Support struggle for Tamansari!

Introduction
Since the media coverage relating to Indonesia is unfortunately still very biased and insufficient, the following article is intended to provide an example of real conditions in Indonesia and to reveal some of the scheming of the Indonesian government, with which the USA cooperates closely economically, militarily and politically (they were even supporting the Indonesian genocide under the dictator Suharto, supporting the annexation of East Timor and then West Papua). The government is opposed by, among others, the citizens and supporters of Tamansari, who offer great resistance.

Tamansari
The district (kelurahan) RW11 Tamansari is located in the middle of the business centre of Bandung, the capital of West Java, which is considered a cultural and educational centre. Bandung also has the official title of a "human rights friendly" city and is committed to uphold and protect human rights through its membership in the UN and the constitution of 1945.

Tamansari was sold to PT. Sartonia Agung in 2017 at a government auction, a very questionable construction company that was officially blacklisted by the government institution LKPP. However, it is actually common land for which the government has neither a land certificate nor an environmental permit and therefore has no right to issue a building permit.

This is because the Basic Law on Agriculture (UUPA) states that any community that has lived or worked on communal land for more than 20 years must be prioritised as the owner of the land. Since the inhabitants of Tamansari have officially lived there for far more than 20 years, they are legally entitled to a land certificate but despite several applications, it has never been handed over to them (by the responsible Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Planning (BPN)).

The construction company PT. Sartonia Agung wants to build a block of flats ("Rumah Deret"), whose apartments are allegedly intended for the residents who are proposed to move in again after the construction. During the construction, the residents are intended to move to Rancacili, a place 30 km away from Tamansari, which is completely inappropriate due to its remote location and poor conditions. It is also likely that the rents for the new apartments will be prohibitively expensive for the residents. The inhabitants of Tamansari have never agreed to this plan.

This plan is part of a governmental program called KOTAKU, which is reportedly a non-profit program. (This will be explained again below)

Before the first eviction in December 2017, 197 families lived in 90 houses in Tamansari. Despite strong resistance, the brutal procedure left only 33 families and 16 houses behind. Many left due to massive pressure from the company and the government.

Further eviction attempts took place (March 2018 - January 2019), the sewage system was destroyed and intimidation attempts by police and paid thugs continued. They also attempted with invalid documents. Again and again, the citizens of Tamansari tried to mediate with the authorities, but nobody cared. Countless demonstrations and events were organized.

The most brutal eviction took place on 12 December 2019, two days after the city of Bandung officially celebrated its human rights-friendly title on International Human Rights Day.
While the case was still on trial and no final decision had yet been made, local police, national police, civil police, national armed forces, paramilitaries and armed thugs came without official announcement and destroyed the entire district. They tore down the houses with excavators while the inhabitants tried to bring their possessions and the children to safety. To speed this up, the national police went to the residents' belongings without permission and took some of them to Rancacili (the place 30 km away where the people are sent). Many belongings of the inhabitants of Tamansari were lost as a result. They also did not have enough time to get everything out of their homes before they were destroyed. Children were injured, crying and screaming, watching their families being beaten with truncheons and the police throwing stones at them. But people gave everything to defend their homes. They built barricades and defended Tamansari with all their courage.

Potentially deadly tear gas bullets were also used. Despite the eventual eviction of all people from the entire area, the units pursued the people to continue beating on them and arbitrarily arresting some of them. 21 people were arrested. At least 37 people were injured, including children.

I myself saw several dozen officials beating Enjo, one of the inhabitants of Tamansari, with truncheons. During the ambulatory treatment he was beaten again. Because of severe head injuries he had to be taken to the intensive care unit. Now he is in a wheelchair, he can no longer walk. A baby still had inflamed eyes for weeks as a result of tear gas and dust.
The only building in the district that was not destroyed is the mosque. Most of the displaced people have been accommodated there until today (about 20 families and a steadily growing number of supporters).

Right next to the mosque you can now see the ruins of Tamansari; piles of stones and objects, memories of a peaceful community life and most importantly a home full of collective memories, which the government apparently perceives as a commodity. But for the people who lived there, it was much more than that. The grandparents of some of the residents have already lived there, watching their children and grandchildren grow up there. Whole life stories took place there, much effort and love was in all corners and edges of Tamansari. But not only the memories, also the living space and the basis of existence were taken from the people. Moreover, the people, and especially the children, are now severely traumatized.

The incumbent mayor, Oded M. Danial, is partly responsible for this tragedy. The following day he apologized to the press for the riots, but he did not draw any conclusions and intends to continue the process as usual. Ridwan Kamil, the Governor of West Java and former mayor, is also involved in the crimes committed.

The Institute for Legal Assistance (LBH), an NGO which among other things stands up for Tamansari, emphasized in a statement on its website the violations of the law which were observed during the illegal eviction:
"The eviction violates the 1945 Constitution, in particular Article 28 on human rights, Law 39 of 1999 on human rights and Law 1 of 2011 on residential and settlement areas." ⁴

Despite repeated requests, the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) did not investigate the numerous human rights violations and the state violence inflicted on the citizens of Tamansari during any of the evictions carried out there.
In the case of Tamansari, the government of Bandung invokes claims from the Dutch colonial period of Indonesia (purchase agreement of 1930), which were officially repealed with the independence of the country. This means that the government actually has no right to take possession of the land. Behind the veil of democracy and the rule of law lies a neoliberal authoritarianism that enforces its business and trade interests with boundless brutality and without regard for the rights of the people. A slow eradication and segregation of the lower class is reminiscent of colonial practices.

Backgrounds

Behind the project "Rumah Deret" (residential block) there are large-scale government programs. The currently largest program is called "National Slum Upgrading Project" (NSUP) and is supported by the World Bank and the AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank). An important part of this is the "Kota Tanpa Kumuh" ("City without Slums") (KOTAKU) program of the Ministry of Housing, which is intended to serve as a national strategy for poverty reduction and to support the NSUP. One of the objectives of KOTAKU is the elimination of urban slums through the provision of housing. The example of Tamansari gives an impression of the way it is being implemented.

KOTAKU is presented on the official website as a non-profit project that does not aim for profit. However, there are obviously commercial and economic interests behind the project. These slum improvement initiatives are also linked to the 100-0-100 program launched by the Indonesian government under Joko Widodo (Jokowi), which stands for 100% access to drinking water, 0 slums and 100% sanitation. This was obviously a utopian plan, the end of it was also planned for 2019.

An international program of the World Bank called "Cities Without Slums" is doing a lot of damage all over the world under the pretext of fighting poverty. The Huffington Post website states: "More than 3 million people were physically or economically displaced between 2004 and 2013 by almost 1,000 World Bank-funded projects." It is not poverty that is fought here, but the poor themselves. It seems that they should get out of the city by any means necessary.

In addition, Tamansari's location is economically very valuable and interesting for investors, a prime piece of land located in the business centre of the city, right next to the Pasupati Bridge (Jembatan Pasupati) and the Balubur Town Square.

Unfortunately there are similar cases throughout Indonesia. In the city of Bandung alone, hundreds of similar measures are planned under the pretext of "improving slums".

Current Info

Not only on television, but also on the Internet one finds absurd allegations and false reports about the Tamansari case. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Planning, which is also responsible for land use certificates, is now claiming in front of the press that the evicted land belongs to the government, for which there is no basis and no evidence, as described above. Previously, the same ministry had called the land communal land.

Unfortunately, the media in Indonesia are strictly controlled and also censored. It is a common practice to threaten journalists with violence to have their photos deleted. Also murders of journalists and activists are not rare in Indonesia.

The socio-religious Islamic organization MUI, recently wrote a letter to the evacuated inhabitants of Tamansari, asking them to leave the mosque. They may also be under pressure from the government, as the evacuation was previously authorized. Furthermore, posters and flyers are repeatedly put up against the inhabitants and supporters of Tamansari. These have clearly not been printed by the neighbors, but it is supposed to look like this (see: picture). The government seems desperate about the resistance of Tamansari's citizens and supporters, which is growing day by day. Even excavators are still regularly sent by as intimidation attempts. Systematic repression seems to be a firm program of the Indonesian government.
"We, the people of Citarum (a district in Bandung), reject the anarcho-syndicalist group that is disturbing and damaging the image of the citizens of Bandung. We are ready to maintain the eligibility of the Bandung City."

These banners were distributed all over the city, everywhere with the same design, only the name of the district was changed each time

Photographer: Siti Maulida
19/12/2019

But the people of Tamansari do not give up. Their strength of will, their cohesion and their courage are tireless.

There are often discussions, film screenings, concerts and exhibitions, and even in the ruins there are still events taking place. The supporters and inhabitants of Tamansari are mainly anarchistic, but they come from different left-wing backgrounds.

From the 13. to the 26. of January 2020, daily demonstrations took place in front of the responsible authorities in the capital, Jakarta. There, too, numerous events were organized; from discussions and workshops to concerts and performances, everything that can be imagined under creative protest was presented.

Numerous activists joined in. The actions were also supported by the LBH (Legal Aid Institute/NGO).

In commemoration of the eviction, which took place exactly two months ago on the 12. of February, an art and music festival was held in the ruins from the 12. until the 15. of February.
"Tamansari still resists" in front of the ATR/BPN (Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Planning)
Photographer: Lita Okta
16/01/2020

Conclusion
Tamansari's story tells of gentrification, land grabbing, corruption, state repression, human rights violations, rights abuses and unconstitutionality by the government of Bandung, West Java. However, this is not only to be found in Bandung, but describes the policy of the Indonesian government itself. But resistance is growing and flourishing, the citizens of Tamansari and its supporters are not giving up and the area is not yet lost.

This is a call for international solidarity! Support the struggle for Tamansari!

Author: Anonymous
The United States, Britain and Australia have been accomplices of the Indonesian genocide in 1965-66.
https://www.embassyofindonesia.org/index.php/bilateral-relations/

international agreement on economic, social and cultural rights (Law No. 05/2005)
https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/text/200129 —> Chapter XA (Human Rights)

Oded: Member of the PKS party, a nationalist Islamic party. He worked for 16 years at "Indonesian Arospace", a state-owned company for the production of civil and military aircraft, after which he manufactured clothing and sold ice cream. Before becoming mayor, he was deputy mayor of Ridwan Kamil.

LBH: https://www.lbhbandung.or.id/1724-2/

http://kotaku.pu.go.id/view/7261/inovasi-program-kotaku-tuai-pujian-delegasi-luar-negeri
http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/worldbank-evicted-abandoned

Pasupati Bridge: a 2.8 km long bridge that has had a significant impact on the quality of life of local residents since it was completed in 2005.
Balubur Town Square: a large shopping centre opened in 2010

Supporters’ Collectives:

ARAP (Aliansi Rakyat Antipenggusuran)
Kolektifa (Kolektif Anti Fasis)
Bandung Supporter Alliance
Kolektif Airnisme
Perpustakaan Jalanan Bandung
Kampung Aliansi

Links:

https://www.betterplace.me/tamansari-melawan (donations for Tamansari)
https://www.instagram.com/tamansarimelawan/ (official Instagram page of Tamansari)
https://www.instagram.com/informasitamansari/ (infographics of Tamansari)
https://www.instagram.com/lbhbandung/ (NGO- Legal Aid Institute)
http://arc.or.id/about-arc/ (Agrarian Recources Center)
https://www.instagram.com/aliensirakyatantipenggusuran/
(ARAP- Aliansi Rakyat Antipenggusuran)

http://www.kolektifa.org
https://www.instagram.com/kolektifa/
(Kolektif Anti Fasis - progressive, alternative, media-orientated, anti-authoritarian movement)

https://www.instagram.com/bdgsupporteralliance/
(The „Bandung Supporter Alliance“)

https://www.instagram.com/airnisme/
(Airnisme-Collektive)

https://www.instagram.com/perpustakaanjalanan_bandung/
(Perpustakaan Jalanan Bandung - Bandung Street Library)

https://www.instagram.com/aliensipelajarbandung/
(Student Association Bandung)

https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/tolakrumahderet/
(#againstrumahderet)

https://www.instagram.com/arif_danun/
(photographer of the first picture)

https://www.instagram.com/geniet_project/
(buy a t-shirt to support Tamansari)

https://www.instagram.com/p/B8JO7Bpl0pc/
(stickers)

https://www.instagram.com/kampung_aliansi/
(supporters collective)
In the ruins – in the background: The „Pasupati Bridge“
Photographer: Siti Maulida
01/01/2020