

EDITORIAL

No more complacency

The Ring of Fire raged once again on Dec. 3 as Mount Marapi in West Sumatra erupted, spewing a tower of ash taller than the volcano itself into the sky without visible warning.

For locals, such events might be routine, as Marapi, the most active volcano in Sumatra, erupts every two to four years. But this time was a tragic departure from the typical; the eruption claimed the lives of 23 hikers who were on the volcano when it suddenly awoke.

We are sending our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families, and we believe the authorities should be held accountable for the deaths. The hikers would have dropped their plans if the authorities had prohibited scaling the volcano, but in fact, officials continued to issue hiking permits despite warnings from volcanologists.

At least 75 hikers were climbing Marapi the day of the disaster. They had been allowed to ascend as far as the volcano's peak, even though the Center for Vulcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (PVMBG) had asked local authorities to stay away from the peak for their safety.

Before the deadly disaster, the volcano was at the second-highest alert level of the PVMBG's four-tiered system, a designation that was supposed to bar any activities within a 3-kilometer radius of the crater, as Marapi has a history of phreatic eruptions, ones that occur without advance signals.

The volcanology center could only provide recommendations to the local Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), and it was up to its parent, the Environment and Forestry Ministry, and local offices to enforce it, the PVMBG's chief said recently.

Local officials in Marapi were not lacking in lessons. In 2017, 16 hikers were trapped on the volcano when it suddenly erupted. Fortunately, they were all evacuated safely, and this luck continued into the beginning of this year, when Marapi underwent several phreatic eruptions without any casualties.

Responding to the fatal disaster last week, PVMBG head Hendra Gunawan was furious, saying authorities "should've learned from the 2017 incident, but instead, they've let it happen again".

The BKSDA claimed it had issued hiking permits after getting the green light from local authorities, including the West Sumatra provincial administration, the Padang search and rescue agency and the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). The BKSDA also said it had warned hikers to avoid the crater.

Later, the BKSDA's acting head, Dian Indriati, acknowledged to the media that the agency had taken factors other than safety into account in its issuance of the climbing permits, including "the positive impact on the local economy".

We appreciate tourism's importance for the well-being of people in the region, but material gain must not come at the cost of human lives.

Marapi's deadly eruption should serve as a wake-up call for the government not to leave volcano disaster mitigation up to mere luck. More than 200 million people are living along the Pacific Ring of Fire, with 5 million living next to active volcanoes that, like Marapi, can erupt anytime without any prior signs.

It is time for the authorities to prioritize lives over cash in the nation's volcano management. They can start by halting hiking permits for 18 dangerously active volcanoes that could erupt anytime.

Further, they should invest more in disaster mitigation, such as early warning systems and public education on evacuation procedures. The PVMBG claimed the alarm for Marapi had been stolen several times throughout the year, hindering the monitoring of the volcano.

It is, sadly, too late to save the lives of the deceased Dec. 3 hikers, but given the pervasiveness of volcanic activity in Indonesia, we can be assured that serious preparation now will save lives in the future. We cannot say we weren't warned.

Indonesia's defense: Toward regional power by 2045



By Hotmangaradja Pandjaitan
and Wibawanto Nugroho Widodo
Jakarta

Hotmangaradja Pandjaitan is the president at Democracy and Integrity for Peace (DIP) Institute and special assistant to the defense minister. Wibawanto Nugroho Widodo is the director for International Engagement at DIP and deputy head of defense and security at National Resilience Institute (Lemhannas) Alumni. The view expressed are their own.



Antara/Didik Suhartono

International duty: Indonesian Navy personnel grouped under the Maritime Task Force (MTF) KONGA XXVIII-O/UNIFIL TA 2023 attend a send-off ceremony on Dec. 6 at the Second Fleet Command headquarters in Surabaya. They will join the international peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

gagements is present overseas to secure the state's national interests at the global level beyond the state's jurisdictional space.

Subsequently, 20 years from now, we will live in a more globalized and interconnected world, with cyberspace as the fifth strategic and war domain alongside the land, sea, air and space domains. In this sense, national defense must be adjusted conceptually, strategically and operationally by synthesizing both the assumptions and premises of realist, liberalist, institutionalist and constructivist schools of thought.

Today, within the systemic global system, the state is not the only dominant actor in international security, as other individual, non-state actors have gained influence, and international governance is becoming more significant in their direct and indirect roles toward national defense, therefore requiring the state to be much more flexible in its engagement with governmental and non-state counterparts both at the domestic and international levels in dealing with contemporary security challenges.

Indonesia's national defense and military must stay up to date with the spectrum of contingencies of not only black-and-white conventional foreign military in-

trusion and invasion, but also with the current reality of applied irregular warfare.

In this regard, two People's Liberation Army Air Force colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, postulate a widened definition of "unrestricted war", while Russian general Valery Gersimov coined "the new generation warfare", which can take place anytime within the full spectrum of international politics, including during times of peace, competition and war.

Modern warfare has transformed into a layered and interminable campaign that uses armed forces, non-armed forces, military and non-military facets and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one's interests, thus blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. This reality bears several consequences.

First, the military's actions in this strategic sense must never take place within a vacuum, but must be proportionally executed alongside other instruments of national power, including information, diplomacy, economy, intelligence, law enforcement and financial national instruments of power. Indonesia needs a clear strategic objective to transform into an exemplary democratic, law-abiding, civilized and pros-

perous state.

Second, there must be new and clearly defined concepts of what constitutes national security, national defense, domestic security and state defense, in addition to the other concepts of foreign engagement and domestic civil support by the military element in the domestic security context.

Third, from the national defense point of view, the formula can be constructed as follows: 1) Domestic security consists of state defense in wartime plus civil support by the military toward civilian authorities in peacetime; 2) National defense consists of military roles in state defense in wartime plus civil support toward civilian authorities in peacetime and military overseas engagements mostly in peacetime (e.g., United Nations peacekeeping forces and in other overseas unconventional/irregular warfare contexts as directed by the President) alongside interagency-based foreign policy engagements on the global level. Overall, the accumulation of homeland defense, homeland security, national defense and interagency-based foreign policy engagements constitute Indonesian national security.

Fourth, national defense must be consistently assessed based on Indonesia's national security roots and global strategic objectives toward 2045, the world system, global trends and when and how to prepare, build, deploy and employ military forces.

In this sense, despite whether Indonesia wants to remain a non-nuclear power, the national defense system must be prepared with deterrence capabilities, including for conventional warfare and irregular warfare with an emphasis on unrestricted warfare and new generation warfare that can even occur during times of peace.

To do so, Indonesia must consider the establishment of a national defense council to routinely review and update the existence of the national defense establishment and its military element as a tool of statecraft instruments of national power in dealing with complex strategic security challenges and to make sure that Indonesia's national defense and its military are ready to sustain the country to become a democratic regional power in 2045.

Lastly, as the mind and spirit are always the winning ingredients in geopolitics, all these efforts must surely be sustained along the way by the expedited transformation of national defense academic centers of excellence, including the National Resilience Institute (Lemhannas) and the Indonesian Defense University.

The Jakarta Post

PUBLISHED BY
PT BINA MEDIA TENGGARA SINCE 1983

Board of Directors : Jusuf Wanandi,

Judistira Wanandi,
M. Taufiqurrahman
& Maggie Tiojakin

Editor-in-Chief : M. Taufiqurrahman

Guarantor

Managing Editor : Adisti Sukma Sawitri

Deputy Managing : Tama Salim

Editor

Senior Editors : Endy M. Bayuni,
Vincent Lingga,
Kornelius Purba

Editorial Advisory : Endy M. Bayuni

Board

Ombudsman : Vincent Lingga,
Bregas Aditya

Editor-at-large : Ary Hermawan

Head of Print : Niken Prathivi

Production

EDITORIAL STAFF: Aditya Hadi, A. Muh. Ibnu

Aqil, Andre Arditya, Dwi Atmanta, Divya

Karyza, Dio Suhenda, Ely Burhaini Faizal,

Hans David Tampubolon, Ina Parlina,

Kharishar Kahfi, Michael Hegarty, Mark

Lempp, Novan Iman Santosa, Nina A. Loasana,

Nur Janti, Radhiyya Indra, Vincent Fabian

Thomas, Wendra Ajistyatama, Yericca Lai

Editorial and General Department

Jl. Palmerah Barat 142-143, Jakarta 10270

Phone (62) (21) 5300476, 5300478

Fax (62) (21) 5350050, 5306971

email editorial@thejakartapost.com

Advertising and Circulation Department

Jl. Palmerah Barat 142-143, Jakarta 10270

Phone (62) (21) 5360001, 5360003, 68469983

Fax (62) (21) 5360008, 5360009

email as@thejakartapost.com [advertising]

subscription@thejakartapost.com [subscription]

PRINTING by PT Gramedia Group,

Gedung Kompas Gramedia

Jl. Palmerah Selatan No. 22-28, Jakarta 10270

US veto: Double standards at the cost of humanity

As usual, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on Sunday, with the theme of "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All", global leaders conveyed lofty messages, pledging their commitment to upholding human rights and safeguarding the inherent dignity of each individual.

However, the disconcerting reality on the ground presents a stark contrast to these proclamations. Those who assert themselves as champions of human rights often navigate decisions motivated by convenience, aligning with oppressors rather than the oppressed.

The true nature of those purporting to champion human rights was revealed two days earlier on Dec. 8 when, owing to a United States veto, the United Nations Security Council failed to call for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

This critical juncture exposed the harsh reality faced by the people of Palestine, caught in the crossfire, as they are systematically denied their fundamental rights and subjected to egregious acts of state terrorism and ethnic cleansing by Israel.

In the face of blatant violations, the international community has regrettably fallen short of taking decisive action against Israel, thereby perpetuating an ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

The crimes committed against the inhabitants of Gaza defy description, prompting global condemnation from voices dedicated to humanitarian causes.

Blatantly defying appeals from both its Arab allies and the UN secretary-general, the US re-



By Imran Khalid

Karachi, Pakistan

A freelance columnist on international relations based in Karachi

jected a call for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza, arguing that such a move would only set the stage for the next conflict. The US exercised its veto power, blocking a UN resolution on Friday.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres had issued a stark warning, emphasizing the breakdown of civil order and the escalating risk of a mass exodus into Egypt, with unpredictable consequences for the broader region.

The vote in the 15-member council stood at 13-1, with the United Kingdom abstaining. Representing the US at the Security Council, Robert Wood asserted that the US remained committed to removing Hamas, stating, "We want to break the cycle of unceasing violence so that history does not keep repeating itself."

Wood argued against an immediate cease-fire, contending that it would only lay the groundwork for the next war, given Hamas's lack of interest in a lasting peace. This obstruction came amidst Israel's unyielding military campaign against Hamas, triggered by the latter's lethal attack in early October.

Guterres invoked the seldom-used Article 99 of the UN Charter, urgently summoning a Security Council meeting to call for an immediate halt to hostilities. Guterres, advocating for peace, called for the release of hostages while emphasizing that "the brutality perpetrated by Hamas can never justify the collective punish-

ment of the Palestinian people".

Despite these pleas and warnings from the international community, the UN and the World Health Organization about the dire situation in Gaza, the US, a major military aid provider to Israel, once again shamelessly rejected the resolution.

The recurring query looms large: What prompts the US to extend unwavering support to Israel through all means, seemingly contradicting its own established international policies?

Blatantly defying appeals from both its Arab allies and the UN secretary-general, the US rejected a call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, arguing that such a move would only set the stage for the next conflict.

This pattern of favoritism toward Israel, transcending international norms, stands out as a stark infringement of global laws.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the Biden administration faces the imperative of addressing this inconsistency and overhauling the US-Israel relationship. The key lies in ensuring a uniform application of existing laws and regulations governing arms exports, even in dealings with Israel.

Adding complexity to the scenario is the stance of the Biden administration, drawing international censure for furnishing mil-

itary assistance to Israel, a move deemed at odds with its well-defined policies.

The US typically abides by legal frameworks such as the Leahy Law, Arms Export Control Act (AECA), Foreign Assistance Act, and the Carter Memorandum, steering clear of supplying arms to entities involved in human rights transgressions.

However, the recent arms transfer strategy of the Biden administration suggests a departure from established norms. Engaging in clandestine negotiations without proper oversight and accountability, the administration persists in supplying arms to Israel, appearing to bypass its own regulatory frameworks.

The two months of conflict have left a trail of unprecedented death and destruction, making an immediate ceasefire an absolute imperative.

Adopting a negative stance on this issue is indefensible, and any attempt to justify rejection rings hollow. It is a glaring contradiction to claim concern for the safety and humanitarian needs of the people in Gaza while tolerating the ongoing conflict.

To advocate for preventing the spillover of the conflict while allowing its continuation is a self-deceptive stance.

The acceptance of the con-

flict, all the while outwardly advocating for the safeguarding of human rights and the welfare of women and children, is a glaring display of profound hypocrisy.

This once again exposes the glaring double standards at play. As per international media reports, the toll has been staggering, with over 18,000 Palestinians, including more than 7,500 children, losing their lives.

This grim statistic underscores the severity of the conflict, with a particularly devastating impact on children, making it one of the deadliest wars for children in modern times.

America's refusal to entertain calls for a permanent cease re only escalates tensions, exacerbating the human tragedy.

In an unprecedented move, Guterres has invoked Article 99 for the first time since assuming office in 2017.

The Israel-Palestine conflict, intensifying over the past two months, has witnessed a deepening humanitarian crisis, even amidst a fleeting, temporary cease-fire. The UN's capacity to foster peace has been hindered, largely attributed to US interference, rendering its functions seemingly voiceless in the ongoing turmoil.

Invoking Article 99 by the UN chief signals a desire for a more proactive role in compelling the Security Council to confront escalating security challenges. But it looks like the US is bent upon sabotaging all peace efforts to buy time for Israel to achieve its immediate objective of "flattening Gaza and eradicating Hamas completely"—another glaring example of double standard and hypocrisy.