

Indonesia - Timor Leste Border Issues through Peaceful Dispute Settlement

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Border issues between Indonesia and Timor Leste especially on the land are still unresolved.

“Border disputes between Indonesia and Timor Leste in enclave oecussi areas still happen because the land borders are still to be fixed between them,” said Law lecturer from Universitas Pendidikan, Ganesha Dewa Gede Sudika Mangku, S.H., LL.M., on Thursday (18/7) at UGM.

Defending his dissertation for doctoral programme of Faculty of Law UGM, he said the unclear state borders became a potential factor that might trigger conflict between citizens living near the borders. Security problems that often emerge in the borders, he said, more strengthened the unclear bordering and can easily spark conflicts both between community or community with security forces.

“Although there has been progress in agreement of land state borders, but there are problems to be solved without violence,” he said.

Dewa Gede added the community had not been much involved in peaceful dispute settlement. He

highlighted the community living in West Timor (Indonesia) and East Timor (Timor Leste) that have similar socio-cultural backgrounds and customary laws.

The customary law includes rules that regulate land affairs and customary area borders. Dewa Gede added that customary leaders have a significant role in solving the existing problems.

“But what happened was that the state plays the major role, ignoring the customary leaders that have the potential to determine land border settlement peacefully,” he said.

Dewa Gede gave recommendations including for both countries to prioritise peaceful dispute resolution and border diplomacy. Besides, community needs to be engaged in border dispute settlement but prior to that, they need to be educated first on borders affairs and nationalism.

“Through these measures, community engagement that arises can give positive impacts to Indonesia’s position in negotiations,” he said.

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