

Potential Conflict, 12 Outer Islands of the Republic of Indonesia Need Special Attention

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From 92 outer islands spreading throughout the Republic of Indonesia, 67 islands have border with neighboring countries; 12 of these need special attention. Those were several topics that were raised in the National Seminar on Management of Outer Islands, Saturday (23/1), at Faculty of Geography, UGM.

As conveyed by Research Professor of National Coordinating Agency for Surveys and Mapping (Bakosurtanal), Prof. Dr. Aris Poniman Kertopermono, M.Sc., that Indonesia as an archipelagic country should develop management of outer islands. The loss of two islands, Sipadan and Ligitan, warned Indonesia of the importance of management. "This is particularly true for outer islands that have special political meaning as outer basic points from territorial ocean border of an archipelagic country," said Aris Poniman.

He said that inventarisation of Indonesian islands has been completed. Soon, a government regulation about the number and names of islands throughout Indonesia will be issued. According to Aris Poniman, the inventarisation was conducted through identification of available maps, interpretation of remote sensing images, field surveys and interviews with local inhabitants, verification with heads of villages and sub-districts, and also validation by Standardization Team for Names of Indonesian Islands. Verifications involved institutions such as Bakosurtanal, Ministry of Domestic Affairs, Hydro-Oceanography Office of Indonesian Navy, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and Provincial and Regency governments.

"Rondo Island in Aceh Province is the westernmost point of Indonesia, whereas Dana Island in East Nusa Tenggara Province is the southernmost island," said the alumnus of Faculty of Geography, UGM.

Meanwhile, Head of Defense Cooperation at the Office of Co-ordinating Minister of Politics, Law and Security, Marine Colonel Dr. Rusdi Ridwan, Dipl. Cart, emphasized that security maintenance of outer islands aims to prevent terrorists and separatists from using them as hideout and other criminal acts, as well as a place for illegal acts. Ridwan mentioned these 12 outer islands, including Rondo Island in Aceh, Berhala Island in North Sumatera, Nipa and Sekatung Islands in Riau, Marore, Miangas, and Maranpit Islands in North Sulawesi, Fani, Fanildo and Bras Islands in Papua, also Batek and Dana Islands in East Nusa Tenggara.

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