

## Indonesia respects Ukraine's sovereignty concerning Crimea issue

Reporter: Fardah □ 21st March 2014

Jakarta (ANTARA News) - Indonesia is a friend to both Russia and Ukraine, but, above all, it always upholds its 1945 Constitution that respects a countrys sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"We always uphold the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity. And this also applies to Ukraine. We cannot accept any move that violates sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," Indonesian Foreign Affairs Marty Natalegawa stated, referring to the Crimea issue, at the presidential office, Jakarta, on March 19.

He stated that the Indonesian government respected Ukraines sovereignty with regard to the Crimea issue, and will not accept any separation of territory that will affect integrity.

If the separation is based on an agreement such as in the case of South Sudan, Indonesia will immediately offer support, he added. "When Serbia and Montenegro separated, we supported them because, it was based on an agreement. But for us, the separation of Kosovo and Serbia, and now Crimea and Ukraine, which is done unilaterally by a group of people, is unacceptable," the minister pointed out.

"The Presidents directives are clear and principled. Indonesia will always put forward the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, be it Ukraine, Serbia and Kosovo or Georgia," he emphasized.

"At the same time, on the other hand, we also prioritize the principles of respect, democracy and loyalty to the Constitution. We referred to the Ukraine upheaval even before the latest incident. We never like to see a change of legitimately-elected government through demonstrations which are unconstitutional," he asserted.

Ukraine's Crimea peninsula, which juts into the Black Sea, is at the center of the current standoff between Russia and Ukraine's new pro-Europe government.

The UN Security Council on March 16, failed to adopt a draft resolution on Ukraine, which otherwise would declare that the March

16 referendum on the status of the Russian-speaking Crimea "can have no validity," and urge nations and international organizations not to recognize it.

Russia, one of the five permanent Security Council members, voted against the draft resolution, drawn up by the United States and backed by Western countries. China, also a permanent Security Council member, abstained.

Tensions in Ukraine have been escalating after Russian troops took over the strategic Crimea region recently. Since then, international pressure on Russia has been growing.

Russia's parliament granted President Vladimir Putin authority to use the military to protect Russian interests in Ukraine, where a new government has been named after demonstrations pushed President Viktor Yanukovich from office.

The Indonesian foreign minister, on March 4, expressed concern over the escalating tension in Ukraine.

"Indonesia is concerned that the political instability in Ukraine can develop into an international crisis that risks relations between a number of countries," he noted in a press statement.

Indonesia encouraged all relevant parties to exercise self-restraint, manage crisis in Ukraine and give priority to peaceful settlement of the crisis by abiding with the international law, he added.

"Indonesia calls, on all concerned parties to exercise utmost restraint, manage the crisis, promote the peaceful settlement of the situation in Ukraine, and to consistently uphold respect for international law," Natalegawa stated.

Indonesia also called upon the United Nations Security Council to carry out its responsibility outlined in its charter to maintain peace and international security, he commented in a press statement issued on March 4. "It is proper for the UN secretary general to send a special envoy there (to Ukraine)," he pointed out.

Minister Marty Natalegawa's statement was hailed by Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Mikhail Galuzin.



"I fully respect that statement, which aims to seek peaceful ways to resolve the crisis in Ukraine," Galuzin stated during a press conference in Jakarta, on March 5.

He explained that the Russian Government accepted Indonesias statement for all concerned parties in Ukraines situation as a sincere approach in order to find solution through peace diplomacy, instead of through violent ways.

"The Russian Military is not intervening with domestic affairs of Ukraine, and the deployment of Russian troops in Crimea Peninsula was in accordance with the articles of Russia and Ukraines agreement of the displacement of Russian Military base in the peninsula," Galuzin explained.

Meanwhile, Guspiabri Sumowigeno, the Director of Center for Indonesian National Policy Studies (CINAPS) reminded the Indonesian government to be cautious while taking a stance over the Crimea crisis.

"We should see this issue as more than just a rivalry between two big nations. I suggest that the government takes a balanced stance and accommodates the views of both the parties," he stated in Jakarta on March 19.

Following the escalation of political tension in Ukraine, the Indonesian embassy in Kiev issued a warning to Indonesian citizens not to visit Ukraine and avoid traveling to Crimea, Kharkiv and other eastern Ukraine regions.

According to data of the Indonesian embassy in Kiev, currently, there were 59 Indonesian nationals, including Indonesian Ambassador Niniek Kun Naryatie, 30 other diplomats, as well as the embassys local staff members in Ukraine.

The rest were three Indonesian chefs working at the Hyatt Hotel, four employees of a spa in Kiev and two others working in a spa in Kharkiv, seven students attending the AIESEC program, one English teacher at the British Council in Kyiv, and eight Indonesian women who married Ukrainian men or other nationalities, and three children of those Indonesian women.

Indonesia had moved 11 of its citizens from Ukraine to Romania in the wake of worsening security situation in the former Soviet Republic.

"We have relocated 11 Indonesians to neighboring Romania. This is a mere step in handling the worsening situation," Natalegawa commented on March 4.

The 11 Indonesians, most of them children, were members of the families of the embassys staff members in Keiv, the capital of Ukraine.

Indonesia recognized the independence of Ukraine on December 28, 1991. The two countries officially established diplomatic relations on June 11, 1992.

The two nations high-ranking officials have often visited each other so far. In

1996, for instance, the then Ukrainian President L.D.Kuchma paid a state visit to Indonesia.

In March 2012, the then Ukrainian president V.F.Yanukovich held a bilateral meeting with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in between the second Seoul Nuclear Security Summit in South Korea.

Marty Natalegawa believed that the Crimean crisis will not directly affect Indonesia but it certainly will affect the global situation.

Defensenew.com reported recently that Indonesia signed a contract for five BTR-4 armored personnel carriers with Ukraines Ukrspetsexport, a subsidiary of state-owned defense giant Ukroboronprom.

The new vehicles will be supplied to the Indonesian Navy, the company explained in a statement. If the first batch is positively evaluated by the countrys military, Indonesia will order a further 50 armored vehicles from Ukraine.

Ukrspetsexports offer was selected by the Indonesian Ministry of Defense through a tender in which it topped bids by Russian manufacturers, the statement elaborated.

As for the economic ties, exports from the Indonesian province of North Sulawesi Province to Ukraine still continues and has not been affected by political unrest there so far.

North Sulawesi exported 24 tons of frozen fish to Ukraine, giving the province foreign exchange income of around US\$14 thousand. It also exported 39 tons of coconut powder worth US\$55,575, the head of the regions trade and industry service, Olvie Atteng, stated recently in Manado, North Sulawesi. (\*)

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