

“Belanda Setan” Enters Hiang: The Dutch East Indies Government's Invasion of Kerinci in 1903

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Abstrak

Kerinci merupakan wilayah yang tidak terjamah oleh Pemerintah Hindia Belanda. Pemerintah Hindia Belanda ini awalnya berusaha “membujuk” para petinggi di Kerinci agar berkenan menjalin kerjasama. Jalanan kerjasama ini sangat diharapkan oleh Pemerintah Hindia Belanda, mengingat sumber daya alam Kerinci yang melimpah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana Pemerintah Hindia Belanda berusaha untuk memasukkan Kerinci ke dalam wilayah administrasi Pemerintahan Hindia Belanda lewat perang, yang difokuskan pada bagaimana masyarakat di Mendapo Hiang dalam melakukan perlawanan terhadap invansi tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini adalah dengan menerapkan tahapan metode sejarah, yang meliputi pengumpulan sumber, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Dari penelitian ini dapat dilihat bahwa upaya menjalin kerjasama oleh pihak Hindia Belanda menemui penolakan demi penolakan oleh para petinggi Kerinci, sehingga akhirnya Pemerintah Hindia Belanda tersebut mengirim pasukan “ekspedisi militer”. Salah satu perlawanan yang dilakukan terjadi di Mendapo Hiang, lewat perang yang terjadi selama beberapa hari. Meskipun demikian, masyarakat Mendapo Hiang yang melawan tersebut harus menerima kekalahan perang, dan dipaksa untuk menerima keberadaan Hindia Belanda di wilayahnya.

Kata kunci: invasi, hindia belanda, kerinci, hiang.

Abstract

Kerinci was an area that was not touched by the Dutch East Indies Government. The Dutch East Indies government initially tried to “persuade” the top officials in Kerinci to agree to collaborate. This collaboration was highly hoped for by the Dutch East Indies Government, considering Kerinci’s abundant natural resources. This research aims to see how the Dutch East Indies Government tried to incorporate Kerinci into the Dutch East Indies Government’s administrative area through war, which focuses on how the people in Mendapo Hiang resisted the invasion. The method used in this paper is to apply the stages of the historical method, which include source collection, source criticism, interpretation and historiography. From this research it can be seen that efforts to establish cooperation by the Dutch East Indies were met with rejection after rejection by Kerinci officials, so that in the end the Dutch Indies Government sent a “military expedition” troop. One of the resistances that took place occurred in Mendapo Hiang, through a war that lasted for several days. Nevertheless, the people of Mendapo Hiang who resisted had to accept defeat in the war, and were forced to accept the existence of the Dutch East Indies in their territory.

Keywords: invasion, dutch east indies, kerinci, hiang.

INTRODUCTION

Kerinci is an area deep in the interior of Sumatra, an area rarely visited by outsiders. Therefore, Kerinci does not receive much contact from foreign parties. This is also why the Kerinci

community around the 20th century period was still closed without outsiders being able to enter. Unless it is with special permission and with a special purpose (Sumatra Courant, 1881). In fact, Kerinci is called the “secret valley”

because this area is so untouched. Another term that is also found is that Kerinci is "*land van melk en honig*" (C.W. Watson, 1984).

Kerinci's famous natural resources caused the Dutch East Indies Government to be interested in establishing cooperative relations. The natural resources in Kerinci, which are an important export commodity in trade, can be seen in the good quality of the plants, with sales increasing from year to year. For coffee plants, for example, in 1889, coffee shipments from Kerinci to Padang for sale were 1.970 piculs, then each year it increased until in 1913 the shipments were 6.000 piculs (A.Ph. van Aken, 1915).

The natural resources in Kerinci would be a shame if the Dutch East Indies Government did not take part in their management. This was also conveyed by Snouck Hurgonje, one of the very well-known colonial advisors of the Dutch East Indies Government. He explained that it was very necessary for the Dutch East Indies Government to include Kerinci as part of the Dutch East Indies administrative area (Iskandar Zakaria, 1985). This means that not only economically, but also politically, the Dutch East Indies Government is trying to include itself in the management of these two aspects in Kerinci.

The Dutch East Indies government began to intend to make cooperation efforts, especially in the economic field.

Even in 1877, through a newspaper article entitled "*Naar Korintji?*" describes the provocation of the Kerinci region needing to be included in the Dutch East Indies (Bataviaasch Handelsblad, 1877). This intention became stronger when foreign parties first entered the Kerinci area, namely in the 1880s. However, the intentions of the Dutch East Indies Government have not yet come to light, because they are always met with rejection by Kerinci officials when invitations for cooperation are expressed through representatives from the Dutch Indies (Sumatra Courant, 1881; A.Ph. van Aken, 1915). This went on for years, even until 1902 (Rasyid Yakin, 1986).

The intention of the Dutch East Indies in the end was not only to collaborate, but they intended to incorporate Kerinci into their territory by force, namely through invasion. This war became known as the "*Perang Tahun Tigo*", which began with the sending of military troops belonging to the Dutch East Indies Government to enter the Kerinci area. This war began to last from 1902-1903 (Rasyid Yakin, 1986).

During this time, the resistance of the Kerinci people through the war against the Dutch East Indies troops, the most famous of which was the Central Island War. The war in this region took the longest time among the wars in other regions in Kerinci, and became the last front of resistance. This can be seen

through the many studies that discuss the war in Kerinci in 1903, which focuses on the resistance on Central Island from various perspectives. This can be seen in the research of Jamal Mirdad (2019), Rio Mastri (2019), Tahar Ramli (2005), A.R. Dahlan (2012), Sherly Nursyamsy & Lisa Rukmana (2023), and so on.

Military expeditions carried out by Dutch East Indies troops encountered resistance in every other Mendapo, including at Mendapo Hiang. The people in Mendapo made efforts to resist the arrival of the "military expedition" team sent by the Dutch East Indies Government. This resistance was a form of resistance to the entry of foreign influence into Mendapo Hiang. In Hiang, the term for the Dutch East Indies soldiers who attacked through this military expedition was called "Blanda Setan" (Sumatra Bode, 1903).

Mendapo Hiang is one of the areas that plays an important role for Kerinci, considering that the Kerinci area is divided into the Tigo Helai Kain and Salapan Helai Kain areas. In Selapan Helai Kain, Mendapo Hiang through Depati Atur Bumi holds the top of the federation with other mendapo who are under Selapan Helai Kain (Safta Afanti, 1980). This is the reason why Mendapo Hiang was interesting to see during the war against the Dutch East Indies in 1903.

METHOD

This research is included in the type of research that is descriptive qualitative, namely by examining events to search for information by producing data in the form of written, verbal, images, behavior, and so on (Lexy J Moleong, 2007; Sudjarwo, 2011; Nasution, 1996; Sartono Katodirdjo, 1991; Kuntowijoyo, 2005). The research method used of course uses historical methods as a work step, starting from collecting sources (heuristics). The author searched for sources in the form of documents, paintings, photos and other sources that could be used as data in this research. Sources in the form of documents, paintings, photos and other sources were taken from libraries, regional archives, regional libraries, as well as visiting several museums. Researchers will also search for sources through several online media that have data with unlocked access. Some online sources that will be searched include the sites delpher.nl, collectienederland.nl, cambridge.org, journals.sagepub.com, collectie.wereldmuseum.nl, libgen.is, kitlv.nl, geheugen.delpher.nl, dbnl.org, nha.courant.nu, and other sites that will be explored further. If you pay attention, many sources from Dutch sites were explored, because this research discusses the history of Kerinci during the period of the Dutch East Indies Government. Several other sources that will also be searched online are via Google Scholar and

Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan repository.

The next step in the historical method is to carry out source criticism, both internal criticism and external criticism. At this critical stage, the researcher will compare the sources that have been collected. This comparison of sources will direct researchers to sources that can be trusted for their truth, by analyzing the degree of similarity of the data obtained, whether data obtained through in-depth interviews, or source documents that have been collected via online or offline sources. The next stage of the historical method is to carry out interpretation as a form of interpretation of these sources. Interpretation needs to be done very carefully to avoid as much as possible the researcher's own subjectivity. This interpretation is carried out by considering the validity of the data which has been reviewed through previous source criticism. The final stage is the historiography stage, namely the preparation of the historical story itself.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kerinci as "Independent Country"

In the official atlas issued by the Colonial Ministry, there are several regions that are still independent, including Kerinci, Dalu-Dalu, Rokan and Tanah Batak (G.J. Resink, 2013). Kerinci as an independent region was declared as "Free Kerinci countries" which was also stated by de Sturler in his

dissertation in 1881 which discussed the Kingdom of Siak Sri Indrapura. He explained that there were several other regions that were still independent from colonialization (G.J. Resink, 2013). Before becoming part of the Dutch East Indies Government, the Kerinci region was led by Depati IV Eight Pieces of Cloth. These depati hold the pinnacle of power as the highest leaders in customary law. This also applies to the establishment of political relations, as well as when making decisions related to something (Afresa, et. al, 2003).

The Kerinci region, which is recognized as an independent region, does not have much influence outside the region. However, the Kerinci region was ultimately seen as part of the archipelago which had unlimited self-government power and the Dutch East Indies government could not interfere at all in all Kerinci affairs (Sumatra Courant, 1874).

Until finally the Dutch East Indies government sent a military expedition force in 1902-1903, resulting in a war known as the Tigo Year War (Rasyid Yakin, 1986). The Kerinci region was then successfully conquered by the Dutch East Indies Government's military expeditionary force. Furthermore, based on Koninklijk Belsuit dated 1 February 1906 No. 54 (Staatsblad no. 187), the Kerinci region was then included in one of the regions

under the Jambi Residency (Safta Afanti, No Year).

As an illustration, Kerinci is a completely new territory. Even in 1922, the road to enter the Kerinci area had not yet been built. Traveling to Kerinci until that year still had to go through the wilderness, namely via the roads that Kerinci traders had previously taken to get out of the Kerinci area itself. However, in 1922, considerations began to be made for building a road to Kerinci via Tapan for economic purposes (G.L. Tichelman & H. van Meurs, 1948).

Kerinci Government before Becoming Part of the Dutch East Indies Government

The government in Kerinci is known as Depati IV, which is the highest government institution spearheaded by Depati Rencong Telang from Sangkar Island, Depati Muara Langkap from Tamiai, Depati Biang Sari from Pengasi, and Depati Atur Bumi from Hiang. Each of these regions has full sovereignty over its territory, and chooses Sanggaran Agung as a place for deliberation if there is something that needs to be discussed (Rasyid Yakin, 1986).

Kerinci is divided into the Tigo Strands of Kain and Selapan Strands of Kain regions. This regional division is a form of recognition of cooperation between the four depati as the highest leaders of the Kerinci region and the Jambi Sultanate. In this case, Prince

Tumenggung Kebaru Dibukit as a representative of the Jambi Sultanate visited the Kerinci area and conveyed his intentions. During this trip, he brought silk cloth which was very valuable at that time as a gift which would be distributed to the four depati in the Kerinci area. He distributed them to Depati Muara Langkap in Tamiai, Depati Rencong Telang on Sangkar Island and Depati Biang Sari in Pengasi. After the three cloths were distributed, the area was named Tigo Helai Kain.

Next, Prince Tumenggung Kebaru Dibukit visited Depati Batu Hampar in Hiang. There are seven more depati areas under Batu Hampar Depati. The cloth brought by Prince Tumenggung was then divided into two, half for Depati Batu Hampar in Hiang, and the other half was distributed to seven depati under Depati Batu Hampar. In this case, Depati Batu Hampar then changed his title to Depati Atur Bumi which was given by the Sultanate of Jambi. After the gift cloth was distributed, the area under the Depati Atur Bumi was then called the Selapan Strands of Cloth area (A. Ph. Van Aken, 1915). The top leader for the Selapan Strands of Kain area is the Depati Atur Bumi from Mendapo Hiang, whose deliberations were held in the Big Expanse of Rawang (Rasyid Yakin, 1986). Then, in Mendapo Hiang, there are several hamlets in it, as in table 1 below.

Table 1. Dusun-Dusun in Mendapo Hiang

No	Dusun
1	Hiang Tinggi
2	Betung Kuning
3	Koto Baru
4	Ambai
5	Sebukar
6	Semerah
7	Bunga Tanjung
8	Kayu Aro Ambai
9	Pendung
10	Koto Padang
11	Pendung Mudik

Source: H.H. Morison. *De Mendapo Hiang in het District Korintji*, 1940

Military Expedition to Kerinci

The Dutch East Indies troops who were sent to attack the Kerinci region as part of a military expedition had many things to consider. One of the considerations that had the greatest influence on the Dutch East Indies Government in controlling the Kerinci area was the economic aspect. This is natural, considering that the Kerinci region has abundant natural resources, and is even famous outside the Dutch East Indies.

Efforts to get closer to the Kerinci region had been made before the war in 1903. The first official approach taken by the Dutch East Indies Government with Kerinci was through efforts to establish a partnership which was hoped would be mutually beneficial for both parties. Efforts to establish this partnership were carried out through the Bengkulu Resident who opened discussions with the Depati in

Kerinci. Prince Pesirah Margalima Kuto became the intermediary in this intention to start the journey by first meeting the Depati Atur Bumi in Mendapo Hiang, precisely in Hiang Tinggi Hamlet. This intention was later rejected by the Depati of Earth Affairs. Prince Psirah Margalima Kuto as the representative of the Dutch East Indies through the Resident of Bengkulu then returned empty-handed (Johan Wahyudi, 2017).

Further efforts are still being made to persuade Kerinci officials to agree to collaborate. Because the representatives sent one after another, plus the creation of monitoring guard posts around the Gunung Raya area, of course the people of Kerinci then felt disturbed. Until finally, the Dutch East Indies envoy from Muko-Muko, namely Imam Marusa's group, announced that the Padang-Jambi route via Kerinci would be opened and then they were hunted down. Most of this group died at the hands of the Lempur people. This then triggered the sending of a military expeditionary force to Kerinci to attack (Rio Mastri, et. al., 2019).

At the end of May 1903, a military expeditionary force belonging to the Dutch East Indies Government was dispatched to Kerinci, bringing troops from the *Sumatra Westkust* region, namely via Pasir Ganting, then via Tapan and entering Kerinci via Koto Limau Saring. Entering June, the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary force began

carrying out expeditions from Mendapo to Mendapo, and encountered resistance at each mendapo. On June 10, 1903, these troops passed through the Sekungkung, Koto Tuo and Koto Kepayang areas, then returned to Rawang, because the Dutch East Indies military expedition troops had set up their post there. Next, the expedition troops went to Mendapo Hiang, then headed to the Three Strands of Cloth area, namely via Sanggaran Agung, Jujun, Tanjung Batu. Next these troops went to the Lolo area, and then to Lempur. This expeditionary force also passed through the Koto Tuo area, Depati Tujuh, then to Semurup (Sumatra Bode, 1904).

Entering July 1903, the military expeditionary force added troops sent from Jambi. This was necessary because some of the troops were killed and injured, after encountering resistance from the military expedition which was carried out from Mendapo to Mendapo. This military expedition is still continuing, touring the Pengasi area, then to Tarutung and Sangkar Island. Then these troops went to Lolo and Lempur. Most of the territory traversed by this expeditionary force was successfully conquered from its initial departure at the end of May to July. However, the Kerinci area was not completely conquered. The people of Kerinci who still wanted to fight back then united their forces on Tengah Island as the final defense front to defend Kerinci, the

war lasted until mid-August 1903 (W.J. Lucardie, 1913).

Resistance of the Hiang People against the Dutch East Indies Troops

The conquest of Mendapo Hiang, the land of the gods (Deli Courant, 1936) by the Dutch East Indies military expedition force in 1903 was something that had to be done. This is because Hiang is the Minister of Dapo who is very important for the Kerinci region, especially the role of Depati Atur Bumi as one of the Depati IV in this region (H.H. Morison, 1940).

The people of Hiang had been waiting for the arrival of the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary force. Hiang's troops were waiting on the banks of the Batang Sangkir river, which borders Penawar (De Locomotif, 1939). Hiang's troops had created a resistance formation, dividing the troops into 3 groups. The first group consisted of 200 people, and the second and third groups each consisted of 100 people armed with rifles, klewangs and spears (Sumatra Bode, 1903).



Picture 1. Map of Hiang and Travel Routes of the Dutch East Indies Military Expeditionary Troops

Source:

digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl

One of Hiang's troops approached the Dutch East Indies military expedition force and asked what they wanted. This was responded to by the commander of the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary force who stated that he did not want to start hostilities. While the representatives of both sides were talking, the first troops of Hiang's army advanced slowly, in formation ready for battle. The attack on the Dutch East Indies military expedition force could not be avoided. Rifles were fired at the Dutch East Indies military expedition troops which immediately killed 2 of them (De Locomotif, 1939), then followed by klewang and spear troops carrying out the attack. Likewise, shots from the Dutch East Indies military expedition troops (Sumatra Bode, 1903). The Hiang troops' war against the "Blanda Setan" on June 12 1903 officially began, and this battle took place in Koto Baru Hiang Hamlet (A. Ph. Aken, 1915).

Hiang's troops were dispersed by numerous rifle shots from the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary troops. The crowded Hiang troops then dispersed and looked for rescue. It was also seen that many people were lying dead and injured (De Locomotif, 1939). Because of the war, it is known that as many as 36 people were killed and nearly 100 people were injured from Hiang's troops. The hamlets of Koto Baru Hiang and Betung Kuning surrendered on June 12, 1903. The Dutch

East Indies military expedition troops began to enter Koto Baru Hiang Hamlet to disarm. However, this is different from Hiang Tinggi Hamlet, which is still fighting back. On June 13, 1903, they prepared themselves to return to war. Then the next day, June 14 1903, war broke out again against troops from Hiang Tinggi Hamlet (Sumatra Bode, 1903).

On June 15, 1903, the war had still ended with defeat on the part of Hiang's forces. The Dutch East Indies military expeditionary force then sought Depati Atur Bumi as their main objective. However, the Depati Atur Bumi is no longer in Hiang Tinggi Hamlet. On June 16 1903, Depati Atur Bumi returned to Mendapo Hiang. The return of the Depati Atur Bumi also declared his surrender to the Dutch East Indies (De Locomotif, 1903). The handover of Depati Atur Bumi as leader of Mendapo Hiang was also followed by the handover of weapons which were then taken to Rawang, as the headquarters for the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary force (A.Ph. Aken, 1915).

CONCLUSION

As the official of the Selapan Strands of Kain region in Kerinci, Mendapo Hiang, led by Depati Atur Bumi, was one of the regions that the Dutch East Indies Government was obliged to subdue. The existence of the Depati Atur Bumi in Mendapo will influence the intention of

the Dutch East Indies Government to control the Kerinci area, and include this area in the administrative area of the Dutch East Indies. However, this intention had to be implemented with challenges, where resistance emerged not only in Mendapo Hiang, but also in other Mendapo's in Kerinci. In Mendapo Hiang, the terminology "Blanda Setan" became a unifier and encouragement for the Hiang troops to resist attacks carried out by the Dutch East Indies military expeditionary troops.

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