

Komnas HAM highlights rights violations by police

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The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has raised concerns about the National Police's limited comprehension of human rights following thousands of cases of rights abuses reported throughout 2015.

Komnas HAM chairman Nur Kholis told *The Jakarta Post* that he and several other commissioners had told National Police chief Gen. Badrodin Haiti during a closed-door meeting on Wednesday that the public had reported 1,780 cases of rights abuse at the hands of police officers last year.

"Every year the number of reports [related to police officers] is relatively high so it is important that the National Police do not to tackle this issue alone. We need to closely analyze what the main problems are," he said over the phone on Thursday.

Nur Kholis explained that Badrodin had agreed that the National Police and Komnas HAM would establish two teams that will analyze, categorize and evaluate the thousands of cases that were reported last year to see how they can be resolved. The teams will also analyze the most frequent rights abuses so that they can be prevented in the future.

Although Nur Kholis declined to disclose specific cases, he said that several cases were related to conflict over natural resources and investigation procedures.

"Apart from the National Police taking action internally, there is a possibility that [Komnas HAM] will help provide training related to human rights," he said.

Nur Kholis acknowledged that with around 400,000 personnel nationwide, it might be difficult to reach police officers in smaller cities and remote areas to educate them about the importance of upholding human rights.

"Right now education on rights has only reached high-ranking officers, and most of them are in the

bigger cities. This is a challenge for the future and we need a systematic plan to tackle it [...] The police force is essential to ensure safety in a democratic country, however, the police force must respect human rights," he said.

He added that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Police would soon end in May and that Komnas HAM may request to add several more provisions in its renewal.

This is not the first time the National Police have been accused of rights abuses. The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS) said that of all state bodies, the police had committed the most human rights violations in 2015, having been responsible for 85 cases. The violations include excessive use of force to disperse demonstrations and prohibiting freedom of expression in public.

Badrodin has asked Komnas HAM for concrete data that shows the alleged rights violations committed by officers.

"I have already asked for the data and the details so that the police can address this. [We need to see] which [actions] are perceived as rights violations and which aren't," he said on Wednesday evening, following the closed-door meeting.

Badrodin, who was once accused of committing rights violations in an anti-terrorism raid in 2007 during his tenure as the Central Sulawesi Police chief, said that many of the violations described by Komnas HAM were related to slow investigations and the suspect-naming process.

However, he said that there were several cases that were merely code of ethics violations and not rights violations.

"Code of ethics violations can be resolved through an ethics court. [People can] use legal measures, such as a pretrial petition, for complaints relating to suspect-naming or other investigation-related issues," he said.