

## Landfill waste floods homes, residents call for closure

Residents of Bakung in Bandar Lampung are urging Bandar Lampung Mayor Herman H.N. to immediately close down the Bakung landfill after waste water began seeping into nearby homes. They are also demanding compensation for the pollution they have been exposed to for years, which has caused numerous ailments such as skin infections.

Bakung resident Rifky Basri, 32, said residents were ready to block the road to the landfill if the municipality failed to respond to their requests.

“On Jan. 23 we blocked the road, but opened it again because we were hoping for a reaction from the mayor. But, the mayor remained firm that the landfill should remain there and refused to provide any compensation. If the municipality refuses to compensate residents then it should at least provide free medical treatment,” Rifky said Tuesday.

Rifky said stinking waste water had been entering homes for the past year.

“If it rains, the waste will flow into residents’ homes. We asked the municipality to repair the drainage system, but it hasn’t happened. The drains are clogged so the waste water overflows into the housing complex when it rains,” Rifky said.

Bakung resident Ridwan Sayuti said their requests were in accordance with an earlier agreement between residents and the Bandar Lampung municipality.

“Compensation had been discussed since former mayor Nurdin Muhayat’s term in office 20 years ago. At that time, each family usually received 20 kilograms of rice a month, but since he retired, we no longer get any compensation,” Ridwan said.

Bandar Lampung councilor Jimmy Khomeini said the Bakung landfill issue was crucial because it involved the health of people living in the area.

“We have long mentioned the matter to the sanitation agency. The municipality should have reviewed the location of the landfill. It should not have been built in a residential area,” Jimmy said.

City Development Planning Board (Bappeko) head Juhandi Goeswi said the landfill’s term of use would conclude in five years. Juhandi promised the landfill would immediately be relocated to Pesawaran or South Lampung regencies when the term of use expired. According to Juhandi, the Lampung provincial administration has allocated locations for an integrated landfill in both regencies.

“Providing there are no other requirements from the waste management authority such as processing waste into compost fertilizer,” he said. The mayor said his office would continue to maintain the Bakung landfill while waiting for an investor willing to turn their waste into electricity. Two companies have expressed their interest in managing the Bakung landfill, he added.

“The central government will also provide assistance for this. We are asking the residents to be patient. We will try to provide compensation and medical treatment as soon as we can,” Herman said.