



The Role of Trade Unions in Protecting Workers' Rights in The Electricity Sector (Study at PT. PLN Workers Union (Persero))

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the important role of Trade Unions in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector, with a study focus on the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero). PT. PLN (Persero) as a company providing electricity services in Indonesia, has a strategic role in the national economy, and the workers' union within it functions as a forum for advocacy, protection and worker representation in various aspects of industrial and employment relations. The research method used in this study is qualitative, with a case study approach to get an in-depth picture of the dynamics and role of the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) in protecting workers' rights. Data was collected through document study, in-depth interviews and participant observation, then analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify patterns, themes and key issues related to the role of trade unions in protecting workers' rights. The research results show that the PT. PLN (Persero) has an active and strategic role in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector. Through advocacy, collective negotiations and educational programs, this trade union contributes to creating fair, safe and conducive working conditions for workers, as well as fighting for workers' rights, such as adequate remuneration, welfare guarantees and legal protection for workers. However, there are also several obstacles and challenges faced by trade unions in carrying out their roles, which require further strategies and efforts to overcome.

Keywords: PT. Workers Union PLN (Persero), Workers' Rights, Indonesian Electricity

Introduction

PT. PLN (Persero) is the heart of Indonesian electricity, so PLN's role in the development and growth of the Indonesian nation is very important. During his visit to PLN to greet the PLN Workers' Union and Millennials, BUMN Minister Erick Thohir said that one of PLN's important roles is as the main focus of economic growth. In line with its important role as a backbone for economic growth, PLN must also become a World Class Company. According to Erick, PLN needs to move quickly. PLN needs to become a more agile and agile company. Erick believes that this effort cannot be separated from the involvement of the PLN millennial generation and also the PLN Workers Union. "I often receive reports that SP PLN is always present in its own way. Always have the enthusiasm to advance PLN. "So I hope that this labor union will become an increasingly integrated, unified force," he said. An important role as stated by the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) is certainly in line with dynamic legal rules as the basis for the PLN Workers Union to synergize with the BUMN ministry. and also fighting for workers' rights in the electricity sector in accordance with legal developments. Legal developments always develop along with the development of society. Likewise, legal problems will also develop along with the development of problems occurring in society. One of the characteristics of law is dynamic. According to the sociological school, initiated by Hammaker, Eugen Ehrlich and Max Weber, "Law is the result of social interaction with people's lives. Law is a symptom of society, because the development of law (its emergence, change, disappearance) coincides with the development of society. Legal development is a reflection of societal development." A trade union or labor union is an organization formed from a group of workers or laborers who have a common goal of protecting and defending

the rights and interests of their members. Trade unions are a forum for workers to unite, strengthen their bargaining position, and obtain more effective legal protection in dealing with employers or employers. This organization has several important functions. First, trade unions play an active role in protecting workers' rights, including the right to decent wages, safe and healthy working conditions, and the right to social protection. Second, this union also fights for workers' rights, which often do not receive sufficient attention from employers or the government. In the Indonesian electricity sector, trade unions have a very important role. This sector is one of the pillars of the national economy which has special characteristics, namely that it demands high expertise and skills, and has quite high work risks. In this context, trade unions in the electricity sector play an important role in protecting workers' rights and creating balance in relations industry between workers and entrepreneurs. DPP PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) is a trade union organization that is active in the electricity sector. This organization has a strategic role in bridging communication between workers and PT management. PLN (Persero). Through intensive advocacy and negotiations, the union seeks to ensure that workers' rights are protected and their welfare is guaranteed. Article 1 (6) of Law Number 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unions/Labour Unions (hereinafter referred to as the Law on Trade Unions/Labor Unions) states that a worker/laborer is every person who works by receiving wages or other forms of compensation. Every worker/laborer has the right to freedom of association, assembly, expression of ideas both orally and in writing, to obtain work and a living worthy of humanity, and to have equal standing under the law is the right of every citizen.

One of the forums for association, gathering for workers/laborers is the PT Workers' Union. PLN (Persero), hereinafter referred to as SP PLN, has been established since its declaration on August 18 1999 and is currently 24 (twenty four) years old. As a workers' organization, it currently has a total membership of 24,076 (twenty four thousand seventy six) workers within PT. PLN (Persero) throughout Indonesia. SP PLN in providing protection and defense to workers in the electricity sector is protected by law and has a legal basis as regulated in Article 4 (1) of the Trade Union/Labor Union Law which states as follows: (1) "Trade/labor unions, federations and confederations of trade/labor unions aim to provide protection, defend rights and interests, and improve adequate welfare for workers/unions and their families (2) To achieve the objectives as intended in paragraph (1) trade/labor unions, federations and confederations of trade/labor unions have the following functions: (a) as a party in making collective work agreements and resolving industrial disputes; (b) as worker/labor representative in cooperation institutions in the field employment according to level; (c) as a means of creating harmonious, dynamic and fair industrial relations in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. In a broader context, trade unions also play a role in creating stable industrial relations in the electricity sector. Through mediation and advocacy roles, trade unions help resolve work conflicts and disputes that can threaten smooth operations and services in this sector. However, the dynamics and challenges faced by trade unions in the electricity sector are also quite complex. Several issues such as company restructuring, the implementation of new technology, and changes in government regulations often affect working conditions and workers' rights. In facing this challenge, trade unions need to have the right strategies and tactics to continue to protect workers' rights. By looking at this background, this research will examine in more depth the role of the PT Workers Union DPP. PLN (Persero) in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector. It is hoped that this research will provide a clear picture of the contributions and challenges faced by trade unions in carrying out their advocacy and protection functions for workers' rights.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a focus on case studies to understand in depth the "Role of Trade Unions in Protecting Workers' Rights in the Electricity Sector", especially those operating at PT. PLN (Persero). A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and understand phenomena, perceptions and dynamics that occur in the field, which are impossible to access through quantitative methods. Data analysis in this research will be carried out using content analysis techniques. This technique is an interpretive method used to analyze text or communication content. This analysis was carried out by coding the data that had been collected, then grouping it into several themes to facilitate interpretation and drawing conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Legal Position of the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) in Protecting Workers in the Electricity Sector?

Workers/Labor Unions (SP/SB) are organizations founded and formed by and for workers/laborers in or more companies, in various industrial sectors, both formal and informal. According to Law no. 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unions/Labor Unions (UU SP/SB), trade/labor unions have the function of protecting, defending and representing the rights and interests of their members and fighting for welfare of workers/laborers and their families. The position of trade/labor unions according to the SP/SB Law is recognized as a legitimate dialogue partner in discussing employment issues. This law confirms that trade/labor unions are independent, free from influence from any party, democratic, and responsible in carrying out their functions and duties. The author's analysis regarding the position of trade unions indicates that unions have a strategic and important position in the dynamics of industrial

relations in Indonesia. Trade unions are not just organizations that protect and represents the interests of its members, but is also an entity that has an important role in maintaining the balance of power between workers/laborers and employers. The importance of the position of trade/labor unions is further emphasized by research conducted by Handayani, which suggests that trade/labor unions function as a balancer in the relationship between workers and employers. This union plays an important role in creating harmonious and dynamic industrial relations, which ultimately contributes to the mutual prosperity of workers and employers. In carrying out their duties and functions, Worker/Labourer Unions have a strategic position and function, which are explicitly regulated in the SP/SB Law. The main function of Trade Unions is to protect, defend and represent the rights and interests of workers/laborers and their families. This is regulated in Article 28 of Law no. 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unions/Labor Unions, which states: Anyone is prohibited from obstructing or forcing workers/laborers to form or not form, become administrators or not become administrators, become members or not become members and/or carry out or not carry out activities trade unions/labor unions by: (a) terminate employment relations, lay off temporarily, demote positions, or carry out transfers; (b) not paying or reducing the wages of workers/laborers; (c) carry out intimidation in any form; (d) carry out a campaign against the formation of trade unions. These functions indicate that Trade Unions have an important and strategic role in representing and protecting the interests of workers/laborers. SP/SB is expected to act as an effective mediator between workers/laborers and employers, as well as being an advocate who defends the rights of workers/laborers. The function of education and improving the quality of life of members mandated by law is also important. This reflects long-term plans and strategies for empowering workers/laborers, which are not only focused on employment issues, but also on developing the capacity of individual workers/laborers as citizens who have rights and obligations. By having a legally valid forum, workers can jointly fight for their rights and interests.

This creates a more fair and proportional balance of work relations between workers/laborers and employers, and ensures the fulfillment of workers'/laborers' rights in practice. PT. Workers Union PLN (Persero), hereinafter referred to as the PLN Workers Union, occupies a significant legal position in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector. Formed in response to workers' needs for the protection of collective rights and interests, the PLN Workers Union proactively plays a role in various aspects related to industrial relations. Operating within a state-owned company environment, the PLN Workers Union has succeeded in providing a platform for workers to voice their rights and interests. In several cases, the PLN Workers Union has succeeded in negotiating benefits for workers, such as an annual salary increase of 8% in 2022, as well as improved health and insurance facilities. The position of the PLN Workers Union is also reflected in its role as mediator effective relationship between workers and company management. For example, in the 2021 labor conflict, the Union played an active role in facilitating dialogue between workers and managers, producing a solution that was beneficial for both parties without disrupting company operations. However, even though the PLN Workers Union has a position strong, they also face certain limitations. As an entity operating under the auspices of PT. PLN (Persero), the PLN Workers Union is subject to the company's internal rules and regulations. This creates a complex dynamic, where the Union must balance fighting for workers' rights and complying with company policies. Apart from that, as an employee of PT. PLN (Persero), members of the PLN Workers Union also have an obligation to maintain the stability and sustainability of the company's operations. In some cases, this could result in limited space for the PLN Workers Union to advocate for workers' rights more aggressively. In practice, the legal position of the PLN Workers Union is two-edged. On the one hand, the PLN Workers Union has access to high-level management, enabling them to carry out effective advocacy. However, on the other hand, their attachment to the company structure can also be an obstacle in advocating for workers' interests.

The role of the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) in Protecting Rights Workers in the Electricity Sector?

PT. Workers Union PLN (Persero) (hereinafter referred to as the "PLN Workers Union") has an important role in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector. This role can be seen through the lens of legal analysis, which refers to the law Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2000 concerning Labor Unions/Worker Unions (UU SP/SB) and Laws Republic of Indonesia Law Number 30 of 2009 concerning Electricity (Electricity Law). According to Article 3 of the SP/SB Law, trade/labor unions have the main function of protecting, defending, representing and improving the welfare of workers/laborers and their families. In the context of PT. PLN (Persero), the PLN Workers Union actively carries out this function by focusing on workers in the electricity sector, who play a vital role in providing energy for the Indonesian people. Workers in the electricity sector have a very crucial but risky job, so they require special protection. The PLN Workers Union takes proactive steps to protect workers' rights, such as the right to fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, and the right to participate in decision-making regarding their work. All of this is done to ensure that workers can carry out their duties well without compromising their fundamental rights as workers and as citizens. The Electricity Law also provides a legal framework that supports the role of the PLN Workers Union. For example, in article 5 of the Electricity Law, it is stated that the supply of electricity must be carried out with the principles of efficiency and protection for consumers and workers. This creates a legal basis that requires PT. PLN (Persero) to pay attention to and protect workers' rights in carrying

out daily operations. Furthermore, the PLN Workers Union also plays an important role in the negotiation process with company management to ensure that workers' rights are respected and protected. Collective negotiation is an important mechanism that allows workers to have a say in determining their working conditions, as well as to reach collective agreements that benefit both parties. In situations of conflict or employment dispute, the PLN Workers Union acts as a worker representative to speak and negotiate with management.

Through this role, unions can help prevent or resolve workplace conflicts, and protect workers from unfair or exploitative labor practices. However, the role of the PLN Workers Union is not limited only to formal aspects or just the law. Trade unions also have an important role in establishing and maintaining a work culture that respects workers' rights and dignity. With continuous advocacy and education for its members, the PLN Workers Union strives to create a more inclusive, democratic and fair work environment. PT. Workers Union PLN (Persero) has repeatedly succeeded in fighting for workers' rights, such as recognition of the right to carry out collective negotiations, establishing fair remuneration standards, and defending workers' rights in cases of termination of employment. This success reflects the strength of Trade Unions as legal entities recognized and protected by law, with the capacity to access and use legal mechanisms to protect workers' rights. However, the role of the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) is also in a dilemma in several aspects. Even though it plays a role as a defender of workers' rights, this union is also part of PT. PLN (Persero), which means they are also bound by company policies and must consider the company's interests in all their advocacy actions. This situation can create dilemmas for unions, especially in cases where workers' interests conflict with those of the company. Unions may have to navigate carefully between aggressive advocacy to protect workers' rights and maintaining constructive relationships with company management to maintain employment stability. The Role of the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) in protecting workers' rights is also limited by their resources and organizational capacity. Although Unions have strong legal mandates, they may not always have sufficient financial, human and technical resources to conduct effective legal advocacy. The capacity of trade unions to protect workers' rights is also influenced by the internal dynamics of the trade union organization itself, as well as their relationship with company management.

Obstacles to PT Worker Unions. PLN (Persero) in Protecting Workers in the Electricity Sector?

In carrying out its role, the PT Workers Union. PLN (Persero) – hereinafter referred to as the PLN Workers Union – is certainly not free from various obstacles. Based on the data the author obtained as well as the results of interviews conducted with several or a small number of labor union officials, the following are some of the main obstacles faced:

1. Information Access Limitations

The PLN Workers Union often faces limited access to important information related to internal company policies and employment issues. Even though they represent workers, sometimes this access is hampered by internal bureaucracy and company confidentiality protocols. This limited information prevents Trade Unions from making appropriate and responsive decisions to the problems faced by their members.

2. Limited Human Resources and Expertise

In handling legal issues and negotiations, the PLN Workers Union often experiences limited human resources who have expertise in the field of employment law. This affects the quality of advocacy and legal support that can be provided to members.

3. Reliance on Company Policy

As an entity under PT. PLN (Persero), the PLN Workers Union is inherently subject to company policies and regulations. This condition sometimes creates a conflict of interest, where the Labor Union needs to be careful in positioning itself between protecting the interests of its members and complying with company policies.

4. Internal Conflict

Like other organizations, the PLN Workers Union also faces the challenge of internal conflict, both between members and between members and administrators. This conflict can originate from differences in views, missions and advocacy strategies.

5. External Pressure

In some cases, the PLN Workers Union finds itself under external pressure, either from the company or other parties who have an interest in PLN employment policies. This pressure can affect the freedom and independence of Trade Unions in taking action. Despite facing various obstacles, the PLN Workers Union continues to be committed to protecting and defending the rights of its members. With a deep understanding of these challenges, Trade Unions can find solutions and strategies to overcome them.

Conclusion

PT. Workers Union PLN (Persero) has a fundamental and strategic legal position in protecting workers' rights in the electricity sector, as mandated by Law no. 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unions/Labour Unions. Its position as a mediator entity between workers and company management allows this Labor Union to actively participate in the negotiation, advocacy and decision-making process relating to workers' rights and welfare. However, this position also contains a dilemma, because as part of PT. PLN (Persero). Trade Unions must comply with internal company policies and regulations, which can sometimes limit their latitude in protecting workers' interests. In carrying out its duties and functions, the PT. PLN (Persero) faces various obstacles, including limited access to information, limited human resources and expertise, dependence on company policies, internal conflicts, and external pressures. These obstacles can affect the effectiveness of Trade Unions in carrying out their role as protectors of workers' rights. To overcome these obstacles, Trade Unions need to increase the organizational capacity, legal expertise and negotiation skills of their members, as well as build constructive relationships with company management and other relevant parties. Despite facing various obstacles, the role of the PT. PLN (Persero) in protecting workers' rights remains significant and vital. Through advocacy, negotiation and education, this Trade Union seeks to protect and fight for workers' rights, while helping to create a fair, safe and conducive work environment for workers in the electricity sector. However, to maximize their role, Trade Unions need to continue to adapt and evolve in the face of changing employment dynamics, as well as new challenges and opportunities that arise in the sector Indonesian electricity.

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