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The Role of the Village Head as a Mediator in Resolving Land Disputes in Koto Tengah District

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Abstract: Land disputes are complex problems requiring an effective resolution mechanism acceptable to the community in Koto Tengah. This research is an empirical legal study conducted in Koto Tengah village, Tilatang Kamang District. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the village head, traditional leaders (ninik mamak), and community members, supplemented by secondary legal materials and analyzed qualitatively. The findings show that the village head acts as a neutral mediator resolving land conflicts through deliberation and consensus, which the community prefers over litigation because it is cheaper, faster, and preserves kinship. The obstacles are the lack of clear evidence of land ownership, the economic interests of the disputing parties, the community's low understanding of land law, the village head's limited authority, limited village land administration, and kinship factors. However, mediation outcomes lack executorial force and rely on social and moral sanction, making them most effective in familial disputes. Therefore, village heads and officials should improve their mediation and land law skills through training, and mediation outcomes should be properly documented. Village communities are expected to increase their legal awareness of land ownership and administration, while local governments should support village governments through coaching, land law outreach, and more orderly land administration data.

Keywords: Village Head, Mediator, Dispute, Land.

INTRODUCTION

Land is a vital resource for human life due to its social, economic, and cultural functions. For Indonesians, land is viewed as an economic asset and a part of social identity and the community's survival. Land is a crucial asset for communities, especially in rural areas, as it is directly related to the fulfillment of life's needs, means of production, and cultural heritage (Suhaila, Hijrah & Idrus, 2025). Therefore, land ownership and utilization must be clearly regulated to create legal certainty and justice for the community. Regulations regarding land in Indonesia are generally regulated in Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning Basic Agrarian Principles, which aims to create legal certainty regarding land rights and prevent land conflicts in the community.

In practice, land disputes still frequently occur in various regions in Indonesia, including West Sumatra. These disputes can be caused by various factors, such as overlapping land ownership, boundary disputes, inheritance disputes, and differing interpretations of land rights. In West Sumatra, land disputes are predominantly driven by conflicts over customary (ulayat) land and inheritance within matrilineal kinship structures, where communal ownership claims frequently intersect with individually registered certificates (Rosdiyanti & Taufiq, 2023). Such disputes are further complicated because they involve the economic, social, and cultural interests of communities. Unresolved land ownership conflicts can lead to social instability and protracted legal proceedings (Dzakirah, 2024).

Although the courts provide a formal avenue for resolution, public access to litigation remains limited. For rural communities in West Sumatra, court proceedings are often geographically distant, costly, and procedurally complex, and they risk damaging the kinship ties that remain essential to nagari social life. As a result, land disputes are not always resolved through litigation. Mediation is often chosen as an alternative dispute resolution method because it is considered more effective, faster, and able to maintain social relations between the disputing parties. Mediation is a dispute resolution process that involves a third party acting as a mediator who helps the parties reach a mutual agreement. In land dispute resolution practice, mediation typically involves several stages, including filing a complaint, verifying the case, summoning the parties, conducting the mediation, and recording the agreement (Fallonne & Handayani, 2024).

Within the Indonesian village government structure, the village head plays a crucial role in resolving internal community conflicts. This role extends beyond bureaucratic functions to mediating conflicts within the region. This role is explicitly regulated in Law Number 3 of 2024, amending Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. The law mandates that village heads resolve disputes within the village, including land disputes between communities (Ichsan Aulia Ahsani et al., 2023). Empirical research indicates that village communities prefer non-litigation land dispute resolution through the village head, as it is considered faster, less expensive, and more effective in maintaining social relations between the disputing parties (Kristianto & Andraini, 2020). The village head acts as a neutral party, facilitating deliberations between disputing parties, mediating discussions, and helping find fair and socially binding solutions. Furthermore, the village head can function as a village peace judge, rendering decisions based on consensus when disputes arise within the community (Marwan Suliandi et al., 2022). Although the village head's decision is not a formal court decision, as a mutual agreement resulting from mediation, it is often viewed as having stronger social legitimacy at the community level. Empirical research shows that village communities tend to prefer non-litigation land dispute resolution through the village head because it is considered faster, cheaper, and able to maintain social relations between the disputing parties (Kristianto & Andraini, 2020). The village head acts as a neutral party, facilitating deliberations between disputing parties, mediating discussions, and helping find fair and socially binding solutions. Furthermore, the village head can function as a village peace judge, rendering decisions based on consensus when disputes arise in the community (Marwan Suliandi et al., 2022). Although the village head's decision is not a formal court decision, but rather a mutual agreement resulting from mediation, it is often viewed as having stronger social legitimacy at the community level. In practice, the village head acts as a facilitator of communication between the parties, rather than a formal judge issuing decisions based solely on positive law (Yuyun et al., 2025).

In West Sumatra, village governments were replaced with nagari led by village heads (wali nagari), choosing to retain the concept of nagari as the lowest level of government, replacing the term "village" to maintain harmony between formal government and customary structures. This provision follows up on Law Number 3 of 2024, which provides regions with

the flexibility to adapt the form of village or nagari government to suit local wisdom. The nagari government also plays a crucial role in facilitating the resolution of community conflicts. The wali nagari, as the head of the nagari government, is responsible for maintaining public order and assisting in resolving conflicts within their jurisdiction. In practice, the nagari government often acts as a cultural mediator, bridging communication between disputing parties and facilitating deliberation to reach mutual agreements (Amalia & Putri, 2025).

Nagari Koto Tengah is a nagari (village) in Tilatang Kamang District, where the majority of the population is farmers. This ownership system makes the Koto Tengah community highly dependent on land as an economic, social, and cultural asset. Land is not only a source of livelihood but also a symbol of status and identity of families or clans within the nagari (Rosdiyanti & Taufiq, 2023). The community's dependence on land creates the potential for land conflicts, especially when there are inheritance disputes, overlapping land boundaries, or changes in land status for development projects (Fallonne & Handayani, 2024).

Nevertheless, previous studies on land dispute resolution have largely focused on formal legal mechanisms or on the normative authority of village heads, and relatively few have empirically examined how wali nagari actually perform their mediating role in practice. In the specific context of West Sumatra, empirical studies on the effectiveness of village heads as mediators of land disputes in nagari remain scarce, which leaves a gap in understanding how customary institutions, formal authority, and community expectations interact in real dispute cases. Land disputes are complex issues and require effective and acceptable resolution mechanisms for the community. In the context of the nagari community, the Wali Nagari holds a strategic position as a mediator who can facilitate dispute resolution through deliberation and involve traditional institutions and community leaders. The purpose of this study is to determine the role and constraints of the Wali Nagari as a mediator in resolving land disputes in the Koto Tengah Nagari.

METHOD

This type of research is empirical legal research. Wignjosoebroto terms this research non-doctrinal legal research (Soetandoyo, 2024), while Marzuki calls it socio-legal research (Peter, 2014). This is called so because this research only places law as a social phenomenon, in this case the law is viewed from its external perspective (Salim, 2014). Empirical legal research itself is simply defined as research that examines and analyzes the behavior of individuals or communities in relation to the law and the data sources used are derived from primary data, obtained directly from within the community (Uber, 2012). As it examines how law operates in social practice, this research is qualitative in nature, interpreting data to understand the social context behind dispute resolution practices rather than reducing it to statistical measurement.

The location of this research is Koto Tengah village, Tilatang Kamang District. It was selected purposively as an agricultural area dependent on land, retaining strong Minangkabau customary structures, including the *ninik mamak* and the Nagari Customary Council (KAN), and offering accessible mediation practices for observation.

The existence of data is absolutely necessary in a research (Sudikno, 2006). The type of data used is primary data, namely data obtained through interviews with the village head and the Koto Tengah community. Key informants were the Wali Nagari as primary mediator, the *ninik mamak* and traditional leaders, and community members involved in or familiar with land disputes, all selected purposively. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observation of deliberations where accessible.

Secondary data consists of primary legal materials derived from regulations related to article. Data analysis is conducted qualitatively. Analysis proceeded through data reduction, presentation organized around dispute forms, aspects of the mediating role, obstacles, and

conclusion drawing against the legal and customary framework. Source triangulation was used to strengthen validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Village Head as a Mediator in Resolving Land Disputes in Koto Tangah District

As an agricultural area, land disputes that occur among the Koto Tangah community are (Amrizal Gunawan Datuak Maruhun Basa, 2025):

1. Boundary disputes between families or between plots of land
One form of land dispute that frequently arises in Nagari Koto Tangah is disputes over boundaries between family plots or adjacent plots. This typically occurs when boundaries are not clearly delineated or when subsequent generations lack a shared understanding of the boundaries. Unclear boundaries often trigger disagreements, especially when the land is intended for development or for planting high-value crops.
2. Inheritance land disputes
Another common form of dispute is land inheritance disputes. In the Minangkabau traditional community, which still strongly upholds customary law, the distribution of inherited land is sometimes disputed when family members feel the distribution is unfair or the portion is not as expected. Inheritance land disputes often involve many parties within an extended family and can trigger emotional tension due to strong kinship ties.
3. Disputes over customary or communal land in the village
Customary land is customary land that is the collective right of the village community. Disputes over customary land often arise when there are differences of opinion regarding the use or utilization of the land, especially when parties seek to claim individual rights to land previously viewed as communal property. Such controversies can arise when there is pressure for development, investment, or new demands to clear productive land.
4. Disputes due to incomplete documents or overlapping rights
Many land disputes in the nagari (village) are also caused by incomplete ownership documents or overlapping rights. For example, a single plot of land may have an unclear certificate, or two parties may claim ownership based on different evidence, such as an old land surveying certificate, a girik (land title deed), or a customary land parcel. When written evidence is inconsistent, legal and administrative disputes can arise all the way to the land office.
5. Disputes due to changes in land use
Land use changes are also a source of land conflicts. When land previously used for agriculture or grazing is converted for housing, public facilities, or even commercial investment, disagreements often arise between landowners, customary leaders, and those seeking to utilize the new land. Disharmony in the decision-making process often leads to disputes.
6. Disputes resulting from differences in perception of customs and formal law
The final form that frequently arises is conflict related to differing perceptions between customary law and formal state law. Communities in Nagari Koto Tangah often adhere to customary law, while the land bureaucracy utilizes the state legal system. When these two systems collide, for example, in disputes over land mortgages.

The village head serves as the primary mediator in the land dispute resolution process at the village level. The legal basis for the village head's role in resolving land disputes in Koto Tangah village is stipulated in Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning Villages and West Sumatra Provincial Regulation Number 7 of 2018 concerning Villages. These regulations empower the village head to facilitate deliberations, mediate conflicts, and ensure that dispute resolution is

fair, participatory, and in accordance with customary law. With this foundation, the village head can maintain social order, protect residents' rights, and uphold local wisdom in dealing with land disputes, so that conflicts can be resolved without causing prolonged tension.

Land dispute resolution in Koto Tengah village adheres to Minangkabau customary law, whereby all conflicts are resolved through deliberation and consensus involving the disputing parties, the village head, and traditional leaders. This approach emphasizes justice, social harmony, and kinship, ensuring that decisions taken not only resolve land ownership issues but also maintain kinship and solidarity among residents. All processes are conducted with respect for customary rights and customary values, ensuring that land disputes can be resolved peacefully and accepted by all parties, while simultaneously strengthening local Minangkabau wisdom.

This role operates through a consensus mechanism involving the disputing parties, the families or clans involved, and community leaders or *ninik mamak*. The role of the Wali Nagari as a mediator encompasses the following aspects: (Amrizal Gunawan Datuak Maruhun Basa, 2025):

1. Facilitator of deliberation and mediator of conflict/disputes

As the head of the village government, the village head facilitates a deliberation process between parties in conflict over rights. *Musyawarah mufakat* (consensus-based deliberation) is a highly respected dispute resolution tradition within the Minangkabau social structure, as it aims to reach a fair agreement through open dialogue, rather than confrontation or the formation of one-sided opinions. In this context, the village head invites the disputing parties and traditional leaders to a discussion, explaining each party's rights and obligations, and guiding the dialogue so that it adheres to the principles of kinship and mutual respect. The village head facilitates a meeting between the disputing parties to engage in joint dialogue with the goal of reaching a peaceful agreement. This mediation process prioritizes principles rooted in Minangkabau customary law, which emphasizes dispute resolution through deliberation and consensus.

2. Bridging between customary rules and formal law

Land conflicts in villages often have a strong customary law aspect because customary law is an important part of the Minangkabau cultural heritage. The village head plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between national legal norms and local wisdom, ensuring that dispute resolution is not merely administrative but also in accordance with local social and customary values. This role requires strong communication skills and a deep understanding of customary law, ensuring that decisions are easily accepted by the community and support social order. In resolving land disputes in Koto Tengah, the village head acts not only as a mediator but also as a liaison between the customary legal norms prevailing within the community and the national legal system. Because the Minangkabau community views land as part of their customs with high cultural value, fair land dispute resolution requires the application of customary legal values, carried out jointly by traditional leaders such as the *ninik mamak*. In practice, village heads often work with village elders (*ninik mamak*) and traditional institutions such as the Nagari Customary Council (KAN) to formulate deliberations that align with customary values and are accepted by all parties. This demonstrates cultural integration in land dispute mediation.

3. Conflict mediator and mediator

When land disputes escalate into disputes that trigger tensions between residents or between clans, the village head acts as a neutral mediator. During the mediation process, he not only listens to both parties' arguments but also provides considerations and proposes realistic solutions that accommodate customary interests and community welfare. With an approach oriented toward restoring social relations and peaceful resolution, the village head helps mitigate potential conflicts that could escalate into the more complex realm of formal

legal proceedings. The success of mediation is measured not only by the resolution of the dispute but also by the acceptance of the agreed outcome by all disputing parties. Through the mediation process, the village head strives to create conditions for peace that are mutually understood and agreed upon, so that the mediation outcome has stronger social power than a court-imposed litigation decision. This is consistent with studies of informal mediation in villages, which show that communities have greater trust and ownership in local mediation outcomes because they involve family values and collective deliberation.

4. Maintaining social and cultural stability

The role of the village head as a facilitator and mediator in land disputes not only impacts legal resolution but also maintains harmony within the village community. Resolution through deliberation and mediation strengthens mutual trust and solidarity among residents, while also maintaining local wisdom in navigating social dynamics. Thus, the village head contributes to maintaining social stability and the sustainability of customary values that underpin community life in Koto Tengah.

Why the Community Prefers the Village Head Over the Courts

The findings indicate that the community's preference for the village head over formal litigation is not merely habitual but is driven by rational considerations. First, the cost of litigation is disproportionately high relative to the economic value of most disputed plots, which are typically small agricultural or inheritance parcels. Second, court proceedings are perceived as slow and procedurally complex, whereas village mediation can be concluded within a relatively short time through a single deliberation. Third, and perhaps most importantly, litigation is viewed as a threat to kinship and social cohesion: because disputing parties in Nagari Koto Tengah are frequently relatives or members of the same clan, a win-lose court outcome would permanently damage relationships that must be sustained within the nagari. Mediation, by contrast, produces a win-win outcome that preserves social harmony. This is consistent with Kristianto and Andraini (2020), who found that rural communities favor non-litigation resolution through village heads for these same reasons. The preference, therefore, reflects a rational weighing of economic, temporal, and social costs rather than a lack of legal awareness.

The Effectiveness and Legal Standing of Village Mediation

The effectiveness of mediation by the wali nagari can be assessed from two dimensions: resolution rate and compliance with outcomes. In Nagari Koto Tengah, mediation is generally effective in cases involving boundary disputes and inheritance among close relatives, where the parties share an interest in preserving kinship. However, its effectiveness declines in cases involving overlapping certificates or claims against the state or corporations, where the dispute exceeds the village head's authority and requires formal legal determination. Thus, village mediation is effective for disputes of a private, familial nature but limited for disputes of a public or administrative nature.

A critical issue concerns the legal standing of the mediation outcome. The peace agreement produced through village mediation is not a court judgment and does not, in itself, have executorial force. Its legal basis derives instead from the parties' voluntary consent, and it is legally analogous to an agreement under Article 1851 et seq. of the Civil Code (KUHPerdara), which binds the parties insofar as they genuinely intend to be bound. However, its weakness lies in enforcement: if one party reneges, the other party cannot directly request execution and must instead bring the matter before the court or the land office. In practice, the binding force of village mediation outcomes rests more on social and moral sanction than on legal coercion, which explains why compliance tends to be high in closely knit communities but weaker where the parties are not bound by kinship or where economic stakes are high.

This limitation does not render mediation ineffective; rather, it clarifies its proper position within the dispute resolution framework. Village mediation functions best as a first-tier mechanism that filters disputes before they reach formal institutions. Where the agreement is breached, the aggrieved party retains the right to pursue litigation, and the mediation record may serve as evidence of the parties' original positions. Consequently, the role of the wali nagari should be understood not as a substitute for the courts but as a complementary, community-based mechanism that reduces the burden on formal institutions while preserving social harmony.

Stages of Land Dispute Resolution

In the research, the stages carried out in resolving land disputes are:

1. Receiving Complaints: The village head received a report from the community about a land dispute.
2. Initial investigation: a preliminary meeting with the disputing parties to understand the root of the problem, evidence, and context of the land that is the source of the dispute.
3. Open deliberation at the village level: The parties were summoned for a customary deliberation facilitated by the village head together with the ninik mamak (traditional leader).
4. Formulation of agreement: The results of the deliberation were formulated as a peace agreement which was set out in an agreement document signed by the parties and witnessed by community leaders.

Therefore, the role of the village head in Koto Tengah as a mediator in resolving land disputes is strategic and crucial. The village head not only serves as a facilitator and mediator in deliberations but also as an intermediary, ensuring that each party has the opportunity to express their opinions fairly. By combining Minangkabau customary law with the principle of deliberation and consensus, the village head of Koto Tengah is able to resolve land conflicts peacefully, maintain social and kinship relations among residents, and maintain harmony and stability within the village. This approach makes land dispute resolution not only legal but also strengthens community solidarity and the preservation of local wisdom.

Obstacles in implementing the role of the village head as a mediator in resolving land disputes in Koto Tengah District

The implementation of the village head's role as a mediator in resolving land disputes in the Koto Tengah area has been successful and demonstrates the effectiveness of local leadership. The village head plays an active role in facilitating dialogue between the disputing parties, prioritizing deliberation and consensus as the primary principles of conflict resolution. In the mediation process, the village head not only acts as a neutral mediator but also involves community elements such as the ninik mamak (head of the village), traditional leaders, and village officials to provide relevant customary and social considerations. Dispute resolution focuses not only on formal legal aspects but also considers kinship relationships and social harmony within the village community. Through mediation conducted wisely and transparently, conflicts that have the potential to cause division can be resolved peacefully without resorting to litigation. This demonstrates the crucial role of the village head in maintaining social stability and strengthening community trust in village government institutions.

In resolving land disputes at the village level, the village head plays the role of mediator, helping bring the disputing parties together through deliberation and consensus. Mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution that aims to reach a mutual agreement without going through the courts. According to Takdir Rahmadi, mediation is a dispute resolution process

with the assistance of a neutral third party to help the parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement (Rahmadi, 2017). However, in its implementation, the Koto Tengah village head often faces various obstacles that can affect the effectiveness of land dispute resolution in the community. These obstacles include the following (Amrizal Gunawan Datuak Maruhun Basa, 2025):

1. Lack of clear evidence of land ownership

One of the main obstacles in resolving land disputes is the lack of clear proof of land ownership from the disputing parties. Many communities still rely on traditional proof of ownership, such as natural boundaries, community testimony, or hereditary land ownership records. This situation makes the mediation process more difficult because there are no official documents that can serve as a strong legal basis. According to Boedi Harsono, legal certainty regarding land rights depends heavily on a land registration system that provides valid proof of ownership recognized by the state (Harsono, 2008). If proof of ownership is unclear, the dispute resolution process will rely more heavily on testimony and interpretation of the history of land ownership.

2. Economic interests of the disputing parties

Land is an asset with high economic value, making it a frequent source of conflict in communities. In many cases, disputing parties have strong economic interests in the land in question. This causes each party to strive to defend their ownership claims, making it difficult to reach an agreement. According to Rachmadi Usman, disputes related to economic interests are often more difficult to resolve through mediation because the parties tend to defend their own interests (Usman, 2013). This situation presents a challenge for village heads in carrying out their role as mediators, who must remain neutral and objective.

3. Low public understanding of land law

Another obstacle faced in resolving land disputes is the low level of public understanding of land law and the importance of land ownership administration. Many people do not understand land registration procedures or the importance of land certificates as proof of legal ownership. As a result, land ownership claims often arise that lack a strong legal basis. According to Maria S.W. Sumardjono, low public legal awareness of land administration is a major factor in land disputes in Indonesia (Sumardjono, 2001). Therefore, Village Heads (Wali Nagari) often have to educate the community about the importance of orderly land administration.

4. Limited authority of village heads in resolving disputes

The village head's limited authority in resolving land disputes. In the mediation process, the village head only acts as a mediator or facilitator, helping bring the disputing parties together. The decision resulting from the mediation process is usually a voluntary mutual agreement. According to Sudikno Mertokusumo, the mediator does not have the authority to impose a decision on the parties, so the success of mediation depends heavily on the parties' willingness to reach an agreement (Mertokusumo, 2006). If one party does not accept the mediation outcome, the dispute can proceed to court.

5. Limited data and land administration in the village

Another frequently encountered obstacle is the limited availability of land administration data at the village level. In some cases, resolving land disputes requires documents such as area maps, land ownership records, or accurate administrative archives. However, not all villages have a comprehensive and well-organized land administration system. According to Urip Santoso, orderly land administration is crucial for creating legal certainty and preventing land disputes (Santoso, 2012). Without clear data, the dispute resolution process will be more difficult and take longer.

6. Kinship factors in society

Land disputes in villages often involve family members or clans who are related by kinship. This situation makes the mediation process more sensitive because decisions made can affect social relations within the community. Village heads must be very careful not to be perceived as taking sides. According to Satjipto Rahardjo, in traditional societies, social and kinship ties have a very strong influence on the conflict resolution process (Rahardjo, 2006). Therefore, mediators must have good communication skills and a social approach to prevent conflicts from escalating into larger ones.

CONCLUSION

The village head plays a crucial role in helping resolve land conflicts within the community. He acts as a neutral third party who facilitates the deliberation process between the disputing parties with the goal of reaching a mutual agreement. In this process, the village head typically involves community members such as the *ninik mamak* (head of the village), traditional leaders, and village officials to ensure that dispute resolution takes into account legal aspects, customs, and prevailing social values. This deliberation approach is considered effective because it maintains family relationships and social harmony within the village. The findings further show that the community's preference for the village head over the courts rests on rational considerations such as lower cost, faster resolution, and the preservation of kinship ties, rather than on a lack of legal awareness. Village mediation is most effective in private, familial disputes such as boundary and inheritance conflicts, but its effectiveness declines in disputes involving overlapping certificates or claims against the state, which exceed the village head's authority.

This study also clarifies the legal standing of village mediation outcomes. The peace agreement produced through mediation is not a court judgment and has no executorial force; its binding power derives from the parties' voluntary consent and, in practice, rests more on social and moral sanction than on legal coercion. Village mediation therefore functions best as a first-tier, community-based mechanism that complements formal legal institutions. This finding addresses the gap in previous research, which has largely examined the normative authority of village heads without empirically assessing how mediation operates and how binding its outcomes are in *nagari* practice.

Obstacles include the lack of clear evidence of land ownership, the economic interests of the disputing parties, the community's low understanding of land law, the village head's limited authority in dispute resolution, limited data and land administration within the village, and kinship factors within the community. These obstacles are interrelated: weak land administration reinforces evidentiary uncertainty, which in turn heightens the parties' reliance on economic and kinship-based claims and further strains the village head's limited authority.

Therefore, it is recommended that the village head and village officials improve their skills in mediation and conflict resolution through training or coaching on mediation techniques and an understanding of land law. Such training should specifically address the documentation of mediation outcomes, so that agreements are recorded in a form that can later support the parties' positions should the dispute proceed to court. With this increased capacity, Village Heads (*Wali Nagari*) can carry out their roles more professionally, objectively, and effectively in resolving land disputes within the community. It is hoped that the village community will increase legal awareness, particularly regarding land ownership and administration, such as the importance of having land certificates and maintaining clear administrative records. Furthermore, the community is also expected to prioritize dispute resolution through deliberation and consensus at the village level before taking the matter to formal legal channels. For local governments, local governments are expected to provide support to village governments in the form of guidance, land law socialization, and the provision of more orderly

and accurate land administration data. With this support, the land dispute resolution process at the village level can run more effectively and have a stronger foundation.

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