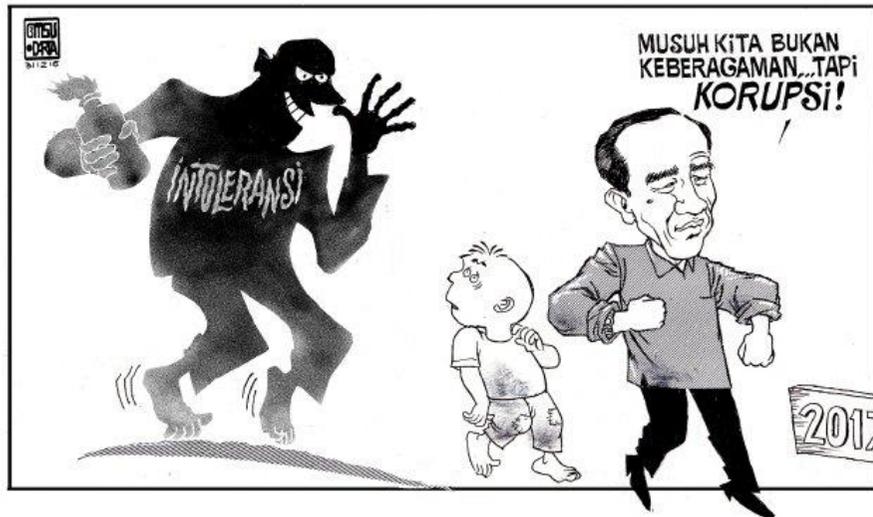


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Says Joko Widodo on his way to 2017: “Our enemy is not the issue of religion, but the issue of corruption!” But Oom Pasikom’s little son looks around and sees the ghost of intolerance. (Kompas, 31-12-2016)

Impunity

Waiting for a solution; The end-of-year report on Human Rights

Kompas, 27-12-2017

To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity. (Nelson Mandela)

This quote by Nelson Mandela was taken from his speech before the House and Senate of the United States of America in 1990. It is still relevant. The fulfilment of human rights constitutes a basic requirement for any country, including Indonesia. To achieve it means to have a long struggle with many victims. For Mandela it meant that he himself was thrown into prison.

In Indonesia, the situation is more friendly for human rights defenders. They don’t have to be afraid of being muzzled. However, that does not mean that their voices are heard or acted upon. Hundreds of times now the Thursday-demonstrations have taken place. Meetings and public debate on human rights issues are being considered. As it turns out, the cases of human rights violations are not being investigated or solved. On the contrary, new cases come to the surface every year.

This is clear from the people’s complaints to the National Human Rights Commission, Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (Komnas HAM) that lately hve been rising. Based on figures form the Komnas HAM there were 5919 complaints in 2013. This figure was 7.258 in 2014 and 8.249 in 2015. For 2016 until November the number stands on 6.786.

From these thousands of reports that the Komnas HAM received the most complaints were related to cases of alleged torture by the law enforcement institutions when the person involved was being interrogated. Other complaints were related to social-economic rights the right to a fair trial and the right to security. The parties that were complained about were in line with the issues at hand.



The text reads: Bring to justice the generals who have violated human rights.

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"Most complaints are about the police, followed by corporations, the regional administration and the central government. The number is on the rise. We now see 500 complaints per month," said Imdadun Rahmat, the chairperson of the Komnas HAM. They are a signal that the ability of the government to solve these violations is far from successful. The Komnas HAM is considered to have insufficient power to handle these cases. That having said, Imdadun claims that the Komnas HAM is working at its optimum. However, Komnas HAM has its focus more and more on the support of victims and relatives of serious human rights violations in the past.

According to research by the Human Rights Risk Atlas 2015 that was presented by Maplecroft, Indonesia is a country that has a high risk of occurrence of human rights violations. Indicators that are important in this respect is the freedom of religion, the freedom of expression and the freedom of association. Another issue is the civilians' security.

This result is in line with the HAM Indeks 2016 that was published by the Setara Institute some time ago. The freedom of expression and association and the freedom of religion experienced a deterioration compared to 2015.

This surely is the homework for the Joko Widodo administration. Far this is what he is boasting about: to foster the plurality. He even brings it up in international forums. The facts from the ground prove otherwise, that the government does not succeed in improving the protection of these freedoms," said Fanani Rosyidi, researcher at the Setara Institute

According to Fanani, the government should have an attitude and a plan to realise an improvement in human rights. This should go together with the general development of the country. Thus cases like Paniai, Tolikara, Tanjung Balai and others would not be repeated. [...]

The deputy chairperson of the DPR commission III, Trimedya Panjaitan is convinced that considering that the government of Jokowi-Kalla is now entering his third year they should start [sic] to give priority to the solution of the old human rights violations.

(RIANA A IBRAHIM)

Freedom of Religion

The blasphemy trial

The Jakarta Globe, 28-12-2016

The team of lawyers defending Jakarta Governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama in his blasphemy trial plans to file an appeal against the presiding judges who they claim had ignored an earlier Constitutional Court ruling which should have exonerated Ahok.

Trimoelja D. Soerjadi, the head of Ahok's defense team, said in a written statement on Wednesday (28/12) that the judges' decision to reject Ahok's objection to his charges contains many irregularities.

One of them is that the judges did not consider an earlier Constitutional Court ruling that says the defendant in a criminal case should not be charged with article 156a of the Criminal Law without first receiving a stern warning. According to the lawyers, the judges had ignored this ruling without any argumentation. "The decision [to continue the blasphemy trial] has been a disappointment. The Constitutional Court ruling was not even mentioned," Trimoelja said.

Trimoelja also pointed out that the case against Ahok is being processed at an unusually fast pace. "I have been a lawyer for 50 years, and I have never seen a case being processed this fast. [...] The public should know that there is massive pressure on the police and the judges. The court and the state should not bow to public pressure," he said.

Another member of the defense team, Humphrey R. Djemat, said, "Ahok is the victim here. And he's now facing a trial by media, a violation of human rights in itself." Nevertheless, Humphrey believes the judges will come to their verdict independently. "The court is a place to seek justice. The witness examination will be a real battle. We will go all out to free Ahok," he said.

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NU warns of the spread of hatred, radicalism on social media

The Jakarta Post, 31-12-2016

Indonesia's largest Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has urged the public to be cautious with news from social media because some information circulating on the internet is purportedly spread by irresponsible parties to deteriorate the country's unity.

NU chairman Said Aqil Siroj highlighted the growing use of social media to spread hatred and slurs by referencing ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group (SARA) issues.

"The issues of the Jakarta gubernatorial election and the Middle East conflict, for example, have been exploited to fuel hatred against certain groups. It will endanger the country's plurality," he said on Friday during the organization's year-end reflection.

He added that the public needed to be vigilant of extremist groups that take advantage of social media's extensive coverage to spread their radical teachings.

The government, he added, should take firm action against social media content promoting extremism and step up efforts to create a counter narrative against radicalism.

"We think the government has failed to build a counter narrative that would prevent radicalism from growing in the digital sphere. Values of tolerance have been met with the intensive spread of radical content that is easily accessible and shared on social media on a daily basis," he said.

Recently, the Singapore and the Turkey authorities deported two and three Indonesian men, respectively, for allegedly attempting to join Islamic State (IS) militants in war torn Syria.

Freedom of Expression

Author of 'Jokowi Undercover' Detained for Alleged Slander

The Jakarta Globe, 01-01-2017

Bambang Tri Mulyono, the author of an exposé on President Joko Widodo entitled "Jokowi Undercover" was detained by the police on Friday (30/12) for alleged slander against the president.

Jokowi Undercover tells the "negative sides" of Jokowi, which the police say are nothing but slander since many of the facts mentioned in the book were unverified.

"Most of the unflattering stories about the president in the book were based on the author's own opinion," police spokesman Brig. Gen. Rikwanto said on Saturday.

The police said the book included a bogus "photometric analysis" of the president and an unsubstantiated claim that he had won the 2014 presidential election on the back of an "unfair and untruthful media strategy."

"The book tries to tell people to distrust mainstream media," Rikwanto added.

Bambang is currently being kept at the Jakarta Police detention center.

Indonesia's Internet Law Should Not Be Used to Condemn Free Speech: Observer

The Jakarta Globe, 01-01-2017

Afifuddin, a political observer from the State Islamic University in Jakarta said the government should not rush to condemn social media users as it moves to contain the spread of "fake news" on the internet.

The government should differentiate between critical members of the public and those who are intent only on spreading hate, slander and provocation, according to Afifuddin.

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"The ITE [Electronic Information and Transaction] Law [Indonesia's internet law] is multi-interpretative, to say the least. You can almost use it to charge anybody, for anything," Afifuddin said in Jakarta on Saturday (31/12).

The government, he said, should carefully categorize hate speech, slander and provocation on social media. They should also define clearly what constitutes a plot against the government.

"We have to avoid targeting people who have genuine criticism for the government," Afifuddin said.

Afifuddin said the government should also try to improve media literacy before it condemns people who use social media without much knowledge of how it works.

"The people need to be educated about media literacy. It's partly the government's fault if the public doesn't know what's on and what's not on in social media, what breaks the law and what doesn't," Afifuddin said.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo had condemned social media for inciting hatred and conflicts and wants ethical guidelines to be set up for internet speech.

At a cabinet meeting in Jakarta on Thursday (29/12), the president stressed again that despite its obvious advantages, the internet has made it harder for the government to control the flow of information.

Terrorism and counter-terrorism

'Candlelight Operation' to Keep New Year's Eve Celebrations Terror-Free

The Jakarta Globe, 28-12-2017

The National Police have set up "Operasi Lilin" (Candlelight Operation) to keep New Year's Eve celebrations all over the country safe and free from terror attacks. Operasi Lilin 2016 will run until Jan. 2.

"People should go about their business as usual. We'll keep everything safe for them," National Police's general information unit head Chief Comr. Martinus Sitompul said in Jakarta on Wednesday (28/12).

Police will send in more officers to prayer houses, tourist spots, shopping malls and main roads in the capital as a precaution.

Last year's celebrations in Bandung, West Java, were interrupted when a Molotov bomb filled with nails exploded underneath a television crew's car parked near the city's town square. The low-explosive bomb did not claim any casualty.

Terrorism on the Rise in Indonesia as Islamic State Comes Under Pressure in Syria: Police

The Jakarta Globe, 29-12-2017

Indonesia has seen more incidents of terrorism this year compared to last year as the embattled Islamic State has called for attacks outside its Middle Eastern stronghold to be stepped up, police said.

The number of terrorism-related incidents increased to 170 from 82, which included attacks as well as arrests of terror suspects. Police said the number of suspected terrorists killed during the year also increased to 33 from seven.

The rise in terrorism cases in Indonesia came as the Islamic State has been driven out of parts of Iraq and Syria it previously occupied, National Police chief Gen. Tito Karnavian said.

"ISIS have been suppressed in Syria throughout this year and they could barely move. Thus, they have called on their networks outside the country to move," Tito told reporters in Jakarta on Wednesday (28/12).

The first Islamic State-linked attack in Indonesia occurred in downtown Jakarta in January, when four people were killed in an explosion and a subsequent shootout with police.

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Operation Tinombala leads to suppression of 32 terrorists: Police

The Jakarta Post, 01-01-2017

The police said on Saturday that its mission to wipe out a terrorist group in Poso, Central Sulawesi, had been successful over the past year. The police also said the operation would be extended to capture the group's remaining members.

The commander of Operation Tinombala, Brig. Gen. Rudy Sufahriadi, said the joint police-military operation had resulted in the death of Santoso, the leader of the East Indonesia Mujahidin (MIT) and the country's most wanted terrorist for years. The operation has also led to the neutralization of 32 members of the MIT, he added.

Rudy said 10 of the members had been captured alive while another 20 had been killed during firefights with officers. Another two were found dead.

"Although we've successfully neutralized Santoso, the operation will be resumed in 2017," said Rudy, who is also Central Sulawesi Police chief. "MIT is now led by Ali Kalora," said Rudy.

The operation, which was initiated in 2015, had been extended several times because of the failure to capture Santoso. After he was shot dead in July, there were plans to terminate the mission.

But the police said the operation was still necessary to capture all remaining MIT members.

At least 19 operation personnel have passed away because of illness or firefights with members of the MIT.

Man Nabbed for Reportedly Planning Church Attack in Palu

The Jakarta Globe, 02-01-2017

An alleged terrorist, identified as Irwanto, or Abu Muhammad, was nabbed for reportedly planning an attack on a church in Palu in Central Sulawesi on New Year's Eve, police said

on Monday (02/01). 30-year-old Irwanto was arrested during a raid by antiterror unit Densus 88 on Jalan Bali in North Lolu, a village in East Palu, on Saturday at 1.20 p.m.

Police claimed the arrest was made just a couple of hours before the suspect was supposed to carry out attacks on a church and a house belonging to Shi'ite Muslims in Palu.

During the raid on Irwanto's rented home, police confiscated a knife, five books on jihad, a manual on bombmaking and a modified phone that was allegedly going to be used to trigger a bomb.

Central Sulawesi Police spokesman Supt. Haru Suprpto said Irwanto had detonated two small handmade bombs in an experiment before the planned attacks.

"The suspect had intended to round up young extremists to join his new terror cell after realizing [slain fugitive] Santoso's group has been cornered in Mt. Biru in Poso," Hari said.

Operation Tinombala, a terrorist-hunting operation which involved both police and military officers, has been officially extended until April 3 to search for nine remaining fugitives. The operation had been scheduled to end on Monday.

The remaining fugitives are Firdaus, or Daus, a.k.a. Barak Rangga; Kholid; Asgar a.k.a. Jaid; Qatar a.k.a. Farel; Abu Alim; Nae a.k.a. Galuh; and Basir a.k.a. Romzi – all from Bima, West Nusa Tenggara. The other two are Ali Ahmad a.k.a. Ali Kalora and Mohammad Faisal, or Namnung, a.k.a. Kobar.

The men are members of the East Islamic Mujahidin group now on the run in the hilly jungles of Poso.

Most remaining MIT members are from Bima: Taskforce

The Jakarta Post, 02-01-2017

Seven out of nine East Indonesia Mujahidin (MIT) terror group members, who are included on Operation Tinombala Taskforce's most wanted list (DPO), are from Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, while the remaining two members are from Poso, Central Sulawesi, a top security official has said.

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Central Sulawesi Police chief Brig. Gen. Rudy Sufahriadi thinks the seven MIT members from Bima are refusing to surrender to Operation Tinombala Taskforce personnel.

“They don’t have families in Poso so there would be no reason for them to surrender. This is not the case for the two DPO members, however. It’s very likely that they will surrender,” said Rudy, who is also the Operation Tinombala Taskforce commander, on Monday.

Rudy further said it was also believed that nine former supporters of the MIT top leader, Santoso alias Abu Wardah, who was shot dead in July 2016, had never traveled in a group. “Ali Kalora in Poso is the one with the highest probability to move separately from the other members. He’d always rather walk alone than together with his group,” said Rudy.

To prevent MIT sympathizers from entering Poso and Bima, the police have tightened security at entrance points in areas across the regency.

Operation Tinombala, which was scheduled to conclude on Jan. 3, will be extended by three months starting on Jan. 4 with support of 1,800 police and military personnel.

Trafficking

76 Chinese nationals arrested for immigration violations

The Jakarta Post, 01-01-2017

The Immigration Office at the Law and Human Rights Ministry has arrested 76 female Chinese citizens, some of whom are believed to work as sex workers in entertainment centers throughout Jakarta, for immigration violations in a raid that took place during New Year’s Eve.



“It’s a record for us. Many have been arrested and all are women. They were arrested for violating permits,” The ministry’s immigration supervisory and persecution director Yurod Saleh said on Sunday. Yurod said some of the women, aged between 18 and 30 years, were netted while working as singing guides at karaoke parlors. “They are [actually] victims of human trafficking committed by irresponsible parties,” he added. Yurod said his officers confiscated Chinese passports, bills, Rp 15 million (US\$1,153) in cash and contraceptives from the women.

He said the women would face punishments ranging from fines and deportation to prison terms.