

Weekly Update Human Rights in Indonesia – 16-11-2015

Impunity

The International Peoples Tribunal 10-13 November 2015

The human rights violations of 1965/66 in Indonesia were discussed in a quasi-legal way during the four day International Peoples Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands. So many things happened during those four days of testimonies, submission of evidence and analysis from experts. The New Church in The Hague was the venue of so many victims, experts, lawyers, human rights activists, and others from 10 November till 13 November 2015. <http://1965tribunal.org/about-us/hearings/> . We present an incomplete compilation below.



IMPRESSIONS:

It was a meeting, by some valued as a seminar, by others as an inquest or a first step for ultimate resolution and reconciliation, that brought new information to all present, but at the same time a meeting where emotions were given space; emotions of people

commemorating their loved ones who had never been found ; emotions of others who still wanted to find the remains of those died as a result of violations 50 years ago. At most moments extensive in-depth and critical lawyers' debate was carried out, at other moments we lighted candles, people presented poems, music and other expressions of solidarity.

WHO ATTENDED?

The participants of the tribunal – around 200 people – were from many different backgrounds. As was announced earlier, Indonesian students, working in The Netherlands had received rumors that their scholarship would possibly be at stake if they were in any way involved (is this a well-known terminology) in the International Peoples Tribunal. There were rumors that dozens of Indonesian students had to reconsider their presence at the Tribunal. Still, many young Indonesians attended the meetings if only to see how a court procedure can take place.

At the beginning of each new session the Registrar – at the request of the Presiding Judge, Mr Yakoob – asked whether a representative of the Indonesian government – who had been invited – were present and wished to address the meeting. In all eight occasions the response was in the negative.

The meeting itself was open to public, on the condition that they register beforehand. For safety reasons all participants were checked with regard to their identity at the entrance.

THE INDICTMENT

Nine different types of human rights violations have been dealt with in the indictment:

1. Murder
2. Enslavement
3. Imprisonment
4. Torture
5. Sexual violence
6. Persecution
7. Enforced disappearances
8. Persecution through propaganda
9. Complicity of other states in the commission of crimes against humanity.

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All “counts” except for the last one claimed that the state of Indonesia is internationally responsible for the acts involved which were identified in the verdict as crimes against humanity. In the last count of the indictment other states were kept responsible; about this claim the verdict has postponed a judgment.

The complete indictment is available at the IPT website:
<http://1965tribunal.org/indictment-1965-tribunal/>

THE WITNESSES

On each of the nine counts of human rights violations the prosecution had invited witnesses, in some cases survivor witnesses, in others expert witnesses. A few preferred to give their statement “behind the screen” and used an alias. This was a procedure to give more protection, allowed for by the Council of Judges. Although already decades living outside Indonesia as exiles, they gave as their reason to remain unidentifiable, that they feared repercussions for the relatives in Indonesia.

The additional testimonies by the Komnas HAM and the Komnas Perempuan representatives were included at the last moment, as they provided important data for the Council of Judges at the International Peoples Tribunal.



Dr. Dianto Bachriadi of Komnas HAM

<http://1965tribunal.org/two-members-of-government-speak-at-ipt1965-hearings/>

THE VERDICT

Below is the main part of the literal tekst of the verdict.

“All the material [presented to the Council of Judges] demonstrates beyond any doubt that the serious violation of human rights brought to the judges’ attention did occur. The judges consider that allegations by the prosecution of cruel and unspeakable murders and mass murders of over tens of thousands of people, of unjustifiable imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of people without trial and for unduly long periods in crowded conditions, and the subjection of many of the people in prison to inhumane and ruthless torture and to forced labour that might well have amounted to enslavement, are well founded.

It has also been demonstrated that sexual violence, particularly against women, was systematic and routine, especially during the period 1965-1967, that many political opponents were persecuted and exiled, and that many thousands of people who, according to propagandist and hate discourse, were thought not to support the Suharto dictatorship with sufficient fervour, disappeared.

All of this was justified and encouraged by propaganda aimed at establishing the false proposition that those opposed to the military regime were by definition grossly immoral and unspeakably depraved. It has been established that the State of Indonesia during the relevant period through its military and police arms committed and encouraged the commission of these grave human rights violations on a systematic and widespread basis.

The judges are also convinced that all this was done for political purposes: to annihilate the PKI and those alleged to be its members or sympathizers, as well as a much broader number of people including Sukarno loyalists, trade unionists and teachers. The design was also to prop up a dictatorial violent regime which the people of Indonesia have rightly consigned to history.

It cannot be doubted that these acts, evaluated separately and cumulatively, constitute crimes against humanity, both in International Law and judged by the values and the legal framework of the new reformist era accepted by the people of Indonesia seventeen years ago.

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This Tribunal has heard the detailed and moving evidence of victims and families as well as the evidence of established experts. It saw this evidence as no more than the mere tip of the iceberg, a few tangible, graphic and painful examples of the devastation of the human beings who appeared before them, as well as the wholesale destruction of the human fabric of a considerable sector of Indonesian society.

The prosecution made the case that other states have aided Suharto's ruthless regime to achieve these results in the pursuit of the establishment of a particular international order in the context of the Cold War. We will consider this in our final judgment."

See for the complete statement: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/aboeprijadi-santoso/concluding-statement-of-the-judges-of-the-international-peoples-tribunal-on-the-/10153684369484400>

Indonesian state responsible for 1965 killings, IPT concludes

The Jakarta Post, 14-11-2015

The panel of judges at the International People's Tribunal (IPT) at The Hague has concluded that the Indonesian government was responsible for the massacres and oppression that followed the events of Sept. 30, 1965. Tempo.co reported that the judges recorded that a number of generals were killed during the initial incident, which was followed by the killing of tens of thousands of Indonesian people.

"There is an organized command line from the top to the bottom from an unconstitutional institution," said Presiding Judge Zak Yacoob, when reading the conclusion of the tribunal on Friday. He said that from all testimonies from the witnesses starting from the first day's hearing on Tuesday to the last day on Friday, it could be undoubtedly concluded "that the serious human rights abuses that they [witnesses] told the judges really happened."

According to the judges, the human rights abuses included the killing of tens of thousands of people, illegal imprisonment without trial for very long periods, inhuman treatment of prisoners, torture, slavery and sexual abuse of women. They said that all the incidents had the political objective of removing the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and its sympathizers from the Indonesian political scene. Yacoob noted that all evidence that had been conveyed to the judges had proved the existence of extraordinary crimes against humanity.

The tribunal was a civil initiative managed by human rights activists and aimed to bring justice and closure for people whose lives were affected by the 1965 to 1966 mass killings. The tribunal is not legally binding but is an attempt to give recommendations for the government to acknowledge the past crimes against humanity as well as to formulate solutions for the victims and their families.

Complicity of other states

As quoted above, the council of judges will in its final statement elaborate on the issue of complicity of other states. We refer here to the interview with the expert witness, Brad Simpson, taken from www.1965tribunal.org.

I sit here with Bradley Simpson, who has just given a testimonial at the Tribunal about the involvement of some foreign countries, particularly the US, in the bloody events in Indonesia in 1965, and some years after that. Simpson is author of Economists with guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968.

Bradley Simpson, you have given a testimony about the complicity of the US government during the bloodbath in Indonesia in the 1960s. What are the important points that you conveyed during your presentation?

The point that I was trying to make was that the US and other western governments had been attempting for more than a year to provoke an armed conflict between the army and the PKI in the hopes that the army would crush the Indonesian Communist Party.

After G 30 S the US government initiated a program of covert operations to support the Indonesian army and encourage it to destroy the PKI. It provided weapons, financial support and political support to the army so that Gen. Soeharto and his allies knew that they had the full support of the US government even if that support was provided covertly because it was politically risky for the US to publicly support the Indonesian army and the generals opposing Sukarno at the time. I also testified that the US was well aware of the killings as they began, and was aware of how many people were being killed as the killings got under way. And that the US did nothing to protest or oppose those killings and in fact provided whatever assistance it could to the Indonesian government or the Indonesian military in order to assist it in destroying the PKI, knowing full well that the assistance it provided was being used by the army to murder unarmed civilians.

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How long did this operation take place?

From what we know of the declassified records, the United States began covertly assisting the Indonesian army in late October 1965 as the ... who happened to be supporters or alleged supporters of the PKI or one of its affiliated organizations.

So it's American money, American weapons and American tacit approval?

Yes. I should emphasize that the material support that the US gave to Indonesia was quite small at the time because it was very risky for the US to openly support the Indonesian army against Sukarno because Sukarno was still the president, the US was not very popular in Indonesia at the time, and so the CIA and the US government generally had to be extremely careful in providing support to ensure that this support did not become public knowledge. Had it become known that the US was supporting the army, this would have discredited the army at the moment that it was seeking to portray itself as the legitimate rulers of the country. And army leaders did not want the US to do anything to endanger their prospects of coming to power. And so this was a very delicate situation where the US wanted to give the army the support that it could, without giving it so much support that people would find out, thereby endangering the army in achieving its broader goals of destroying the pki, overthrowing Sukarno and taking power themselves.

I'm sure America was not alone in this. Are there any other countries involved?

Very few countries, actually no country did anything to oppose the killings in any meaningful way. The British government conducted covert propaganda operations in support of the army's campaign, as did the Australian government. The Japanese government provided financial assistance to the Indonesian army as well as a number of other western governments which provided intelligence support, even the Soviet government.

Government brushes off Hague tribunal on 1965

The Jakarta Post, 10-11-2015

The government has refused to acknowledge the International People's Tribunal 1965, being held in The Hague, the Netherlands, saying that Indonesia works on its own justice system.

Attorney General HM Prasetyo refused to accept the mass killings of 1965 and 1966 being brought before a tribunal overseas. "We solve our own issues. There is no need for other parties to be involved in this," he told kompas.com. He said the government was making continued efforts to resolve past human rights violations, however, there had faced difficulties in finding evidence and witnesses to testify.

Questioning sessions and early investigations conducted by the National Commission of Human Rights (Komnas HAM) could not yet be brought to the full investigation stage he said. "The government is trying to resolve the violations through reconciliation, but there are so many things to discuss and prepare," Prasetyo said.

State Secretary Pratikno said the government was working to prepare a systematic solution for the human rights violations. "President [Joko Widodo] directed us to [work] based on our own justice system," he said.

The international tribunal, initiated by human rights activists, is being held from Nov. 10 to 13, marking the 50th anniversary of the massacre of up to 1 million considered members or supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Luhut Binsar Panjaitan also questioned the people's tribunal, claiming it was unjust. "Who do they want to try? How can they make a decision about our [case]?" he said.

Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, the general coordinator of the International People's Tribunal 1965 earlier announced that there would be seven judges, six international prosecutors and 16 witnesses taking part in the tribunal. She urged the government to apologize as the first step toward recognizing the crimes committed by a past government, and also take into account the recommendations resulting from the tribunal.

See also the heated debate among the many people noting their comments:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/11/10/government-brushes-hague-tribunal-1965-massacre.html>

As Lawyer Todung Leads Prosecution, Kalla Says Netherlands Not the Place for '1965' Tribunal

The Jakarta Globe, 10-11-2015

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It is not appropriate for an activists' tribunal on the 1965-66 anti-communist violence in Indonesia to be organized in the Netherlands, Vice President Jusuf Kalla said on Tuesday, after other senior government officials had already dismissed the proceedings as irrelevant.

Asked how he felt about the International People's Tribunal 1965, Kalla admitted that he didn't know in detail what was going on in The Hague, but he stressed that Indonesia itself had also in the past been affected by human rights abuses committed by the Dutch.

The Netherlands ruled Indonesia for centuries and fought a bloody war to retain the colony after it declared independence in 1945, but the Dutch government has in recent years tried to make amends, for instance by apologizing for war crimes committed by its troops and paying damages to relatives of victims.

But Kalla said that when it comes to human rights abuses, the Dutch are not in a position to speak about Indonesia, proven by the fact that the government of the former colonial power even paid for acts of cruelty committed here. "So, don't judge Indonesia," the vice president said at his office.

Separately, Hikmahanto Juwana, an international law professor from the University of Indonesia (UI) who is not afraid of controversy, said the Netherlands should be careful not to damage its good relationship with Indonesia. "Even though the results of this trial mean nothing in legal terms and the [Indonesian] government can ignore them, they will spark controversy among the Indonesian public," Hikmahanto said. "This will have an impact on the ties between Indonesia and the Netherlands, which are currently good."

"The Dutch government shouldn't use double standards," the professor added. "When we're talking about atrocities committed by the Indonesian government it is willing to allow an event [like IPT 1965] to take place, but it's not ready [to do the same thing] when the [Dutch] state and its soldiers commit acts of cruelty."

However, other than the location of the event and the nationality of one among the panel of seven judges, Dutch involvement seems to be limited.

The government of Prime Minister Mark Rutte would likely have little to gain from such involvement, especially as it has in recent years tried hard to strengthen its relationship with Indonesia, including by boosting business ties.

The tribunal is being held from Wednesday till Friday in a former church in The Hague that is currently in use as a concert hall and is not an initiative by the Dutch government. In fact, no state has recognized the tribunal and its findings cannot be enforced anywhere.

The proceedings do follow those of a formal court -- with prosecutors and judges -- but it is a civil society initiative that, according to the IPT 1965's website, "operates outside the mechanisms of government and formal institutions like the United Nations."

The prominent Indonesia lawyer and activist Todung Mulya Lubis acts as the chief prosecutor. Other Indonesian activists and lawyers involved in the prosecution are Agustinus Agung Wijaya, Sri Suparyati, Antarini Arna, Uli Parulian Sihombing and Bahrain Makmun.

A statement on the tribunal's website says it is an initiative of the International People's Tribunal 1965 Foundation, "which was set up in 2013 by a group of victims in exile and in Indonesia, as well as by human rights activists, intellectuals, artists, journalists and academics, and many other groups."

Valentina Sagala, a commissioner at the Indonesian NGO Women's Institute and a member of the group behind the tribunal, stressed that it was not an attempt to indict anyone on criminal charges.

She said the tribunal's outcome, expected to be presented next year at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, would not be legally binding, but would instead serve as a "moral verdict" so that the Indonesian government could formulate its own policies on addressing the massacres of half a century ago.

Indonesia's attorney general, H.M. Prasetyo also bristled at the fact that the tribunal was taking place outside the country. "These are our own problems and we will solve them ourselves," Prasetyo was quoted as saying by Kompas on Tuesday. "There's no need for involvement from other parties."

Prasetyo has however repeatedly refused to launch an inquiry into findings of gross violations of human rights -- as detailed by the government's own National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) -- after a failed coup attempt that was pinned on the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

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Key military leaders were killed in the alleged coup attempt, sparking a wave of violence against suspected communists across the country, which was supported by Western powers like the United States and heralded the start of Suharto's New Order regime.

Until today, however, it remains difficult to discuss the events of 1965-66 in Indonesia from the perspective of the victims and their relatives, or to question the official version of what happened.

At least 500,000, but possibly and more than a million people were killed, and many others were tortured, raped or sent to prison camps. The purges have always been presented as necessary to prevent a communist takeover.

Indonesian authorities recently threatened to close down a writers' festival in Bali if the organizers allowed discussions on 1965 and its aftermath.

The website Rappler (<http://www.rappler.com/indonesia/112911-aliansi-anti-komunis-indonesia-tim-ipt-1965>) quoted a message from the Aliansi Anti Komunis Indonesia (AAKI) with an appeal to journalists to come and “welcome” back the human rights activists and lawyers on their arrival in Jakarta on Sunday night.

Johannes Nugroho¹: Knee-Jerk Reactions to IPT 1965 Will Not Help Indonesia One Bit

The Jakarta Globe, 13-11-2015

Seeking to redress the injustice of the 1965-66 Indonesian Communist Purge which saw the deaths of an estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 individuals, the International People's Tribunal 1965 is held in The Hague this week.

The non-binding court has evidently touched a raw nerve within the Indonesian establishment -- so much so that it drew fire from political grandees such as Vice President Jusuf Kalla and Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs Luhut Panjaitan. They lampooned the event and yet their arguments are clearly based on logical fallacies.

¹ Johannes Nugroho is a writer from Surabaya. He can be contacted at johannes@nonacris.com and on Twitter

While dismissing it as “irrelevant,” the vice president displayed great ignorance when answering questions from journalists on the subject. In a major breach of logical coherence, he argued it was inappropriate for the Netherlands as Indonesia's former colonial master to host the event. To begin with, the tribunal was never the initiative of the Dutch government, a fact that effectively invalidates his charge. The tribunal was a collective effort by both international and Indonesian civil society activists to stage a “mock” trial in lieu of a real one long overdue in Indonesia.

More disturbingly, Kalla's take on the issue found resonance with at least one academic, Hikmahanto Juwana, an international law professor from the University of Indonesia (UI), who said: “The Dutch government shouldn't use double standards. When we're talking about atrocities committed by the Indonesian government it is willing to allow an event [like IPT 1965] to take place, but it's not ready [to do the same thing] when it was the [Dutch] state and its soldiers who committed the acts of cruelty.”

The surreal part of both men's reasoning is the assumption that the Dutch state has both the legal and moral directive to prevent a civil society event from taking place. In a liberal democracy like the Netherlands, the state is legally and traditionally bound to respect the right of its citizenry to hold lawful gatherings, even if to dissent from official government policies. So expecting the Dutch government to break up the tribunal is nothing short of ludicrous.

Essentially, in blaming the Dutch government, both men clearly failed to differentiate between the Dutch state and its civil society, both of which are part of the democratic system but by necessity remain separate.

In yet another moment of great irony for a government that professes to be against communism and all its derivatives, Jakarta's stance on the 1965-66 purge of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) is one that Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin would have approved of.

The Indonesian government doggedly insists on a sanitized version of events which demonizes the victims of the bloodbath, tolerating no independence of thought and conscience, nor freedom of expression on the matter, by Indonesians and foreigners alike.

Indonesian nationals courageous enough to take part in the tribunal are inevitably stigmatized as traitors. Luhut in a recent interview with a BBC reporter said, “ Those

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Indonesians [involved in] the tribunal probably have very little else to do. We Indonesians know how to solve Indonesian problems [ourselves]. They may be Indonesians whose way of thinking is no longer Indonesian.”

A driving force behind the proceedings, noted human rights lawyer and sociologist Nursyahbani Katjasungkana even admitted being counseled by friends and colleagues to take suitable precaution for her own safety. Acclaimed historian Asvi Warman Adam in his statement as an expert witness at the tribunal even had to stress that far from wanting to denigrate Indonesia, he only wanted to rectify the nation’s historical record.

People within the Indonesian government, like Kalla and Luhut, forget or perhaps choose to ignore the fact that the Dutch government has never actively tried to suppress information about its own past human rights abuses in Indonesia. As recent as Oct. 16, the Dutch newspaper De Volkskrant published newly discovered photos detailing atrocities committed by Dutch military forces in 1946 during Indonesia’s War of Independence.

By allowing such damaging material to come forth, the Dutch government, unlike its Indonesian counterpart, shows that it is not allergic to criticisms of its past mistakes. Thankfully, the majority of Dutch people today don’t believe that the editorial staff and writers at De Volkskrant are traitors for washing the nation’s dirty laundry in full public view. Unlike Luhut, neither do their politicians condemn them for it, nor try to nanny-state them into thinking along certain lines.

So irrational is Indonesia’s paranoia with communism that local authorities in Yogyakarta recently confiscated 27 toys imported from China bearing Soviet flags and hammer-and-sickle insignia. It’s doubtful that most Indonesian children would have known what the symbols meant, had it not been for the diligence of the officers behind the exposure. Yet such ironies are often lost in the illogical stampede based on inculcated fear.

It remains unclear what the Indonesian government tries to achieve through its anti-colonial nationalist posturing, internal scaremongering and profound denial of historical facts concerning the 1965-66 genocide of communists, their sympathizers and those unfortunate enough to be caught in the witch hunt. If it expects international accolades, then the efforts are already a failure. If it only wants to delay the tragedy’s resolution, it might just succeed, yet at a great cost to Indonesia’s own standing in the civilized world.

1965 massacre tribunal website blocked

The Jakarta Post, 12-11-2015

A website presenting updates on the International People's Tribunal on Indonesia's 1965 mass killing could not be accessed on Thursday afternoon. The website was set up by human rights activists to inform the public about the activities of the tribunal in The Hague, the Netherlands, from Nov. 10 to 13. Thursday marked the third day of the tribunal, which is discussing the exiling of people, forced disappearances and hate propaganda. When thejakartapost.com attempted to open the website, 1965tribunal.org, the homepage had been replaced with an ERROR 403-Forbidden notice.

The website was established to give live streams from the tribunal, which features prosecutors and witnesses who openly discuss what happened during the communist purge. People can still watch the tribunal on its YouTube channel. Communications and Information Minister Rudiantara said that the ministry did not block the website. “I have checked it,” he told thejakartapost.com.

The tribunal is a civil initiative managed by human rights activists and aims to bring justice and closure for people whose lives were affected by the 1965 to 1966 mass killings. The massacre is believed to have been orchestrated by the government and claimed up to 1 million lives.

The President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo administration has chosen to ignore the tribunal, saying that Indonesia has its own judicial system and has given no details on how past human rights abuses will be addressed. The tribunal is not legally binding but is an attempt to give recommendations for the government to acknowledge the past crimes against humanity as well as to formulate solutions for the victims and their families.

See also: <http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/1965-peoples-tribunal-website-inaccessible-indonesia/>

British journalists deported

The Jakarta Post, 11-11-2015

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British journalists Neil Bonner and Becky Prosser finally returned home to England early Wednesday morning after serving 72 days in prison before and after being found guilty of violating the Immigration Law.

They were sentenced last week to two months and 15 days in prison and a Rp 25 million fine each for making a documentary on piracy in the Malacca Strait while on tourist visas, instead of journalist visas. (...)

Meanwhile, Bonner regretted the guilty verdict the pair received, which could set a bad precedent for journalists. He also recalled President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo promising open access for foreign journalists in Indonesia, especially in Papua. The real situation in the field is not yet in line with the President's promise as there are difficult processes that foreign journalists must follow.

Prosser and Bonner paid their own ticket home and even the costs of the security officers from Batam Immigration Office that escorted them from Batam to Jakarta.

They were both freed from Batam Penitentiary on Thursday afternoon but the Immigration office only allowed them to return back home on Tuesday. The Immigration office also put the two filmmakers' names on the immigration blacklist, banning them from returning to Indonesia, possibly forever.

Rafli, an official at the Batam Immigration Office said Prosser and Bonner bore all their own and related costs as the state did not provide a budget for it. "If they could not afford the cost, we would ask their country's representative office to pay it for them. But they could afford it themselves," he said. Rafli said the officials escorted them to Jakarta as part of the deportation process. Even though Singapore is closer to Batam than Jakarta, the officials needed to make sure that the two journalists left Indonesia.

Social-economic Rights

Rights Activists Want Basuki to Mollycoddle Illegal Slum Dwellers

The Jakarta Globe, 13-11-2015

Rights activists have criticized Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama for his hard-line stance in the eviction of slum residents, saying he should be more amenable to dialogue and less heavy-handed in his treatment of illegal settlers.

"There are always human rights violations in every eviction," Siane Indriani, a member of the National Commission for Human Rights, or Komnas HAM, said on Thursday as quoted by CNN Indonesia. She added, "No one can force another person to move away regardless of the status of his or her home." (Actually they can.) "There must be a dialogue [between the parties involved]," she said, adding that the governor "needs to approach the slum residents [prior to the evictions] and treat them like humans." She cited the land law, which she said stated that people who do not have title deeds for their homes can simply register their land with the local land agency, and that in the event of an eviction they must be paid compensation.

Siane said that in the case of slum dwellers, whom the Jakarta administration is moving into city-funded apartments in order to restore riverbanks, the governor should be asking the affected residents what kind of housing they wanted as compensation.

She claimed moving them away from slums and into apartments – provided by the city for free – deprived the residents of their livelihoods. "For instance, one person worked making and selling tofu from his home [in a slum area]. After the eviction, he moved to a low-cost apartment where he couldn't possibly produce tofu," Siane said. "Keep in mind that this should not be about getting rid of the poor, but about getting rid of poverty," she added.

Yunita, a representative from the Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation, or LBH Jakarta, agreed that the city administration had failed to fully account for the losses suffered by residents evicted from illegal settlements, or to inform those affected why they were being moved. "The government does not involve the [evicted] people at all," she told CNN Indonesia.

The Jakarta administration says it hopes to create a slum-free city by 2018, as a part of its wider spatial planning program. Clearing up the riverbanks, where most of the city's slums and illegal settlements are located, is also seen as essential in addressing the chronic floods that the city is subjected to each rainy season. The slums have over the decades constricted the flow of the rivers so severely that they regularly burst their banks during even moderate rains.