

## Impunity

### **Gerindra Signals it Would Support Ex-General in Jakarta Election Over Sandiaga**

The Jakarta Globe, 22-05-2016

The Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra) announced on Sunday (22/05) it would select a retired army general linked to one of the worst civilian massacres in East Timor, as its choice for candidate in next year's Jakarta gubernatorial election.

Abdul Ghoni, deputy chairman of the Jakarta chapter of Gerindra, told Detik.com that the party will likely select Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin relegating the other, and more popular candidate, businessman Sandiaga Uno to its second choice. The announcement will be made by the party's central leadership board at the end of the month.

Ghoni said the retired Army general "had performed well" as chief of the Jayakarta military command in Jakarta during the widespread riot surrounding President Suharto's resignation in 1998. Sjafrie "was very close to the Jakarta people at the time. He was idolized by many housewives at the time. It is fitting that Jakarta is led by a military man," Ghoni told the portal.

Then commander of the Army's special forces' intelligence task force, Sjafrie was accused by the international community of orchestrating the Santa Cruz massacre on November 12, 1991 which claimed the lives of more than 250 East Timorese pro-independence protesters. Sjafrie was also among those accused of establishing a pro-Jakarta militia which caused widespread violence in East Timor during the 1999 referendum.

In September 2009, the United States refused to issue a visa for Sjafrie, then deputy defense minister, to accompany then president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to attend the G20 leaders summit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Ghoni said Sandiaga "is ready to become [Sjafrie's] running mate," claiming that several parties have already expressed interests in supporting the pair. However, Gerindra central leadership chairman Ahmad Riza Patria said that Sjafrie is more likely to be paired by a

candidate from another party. Gerindra has 15 seats at the Jakarta City Council, 12 seats short from being able to nominate its own pair.

Ahmad said Gerindra could form a two party coalition with the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) with 28 seats, or form an alliance with at least two more parties. The third biggest party in the House is the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) with 11 seats, which means even if it forms a coalition with Gerindra the bloc would still be one seat short.

Sandiaga, who is also vying for tickets from other parties including the PDI-P, resisted commenting on the claims he would likely be named second pick by his own party. "I have heard about it. However, the final decision is in the hands of [Gerindra chairman] Prabowo [Subianto]. I will continue to work until the final decision is made," he said as quoted by Tempo.co. "Whatever the party's decision will be, I will support it."

### **Defence minister backs move by retired TNI officers to hold anti-PKI symposium**

Kompas.com - May 13, 2016

Jakarta -- Retired Indonesian military (TNI) officers are planning to organise an anti-PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) symposium on July 2. The anti-PKI symposium is aimed at countering the government sponsored symposium on the 1965 tragedy in April.

The retired TNI officers claim that the April symposium did not accommodate all parties so they have decided to organise an alternative symposium.

"If you want to set things straight, it must be jointly, entirely objective, entirely open", said State Defense Movement (Gerakan Bela Negara) central leadership board chairperson retired Major General Budi Sujana at the Kartini Building in South Jakarta on Friday May 3.

"We're asking for assistance, if you want to organise (a reconciliation symposium) let's do it together, a comprehensive committee, balanced speakers", he added. Likewise with the victims, said Sujana, not just the victims after 1965 but also to delve into the causes going back to the preceding years back to 1948. Sujana hopes various groups and parties can attend the anti-PKI symposium in order to prove that the Indonesian nation is capable of defending the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and the state ideology of

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Pancasila from being undermined by the rise of the PKI. The retired officers plan to ask Coordinating Minister for Politics, Legal and Security Affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, as a government representative, to facilitate the symposium. "If he doesn't (support it), well it means that the ones supporting them are PKI", said Sujana.

It is planned that the anti-PKI symposium will be chaired by former army deputy chief-of-staff retired Lieutenant General Kiki Syahnakri. Syahnakri has said that they are concerned that the earlier 1965 symposium was one-sided. Syahnakri claims to have asked that the earlier symposium be postponed but it was not done. According to Syahnakri, if the symposium's ultimate aim was reconciliation then this was not achieved. "Reconciliation is impossible if it's only one-sided. Meaning the goal of the symposium was not achieved and instead it gave rise to an extraordinary reaction such as this", said Syahnakri. "Not to mention that afterwards [they] want to [start] exhuming [mass] graves", he added.

He said however that the organisation of the anti-PKI symposium is still facing financial constraints. Nevertheless, Syahnakri claims that Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu already knows about the symposium and agrees with the plan. "Yes, [he] supports it. [He's] also supporting it financially", he said.

Notes by translator James Balowski:

1. Former Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Kiki Syahnakri was appointed commander of the TNI in East Timor in September 1999 after pro-Jakarta militiamen went on a violent rampage in the wake of the independence vote. Along with former armed forces chief General Wiranto and six other senior generals, in February 2003 he was indicted for crimes against humanity by the joint UN-East Timor Special Crimes Unit.

2. Ryamizard Ryacudu is a former army general known for his hardline stance on separatism and xenophobic remarks and criticism of rights activists. In 2001 he praised the killing of prominent Papuan independence leader Theys Eluay, saying the Kopassus soldiers who murdered him were "heroes". He is a close ally of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) chairperson Megawati Sukarnoputri and as army chief of staff during her presidency oversaw military operations in Aceh and Papua resulting in countless civilian casualties.

[Translated by James Balowski for the Indoleft News Service. The original title of the report was "Didukung Ryamizard, Purnawirawan TNI Akan Bentuk Simposium Lawan PKI".]

Source:

<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/05/13/15530051/Didukung.Ryamizard.Purnawirawan.TNI.Akan.Bentuk.Simposium.Lawan.PKI>

### Open letter by Human Rights Watch to minister Luhut

See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/22/hrw-letter-general-luhut-binsar-pandjaitan>, 23-05-2016

We write to you at this time regarding the Indonesian government's expressed commitment to begin identifying, confirming, and exhuming alleged mass grave sites of victims of the 1965-66 massacres. Identification of possible victims and determination of how they died are important components of a process toward accountability for those crimes.

Mass grave sites are crime scenes that require the deployment of forensic experts with the requisite skill and precision to ensure that exhumation is done as part of a careful and systematic process that preserves crucial evidence and allows for identification of bodies. Exhumations without forensic experts can destroy critical evidence and greatly complicate the identification of bodies. In places like Kosovo and Iraq, spontaneous and disorganized exhumations greatly complicated victim identifications and destroyed evidence.

We therefore urge you to ensure that any exhumations are conducted with the assistance of international experts with experience in mass grave recovery operations. The Indonesian government should invite impartial international forensic experts, including those with experience working before criminal tribunals, to help preserve and analyze evidence in any newly accessible mass graves. We believe that the Indonesian government should seek the assistance of foreign governments and the United Nations to support such investigations. International donors should help finance the preservation and analysis of evidence that could be vital to future domestic accountability processes to address serious crimes.

One such organization with extensive experience and an unimpeachable record of credible and impartial investigations is the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team ([www.eaaf.org](http://www.eaaf.org)). The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense, EAAF) is a nongovernmental, not-for-profit, scientific organization that applies forensic sciences—mainly forensic anthropology and archaeology—to the investigation of human

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rights violations in Argentina and worldwide. EAAF was established in 1984 to investigate the cases of at least 9,000 “disappeared” people in Argentina under the military government that ruled from 1976-1983. Today, the team works in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Human Rights Watch would be happy to provide whatever assistance possible to help the Indonesian government undertake forensic exhumation of alleged mass grave sites that apply the best international practices.

### Freedom of Expression

#### **Bandung gripped with communist fears**

The Jakarta Post, 21-05-2016

In absence of the State’s assurance for freedom of expression, the nation has continuously witnessed repressive acts against academic freedom within university campuses across the country.

While it was the police who halted a number of such academic events in Yogyakarta, lately, similar repression was observed in West Java. The only difference in the latter was that the hard-line group, the Islam Defenders Front ( FPI ), played the role of oppressor.

Just on Thursday, the social and political sciences department of Padjajaran University ( Unpad ) in Sumedang, near West Java’s capital of Bandung, decided to cancel its seminar, entitled “Marxisme sebagai Ilmu Pengetahuan” ( Marxism as science ) following intimidation by the FPI.

Activist Firman Ekoputra from the Rumah Kiri organization, Unpad political scholar M. Rolip Saptamaji and Unpad political science lecturer Carolina Paskarina were initially scheduled to speak at the seminar.

It was the second repressive act in only a week by the FPI against freedom of academic expression in the province. On May 10, the hardliners dispersed Sekolah Marx ( School of Marx ), an event discussing Marxism conducted by the Daunjati student press group of the Indonesian Art and Culture Institute ( ISBI ).

The FPI demanded Daunjati end the event, but the press group continued with proceedings until last Wednesday, albeit with compromises.

Student Council spokesperson of Unpad’s social and political sciences department Muhammad Ariq Andarmesa said the FPI had come to the university, demanding that the university cancel the seminar. “The academic affairs division of my department then asked the students to cancel the event, citing security reasons,” Ariq told The Jakarta Post in an interview on Thursday.

He also received various anonymous phone calls, including one claimed to be from police intelligence, telling Ariq to beware as tension with communists was simmering. “This proves the campus, once heralded as an autonomous institution free from outside pressures, is powerless in dealing with threats to its academic freedom,” Ariq said.

The department head, Widya Setiabudi, said recommending the student council delay the seminar was aimed to “deal with the simmering tension”. “We wanted to cool down the situation. In the end, we just postponed the event,” Widya said, adding that Marxism was a common subject of campus discussion, given that it was part of the social and political studies course.

However, Research, Technology and Higher Education Minister Muhammad Nasir told the Post on Thursday that Marxism was banned in all campuses in the country. “It cannot be taught as a university subject. Every campus has to abide by the law,” Nasir said, adding that Marxism was not in line with core values that embody the “belief in God” principle, outlined in the Constitution.

The ministry’s director-general for academic and student affairs, Intan Achmad, said he was unaware that Marxism had become a subject at the university. Meanwhile, National Police spokesman Brig. Gen. Boy Rafli Amar said it was the police’s job to handle communist-related events, not the FPI’s. “The FPI should not act as vigilantes toward any event related to communism,” Boy told the Post on Thursday.

Separately, Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy ( ELSAM ) researcher Andi Mutaqqien said Article 219 of the Criminal Code, which stipulates that advocating communism is a crime, was open to interpretation. “Not every seminar on communism intends to advocate the ideology,” Andi said.

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## Guarantee the journalists' safety

Kompas, 21-05-2016

Eight cases of violence that resulted in deaths of Indonesian journalists are still waiting to be solved. That should be an indicator for the government's commitment to guarantee the journalists' safety. These cases should also be solved, said the Chairman of the Press Council Yosep Adi Prasetyo, in order not to have questions tabled when Indonesia will host the World Press Freedom (WPF) 2017.

The eight cases he meant are the journalist of Bernas, Muhammad Fuad Syafrudin who died on 16 August 1996, Naimullah, journalist of Sinar Pagi, Kalimantan Barat, who died on 25 July 1997, Agus Mulyawan, journalist of Asia Press, who died on 25 September 1999 in East Timor and Muhammad Jamaludin, journalist of TVRI Aceh, who died on 17 Juni 2003. The other four cases were Ersa Siregar, journalist of RCTI, who died 29 December 2003, Herliyanto, journalist of Delta Pos, found dead on 29 April 2006, Ardiansyah M Wibisono journalist of a local TV station in Merauke, who died on 29 July 2010), and Alfred Mirulewan journalist of Pelangi, found dead on 18 December 2010).

Of these cases no perpetrator has been identified for lack of evidence. The Press Council works with the police in an effort to solve these cases. The WPF 2017 will take place in Jakarta in May 2017 di Jakarta.

## Scholars, government differ on Marxism

The Jakarta Post, 23-05-2016

Amid intimidation from the Islam Defenders Front ( FPI ) against scholarly discussions on Marxism, the country's intellectuals and the government are still arguing about whether the leftist ideology is an acceptable subject for discussion.

If the country's scholars and the government are unable to settle their differences, the FPI's hostility could become the ultimate winner in this lengthy debate over freedom of expression. Several academics on Sunday called on the government to protect freedom of expression at universities following a series of crackdowns on discussions on Marxism in Bandung and Sumedang, West Java, by the FPI.

The FPI dispersed a discussion at the Indonesia Institute of Arts and Science ( ISBI ) in Bandung on May 10 and a seminar on the same topic at the Padjajaran University ( Unpad ) in Sumedang on May 19.

Despite the crackdown and coercion, the Research, Technology and Higher Education Ministry has washed its hands of the matter, proclaiming Marxism illegal in all universities in the world's fourth largest democracy.

"Marxism cannot be taught because it is not in line with the nation's ideology of Pancasila," Intan Achmad, the ministry's director general for learning and student affairs, told The Jakarta Post.

Responding to that statement, Mukhtasar Syamsuddin, head of Gadjah Mada University's ( UGM ) School of Philosophy, said the government should ensure protection for any kind of event on campus, including events at respectable education centers in West Java. "These discussions are within the academic realm. They are not efforts intended to change the nation's ideology. The government has to provide protection as part of its mandate to educate the whole nation," Mukhtasar told the Post on Sunday.

He said Marxism had been taught at his school since the 2000s, a move aimed at giving his students a complete philosophical perspective. "We are obliged to learn every branch of philosophy, including Marxism, liberalism, pluralism and multiculturalism, because they cannot be critical toward everything without having a holistic comprehension," he said.

In stark contrast to Mukhtasar's sentiment, Intan said "there is no need to wax nostalgic on the uses of Marxism, for it does not have place anymore in this era".

Nonetheless, renowned scholar Franz Magnis Suseno said Marxism was still a "relevant" subject for discussion, especially in the academic forum, so that younger generations would know why the teaching could not be implemented in the country that uses Pancasila as its governing ideology.

"The law only prohibits the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism, based on the now-defunct Indonesian Communist Party, with the intention of changing the country's founding ideology," Franz told the Post on Sunday, referring to Article 219 of the Criminal Code.

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"Marxism is not an ideology. There is a lot of it that is not related to communism, such as Marx's critical theory of society," said Franz, a senior lecturer at the Driyarkara School of Philosophy in Jakarta. Franz also raised his concerns over the government's "inaction" in dealing with the swelling tide of intimidation and intolerance seen in West Java, saying "it is a dangerous threat to freedom of academic expression. This threat is more dangerous than the threat posed by the FPI".

Meanwhile, several academics within the Progressive Intellectuals Forum, including UGM sociologist Arie Sujito, Sanata Dharma University historian Baskara T. Wardaya and Airlangga University political science lecturer Airlangga Pribadi, demanded on Saturday that the government protect freedom of academic expression on campus.

Separately, the crackdown on communist symbolism continues as soldiers from the Batanghari base in Jambi apprehended a man, identified as RS, on Saturday for wearing shirt with the hammer-and-sickle logo, similar to that of the PKI.

### Death penalty

#### **New hope emerges for Indonesia death row inmates**

Catholic News Asia, 18-05-2016

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/new-hope-emerges-for-indonesia-death-row-inmates/76072>

The death penalty in Indonesia will not be abolished but condemned inmates could avoid the firing squad if they show enough remorse for their crimes while awaiting execution, a government official said May 18.

The government is to propose handing death row inmates a 10-year probationary period, according to Enny Nurbaningsih, an official of the ministry of law and human rights. "It is hoped they will show enough remorse so that their sentence can be reduced to life imprisonment," she told a May 18 seminar in Jakarta titled: "Death Penalty in a Democratic Nation."

"The emphasis is that the death penalty is only the last resort," she said.

Indonesian pro-life groups in cooperation with the Catholic bishops' conference and the Catholic University of Atma Jaya organized the seminar in which many speakers called for the abolition of the death penalty.

According to Asas Tigor Nainggolan, coordinator of the pro-life groups, the government was preparing to execute 14 death row inmates by firing squad this year, although the dates of the executions and the names of those to be executed had yet to be confirmed.

Last year at least 14 people, many of them foreigners, were executed. Most were condemned to death for drug trafficking in line with a policy laid down by Indonesian President Joko Widodo to execute all drug traffickers.

Two people who escaped execution last year were French national Sergei Areski Atlaoui and Mary Jane Veloso of the Philippines. They were reprieved, as they had to undergo legal processes in their respective countries.

Some at the seminar saw the possible government proposal to lay down a 10-year probation period as a positive step, but many called for the complete abolition of the death penalty, calling capital punishment a product of an imperfect and unjust legal system.

Laws are not perfect and judges can make mistakes, Archbishop Ignatius Suharyo of Jakarta, told participants. "Don't be too confident. When you think that laws are perfect, that is the beginning of injustice," the archbishop said. "Trials can be misleading," added the president of the Indonesian bishops' conference.

Jesuit Father Franz Magnis Suseno, a philosophy professor at Jakarta's Driyarkara School of Philosophy, said the death penalty should be abolished because it is an instinct for revenge. The problem is that once it is done it is irrevocable. "We have to realize that judges can make mistakes, too," the German-born priest said. According to Father Suseno, death penalty has not proven to have a deterrent effect.

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## Papua

### **Match words with action on Papua abuses**

The Jakarta Post, 19-05-2016 by Andreas Harsono (Human Rights Watch)

The detention of more than 1,500 Papuan independence supporters on May 2 for “lacking a permit to hold a rally” speaks volumes of the government’s stubbornly problematic approach to dealing with dissent in the restive territory of Papua. This approach has for decades provided impunity for security forces, despite their abuses against Papuans and turned dozens of those exercising their universal rights to freedom of expression and association into political prisoners.

President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo has promised Papuans a change, beginning with “an open dialogue for a better Papua”. But aside from the release of a few political prisoners, there has been barely any signs of meaningful change on the ground in Papua.

Jokowi’s December 2014 pledge to thoroughly investigate and punish security forces implicated in the death of five peaceful protesters in the Papuan town of Enarotali that month has remained unfulfilled. And the Indonesian bureaucracy continues to obstruct international media from freely reporting in Papua despite the President’s May 2015 declaration to lift the decades-old restrictions.

Last month the government announced a new approach to Papua’s long history of serious rights abuses and lack of accountability: It was going to try to resolve them.

On April 20 chief security minister Luhut Pandjaitan opened a one-week meeting in Jakarta, which was attended by more than 20 human rights activists and ethnic Papuan officials from Papua and West Papua, along with officials from the National Police, the Attorney General’s Office ( AGO ) and various ministries.

The meeting followed increasing international scrutiny of Indonesia’s human rights record in Papua, including a September 2015 proposal by the Pacific Islands Forum, a political grouping of 16 Pacific nation states, for a possible human rights “fact finding mission” in Papua.

The meeting aimed to develop a roadmap to investigation and resolution of a number of the region’s most serious human rights abuses. The initiative was a follow-up to Jokowi’s commitment in December 2014 to seek an end to human rights violations in Papua.

The government has compiled a 17-page report detailing 11 high-priority human rights cases in Papua that it aims to solve. They include the Biak massacre in July 1998, when security forces opened fire on participants of a peaceful flag-raising ceremony on the island, the military crackdown on Papuans in Wasior in 2001 and Wamena in 2003 that left dozens killed and thousands displaced and the forced disbandment of the Papuan People’s Congress in October 2011 that left three people dead and hundreds injured.

The government has also prioritized individual cases such as the disappearance of Aristoteles Masoka, the driver of murdered Papuan leader Theys Eluay in November 2001. Although Eluay’s body was found inside his car, and seven Army Special Forces soldiers were convicted in 2003 for the murder, Masoka has never turned up.

The list is an encouraging sign that the government recognizes the role of the security forces in human rights abuses in Papua and the need for accountability. However, mass killings that took place between the 1960s and 1970s, including a military operation in 1977-1978 against Free Papua Movement ( OPM ) insurgents that allegedly involved indiscriminate aerial bombings and strafing, have been deliberately omitted.

Papuan activists have also called for investigations into the killing of anthropologist-cum-musician Arnold Ap in April 1984 and rights abuses linked to the Indonesian security forces in the lead-up to the July 1969 UN-sponsored referendum that resulted in a much-contested unanimous vote for continued integration with Indonesia.

The government’s plan to resolve these cases involves deploying agencies including the National Police, the AGO, the National Commission on Human Rights ( Komnas HAM ) and the military police to investigate. The plan specifies the need for compensation for survivors and victims’ families for incidents in which the evidence clearly indicates the culpability of government officials and security forces.

Insp. Gen. Paulus Waterpauw, the Papua Police chief, has promised to prosecute individuals implicated in those abuses. The government has yet to publicly disclose a timeline for these investigations.

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Papua's troubled history and ongoing serious human rights abuses demand a meaningful government response to both address the crimes of the past and to enact measures to prevent future abuses. The ongoing low-level conflict with the small and disorganized OPM obligates the government to ensure security for the population.

Security forces repeatedly fail to distinguish between violent acts and peaceful expression of political views. The government has denounced flag-raising and other peaceful expressions of pro-independence sentiment in Papua as treasonous. Heavy-handed responses to peaceful activities have resulted in numerous human rights violations.

In the past eight years, Human Rights Watch has documented dozens of cases in which police, military, intelligence officers, and prison guards have used unnecessary or excessive force when dealing with Papuans exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association.

The government also frequently arrests and prosecutes Papuan protesters for peacefully advocating independence or other political change. More than 35 Papuan activists are in prison on treason charges.

Human Rights Watch takes no position on Papuan claims to self-determination, but opposes imprisonment of people who peacefully express support for self-determination.

Papuans are likely to be skeptical of Luhut's plan to resolve past human rights abuses unless the positive rhetoric is matched by meaningful investigations and prosecutions for those crimes.

Read also: <http://awpasydneynews.blogspot.nl/2016/05/1-west-papua-modernises-people-in.html>

### Political developments

#### **National Hero Title for Suharto Still On Hold: Minister**

The Jakarta Globe, 23-05-2016

A plan to bestow the official title of national hero to former president Suharto is still being discussed by the Council on Titles, Decorations and Honors tasked with proposing names for the title, Social Affairs Minister Khofifah Indar Parawansa said on Sunday (22/05).

The plan is on everyone's lips this month after newly-elected Golkar Party chairman Setya Novanto promised he will do his best to secure the national hero title for Suharto—the founder of Golkar who ruled the country for 32 years—saying, “Suharto pioneered this country's development.”

“The Titles Council, led by the Defense Minister [Ryamizard Ryacudu], still needs to discuss the issue,” Minister Khofifah told reporters in Surabaya, as reported by Kompascom. “Once the council has finished their deliberation, the Social Affairs Ministry will issue the [national hero] decree.”

According to government regulation, the Social Ministry has to propose a series of names to be given the title of national hero to the president after discussing them with the Titles Council. The president will decide which names will be given the official title—which will be granted in a ceremony on National Heroes Day, Nov. 10.

However, not everyone agrees that former dictator Suharto should be given the title.

Chief Security Minister Luhut Pandjaitan has declared his support for the pro-Suharto side, saying “the country should not forget the positive things Suharto did, though as a leader he did make some mistakes.”

“We have to look at the bigger picture. Let's be honest, Suharto did make some mistakes but at the same time he also transformed the country from an unregarded backwater into a modern country. No one can deny that,” Luhut said in a media briefing on Friday.

On the other side of the divide, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) lawmaker Masinton Pasaribu asked the government to reconsider the plan, since the public now

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sees Suharto as the ultimate source of corruption, collusion and nepotistic practices during his rule. Masinton noted that a People's Consultative Assembly Decree (Tap MPR) released in 1998 declared that Suharto was involved in many corruptions cases. "The decree clearly and firmly stated that Suharto was personally—legally—involved in these cases," Masinton said.

Suharto, nicknamed the "Smiling General" while he was president, died after a long illness in January 2008. He was brought down from power in 1998 by massive student-led protests after ruling the country for 32 years, during which time Indonesia was celebrated for its economic development. But dissent was muffled during his reign and many people disappeared when his family's wealth and iron-fisted rule was questioned.

Last December, a Supreme Court's ruling ordered the family of Suharto to return Rp 4.4 trillion (\$317 million) to the state after the former strongman was proven guilty of misappropriating state funds during his three-decade rule.

The court ruled the funds accumulated since the establishment of the Supersemar foundation—a total sum of \$420 million and Rp 185 billion—were largely embezzled and never used for their stated purpose: to improve education throughout the country. The Suharto family still has not returned any of the money to this day.

### **Soeharto doesn't deserve to be a national hero: activist**

The Jakarta Post, 22-05-2016

An activist has opposed the idea proposed by the Golkar Party to name late dictator Soeharto a national hero, saying that the blemishes in his record made him ineligible.

A hero was someone who had done something meritorious, Panel Barus, an activist during the 1998 reform movement said on Sunday. "Soeharto developed Indonesia on debt that later in 1997 brought Indonesia's economy to the point of collapse," he said as quoted by news portal kompas.com.

Army General Soeharto, who led Indonesia for 32 years was allegedly involved in human rights abuses such as the 1989 Talangsari incident in Lampung in which over 130 people are estimated to have been killed in a clash between the military and local villagers. "Has he [Soeharto] been taken to court for Talangsari and other cases?" Panel added.

He said Golkar's proposal of the idea lowered public trust in the party closely linked to Soeharto. Former Golkar chairman Aburizal Bakrie announced the party's plan to propose Soeharto's nomination as a national hero during an Extraordinary National Meeting of the country's longest-surviving political party in Bali on Monday.

"Golkar has earlier proposed that Soeharto be named a national hero, but thus far we have not succeeded. This time, the National Meeting has also urged the central board [DPP] that Soeharto be named a national hero," Aburizal said.

Soeharto lost his grip on power after 32 years following Indonesia's worst economic crisis in 1997 and mounting protests that led to his resignation as president in May 1998.