

Weekly Update Human Rights in Indonesia – 18-04-2016

Impunity

Let the past rest?

“History is being rewritten in Indonesia. The National Symposium Analysing the 1965 Tragedy by a Historic Approach is being held in the Aryaduta Hotel in Jakarta, 18-19 April. The symposium has been initiated by the Forum Silaturahmi Anak Bangsa and has support from the Coordinating Ministry for political, legal and security affairs. Participants will come from victims’ organisations, historians, retired military and others involved in this period of violence.”

CNN Indonesia, 18-04-2016

<http://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20160418085757-20-124594/live-symposium-nasional-tragedi-1965/>

Indonesia urged to hold truth and reconciliation process over massacres

Activists hope for repeal of decree banning Indonesians with family links to communists from government jobs.

The Guardian, 13-04-2016

Calls for the Indonesian government to launch a truth and reconciliation process to address the slaughter of half a million suspected communists in the 1960s are growing ahead of a planned government-funded discussion of the atrocities next week.

Human rights activists are hopeful the two-day symposium in Jakarta on 18-19 April will lead to the repeal of a decree banning Indonesians with any family ties

to the former Indonesian Communist party (PKI) from government jobs and positions with the military and police. The 1981 regulation currently excludes an estimated 40 million people from such positions.



Members of the Indonesian communist party’s youth wing are taken to prison in Jakarta in 1965. Photograph: Associated Press

“These are people who haven’t done anything wrong. They might have had a grandparent or a great-grandparent who was allegedly affiliated with the PKI,” Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, told reporters in Jakarta. “Ending this process of blacklisting ... is obviously an important step and frankly is something that is the sooner the better.”

Last September marked 50 years since the start of the mass killings that occurred across the country from 1965-66, amid cold war fears about the global spread of communism. At the time Indonesia had the third-largest communist party in the world.

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Given the deep political sensitivities associated with the atrocities, activists say the scheduled talks in Jakarta are a step in the right direction, and could provide the necessary impetus for a broader reconciliation process.

Roth added: “What is needed is to begin with a truth-telling process ... an opportunity for the survivors, perhaps for some of the participants, for the descendants to speak publicly, so that the Indonesian people can hear these first-hand accounts.”

However, the Indonesian government has repeatedly resisted attempts to openly grapple with this bloody chapter in its history. It has censored and shut down public discussions on the abuses of 1965, and rejected the results of a 2012 investigation by Komnas HAM, the National Human Rights Commission, which detailed gross rights violations from the period.

Late last year a 77-year-old Swedish man was deported and blacklisted for attempting to visit a mass grave on the island of Sumatra, where his father and 40 other suspected communists are buried.

Elected in 2014 on promises of prioritising human rights violations and tackling corruption, the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, known as Jokowi, has been largely disappointing on the former issue, said Haris Azhar, the coordinator of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence.

“Nothing really has come from Jokowi as president, and nothing impressive has come from his government or cabinet on how to address this,” said Azhar.

In the United States, Indonesia’s human rights commission has also lodged an official request with the US government to release archived records believed to detail the CIA’s covert involvement in Indonesia’s 1965-66 massacres.

See also: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/04/14/hrw-calls-on-us-government-to-reveal-truth-about-1965-massacre.html>

High school teacher introduces alternative narratives on 1965 tragedy

The Jakarta Post, 17-04-2016

A high school history teacher in Batam, Riau Islands, has brought alternative narratives of the 1965 to 1966 communist purge into class as a way to reveal the truth behind the mass killings done during those years. “In school the lesson materials of our history must reveal the truth about the state’s failure in the past because history itself should represent the country,” said Diah Wahyuningsih, a 42-year-old history teacher at state senior high school SMAN 4 Batam, on Friday.

“Don’t deceive the people any more. The young generation is not as stupid as they might think because they now could find everything on the internet,” she said.

Diah said she had held discussions about the 1965 tragedy and its impacts on society in her classes. She even asked her students to together watch Joshua Oppenheimer’s documentary film *The Look of Silence*, which was released in December 2014. Diah claimed her grandfather had been a spokesperson for former president Sukarno's Indonesian National Party (PNI). However, she said, her grandfather was murdered in West Sumatra during the 1965 tragedy.

The kidnapping and killing of six Indonesian Army generals in Sept. 30, 1965, which was suspected to have been orchestrated by the now defunct Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), led to an attacks against the PKI by the Military under the leadership of Soeharto.

Following the attacks, scores were arrested, tortured and murdered. It is estimated that between 500,000 to 1 million people were killed during the cleansing of people suspected of having leftist connections, regardless of their age or level of ‘connection’.

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Survivors and relatives of the victims have also been stigmatized and face discrimination to this day. Moreover, the perpetrators of the mass killings have never been revealed.

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) and the Presidential Advisory Board (Wantimpres) are set to hold a two-day symposium on April 18 and 19 in Jakarta to discuss and bring recommendations on the 1965 to 1966 mass killings. The symposium will involve academics, human rights activists, 1965 victims, politicians and representatives of several government bodies. (vps/ebf)

Read also

- Commentary: Understanding Violence Against the Left in Indonesia - The Jakarta Globe, 14-04-2016 by Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir <http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/opinion/commentary-understanding-violence-left-indonesia/>
- Murdering army, silent church - Inside Indonesia, April 2016 by Willy van Rooijen <http://www.insideindonesia.org/murdering-army-silent-church>
- Testimony of a messenger – Inside Indonesia, April 2016 by Margot L. Lyon <http://www.insideindonesia.org/testimony-of-a-messenger>
- Testimonies by army personnel – Kompas 18-04-2016 http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/04/18/16100601/Soal.Peristiwa.1965.Sintong.Tantang.Buktikan.jika.Korban.di.Jateng.100.000.Orang?utm_source=WP&utm_medium=box&utm_campaign=Kknwp
- National Symposium on the 1965 tragedy – CNN Indonesia 18-04-2016 <http://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20160418085757-20-124594/live-symposium-nasional-tragedi-1965/>

Freedom of religion

Imagining a nation divided

Inside Indonesia, April 2016 by Daniel Andrew Birchok

On 13 October 2015, a group of Muslim residents in the district of Aceh Singkil burned down a Christian church, then attempted to do the same to a second. The attackers allegedly claimed to be acting to close illegal houses of worship, that is, churches without government permits. One member of the group died after clashing with police. In the aftermath, the local government closed ten other churches thought not to have proper permits, and several thousand Christians fled across Aceh's border with North Sumatra.

Reading news stories about these tragic events, I was struck by a sense of déjà vu. In 2008 and 2009, I conducted research in the archives of the Acehese branch of the Indonesian Council of Ulama, located in Banda Aceh. Among these files is a collection of documents related to an earlier period of tensions between Muslims and Christians in Aceh Singkil.

Between 1968 and 1979 the question of churches without proper permits led to similar confrontations in this region. In March 1978, these tensions climaxed when four churches were burned by an Acehese mob. At least one man, in this case a Christian, died. A second round of church burnings occurred in June 1979. After these, the national government helped to negotiate an agreement to end the violence. As in 2015, this settlement entailed the closing of churches without government permits.

Read the whole article: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/imagining-a-nation-divided>

Environment

Govt Preparing Moratorium on Palm Oil and Mining in Peatland Areas

The Jakarta Globe, 14-04-2016

President Joko Widodo's administration is currently preparing a moratorium on palm-oil plantations and mining activities in peatland areas, in accordance with a May 2015 government regulation. Joko mentioned the moratorium in his speech at an environmental event to celebrate International Forest Day on Karya Island, in Jakarta's Thousand Islands district, on Thursday (14/04). "Prepare for a moratorium on palm; prepare for a moratorium on mining," the president said.

He added that the current number of palm-oil plantations in the country were already sufficient, as farmers could still boost their production capacity by using the available resources, such as better seeds and technology. Joko said he would also not allow any more licenses for mining companies to expand their operations in these areas. "No more of the mining concessions breaching into conservational forests," the president said.

Moreover, Joko emphasized that all stakeholders should preserve Indonesia's biodiversity, as the country is famous for its natural resources and its forests, dubbed "the lungs of the world."

Police Accountability

Police probe Densus 88 over Siyono's death

The Jakarta Post, 14-04-2016

The National Police are investigating counterterrorism unit Densus 88 over the death of terror suspect Siyono, who died while being interrogated by the squad.

National Police Internal Affairs Division (Propam) chief Insp. Gen. Mochammad Iriawan said members of his team were questioning a number of witnesses from the squad. "We have scrutinized seven members of Densus 88 who guarded and drove Siyono from his house in Klaten, Central Java, to the interrogation center," Iriawan said as reported by Antara news agency on Thursday.

Beside Densus 88, Propam is also investigating a number of chiefs from the Central Java Police. The division did not deny the fact that Densus 88 had violated procedures in arresting Siyono. Siyono, the alleged commander of neo-Jamaah Islamiyah (neo-JI), died in suspicious circumstances while in police custody over a four-day period.

The police previously claimed that Siyono died from a brain hemorrhage after being hit by a blunt object, allegedly a metal object inside a car after attempting to escape from a police officer.

But a recent autopsy result released by the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) said Siyono passed away after a broken rib pierced his heart.

The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) has alleged that Densus 88 tortured Siyono during the interrogation process.

However, National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) chief Insp. Gen. Tito Karnavian said people should not jump to conclusions.

"Did the autopsy result show evidence of torture? Don't jump to conclusions," Tito said to journalists. The autopsy revealed the presence of wounds, but it could not prove how or why the wounds came about, Tito said. (bbn)

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Political Developments

The Panama Papers and the National Audit Body (BPK)

The Jakarta Globe, 14-04-2016

President Joko Widodo remained silent when Harry Azhar Aziz, the head of the Supreme Audit Agency, or BPK, clarified the reason his name is listed in the so-called Panama Papers, during a meeting at Merdeka Palace in Jakarta on Thursday (14/04).

Based on leaked financial records belonging to Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca, Harry is listed as the owner of Sheng Yue International Limited, which was set up in the Central American tax haven.

Cabinet Secretary Pramono Anung confirmed that the Harry had made a clarification. "Well, since it was only a clarification, the president only listened," Pramono said after the meeting. The minister added that the president did not comment while Harry explained the background of how his name was listed as a client of the law firm, which has become embroiled in an international tax scandal. "Only the BPK chairman knows why and how [his name was listed]. However, he has clarified it," Pramono said.

According to Pramono, the president did not know the details of Harry's alleged involvement in the financial scandal. "The president only received the news, but he did not have any details. So [that is why] he only listened to the BPK chairman's report on the matter," Pramono said.

Indonesia – EU relations

The EEAS website, 10-04-2016

Federica Mogherini is in Indonesia for two days of talks focusing on EU-Indonesia relations and EU-ASEAN ties.

Closer economic cooperation, countering terrorism and climate change are on the agenda. On her first day in Jakarta, the High Representative met with President Joko Widodo, inviting him to be the first Indonesian president to visit the EU institutions in Brussels. She then co-chaired the first-ever Indonesia-EU Strategic Dialogue, together with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

"Indonesia is a key partner in a key region," Mogherini explained during a joint press conference with Minister Marsudi. This visit, she added, launches "a new phase in upgrading the relations between the European Union and Indonesia." The High Representative announced the common will to "explore all the potential for further cooperation in all different sectors."

See the whole story:

http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2016/080416_eu_indonesia_asean_ties_strengthened_en.htm

Jokowi calls on EU leaders to promote peace, tolerance

The Jakarta Post, 17-04-2016

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo departed on Sunday for Berlin to begin a five-day working visit to the EU.

During his trip, Jokowi will call on EU leaders to take greater measures to spread peace amid the rise of extremists and terrorism in many parts of the world, the presidential communications team said in a statement on Sunday.

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It added that President Jokowi would use the working visit to invite EU leaders to spread the values of peace and tolerance through a variety of channels, including digital methods and social media.

The President would reportedly like to highlight the message that world leaders must work together to seek solutions for new challenges and to promote humanity and justice.

Jokowi is set to visit four countries, namely Germany, England, Belgium and the Netherlands. The President is scheduled to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister David Cameron and the prime minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte.

The presidential communications team said the trip would mark the first time Jokowi had met three EU presidents, namely the president of the European Parliament, the president of the European Council and the president of the European Commission.

President Jokowi's working visit is aimed at strengthening cooperation with the EU, especially in economics, and jointly enhancing tolerance and peacebuilding.

Indonesia is looking to prioritize cooperation in trade, investment, maritime resources and water management. The EU is one of Indonesia's main trading partners and investors.

The trade value between Indonesia and the EU reached US\$26.14 billion in 2015, making the EU the country's fourth largest trading partner. Meanwhile, the EU is Indonesia's third largest investor with \$2.26 billion worth of investment in 2015.

President Jokowi expected that his visit to the four countries would provide real benefits that would be felt by Indonesian and EU citizens, the team said. (ebf)

HRW urges EU to greet Jokowi with a message about rights

The Jakarta Post, 17-04-2016

Human Rights Watch (HRW) deputy Asia director Phelim Kine has said the critical issue of human rights should not get lost in the diplomatic mix during the visit of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo to Europe next week.

Kine said that human rights abuses, past and present, remained a serious problem in Indonesia, impacting victims' families, women and ethnic, religious and sexual minorities. Jokowi's interlocutors in Europe needed to keep these issues front and center in their meetings, he said.

"That includes expressing support for the Indonesian government's tentative first steps toward accountability for the mass killings of 1965 and 1966 that claimed at least 500,000 lives," Kine said.

"A government-supported symposium on April 18 may seem unremarkable, but it's an act of political courage that European leaders should praise."

President Jokowi is set to discuss trade ties and intelligence sharing with European Union officials and his counterparts in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK during the visit.

Kine went on to say that Indonesian women were counting on European leaders to express their outrage at the government's failure to stop the abusive "virginity tests" women are forced to undergo when applying to the National Police and Indonesian Military. Dozens of political prisoners, mostly peaceful activists from Papua and the Moluccas, also needed European leaders to tell Jokowi that they were not forgotten despite their long imprisonment, he added.

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The rights activist said European leaders should speak out for sexual and religious minorities who were vulnerable to local-level threats and violence. “Government officials have recently jumped on the Islamist bandwagon to make increasingly hostile remarks against Indonesia’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population,” he said.

According to the HRW, public rhetoric against Indonesia’s religious minorities, including the Ahmadiyah, Shia and some Christian congregations, has for a number of years been accompanied by serious violence against these communities.

“Jokowi may be following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, by failing to protect religious minorities from Islamist and other militant groups,” said Kine.

He said Jokowi also needed to hear the concerns of European leaders about the Indonesian government’s tight grip on the access of foreign media, academics, and nongovernmental organizations to the country’s easternmost island of Papua. “These restrictions defy Jokowi’s May 2015 declaration that Papua was now open to foreign media.”

Kine said the measure of success of Jokowi’s European trip would be its balance of meaningful engagement on human rights issues with discussions on economic and security ties. (ebf)

Prison conditions

Abu Bakar transferred to Bogor prison

The Jakarta Post, 17-04-2016

Authorities have claimed that the transfer on Saturday of terror convict Abu Bakar Ba’asyir from Nusakambangan prison island in Cilacap, Central Java, to Gunung Sindur prison in Bogor, West Java, was based on humanitarian reasons.

“There was no other motive other than humanitarian reasons. He is old so he needs access to a closer medical treatment center. At Gunung Sindur prison, the medical treatment facility is much closer,” Pasir Putih prison warden Hendra Eka Putra told journalists on Saturday.

The firebrand Muslim cleric was kept in an isolation cell at the Pasir Putih maximum security prison on Nusakambangan for the month before he was moved to Gunung Sindur prison. It is believed it will now be more difficult for Ba’asyir’s followers to meet with him.

Before he was placed in isolation in Pasir Putih prison, Ba’asyir periodically received visits from his followers, enabling him to keep spreading his radical views.

Security authorities transferred Ba’asyir from Sodong Quay on Nusakambangan Island to the Wijayapura Quay compound in Cilacap before taking him to Wulung Airport to depart for Bogor using a police aircraft.

Ba’asyir has now been isolated in a special cell to prevent him from communicating with other terror convicts. He is also prohibited from seeing visitors apart from family members, lawyers and his medical team.

The South Jakarta District Court sentenced Ba’asyir to 15 years in prison in 2011 after he was found guilty of masterminding and financing armed group trainings on Mount Jantho, Aceh. He was locked up on Nusakambangan, where around 70 other terrorists are currently serving sentences.

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Ba'asyir was held in the same prison as Aman Abdurrahman, a terror convict who is said to be a coordinator for the Islamic State (IS) movement in Southeast Asia, before being placed in isolation in Pasir Putih.

The 70 terrorist convicts are housed in several cells across six different prisons on Nusakambangan, namely Batu, Besi, Kembang Kuning, Pasir Putih, Permisan and a narcotics prison. (ebf)

Papua

LBH Jakarta: 63 Papuan activists arrested in the last 9 days

Suara Papua - April 15, 2016

Arnold Belau, Jayapura -- The Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Jakarta) reports that 63 people have been arrested over the last nine days in West Papua. Most of those arrested are activists from the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) and the Regional People Parliament (PRD).

Once again the government's intentions in Papua are being questioned. The LBH Jakarta is strongly condemning the systematic arrest of activists in the lead up to simultaneous actions that took place in Papua on April 13.

The actions, which were led by the KNPB, were joined by around 5,000 Papuans who were supporting the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULWMP) becoming a full member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG).

"We suspect that the security forces will act repressively in Papua in the lead up to the huge actions on April 13. The KNPB is the organisation in Papua that is being most systematically criminalised at the moment. So on the day before [the actions] we along with 47 other organisations from various elements [of society],

from students to workers, issued a solidarity statement calling on security forces not to act repressively. And it was proven. We have the names of all 61 [sic] people who have been arrested", said LBH Jakarta director Alghiffari Aqsa in an email sent to Suara Papua on April 15.

The LBH Jakarta notes that 15 people were arrested in Timika on April 5 and on April 12 six people were arrested in Yahukimo and 15 in Kaimana. On April 13, thirteen people were arrested in Merauke, three people in Sorong and 11 people were arrested in Jayapura.

LBH Jakarta public defender Veronica Koman meanwhile said that in addition to this, some of those who were arrested were stripped naked, beaten with rifle butts, kicked and forced to stand in the sun.

"Certainly, those who've been arrested have now been released, except there are still two who are being detained in Timika. One of them has been charged with subversion (maker) even though the person concerned was only leading a prayer meeting on the grounds of a church that supports the ULWMP", said Veronica.

In addition to this, the LBH Jakarta is currently investigating allegations that people were tortured in Dekai, Yahukimo.

"We received a report that six of the people arrested were hit in the head with hammers, kicked in the face with military boots, ordered to crawl [on the ground] and eat dirt, beaten in a cell until they were bruised and bleeding, as well as being ordered to sing Indonesia Raya [the national anthem] and eat money they had in their pockets", she explained.

Veronica continued, "These incidents violate Article 28I of the Constitution, the convention against torture and Article 351 of the Criminal Code. Therefore the Mabes Polri [national police headquarters], specifically the Bareskrim [Criminal Investigation Bureau] and the Propam [Professionalism and Security Affairs

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Division] must investigate the matter. Perpetrators of torture, even though they are law enforcement officials, must be punished", asserted Veronica.

The arrests, which began a day before the action, were carried out in order to prevent the demonstrations from going ahead. The legal articles used for these arrests are vague and completely fabricated.

In Yahukimo and Merauke, police were unable to explain which articles were used for the arrests. In Kaimana, police said that the arrests were made because the demonstration did not have a police permit.

"We were having an internal meeting to prepare for the action in our own offices weren't we, what did we need a permit for?", asked a LBH Jakarta source in Manokwari as quoted in the email received by Suara Papua.

Furthermore, police also prevented protesters from joining the action and carried out arrests during the action. Police also smashed the windows of a command vehicle in Jayapura even though there was no provocation by the protesters who were demonstrating peacefully.

"The string of incidents over these nine days again demonstrates that there has yet to be any change in the government's attitude towards Papua, it's still very repressive. [The people's] constitutional rights to freedom of expression and opinion are violated repeatedly. The state's presences in Papua is in the form of violence", asserted Alghiffari.

The LBH Jakarta is therefore demanding that President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo take action against the national police and the Papua regional police who have violated the constitutional rights of the Papuan people and order them to immediately release Yus Wenda and Steven Itlay who are still being detained in Timika.

"Our call to the Papuan people is that you are not alone. Continue [expressing] your aspirations!", said Alghiffari.

[Translated by James Balowski for the Indoleft News Service. The original title of the report was "LBH Jakarta: 63 Orang Ditangkap Selama 9 Hari di Papua".]
Source: <http://suarapapua.com/read/2016/04/15/3256/lbh-jakarta-63-orang-ditangkap-selama-9-hari-di-papua>