

Freedom of Religion

Ahok's relatives support his withdrawal of appeal

Kompas, 24-05-2017

The relatives of Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama ("Ahok") have explained his reasons for not lodging appeal against the verdict for insulting the Islam that was issued by the North Jakarta Court on 9 May. By reading a letter by Basuki, his wife said that Basuki wanted to accept the verdict by the judges be it for the sake of the people and the country.

Basuki's wife, Veronica Tan read the letter by her husband in an explanation to journalists in Jakarta, last Tuesday. Basuki and his legal counsel had agreed not to appeal against the courts decision of the North Jakarta Court. "Let us show that we have trust in the almighty Lord (...). On Monday the lawyers' team submitted an appeal note with the North Jakarta Court, but soon after Veronica and a lawyer cancelled the appeal.(...)

Basuki stated in his letter that he had been reflecting on what had happened to him. He learnt to forgive and accept everything. He also accepted the judges' decision for the interest of the people and the country. He also explained his view on the damage possibly experienced by the inhabitants of Jakarta, with regard to the problems of the traffic jams as a result of the solidarity demonstrations that disturb the traffic.

He was also concerned that his opponents would turn round his efforts because of their dislike of his aims. He said he was grateful for the show of support and asked his supporters to demonstrate within the existing rules, to keep the candle of struggle burning for the Constitution, the Unitarian State, the Pancasila and the motto of Unity in Diversity.

One of the lawyers, Fify, added that the decision to withdraw the appeal had not been an easy one. But the relatives accepted Basuki's decision. They had lengthy discussions. "Many volunteers sent their prayers and support Pak Ahok's release. We want to support the struggle, but we should not be selfish and think of broader interests", said Fify.

Asked on a separate occasion the Prosecutor General H.M. Prasetyo said that his office had not yet decided about having an appeal. "I heard about the relatives' explanation but we (the prosecutor's office) have not yet made up our minds, whether we appeal or not," he said.

Ahok resigns as Jakarta governor

The Jakarta Post, 24-05-2017

Non-active Jakarta governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama resigned on Tuesday after withdrawing his appeal against the court's decision to sentence him to two years in prison, Home Affairs Minister Tjahjo Kumolo has said. Ahok's resignation letter, which is addressed to President Joko "Joko" Widodo, has been received by the Home Affairs Ministry and would be processed immediately. "On May 23, Ahok delivered a letter of resignation from his position as Jakarta governor to the president, one day after dropping his appeal," Tjahjo said. "He should, therefore, be dismissed as soon as possible and Djarot will replace him as the definitive governor," he said, referring to acting governor Djarot Saiful Hidayat.

Ahok's dismissal would be carried out after Jakarta High Court released an official letter stating that Ahok has withdrawn his appeal. With five months left in Ahok's and Djarot's term, this means the position of deputy governor will soon be vacant. Separately, Ahok's lawyer Josefina Syukur confirmed that Ahok had resigned. "Ahok resigned because he has withdrawn his appeal," she said.



Commentary: Can Support for Ahok Bring Change in Indonesia's Blasphemy Law?

By : Rafiqha Qurrata A'yun | Jakarta Globe, 17-05-2017

Across Indonesian cities and abroad, candlelight vigils have been held in support of Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, Jakarta's Chinese-Christian non-active governor. He was recently sentenced to two years in prison for blasphemy for insulting Islam.

Ahok is one of many people jailed under this controversial law. In the last 15 years more than 100 people have been convicted of blasphemy and jailed in Indonesia.

Human rights activists have argued that the laws discriminate against religious minorities and promote religious intolerance.

Ahok, a brash politician who enjoyed high popularity among Jakarta's people, became embroiled in the blasphemy case after an edited video of him criticizing opponents who use a verse in the Koran to dissuade people from voting for a non-Muslim went viral.

The blasphemy case factored in Ahok's loss in the recent Jakarta gubernatorial election. His opponents exploited the brewing religious and racial sentiments against the double-minority Ahok. They aligned themselves with hardline Islamic groups that organized a series of massive rallies demanding he be jailed.

Although Ahok lost the race, he received 42.05 percent of the vote, or 2,351,141 people. The size of his vote presents an opportunity to gather support to challenge the blasphemy law.

Read the full article: <http://jakartaglobe.id/opinion/commentary-can-support-ahok-bring-change-indonesias-blasphemy-law/>

Terrorism and Counter-terrorism

Kampung Melayu Bomber Had Links to Islamic State: Police

Jakarta Globe, 26-05-2017

Preliminary investigations revealed that the suspected suicide bomber of Wednesday's (24/05) attack in East Jakarta had links to an Islamic State sympathizer who detonated a low-explosive bomb in Bandung, West Java in February, police said on Thursday.

According to investigations into Wednesday's attack — where two suspected suicide bombers killed at least five people including three policemen near a bus station in Kampung Melayu — one of the suicide bombers, identified only as I.N.S., had links to another suicide bomber who detonated a bomb in Bandung in February.

In the incident in February, a militant detonated a low-explosive bomb in the courtyard of a local government office in Cicendo, Bandung. The incident had no casualties and one of the perpetrators was shot by the police.

Police later in March arrested two other militants who were involved in that same attack. Investigations revealed that one of them, whom police identified only as A.M., had allegedly assembled the pressure-cooker bomb.

A.M. and the two other militants implicated in the Cicendo attack were allegedly part of Jemaah Ansharut Daulah, an umbrella organization on a United States State Department "terrorist" list that is estimated to have drawn hundreds of Islamic State sympathizers in Indonesia.

The group is led by Aman Abdurrahman, a cleric currently imprisoned on Nusakambangan Island at Cilacap, Central Java.

Police have named Aman as one of the masterminds behind the terrorist attack in Jalan Thamrin, Central Jakarta, in January last year, which resulted in the death of four people, including the attackers.

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I.N.S.'s wife —whom investigators questioned on Thursday as they searched the family's rented home in Jatinunggal, Bandung — revealed this information to the police, Sr. Comr. Yusri Yunus, spokesman for the West Java Police said.

"There were documents about Islamic teachings, backpacks, shoes and two bayonets [at I.N.S.'s home]," he told the Jakarta Globe.

"We are still digging deeper into all of this, but it was found that the alleged perpetrator had known A.M.," Yusri added.

Police also said the bombs on Wednesday night, where twin blasts from pressure-cooker bombs occurred just minutes apart, were similar to that used in the Cicendo attack.

Yusri said police also searched the home of the second suspected suicide bomber's parents in Cimahi, Bandung, on Thursday and questioned his mother. Police identified him only as A.S.

Political developments

TNI and KPK Announce Three Graft Suspects in Presidential Chopper Scandal

Jakarta Globe, 27-05-2017, Reuters

Indonesia's military and anti-corruption agency have identified three suspects in a corruption investigation into the controversial purchase of an AgustaWestland's helicopter, the military chief said on Friday (26/05).

Indonesian Military Chief Gen. Gatot Nurmantyo said the investigation, in which the police, state auditors and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) participated, found the deal did not follow proper procedures, causing a loss of Rp 220 billion (\$16.5 million) to the state.

Originally meant for the use of Indonesia's president, the AW101 helicopter looked set to become a white elephant when Joko Widodo in 2015 rejected the \$55-million purchase in favor of continuing to use an older helicopter, media have said.

The three suspects are all military personnel on active duty, Gatot said, referring to them only by their initials at a joint news conference at the headquarters of the anti-corruption agency.

"In the military, corruption is very detrimental to the soldiers because... those who do it are policymakers and they could endanger soldiers by buying sub-optimal equipment," Gatot said.

Investigators have also frozen the bank account of a domestic company linked to the procurement, holding a balance of Rp 139 billion.

Italian defense group Leonardo Finmeccanica, the parent company of AgustaWestland, could not immediately be reached for comment.

Controversy over the Air Force's helicopter purchase deal grew late last year when Gatot sought to cancel it.

In response, Air Force officials said they had approval from the government and the House of Representatives to continue with the purchase and alter the craft to equip it for search and rescue missions. Gatot then ordered an investigation into the deal.

The AW101 helicopter arrived in Jakarta in February but was sealed at the capital's Halim military airbase, media have said.

In 2014, India cancelled a \$770-million deal to buy 12 AW101 helicopters after the arrest of the then chief executive of Finmeccanica, Giuseppe Orsi, for allegedly paying bribes to secure the deal.

Four named suspects in case of alleged graft connected to BPK, ministry

The Jakarta Post, 27-05-2017

The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) on Saturday named four suspects in a case of alleged graft following raids conducted at the offices of the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) and the Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Ministry.

“Following the investigation, it could be concluded there was suspected graft practiced in the financial audit conducted by the BPK into the Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Ministry’s 2016 budget report,” KPK chairman Agus Rahardjo said.

The KPK named the ministry’s inspector general, Sugito, and Jarot Budi Prabowo, a high-ranking official at the ministry, as well as two BPK auditors, Rachmadi Saptogiri and Ali Sadli, as suspects in the bribery case.

KPK deputy chairman Laode Muhammad Syarief said Sugito was accused of having bribed the BPK auditors in an effort to obtain an “unqualified (WTP)” opinion – the best audit level – for the ministry’s 2016 budget report.

During the raid on the BPK, KPK investigators seized Rp 40 million (US\$3,000) in cash that was allegedly provided by the Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Ministry to Ali.

The KPK also confiscated Rp 1.15 billion and \$3,000 from a safe-deposit box in Rachmadi’s office. “The KPK is investigating whether or not the money [seized from the deposit box] is related to the alleged bribery,” said Laode.

On Friday, the KPK carried out an operation in two locations and apprehended seven people, four of whom were later named suspects, for questioning. The three others – Rachmadi’s secretary, Johan’s driver and a security staff member at the BPK office – were questioned as witnesses.