

Actions, demos, protests...

Indonesia Roundup #17 - May 29-June 4, 2006

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Dear Indoleft subscribers,

Due to time constraints and technical problems, no issues of Indonesia Roundup have been posted since late April (Number 11). With this issue we plan to restart the service on a weekly basis again. Numbers 12-16 will be posted and added to the ASIET web site as translations are completed.

James Balowski.

Activists launch pre-trial suit against New Order

Unwilling to accept that former President Suharto will escape justice, on May 29 activists from the 1998 reform movement launched a pre-trial suit against the New Order regime at the South Jakarta District Court. The 18 activists who were registered as plaintiffs were accompanied by a lawyer from the Indonesian Legal Advice and Human Rights Association (APHHI).

"We are asking for a cancellation of the order to stop the investigation into Suharto and for the legal process against Suharto be resumed. The mechanism is up to the state. The state could hold a trial in absentia", said the spokesperson for the Nameless Committee for the League of 1998 Activists (KTNPA-1998), Raymond R Simanjorang.

The activists also held a protest and gave speeches in front of the court. "We are still demanding that Suharto be tried. It cannot be that on health grounds Suharto can just be released", said one of the speakers. (Detik.com, 29/5/2006)

New Order victims rock Komnas HAM

Around 100 families who were victims of human rights violations by the New Order regime of former President Suharto held a rally from the Proclamation Monument in Jakarta to the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) on May 30.

The protesters wore black robes and covered their faces with newspapers with the writing "Try Suharto" and "Sorry No, A Trial Yes". They also brought wooden gongs, which they played during the march as well as an iron cage with an effigy of Suharto inside it with a banner around its neck reading "Suharto Human Rights Criminal".

According to the public relations officer for the Victims of New Order Human Rights Violations, Mujianto, the action was held to demand that Komnas HAM fully investigate human rights violations, particularly the cases of the disappearance of activists in 1997-98. (Detik.com, 30/5/2006)

Students demand governor be investigated over corruption

Around 100 students and youths from East Kalimantan demonstrated at the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in Central Jakarta on May 30. They were demanding that the KPK investigate East Kalimantan governor Suwarna AS over an alleged corruption case involving 1 million hectares of palm oil land.

Arriving at the KPK offices at around 12.30pm, they immediately started the action singing "Revolution, Revolution or Death" accompanied by shouts of "Viva Students!". Black banners were also unfurled above a vehicle with a sound system with the writing "Uphold the supremacy of the law, arrests and try the most corrupt governor in Indonesia Suwarna AS the governor of East Kalimantan".

In speeches the protesters urged the KPK to immediately investigate the corruption case and that the office of the prosecution and the police be transparent and not attempt to cover up the issue. The protest was watched over by around 25 police officers. After being received by a representative of the KPK, the protesters disbanded in an orderly manner. (Detik.com, 30/5/2006)

Fisherpeople protest pollution, demand compensation

Around 300 fisherpeople from the Jakarta Fishers Communication Forum (FKNJ) protested at the North Jakarta mayor's office on May 30. They were calling on the municipal government revoke the business licenses of factories that are discharging waste in the Cilincing, Marunda and Muara Tawar rivers. The protesters demanded that the government pay compensation for the financial losses they have suffered.

According to the demonstrators, over the last two years pollution on the coastal beaches of North Jakarta has been worsening and has resulted in a decline in the production levels of their green mussel farms.

"My green mussel pond has produced nothing since January", said Fatimah, one of the protesters. Fatimah said the factories border on their mussel ponds which support some 6,500 families. Before the rivers became polluted, production had reached 10 tons per season. They said that as a result of the recently failed season, they suffered losses of as much as 93 billion rupiah. (Tempo Interactive, 30/5/2006)

Nahdlatul Ulama demands FPI be disbanded

Members of the Islamic mass organisation Nahdlatul Ulama from the Cirebon area of West Java demonstrated on May 30 demanding that the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), the Indonesia Mujahidin Council (MMI) and Hizhut Tahrir be disbanded. The demonstration was in response to last week's eviction of former President Abdurrahman Wahid alias Gus Dur during an event in the West Java town of Purwakarta. Tightly guarded by police, they condemned the actions against Gus Dur saying it did not reflect Islamic values. (Liputan 6, 30/5/2006)

Papuan activists protest anti-pornography law

Dozens of activists from the Papuan Traditional Arts Council (DKAP) protested recently against the draft law on pornography at the Papuan Regional House (DPRD) of Representatives in Jayapura. The protesters included student, religious figures and traditional leaders who believe that the law will kill off Papua's traditional attire, the penis gourd.

The protesters arrived at the DPRD in three busses. Uniquely, a number of the demonstrators wore penis gourds. They said that if the draft law is ratified it will result in the disappearance of the Papuan people's identity. Traditional residents of Wamena for example, can often be seen wearing penis gourds. (Liputan 6, 31/5/2006)

Hundreds of residents reject inauguration of regent

Around 300 residents from a number of villages in the Tebo regency of Jambi, East Nusa Tenggara, protested on May 31 against the inauguration of the newly reelected regent of Tebo, Madjid Muaz. According to the protesters, during his term as regent between 2001-2006 Muaz was involved in corruption, collusion and nepotism, specifically by appointing two of his daughters as government officials without having sat the state civil service entrance exam.

The protests marched as far as one kilometre to the regent's official residence however tight police security prevented them from entering. The action was supported by a number of members from the Tebo DPRD some of whom even joined in giving speeches. There has been a long-running dispute between the regent and the DPRD with assembly members even recommending that Muaz be dismissed. (Liputan 6, 31/5/2006)

Residents reject waste management plant

Residents from the Serang city in the Banten regency protested recently at the offices of the Banten regent. The protesters were demanding that the license to construct a waste management plant by the Cilegon city government be revoked. The residents said they were concerned that the quality of water in their area that is used for daily needs and irrigation will become polluted. (Liputan 6, 31/5/2006)

Makassar housewives protest against discrimination

Around 100 housewives protested in the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar on May 31 over the quality of healthcare services provided by hospitals.

The housewives, who were from the People's Urban Poor Struggle Committee (KPRM), arrived at the South

Sulawesi Health Agency at around 9.30am. Protesters said that hospitals discriminate against the poor citing the uneven distribution of cards guaranteeing health services for the poor (JPKMM).

In addition to this they also raised questions about the attitudes of hospital that are reluctant to provide free health services to the poor. "If a person is rich they get a good service. If it's a poor person, they sometimes even get rejected for all sorts of reasons", explained one of the protesters.

The housewives were received by officials from the Makassar Health Offices who attempted to provide and explanation to counter their complains. By 11.30am the debate between the protesters and the officials became heated with some of the housewives even jumping up onto desks and abusing the officials. The situation only calmed down after officials promised to register those people who had not obtained JPKMM cards. Protesters returned home at around 1.30pm. (Detik.com, 31/5/2006)

Makassar residents protest over cash subsidies

Hundreds of resident from the Kumuh area of Makassar demonstrated at the DPRD on June 1. They were protesting because they have not been registered to receive direct cash subsidies. The protesters said that the suspect that certain individuals in the village administration and the National Statistics Agency (BPS) are manipulating data so that those who are receiving subsidies are families that are not actually poor. (Liputan 6, 1/6/2006)

Gus Dur supporters demand FPI be disbanded

Gus Dur supporters in Purwokerto protested again on May 1 demanding that the FPI be disbanded. They believe that the FPI is using Islam as a cover to commit acts of anarchy. The demonstrators also demanded that police immediately investigate actions engineered by the FPI because they are creating anxiety among the public. (Liputan 6, 1/6/2006)

Students protest against sand dredging in Banten

Students demonstrated again on June 1 against the dredging of sand from the waters of the North Banten Gulf because they are convinced that it is damaging the marine ecosystem. The protesters were demanding

that the regent of Serang, Taufik Nuriman, revoke the sand dredging license. As in earlier demonstrations, the protesters again closed off roads as well as hijacking two vehicles owned by the local government. (Liputan 6, 1/6/2006)

Residents demand arrest of mayor over corruption

On June 1, residents and anti-corruption activists in South Sumatra demonstrated demanding that the mayor of the Prabumulih regency, Rahman Djalili, be detained and suspended from duties. Djalili is a suspect in a corruption case involving the purchase of land for an office and hospital valued at 3.3 billion rupiah. The head of Prabumulih prosecutors' office, Ferdinan Pangabean, has also been accused of receiving bribes during the investigation of the case. Djalili remains free even though the South Sumatra chief prosecutor has issued an arrest warrant for his detention. (Liputan 6, 1/6/2006)

Palu residents blockade road

More than 100 residents from the Duyu village in the West Palu sub-district of Central Sulawesi blockaded the entrance to the Bukit Nirwana housing estate using lengths of wood and stones. The June 1 action was protesting the failure of the housing estate developers to pay the residents compensation for their land. (Liputan 6, 1/6/2006)

Division of Tana Toraja regency rejected by students

Students from the Tana Toraja regency in Central Sulawesi held an angry protest at the South Sulawesi DPRD in Makassar on June 1. The protesters' anger was triggered by an agreement by assembly members to split up the Tana Toraja regency. According to the demonstrators, the move is nothing more than an endeavour to divide up power among the political elite and will only create disunity within traditional Tana Toraja society and create conflicts between the people. (Liputan 6, 2/6/2006)

Poor people protests over cash subsidies in Cirebon

Hundreds of poor people went to the Cirebon regency BPS in West Java on June 2 to protest because they still had not received cards for direct cash subsidies. Even those who have received cash subsidies said that the money was incomplete saying that deductions had been made from the 300,000

rupiah per three months on the grounds that other poor people had not received assistance. (Liputan 6, 2/6/2006)

Unity in Diversity Alliance holds march

Around 200 demonstrators from the Unity in Diversity Alliance (ABTI) held a cultural rally through the major thoroughfares of Jl. Sudiarman and MH Thamrin in Jakarta on May 3. The rally presented a variety of arts from across Indonesia including traditional dances from Bali, Reog Ponorogo, Achenese dance and Debus Banten.

The rally, which continued for around three hours using 25 trucks and a convoy of motorbikes, started at the South Jakarta area of Semanggi then proceeded to the Hotel Indonesia roundabout and on to the National Monument.

The cultural rally took up the theme "Pancasila is Our Home" saying that maintaining diversity is the only way to maintain the identity of the Indonesian nation. ABTI spokesperson Ratna Sarumpaet said that the Indonesian nation must continue to promote attitudes that respect diversity and tolerance. Indonesia is a composite nation and therefore cannot be monopolised by particular political or religious groups she said. (Tempo Interactive, 3/6/2006)