

Indonesia: Virtual pots and pans protest demands ratification of domestic worker bill

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Jakarta — A range of inter-religious leaders, activists and domestic workers (PRT) banged pots and pans as a way to push the government and the House of Representatives (DPR) to immediately ratify the Draft Law on the Protection of Domestic Workers (RUU PPRT).

The pots and pans action, which was held virtually on Sunday January 9, involved more than 190 people who appeared in virtual space with each person banging the pots and pans as many as 18 times.

Eva K Sundari from the Sarinah Institute, who also took part in the event, said that the movement hoped to push for the completion of the RUU PPRT.

“I hope that through this movement, we can appeal to the president to give his endorsement to the RUU PPRT, which has been sitting on the DPR’s desk for 18 years”, said Sundari.

Sundari explained that the pots and pans are a symbol of the importance of the bill for all people from various different groups, regardless of religion, age, class or profession. It is here that the role of domestic workers is found because they are responsible for the prosperity of the public at home.

“To the DPR leadership and also to the Bapak [Mr] President, we have been struggling for 18 years, now is the time, the RUU PPRT must be ratified”, shouted Sundari before striking a pan.

She said that the screams and cries of domestic workers had risen 50 percent since the Covid-19 pandemic. The draft law is considered important so that domestic workers receive recognition for their work, protection and the rights they should be afforded.

Andy Yetriyani from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) explained that based on their data compiled annually there were more than 2,300 cases of violence against domestic workers between 2005 and 2020.

“So, (these cases of violence occurred) almost throughout the time taken for the formulation of this draft law, they have been left up in the air”, she said.

Aside from activists, seven representatives of inter-religious leaders also appeared in the virtual event. They also called for domestic workers to receive the same treatment as other people.

The inter-religious representatives came from, among others, the central board of the Islamic mass organisations Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) and Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI), the Bishops Council of Indonesia (KWI), the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Association (PHDI) and the High Council of Indonesian Faiths (MLKI).

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