

Indonesia: Hundreds of women take to Jakarta's streets to mark International Women's Day

Friday 5 April 2024, by [BALOWSKI James](#), [SYNOBOR Sonya Hellen](#) (Date first published: 8 March 2024).

Hundreds of women from various women's organisations commemorated International Women's Day (IWD) 2024 by marching from the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) offices to the National Monument (Monas) area in Central Jakarta on Friday March 8.

The women, who were from the Indonesian Women's Alliance and had been gathering at Bawaslu since 7 am, began the action by giving speeches.

They then held a long march along Jalan Thamrin to the Horse statue near Monas. During the action which took up the theme "Safeguard Democracy, Protect of Women's Rights", the women brought a large banner with the message, "Indonesian Women Descend on the Palace, Prosecute Jokowi the Destroyer of Democracy", referring to President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo. Wearing all-black and purple clothing, the participants also carried various posters describing the situation face by women in Indonesia.

During the march to Monas, the women took turns climbing up onto a small truck in the front of the demonstrators and shouted a number of demands. In speeches, they demanded that the government pay attention to the protection and fulfillment of women's rights in Indonesia.

International Women's Day represents a milestone in the women's struggle around the world to end all forms of gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination.

In Indonesia, women's public participation is still difficult to realise because of the shackles of violence against women which is systematic and structured.

Mutiara Ika from Perempuan Mahardhika (Free Women) emphasised that the commemoration of IWD in 2024 was an important moment for the women's movement.

This is because at this year's commemoration of IWD, women are calling for resistance against all of the chaotic pro-oligarchic policies and actions to destroy democracy that have been carried out by the Widodo government during his period of leadership.

On the other hand, the House of Representatives (DPR) has not carried out its function of checks and balances.

This has resulted in the issuance of policies that have in fact narrowed the freedoms for civil society to express an opinion and has opened the way for investment.

For example, a number of laws have been enacted even though they were rejected by the public, such as the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, the revised Health Law, the revised Criminal Code

(KUHP), the law on additional provinces in Papua and the second revision to the Electronic Information and Transaction (ITE) Law.

The Indonesian Women's Alliance believes that the deterioration of democracy in Indonesia was clearly illustrated during the 2024 election process, with the non-neutrality of the president through *cawe-cawe* (meddling) to his ministers and the ethical violations due to a conflict of interest in the Constitutional Court.

Therefore in commemorating IWD, the Indonesian Women's Alliance demanded and called for the upholding of democracy and the rule of law.

In addition to this, they demanded the ratification of a number of draft laws such as the Draft Law on the Protection of Domestic Workers (PPRT), the Draft Law on the Protection of Indigenous Peoples, the Anti-Discrimination Bill and the Draft Regional Regulation (Raperda) on Jakarta Legal Aid, as well as the realisation of implementary regulations that support the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (TPKS).

Separately, in the context of celebrating IWD, the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) stated that aside from the retreat of democracy, the state has ignored the protection of women.

The practice of destroying democracy and the rule of law by the Widodo government has been marked by the birth of policies in various sectors that are a serious threat to human rights, especially women's rights.

According to YLBHI Chairperson Muhammad Isnur, based on the YLBHI's records, there are a number of state policies that do not side with the general public, especially women.

This includes, among others, the vulnerability of women human rights defenders and environmental activists to intimidation and criminalisation, the slow deliberation of the PPRT bill, the birth of the Jobs Law that is detrimental to women workers, the inadequate implementation of the TPKS Law, and the many and growing number of regional regulations that discriminate against minority gender and sexual groups.

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