

Actions, demos, protests...

Indonesia Roundup #16 - May 21-28, 2006

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National Awakening Day commemorated with anti-Suharto protests

National Awakening Day on May 20 was commemorated with a demonstration at the State Palace in Jakarta and protests in a number of other Indonesian cities.

The majority of protests were by student organisations that were demanding that the government revoke the order to stop the investigation into corruption by former President Suharto. (Liputan 6, 21/5/2006)

Anti-Suharto protests ends in clash, arrests

The termination of the investigation into Suharto continues to attract protests. On May 21, dozens of protesters from the Indonesian Muslim Students Action Front (KAMMI) and students from the Surabaya Institute of Technology protested in East Java provincial capital of Surabaya.

The students were demanding that Suharto be tried in a court of law and that the Attorney General revoke the order to stop his investigation. They also warned of the danger of the "latent New Order" which is trying to return to power.

A confrontation with police was unavoidable after negotiations reached a dead end with police claiming that the protest was illegal. Although police asked the students to end the demonstration by 11am, protesters insisted on giving speeches until noon. They also set fire to tyres and threw plastic bottles at police. Eventually police attacked the protests and two students were arrested for disturbing public order. (Liputan 6, 21/5/2006)

Newly elected regent suspected of using false diploma

Scores of residents from the Bungo regency of Jambi,

East Nusa Tenggara, protested at the Jambi regional police headquarters on May 21. The protest was held to demand an investigation into allegations that the recently elected regent of Bungo used a forged diploma to be registered for nomination. Police were mobilised to blockade protesters who had unfurled banners during the protest. (Liputan 6, 21/5/2006)

Protesters in Jakarta demand Suharto be tried

Dozens of people from the Try Suharto Social Movement (GMAS) protested in front of the State Palace in Central Jakarta on May 21. They were calling on the government to bring the former president to trial. The action, which began in front of the Arjuna Monument, was demanding that the Attorney General, Agung Abdul Rahman Saleh, revoke the recently issued order to stop the investigation into the Suharto case. They also called on the government to seize the assets belonging to the 84-year-old man and his cronies. (Liputan 6, 21/5/2006)

Yogyakarta students reject amnesty for Suharto

Lively demonstrations against the granting of amnesty to Suharto have taken place in various parts of the country. In the Central Java city of Yogyakarta, an action was held by dozens of student from the People's Challenge Alliance (ARM) on May 21.

The protest by ARM, which represents an alliance of organisations including the National Student League for Democracy (LMND), the Muslim Students Association for Reform (a splinter group of HMI) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PRD), started at the Gajah Mada University roundabout at around 10.30am.

Protesters articulated five demands: Arrest, try and seize Suharto's assets, the nationalisation of the mining industry, free education and healthcare, the abolition of the long-term debt and no new borrowings and a wage rise for workers in accordance with the cost of living in Indonesia's nine largest cities.

They also brought banners protesting the government's closure of the Suharto case that insinuated President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) is a part of the New Order regime. A number of banners had messages such as "SBY-JK = Neo-New Order" and "Amnesty for Suharto = The rise of the New

Order"

The coordinator of ARM said that protests would not end there and that they would continue to build a movement to protest against Suharto's amnesty. (Detik.com, 21/5/2006)

Garut residents finally accept Bandung rubbish

Dozens of Pasar Baging residents from the Sukaraja Village in the Banyuresmi sub-district of Garut, West Java, demonstrated on May 21 against the Pasar Baging area being used as a disposal sight for rubbish from nearby Bandung. The protesters had planned to intercept West Java Governor Danny Setiawan on his way to a visit to the site.

After several rounds of negotiations with the Garut regional government, in the end the residents reopened the road so the governor's entourage could enter the area. They also agreed to accept rubbish from Bandung but only for a limited number of days. (Liputan 6, 22/5/2006)

Protesters 'seal off' Suharto's residence in Solo

Demonstrators protesting against Suharto and his cronies from the Social Alliance for the People's Welfare (AMUK-Rakyat) 'sealed off' Ndalem Kalitan, Suharto's residence in the Central Java city of Solo this afternoon.

The coordinator of the action, Winarso, said that they sealed off the residence to symbolise the takeover of assets owned by Suharto and his family by the state because they were obtained through the oppression of the Indonesian people.

"If the government does not have the courage to pursue and take control of Suharto and his cronies' wealth it will be the people who will take action. Most of the wealth of his family and cronies was obtained by greed and deceit", said Winarso. (Tempo Interactive, 22/5/2006)

'Oneng' joins protest against pornography law in Bali

Protests for and against the draft law on pornography (RUU-APP) continue to be organised. While protesters in Jakarta demonstrated in support of the bill, in Bali, around 100 activists from the

People's Awakening Alliance (AKR) demonstrated against the law on May 21. The well-known actor Rieke 'Oneng' Diah Pitaloka even joined action.

The action in front of the Bajra Sandhi Monument of Struggle was commemorating eight years since the reform movement was launched. During the action that began at around 3pm, they held speeches and presented a music performance of songs from the activist movement. The stage even had a picture of a naked woman as a backdrop symbolizing their objections to the law.

In a speech Pitaloka said "This afternoon in Jakarta [they are] supporting the ratification of the RUU-PAA on the grounds that it will improve the dignity of this nation. But the rottenness of this nation is not because of the sway of dangdut [music] singers but because of the corrupters. If the RUU-APP is ratified, the jails will be filled with artists, housewives selling jamu [traditional medicine] who wear a kebaya [traditional tight fitting blouse], while the corrupters will be able to walk free". (Detik.com, 22/5/2006)

Workers in Malang demand the release of six colleagues

On May 22, around 750 workers from PT Adiputro in the Malang city of East Java took to the streets again to demand the release of six of their colleagues who are currently being detained by the municipal police.

The action started at the offices of the Malang Indonesian Workers Solidarity Struggle (SPBI) followed by a march to the Malang Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) some five kilometers away.

In speeches they said that police had acted arrogantly and unfairly in attacking and arresting 132 striking workers. "During the strike, there were no workers who caused damage [to property] or took other anarchic actions. Why then did the police forcibly arrest the workers", said SPBI secretary general Andy Irfan.

Irfan added "What clearly violates [the law] is the owners of Adiputro who pay workers less than the regional minimum wage". He said that the workers had been on strike for more than a month demanding a wage increase but there had still been no response

from the company management. (Detik.com, 22/5/2006)

Students from Tana Toraja protest in Makassar

Dozens of students from the Central Sulawesi regency of Tana Toraja protested at the Makassar DPRD on May 24. They were opposing the government's plan to split up the Tana Toraja regency. The students said that the plan to split up the regency was nothing more than an effort by the political elite to divide up power among themselves. Council members have promised to arrange a meeting between the students and a special committee on the matter. (Liputan 6, 25/05/2006)

Papuan students in Yogya protest PT Freeport case

Dozens of Papuan students in Yogyakarta held a demonstration on May 25 against the prosecution of a number of Papuan civilians involved in protests against PT Freeport Indonesia. They were also protesting the trial of 10 Papuan students who were arrested following protests at Plaza 89 in the South Jakarta area of Kuningan last February.

Demonstrators said that the trial goes against the sense of justice of all those Papuans that have been victimised by PT Freeport. (Liputan 6, 25/05/2006)

'Gus Dur lovers' protest Mujahidin Council in Surabaya

Hundreds of people from the East Java city of Pasuruan, calling themselves lovers of Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur, along with members of the National Awakening Party-linked youth group Garda Bangsa (Nation's Guardians) protested at the headquarters of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) in Surabaya on May 24.

The demonstrators were protesting the eviction of Gus Dur when he spoke at an interethnic and religious discussion in Purwakarta, West Java, on May 23. They said that the eviction was an act of harassment against the Islamic scholar and could trigger hostility between religious groups. They are therefore demanding that four Islamic groups, the MMI, the Hizbut Tahir Indonesia (HTI), the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Islamic Community Forum (FUI) issue a public apology in the mass media.

Similar protests were articulated by a number of

public figures from the Social Alliance Against Violence and the Wahid Institute in Jakarta.
(Liputan 6, 25/05/2006)

Thousands of farmers occupy Lampung parliament

Thousands of PT Bangun Nusa Indah rubber plantation farmers in the South Sumatra city of Lampung have been protesting at the DPRD since May 21. The farmers are demanding that PT Bangun Nusa Indah is relocated and for the return 4,000 hectares of palm oil land that was taken over by the plantation company.

One of the spokespersons for the farmers, Achmadi, said that the farmers have agreed to remain at the DPRD until their demands are met. The company has failed to fulfill a summons to meet with one of the DPRD's commissions and has only met with activists from the Justice and Prosperity Party, which supports the company's claim over the land.
(Detik.com, 26/5/2006)

Banten students demand Suharto be tried

Dozens of students from the Banten provisional chapter of KAMMI protested in Serang on May 28. They were demanding that Suharto and the lackeys of the New Order regime be tried in a court of law.
(Liputan 6, 28/5/2006)

Plasma Karet farmer protest enters seventh day

Entering the seventh day, around 1,000 rubber farmers from Tulang Bawang were still occupying the Lampung DPRD. The farmers say they will remain there until they are able meet with the management of PT Bangun Nusa Indah Lampung, which is the parent company in a palm oil partnership program. (Liputan 6, 28/5/2006)