

Donald Trump's Indonesian business partner, Hary Tanoë, considers running for president

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Billionaire developer Hary Tanoë, who is building two Trump resorts, says he has 'access' to the US president-elect.

Donald Trump's Indonesian business partner, a billionaire developer and media mogul, has announced he might run for president in Indonesia's 2019 elections.

"If there is no one I can believe who can fix the problems of the country, I may try to run for president," Hary Tanoësoedibjo told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [1].

"Not for myself, for the country," he said, adding that the nation of about 260 million people needs "a leader with integrity who can bring a solution for the country".

Known locally as Hary Tanoë, the tycoon is building two Trump developments - a 100-hectare, six-star luxury resort on the coast of Bali and a resort outside Jakarta with a championship golf course designed by former world No 1 Ernie Els. The resort will have 300 villas and adjoin a theme park.

Both projects are due to be completed while Trump is in office.

Unlike Trump before his presidential run, the 50-year-old has already delved deeply into politics. Tanoë made a failed attempt in 2014 to get the nomination for vice-president and has since set up his own political party, United Indonesia, using Twitter [2] and appearances on his TV stations as a platform.

His company, Global Mediacom, also known as MNC Group, saw stocks rise significantly when Trump won the election in November.

Tanoë said he has "access" to Trump although it was limited and most of his contact regarding the joint developments was with the president-elect's adult children; Donald Jr, Eric and Ivanka. "Each of them has different roles. Don Jr has responsibility for the overall project, Eric the design and golf, and Ivanka more of detail - the fit-out of the hotel," he said.

Vast foreign business interests held by an incoming president have been flagged as a potential conflict of interests, especially if the ventures are linked to businesspeople with aspirations for power.

In Indonesia's last election, Tanoë threw his support behind former general Prabowo Subianto, who went on to lose to Joko Widodo, meaning Trump's biggest financial stake in Indonesia is run by a political adversary to the country's leader.

And Tanoë has already arranged for two controversial Indonesian politicians to meet Trump. The first was Setya Novanto, the speaker of the House of Representatives who was at the centre of a

\$US4bn corruption scandal in Indonesia. He denies all allegations.

The second was Fadli Zon, the deputy speaker, who is close to Indonesian religious hardliners who have been pushing for Jakarta's governor to be jailed for blasphemy.

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, known by his nickname Ahok, is fighting a racially charged attempt to prevent him from winning a second term next month by Islamists who are against a Christian Indonesian of Chinese heritage being in power [3].

But Tanoe, also a Chinese Indonesia Christian, said the country was ready for a leader of any background. "The majority of the people are more realistic. They want to see a leader who can bring solutions," he said.

He blamed the president, known as Jokowi, for not responding "quickly enough" to quell protests in that capital that saw roughly half-a-million people rally against Ahok on 2 December. "The issue is more with President Jokowi. He has to show his leadership is firm enough to make people calm down."

Oliver Holmes in Bangkok

P.S.

* The Guardian. Monday 2 January 2017 05.42 GMT Last modified on Monday 2 January 2017 05.43 GMT:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/02/donald-trumps-indonesian-business-partner-considers-running-for-president>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-02/donald-trump-indonesian-business-partner-wants-run-for-president/8156716>

[2] https://twitter.com/Hary_Tanoe

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/12/jakarta-governor-ahoks-blasphemy-trial-all-you-need-to-know>