

# Indonesian elections: Generals behind Jokowi, Prabowo ridden with political interests warn activists

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Jakarta — The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) and the Mining Advocacy Network (JATAM) have again warned that both presidential candidate tickets — incumbent President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo and running mate Ma’ruf Amin as well as rival Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno — have close ties with retired TNI (Indonesian military) generals.

The presence of these retired officers is ridden with political interests and the prospect of resolving past human rights (HAM) violations will become increasingly bleak no matter who becomes the next president.

Kontras noted that nine out of the 27 retired officers who are behind Widodo and Ma’ruf have a problematic track record on human rights.

“Likewise with Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno where there are eight retired officers who were allegedly involved in past cases of HAM violations”, said Kontras researcher Rivanlee Anandar at the Kontras office in Jakarta on Friday April 12.

Anandar gave as an example the names of retired officers in the Widodo camp who are already known by the wider public such as Coordinating Minister for Security, Politics and Legal Affairs Wiranto, former Army chief of Staff Fachrul Rozi and former National Intelligence Agency (BIN) chief Hendropriyono.

In the Prabowo camp meanwhile there are names such as the former head of the Special Forces (Kopassus) Rose Team Bambang Kristiono, former East Timor military commander Tono Suratman and former Army spokesperson Syafrie Samsuddin.

All of these people are alleged to have played a role in bloody incidents such as the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, the 1989 Talangsari massacre in Lampung, the 1989-1998 military operations in Aceh, the 1997-98 forced disappearance of pro-democracy activists and violence in East Timor.

“Several cases involving these retired TNI officers have not even been tried in court”, he said.

Kontras believes that the presence of these retired officers in positions which are close to the highest echelons of state power is having a bad influence on efforts to resolve cases of past human rights violations, particularly through judicial mechanisms.

In the context of mining and energy, there are many former TNI and police generals who are part of the inner circles of both presidential candidates which are ridden with conflicts of interest.

JATAM campaign head Melky Nahar cited ex-generals who are alleged to be using the elections as an entry point to promote their interests in mining and energy businesses.

The involvement of these ex-TNI and police generals, particularly those which hold strategic positions in companies is also ridden with security interests related to suppressing resistance by local communities to mining and energy projects.

“Moreover several among them have become an important part of today’s power structure”, said Nahar. (bin/osc)

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<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20190412182320-32-385833/jenderal-di-balik-jokowi-prabowo-dinilai-sarat-kepentingan>

• Translated by James Balowski. The original title of the article was “Jenderal di Balik Jokowi-Prabowo Dinilai Sarat Kepentingan”.