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Indonesia: Civil Society Coalition to audit state officials involved in Covid-19 test business

Monday 6 December 2021, by [KAMIL Irfan](#) (Date first published: 29 November 2021).

The Civil Society Coalition for Democracy and Justice suspects that there are elements of corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN) in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Covid-19 testing business.

It is alleged that Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan and State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) Minister Erick Thohir are involved in the Covid-19 testing company PT Genomerik Solidaritas Indonesia (GSI).

“Some time ago my colleagues and I conducted some brief research, we met with parties which know about the issue. There my colleagues and I could begin to understand more clearly that there is alleged collusion, or corruption. So this is something interesting”, said Civil Society Coalition representative Novel Baswedan at the Cikini Lama Restaurant in Jakarta on Monday November 29.

During the brief investigation, said Baswedan, they found several parties who allegedly took advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to monopolise and control the PCR business.

The former Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) investigators taskforce head said that it is suspected that the control of the PCR business resulted in the cost of PCR tests in Indonesia being more expensive than in India.

“And with the control that occurred in Indonesia, the cost of PCR [tests] was very expensive and this was born by the state from Covid-19 funding as well as all of us”, said Baswedan.

Based on this investigation, according to Baswedan, the Coalition hopes that the parties who allegedly played a role in the PCR testing business should be investigated and exposed.

“We want the people who played a role domestically during the Covid-19 pandemic disaster, when it befell the entire world, those who did not care about human rights, so it is fitting that they must be fully investigated,” said Baswedan.

“If there are state losses they must be returned and all of the people who committed crimes by reaping profits from this must be held liable,” he said.

Meanwhile another Coalition representative, Ferry Juliantono, said that they are ready to become a people’s auditor and work voluntarily but professionally to audit PT GSI, which Pandjaitan and Thohir are allegedly involved in.

“We’ll refer to ourselves as a people’s auditor. We along with a public accountant’s office which is

prepared to be appointed by us, and in formal terms Pak [Mr Luhut won't have to spend a single cent, we'll provide a public accountant's office to work together with us [to conduct the audit]", said Juliantono.

Juliantono is of the view that collusion and nepotism are the key to the problems that have occurred in the PCR testing business.

According to Juliantono, the two ministers who are allegedly involved in the PCR businesses could hand over Covid-19 testing to a state-owned enterprise.

"As state officials, those concerned should not, in this case Pak [Mr] Luhut and Erick Thohir, have established a new company to provide PCR tests", said Juliantono.

"But what [they] did was to form a company, and even worse still the rogue individuals concerned obtained ownership of shares in the company", he said.

Earlier, Panjaitan said he was ready to be audited in relation to accusations of his involvement in the PCR test business.

Panjaitan said this in response to a plan by the Pro-Democracy Activist Network (ProDem) to report Panjaitan and Tohir to the Metro Jaya Jakarta regional police over the matter.

"It's okay (if I'm reported). If later I'm wrong it'll be easy, please go ahead and audit us", said Panjaitan at the Metro Jaya regional police in Monday November 15.

Irfan Kamil

Translated by James Balowski

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