

Indonesia: Marking 24 years of reformasi, Yogya rally rejects another term under the oligarchy

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Laili — The People Movement Alliance (ARB) held a protest action to commemorate May Day, National Education Day and 24 years since reformasi in the Central Java city of Yogyakarta on May 22.

The action, which was titled “Enough of the oligarchy’s term in office, don’t extend it any further!,” was joined by various different organisations, campuses and pro-democracy activists including the Student Struggle Center for National Liberation (Pembebasan), the Socialist Study Circle (LSS), Populist Youth Horizon (CMK), Berdikari Women, the Women’s Liberation Union (SIEMPRE), the Indonesian Student Union (SMI), the Ahmad Dahlan University (ADU) Muhammadiyah Students Association (IMM), the Yogyakarta Bima Student Association (IMBY), the Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University (UMY) Social and Political Science Student Executive Council (BEM), the Yogyakarta State University (UNY) Movement and the UAD Movement.

The protesters gathered at the Yogyakarta Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN) at around 12 noon. They then marched to the Gejayan traffic intersection arriving at 2.30 pm with a convoy of motorcycles following the command vehicle, from which speeches were organised by the action coordinator.

Based on a press release by the ARB and interviews with one of the action coordinators, the action was held to highlight the many sectors which are still have problems that still have not been resolved after 24 years of reformasi — referring to the political reform process that began in 1998.

This includes human rights violations which continue to take place, past violations which have still not been resolved, land theft, military violence in Papua, low wages for workers, the commercialisation of education and cases of sexual violence which continue to rise.

“Twenty-four years of reformasi but it’s like we’ve been marking time, there hasn’t been any significant change,” said action coordinator Beki.

One of the important points that was emphasised during the action was opposition to the discourse on postponing the 2024 legislative and presidential elections and extending President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s term in office.

The protesters said that this would do irreparable harm to the gains of reformasi which were won by the people’s and student movement by overthrowing the New Order regime of former president Suharto, who though the power of the military held on to power for 32 years

“The Jokowi regime today is not very different from the New Order, as can be seen from the

criminalisation of human rights activists,” continued Beki.

The action ended at 5 pm with the reading out of a statement and the following demands by the action coordinator:

- A six hour working day for workers
- Stop arbitrary sackings
- Revoke the Omnibus Law on Job Creation and its derivative regulations
- Decent wages for workers
- Provide fully paid menstrual and maternal leave for women workers
- Enact the Draft Law on the Protection of Domestic Workers
- Give workers the right to form trade unions
- Apply Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 30/2021 on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions
- Apply a curriculum which has a gender justice perspective in schools and higher education institutions
- Enact a derivative regulation on the crimes of rape and forced abortion
- Fight the criminalisation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) comrades and other minority gender groups
- End the commercialisation of education
- Revoke all illegal fees in schools
- Build safe spaces on campuses
- Realise education which is free, scientific and democratic
- Provide transparency to students on higher education budgets
- Arrest and try perpetrators of sexual violence on campus
- Release Papuan rights activist Victor Yeimo and all Papuan political prisoners
- End the criminalisation of Papuan activists
- End the criminalisation of human rights activists Hariz Azhar and Fatia Maulidiyanti
- Withdraw the military from the land of Papua
- Allow access to Papua for national and international journalists
- Revoke the revisions to the Special Autonomy Law on Papua, reject the creation of new autonomous regions (DOB) in Papua, and give the Papuan nation the rights to self-determination
- Stop agrarian conflicts
- Revoke the Location Designation License (IPL) for mining at Wades Village in East Java
- Restrict the role of the military in land conflicts and theft
- Revoke the business license of the companies PT Citra Mataram Construction and Pramudya Afgani and end the criminalisation of Kulon Progo residents
- Close down PT LNG Tangguh, PT Freeport and reject mining in the Wabu Block and the operations of other companies in the land of Papua
- Arrest and try the generals and perpetrators of human rights violations in Indonesia and Papua
- Release the 10 activists in Bima detained by the West Nusa Tenggara regional police
- Reject increases in the price of basic goods
- Reject the removal of subsidies (reject increases in the price of fuel, value added tax)
- Reject the new capital city project in East Kalimantan and other mega-projects of the oligarchy
- Reject the postponement of the 2024 elections and the extension of the president’s term in office

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