

Indonesia: Protests erupt across Indonesia after House ratifies 'colonial' Criminal Code

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Jakarta — The Draft Criminal Code (RKUHP), which was only just passed into law by the House of Representatives (DPR) and the government at a plenary meeting on the afternoon of Tuesday December 6, has attracted widespread opposition.

And it has not just been in Jakarta. Protest actions opposing the new Criminal Code (KUHP) — which is seen as still containing many problematic articles that risk criminalising people and threatening civil freedoms — have also taken place in various other parts of Indonesia. Those opposing the KUHP feel that aside from the problematic articles in the law, the government and the DPR lacked openness in the deliberation process. The following is a roundup of actions against the new law in different parts of Indonesia on Tuesday. Jakarta A demonstration rejecting the KUHP, which was held by the Civil Society Coalition in front of the DPR building today, was dispersed by police. Yet the protesters had planned to hold the demonstration into the evening. Based on CNN Indonesia's observations, the Coalition dispersed voluntarily after police issued a second warning using a megaphone. "[You] are requested to disperse voluntarily", ordered one of the police officers. In addition to this, they were also approached by several police officers who also asked them to disperse. The Coalition requested that the action be allowed to continue but police kept ordering them to leave. The Coalition also asked the police for time to hold evening prayers. Although this request was granted, they still had to disband afterwards. In the end they left at around 6.45 pm. During the action, the Coalition put up two tents which were used to symbolise an action that would continue for a sometime. They said they would continue to oppose the KUHP which was enacted today because they believe that it contains problematic articles that threaten civil freedoms. Jakarta street paralegal and action coordinator Dzuhrian Ananda Putra earlier said that the demonstration would be held into the evening. This would be done at the same time as studying the impact of the new KUHP on freedom of expression. According to Putra, demonstrations should not be restricted. "We want to explain why the tents, the camping, camping is an activity which is long-term, requires our energy, and we want to say that public resistance [to the law] will be long and continued", said Putra. "The waves [of protest] won't just be yesterday, today, tomorrow, but will [continue] because of the impact of the new KUHP is very clear", he said. Aceh In Indonesia's northern-most province of Aceh, the Independent Journalist Alliance (AJI) erected a huge banner in front of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) office. "This action is a form of opposition from us as Acehnese journalists against the enactment of the RKUHP by the DPR", said Banda Aceh AJI Chairperson Juli Amin on Tuesday. Amin said that based on a study of the RKUHP conducted by the AJI Indonesia, there are 17 articles that they believe will do irreparable damage to press freedom. Moreover, Amid said that several of these article also have a strong potential to curb journalistic work, and that if the regulations come into force then press workers will feel the impact. "We demand that the DPR and the government remove the problematic articles in the RKUHP which have the potential to curb journalistic work and criminalise journalists", he said. Surabaya The East Java Civil Society Coalition held a silent action in the provincial capital of Surabaya in which they gave out stickers with the warning #SemuaBisaKena (this affects everyone) to members of the public. They warned people that the revised KUHP, which was proposed by the government and deliberated with the DPR, could

target anyone in coming days. The protest action by the Coalition, which is made up of the Surabaya Legal Aid Foundation (LBH), the Surabaya AJI and student groups, was held at an intersection which connects Jalan Mayjen Dr Moestopo, Jalan Dharmawangsa, Jalan Tambah Boyo and Jalan Petojo. One of the representatives of the protesters, who is also a public defender from LBH Surabaya, Habibus Salihin, said that they felt that they had been screwed by the DPR and the government. "We've had enough of being screwed by the government over the last few years, starting with the KPK [Corruption Eradication Commission] Law, the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, through to the new KUHP, the DPR and the government always respond by saying [if you don't like it then] take it to the Constitutional Court", said Salihin during a break in the action. Denpasar Activists in the provincial capital of Bali gathered to hold a protest action Tuesday in front of the Bajra Sandhi Monument in Renon, Denpasar. The activists came from the Bali People's Struggle Front for Democracy (Frontier), the Environmental Advocacy Working Committee (Kekal) and the Bali Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi). "We demand that the Bali governor and the Bali DPRD send a letter to the DPR as an institution in order to have all of the rubber articles removed because they threaten freedom of expression and opinion", said Bali Frontier Secretary General Anak Agung Gede Surya Sentana. Medan The enactment of the RKUHP was also opposed by in the North Sumatra provincial capital of Medan. The North Sumatra People and Workers Accumulation of Anger Alliance (AKBAR) held a rally on Jalan Layang in Jamin Ginting in which they held up posters with the message, "RKUHP: Protecting those in power, criminalising the people". The action attracted the attention of road users with several people offering their support by giving the protesters the thumbs-up. North Sumatra Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) representative Adinda Zahra Noviyanti, who took part in the action, said that the protest represented the disappointment of social groups with the government of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo. "The government and the DPR didn't listen to or heed any of the criticisms made by civil society throughout Indonesia about the problematic articles", said Noviyanti at the action on Tuesday. The protesters said that there are still around 74 problematic articles covering crucial issues in the final draft of the law November 9. The crucial issues referred to include democracy and the living law, the death penalty, attacks on the values and dignity of the president and vice president, vagrancy and adultery. "These problematic articles are susceptible to being used as potential avenues for the criminalisation of people and can be used to protect those in power. They are very susceptible to the criminalisation of people. Especially criticism against the government", said Noviyanti. Noviyanti explained that they do not oppose the KUHP being revised as such because it is indeed a legacy of Dutch colonialism. The RKUHP could have been a positive step towards the reform of criminal law which is already hundreds of years old. Unfortunately, the problematic articles were still included in the law. "We provided criticism in a nice way but it wasn't heeded. Our friends at the national level have held discussions, but the government only carried out socialisation, not the active involvement [of the public]", she said. The protest action was continued with speeches on the Jamin Ginting intersection. Despite the criticisms of the new KUHP, there was not one police officer watching over the action. Makassar In the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar, the LBH said that the DPR's enactment of the RKUHP was un-democratic. LBH Makassar believes that there are a number of articles which could criminalise freedom of opinion, yet this is very important in a democracy. "In terms of the RKUHP process up until now, the process was undemocratic, it was enacted without considering input from civil society", LBH Makassar director told CNN Indonesia on Tuesday.

Protesters rally at parliament against enactment of 'colonial' Draft Criminal Code

Protesters opposing tomorrow's planned enactment of the Draft Criminal Code (RKUHP) have arrived in front of the House of Representatives (DPR) building in Jakarta. They brought with them posters containing their demands and yellow flags symbolising death. By 1.18 on Monday December

5, the demonstration against the RKUHP had been joined by a number of different groups including the Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (LBH), Greenpeace, the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), the Legal Aid Institute for the Press (LBH Pers), students, workers, environmental activists and women's groups. "This action will be joined by various civil society groups, and we don't yet know just how many will come because protesters are still arriving", said LBH Jakarta public defender Citra Refarandum in front of the DPR building in Senayan, Central Jakarta on Monday. Several of the demonstrators put up a huge poster on the DPR's gates, while others scattered flowers in front of the DPR building as a symbolic protest. Wreaths of flowers could also be seen placed in front of the building. "To share in sorrow over the revival of the colonial articles in the RKUHP", read one of the wreaths. "Opposing the problematic RKUHP", read one of the banners hanging from the DPR's front gate. A number of police officers meanwhile watched over the demonstration. Traffic on Jalan Gatot Subroto came to a standstill with many drivers slowing down in order to look at the protest action. Earlier, police mobilised some 400 personnel who were placed on alert in front of the DPR building. "Meanwhile four SSK [company level units, 400 personnel] were placed on alert there. This is just from the police", said Central Jakarta Metro Jaya district police chief Senior Commissioner Komarudin when sought for confirmation. Komarudin said that the protesters at today's demonstration are from the Jakarta LBH. In relation to the issue being articulated, he said that it was about opposition to the RKUHP. "Based on the flyers, they're from LBH Jakarta. Perhaps from the flyers, (it's a demonstration opposing) the RKUHP", he said. In relation to the redirection of traffic, Komarudin said that it was situational and traffic would be rerouted if necessary. "For the meantime it's situational", said Komarudin. He added that security in front of the DPR would be the same as for ordinary protest actions and hoped that the demonstration today would proceed smoothly. "Security or services and guarding the progress of the action conveying an opinion in public will be like security for other actions. The hope of course is that the action will proceed securely, orderly and smoothly", he said.

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