

Electoral Reform:
Fixing the Roots,
Not Replacing the
Mechanism

IEROF 2026
Formulates a
Roadmap for Electoral
Democracy Reform

Reassessing
the
Parliamentary
Threshold

PRLDM



B U L L E T I N February 2026



**KEEPING
ELECTORAL
REFORM
ON TRACK**



INTRODUCTION

3



EDITORIAL

4

Electoral Reform: Fixing the Roots, Not Replacing the Mechanism



ACTIVITIES

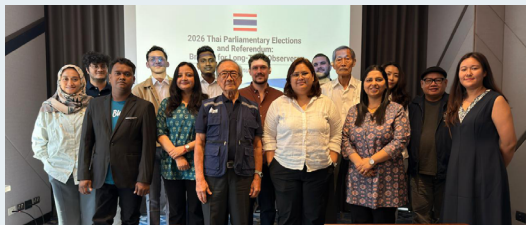
6

IEROF 2026 Formulates a Roadmap for Electoral Democracy Reform



10

The Civil Society Coalition Holds Audience with Political Parties to Encourage Codification of the Election Law



12

Perludem's Participation and ANFREL's Record in the 2026 Thai Elections



14

House of Representatives Commission II Public Hearing: Perludem Delivers Notes on Parliamentary Threshold

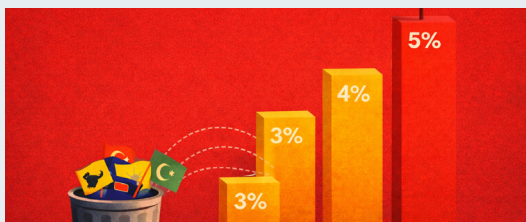
Editorial Board
Heroik M. Pratama
Kahfi Adlan Hafiz
Usep Hasan Sadikin

Managing Editor
Ajid Fuad Muzaki
Annisa Alfath

Photos
Haura Ihsani
Rikky MF

Design
Eko Punto Pambudi

Published by
Perludem
Jl. Tebet Timur IV B
No.14, Tebet,
Jakarta, 12820



EVENT ANALYSIS

15

Reassessing the Parliamentary Threshold



FOOTNOTE

17

Mestakung Revision of the Election Law



Election is more than merely a five-yearly technical procedure behind the voting booth. Nor is it merely contest between individuals or parties. Election is the foundation that determines the quality of a country's democracy. When electoral regulations are established to ensure justice and legal certainty, when election organizers demonstrate independence and professionalism in carrying out electoral stages, and when every election participant prioritizes integrity in their contestation, a quality and representative democracy will be yielded.

However, in recent years, our electoral democracy has faced increasingly complex challenges. These include the strengthening of power relations between actors, which undermine existing legal regulations, the professionalism and impartiality of electoral management institutions, the capital-intensive contest for votes, and digital disruption that has given rise to disinformation, manipulation of public opinion, and unequal access to information.

In such context, electoral reform cannot be understood in isolation. It

demands a systemic approach, ranging from improving the design of the electoral system, regulating the recruitment of democratic and integrity-based electoral actors, restructuring the organizing institutions, and establishing an electoral justice system that adapts to digital transformation. These efforts cannot be undertaken in the year or two leading up to the election; they must be implemented well in advance.

The present bulletin provides a platform for analysis and discussion on efforts to continuously improve electoral democracy. It highlights various efforts undertaken by Perludem to realize fair and integrated electoral reform. Furthermore, the bulletin offers analysis of current events specifically addressing current issues concerning electoral democracy in Indonesia.

Ultimately, it is hoped that this bulletin will provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of maintaining our sustainable electoral democracy. Even if election is still understood as merely a five-yearly procedure, procedural democracy without integrity will only yield fragile legitimacy. ●



Heroik M Pratama
Perludem
Executive Director
Editorial



Electoral Reform: Fixing the Roots, Not Replacing the Mechanism

The discourse of returning regional head election (Pilkada) to the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) has recently recalled.

President Prabowo Subianto has, on several occasions, expressed the view that electing regional heads through the DPRD is worthy of reconsideration. The rationale used remains the same outdated rhetoric: high political costs, fierce contests, and high budgetary burdens. This statement cannot be separated from the President's position as the holder of supreme executive power, wielding significant influence over the direction of legislative policy and future political reform.

President Prabowo's view certainly differs from previous discourse from some members of the House of Representatives

(DPR) or political party elites. This time, regional elections held through the DPRD seem to receive symbolic legitimacy from the head of government. This legitimacy not only strengthens the argumentative position of its proponents but also bears the potential to shift the direction of public debate away from the principle of popular sovereignty and toward purely political efficiency and stability.

This situation reminds the public of an incident a decade earlier, when the DPR in 2014 passed Law No. 22 of 2014, which abolished direct regional elections and returned regional head elections to the DPRD. At that time, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono took decisive constitutional action by issuing Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) No. 1 of 2014. The Perppu

explicitly revoked the DPRD-led regional election law and restored direct elections as the mechanism for filling regional head positions.

This is the point where the debate becomes crucial. Changing the regional electoral mechanism is not merely a technical administrative issue, but also concerns the foundations of electoral democracy that have been built post-Reform. If elections through the DPRD are seen as a solution to high political costs or electoral conflict, the question then arises: can efficiency be justified by reducing the level of direct citizen participation?

Perludem believes the real problem lies

not be selective, adopting what is efficient and discarding what is essential. The more pressing agenda is clear:

1. Establish strict political financing regulations,
2. Strengthen transparency of campaign funds report,
3. Ensure consistent law enforcement,
4. Construct a more accurate and open vote recapitulation system.

At this point, electoral reform must be directed at closing loopholes for political corruption, strengthening oversight, and ensuring fair and equal competition. Therefore, any steps that could potentially reduce participation must critically and

Protest rejecting Indirect Regional Election Bill in front of the Merdeka Palace, Jakarta (16/9/2014)

(PHOTO: REPUBLIKA/ WIHDAN)



in loose political financing governance, weak oversight, and the proliferation of transactional political practices. Changing the electoral mechanism without addressing the root of the problem is tantamount to shifting the transaction arena from an open to a closed space. Direct regional elections were born as a correction to elitist political practices with minimal accountability. Shifting them back to the DPRD risks narrowing citizen participation and increasing the scope for political compromise that is not always in the public interest.

Electoral reform should actually move forward, not backward. Reform should

openly be considered.

Perludem believes that maintaining direct regional elections is not about maintaining the status quo without criticism, but rather ensuring that the agenda of the improvement of democracy is not pursued by revoking citizens' political rights. Direct regional election is a product of Indonesia's long historical experience of centralizing power, political elite manipulation, and pseudo-procedural democracy at the local level. Therefore, any attempt to change them must be rigorously tested, not only for efficiency but also for constitutionality and long-term implications for local democracy. ●

Indonesia Electoral Reform Outlook Forum 2026 in Jakarta, Wednesday (February 4).

FOTO: RIKKY MF



IEROF 2026 Formulates a Roadmap for Electoral Democracy Reform

Perludem once again held the 2026 Indonesia Electoral Reform Outlook Forum (IEROF) as a collaborative dialogue forum between civil society organizations and academics, election organizers, the government, and political parties. Through IEROF, Perludem reiterated that the electoral reform agenda is a medium to long-term process that must be systematically formulated, research-based, and positioned as a collective national agenda.

With the theme "Toward Democratization: Beyond Procedural Electoral Reform," IEROF 2026 is motivated by the realization that the improvement of Indonesian democracy cannot stop at merely technical and administrative aspects. Electoral reform must also address the quality of representation, integrity, and the relationship between election and strengthening popular sovereignty.

Perludem Executive Director Heroik M. Pratama stated that the Constitutional Court (MK) had ordered the separation of national and regional elections to simplify the system. However, this ruling has not been fully addressed in the legislative agenda. Therefore, civil society

organizations have compiled six books on the Election Bill as research-based references to prevent the DPR from hastily deliberating revisions ahead of the electoral stage.

Meanwhile, Viola Reininda, Program Manager of the Indonesian Center for Law and Policy Studies (PSHK), believes there is a gap between elite interests and the public interest. Many progressive Constitutional Court rulings have not been consistently implemented in legislation. She emphasized that post-reform democracy should be participatory and deliberative, not a return to top-down patterns. Democratic representation, she argued, must meet philosophical, legal, and sociological aspects.

From a national planning perspective, Nuzula Anggeraini, Director of Ideology, Nationality, Politics, and Democracy of the National Development Planning Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (IKPD BAPPENAS RI), stated that the government plays a neutral facilitator role in electoral reform. She emphasized the importance of evidence-based policy and acknowledged that the improvement of electoral governance is inseparable from political party reform.

Meanwhile, Darren Hughes, Chief Executive of the Electoral Reform Society (ERS), shared good practices in the UK, including the use of referendums and participatory mechanisms to ensure the legitimacy of reforms. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring electoral access for people with disabilities through the provision of braille ballots and mobility assistance.

In the second session, on electoral governance, Hadar Nafis Gumay, Director of Network for Democracy and Electoral Integrity (Netgrit), stated that the use of information technology in elections is inevitable. Digitalization

data for political campaigns pose serious challenges. In this context, data protection and digital campaign oversight are integral to electoral governance. Therefore, collaboration between election organizers, the government, digital platforms, and civil society is necessary to maintain information integrity.

From the organizers' perspective, General Elections Commission (KPU) Commissioner Betty Epsilon Idroos explained that the use of technology is part of the current electoral management strategy. KPU is regularly improving the digitalization of its information systems, data publication, and strengthening its



Discussion
Towards Democratization: Beyond Procedural Electoral Reform, IEROF 2026 in Jakarta, Wednesday (February 4).

PHOTO: RIKKY MF

Strengthening
of Electoral Governance: Implementation and Reform of Election Organizers, IEROF 2026 in Jakarta, Wednesday (February 4).

PHOTO: RIKKY MF

has significantly facilitated voter data updates, the publication of results, and the transparency of vote recapitulation. However, he emphasized

that technology is not the sole solution. Without strong governance, digital innovation pose the risk of creating new problems, including disputes and a crisis of public trust. Therefore, he emphasized that the use of electoral information systems must be accompanied by independent audits, strict cybersecurity standards, and a swift and transparent correction mechanism.

Nenden Sekar Arum, Executive Director of Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENet), stated that electoral integrity is now largely determined by the state of information ecosystem. She noted that organized disinformation, manipulation of social media algorithms, and misuse of personal

information technology infrastructure to increase transparency and accuracy. However, she acknowledged that digital transformation must be balanced with the readiness of human resource, system security, and technical risk mitigation on the field.

Meanwhile, from an international perspective, Fair Vote UK Executive Director Kyle Taylor emphasized the importance of regulatory consistency and stable institutional design. He argued that electoral reform should not be carried out in a piecemeal or arbitrary manner, as this could undermine the system's legitimacy. He emphasized that the independence of election organizers must be maintained through a transparent, merit-based selection mechanism, thus minimizing political interference in technical decision-making.

In Electoral Justice System session, Titi

adil dan

ngan
nan
i
in
mil

Electoral

Justice System:
A Comparison
of Experiences
in Election Law
Enforcement
Reform, IEROF
2026 in Jakarta,
Wednesday
(February 4).

PHOTO: RIKKY MF

Anggraini, a lecturer at Faculty of Law of University of Indonesia (UI), stated that the design of electoral justice system (EJS) significantly determines the quality of democracy. The electoral justice system not only resolves disputes but also reflects the upholding of principle of the rule of law. She also highlighted the rampant phenomenon of autocratic legalism, namely the use of law to undermine democracy. In the context of election, this is evident through the manipulation of rules, systems, and election participants, including the use of social assistance, vote buying, and the involvement of officials. Weakened democracy, she argued, often begins with the normalization of fraud and the restriction of citizens' rights through legal instruments.

Meanwhile, Charles Simabura, Director of Center for Constitutional Studies (PUSaKO) at Faculty of Law of Andalas University, assessed that institutionally, Indonesia's election law enforcement system has actually developed significantly post-Reform. However, the main problem lies in the intervention of political elites and the quality of human resources. He also cited the increasing trend of involvement of civil servants, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), and the Indonesian National Police (Polri) in election dynamics, which bears the potential to undermine neutrality.

Rahmat Bagja, Chairperson of General Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (Bawaslu RI), emphasized that making Bawaslu the electoral administration judicial body was

not the proper solution. He argued that the main challenges lie in human resource capacity, the complexity of its authority, and the effectiveness of coordination with law enforcement officials.

In general, IEROF 2026 emphasizes that Indonesia's democratic challenges are not merely technical issues, but also concern system design, elite behavior, institutional integrity, and the quality of public participation. Electoral reform must be understood as part of an effort to save democracy from decline and placed on the collective national agenda.

Various recent studies have shown that the 2024 General Election will be a crucial turning point for democracy. Sana Jaffrey and Eve Warburton (2024) argue that the 2024 election marks the beginning of democratic decline, placing Indonesia on the brink of competitive authoritarianism, as conceptualized by Levitsky and Way (2020). This assessment is further supported by the V-Dem 2025 report, which classifies Indonesia as an electoral autocracy, a condition where election is procedurally held but no longer guarantee fundamental democratic principles such as fairness, accountability, and meaningful competition.

An evaluation of the 2019 and 2024 simultaneous elections (five-box) shows that the simultaneous election design, combined with an open proportional system, has resulted in increasing fundamental problems in the elections. These include increased workload on election organizers, high numbers of invalid votes, complexity in electoral management, and increased vote buying. Furthermore, the 2024 elections also exposed deeper structural issues within Indonesia's electoral and party systems. The accumulation of regulatory and implementation issues demonstrates the urgent need for electoral reform.

In the previous year, Perludem, through this forum, submitted approximately 10 recommendations regarding the urgent revision of the Election Law within the framework of electoral system reform in Indonesia. Some of these recommendations are certainly still

highly relevant to the current situation. For example, the design of simultaneous elections with a separation of national and regional elections, a mixed electoral system as an alternative to improve the legislative electoral system, increase of women's representation, efforts to create transparency and accountability in campaign funding, and efforts to improve election law enforcement.

Continuing such efforts, IEROF 2026 again recommends a number of key points regarding the future electoral reform agenda in Indonesia, including:

1. Electoral reform must be viewed as a systematic process to improve the quality of electoral governance and democracy, the results of which are sometimes not immediately visible. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that electoral reform is a medium- to long-term plan. This will ensure a roadmap that serves as a shared guide for all stakeholders.
2. Electoral reform must be placed on the collective agenda of the state, political parties, election organizers, civil society, and the public at large to strengthen public trust in elections and democracy, not merely a political elite agenda to recalculate electoral gains and losses.
3. The implementation of the Election Law revision must diligently be carried out, based on empirical and theoretical evaluations of previous elections. This includes adherence to the Constitutional Court's non-negotiable ruling, through follow-up to the Constitutional Court's ruling in future legislation.
4. Cost-effectiveness in elections, including regional elections, is achieved not by replacing direct election with election via the DPRD, but by reducing the format and length of stages and optimizing digital technology. Beyond this, the high costs of elections lie with the campaigning and vote buying of the participating actors (parties and candidates).
5. It is important to optimize digital technology in election to ensure the principles of direct, general, free, confidential, honest and fair election, which must be based on services and protection of citizens' rights.
6. Addressing electoral disinformation cannot be achieved through censorship and punishment, but rather through ensuring transparency and accountability, particularly among state actors and companies such as social media platforms. This way, electoral governance can prioritize the increase of trust in electoral process and results over punishment.
7. Cost efficiency in election can be achieved by limiting donations and expenses, but more importantly, ensuring honesty and accountability. One way to achieve this shall be through transparency about campaign costs (offline and online), not only borne by election participants but also by companies, including social media platforms.
8. It must be recognized that the challenge to democratic institutions in Indonesia lies not in the presence of these institutions, but rather in the quality of human resource performance who runs them. Therefore, revolutionizing the procedures for filling positions in these institutions is the primary solution. This requires, of course, removing the political interests that have held these institutions hostage.
9. The current decline of democracy is often facilitated by the creation of repressive legal instruments. Election law reform and enforcement must be carried out with democratic principles in mind, not using the law as an authoritarian instrument used only to "fight" political groups that disagree with those in power.

Electoral reform must be viewed as a systematic process to improve the quality of electoral governance and democracy, the results of which are sometimes not immediately visible.

The Coalition Held Audience with the NasDem Party Faction, Tuesday (January 27)

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



The Coalition Held Audience with the Democratic Party DPP, Monday (January 26)

PHOTO: HAURA IHSANI



The Civil Society Coalition Holds Audience with Political Parties to Encourage Codification of the Election Law

The Coalition for the Election Law Codification has conducted a series of audiences and policy dialogues with several political parties in the House of Representatives in January– February 2026. This activity is part of an advocacy effort to encourage electoral system reform through a more comprehensive, systematic Election Law

Codification, and oriented towards the strengthening of electoral democracy.

During the meeting, the coalition presented the Civil Society-Proposed Draft of the Election Bill Revision, which has been codified into six main books, covering aspects of the electoral system, election actors, electoral management, law enforcement, sanctions, and concluding provisions. The coalition

1. Coalition Audience with the NasDem Party Faction, Tuesday (January 27)

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



2. The Coalition submitted the draft of the Election Bill Codification proposed by civil society to the Golkar Party DPP, Wednesday (January 28)

PHOTO: HAURA IHSANI



3. The Coalition Held Audience with the Association of Indonesian Regency Governments (APKASI), Wednesday (January 28)

PHOTO: HAURA IHSANI



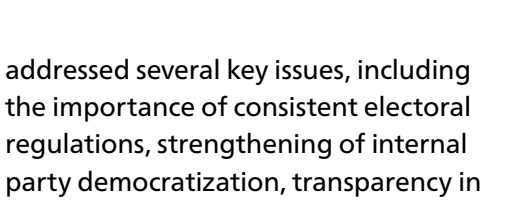
4. The Coalition Held Audience with DPP of the PAN Party, Friday (January 30)

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



5. The Coalition Held Audience with DPP of the PDIP Party, Friday (February 3)

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



6. The Coalition Held Audience with DPP of the PKS Party, Friday (February 6)

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



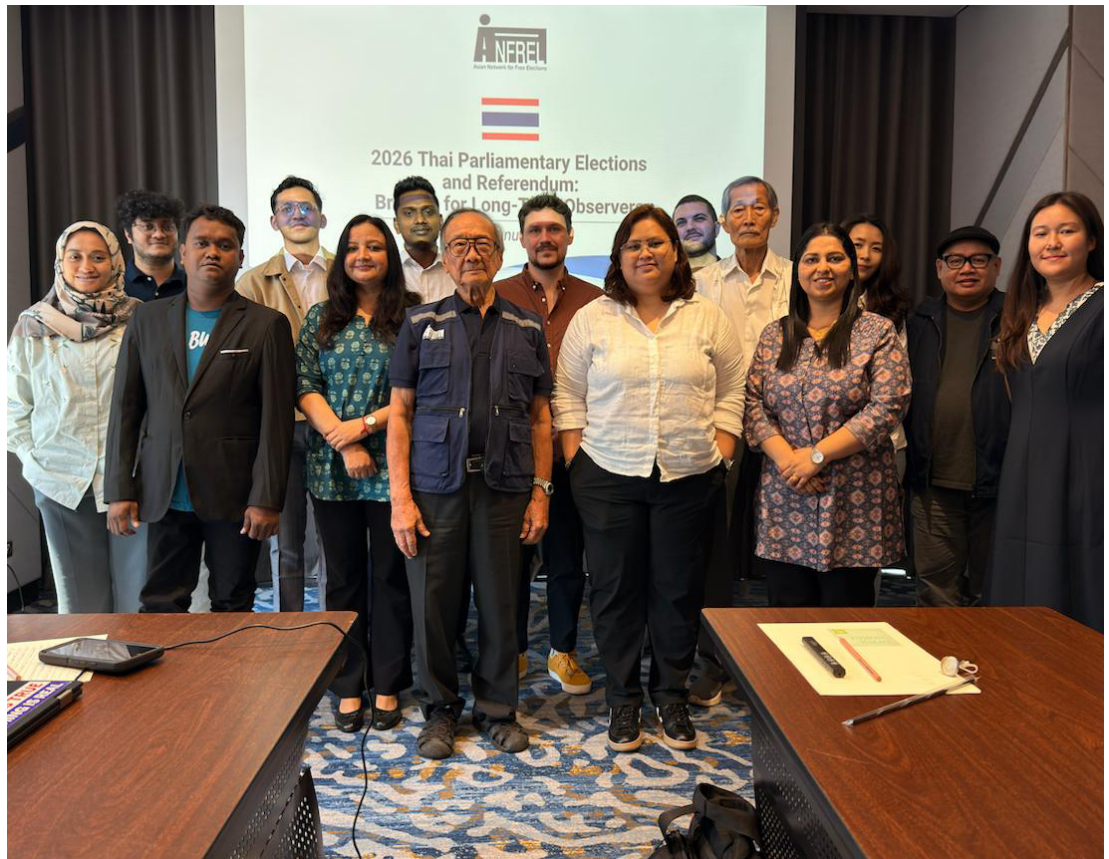
addressed several key issues, including the importance of consistent electoral regulations, strengthening of internal party democratization, transparency in political financing, increase of women’s representation, and strengthening of the independence and professionalism of election organizers. At the same time, the coalition also listened to the views, critical notes, and political positions of each party on the reform agenda.

Through this hearing, the coalition urges that Election Law reform be carried out in an inclusive, participatory manner, and based on strong policy arguments. Dialogue with political parties is a strategic step to build mutual understanding and explore shared commitments to strengthening the foundations of Indone-

sian democracy. The civil society coalition will continue to monitor the legislative process to ensure that the Election Law revision truly address the need for improved electoral governance and increase of public trust in the political system.

The Civil Society Coalition for the Election Law Codification is comprised of Perludem, PUSaKO Andalas University, Puskapol UI, the Indonesian Women’s Coalition (KPI), Network for Democracy and Electoral Integrity (Netgrit), ICW, PSHK, Themis Indonesia, Migrant CARE, the Indonesian Association of People with Disabilities (PPDI), SAFENet, Remotivi, Institute for Community Research and Advocacy (Elsam), and Regional Autonomy Implementation Monitoring Committee (KPPOD). ●

Perludem with all ANFREL members before monitoring the 2026 Thai Elections



Perludem's Participation and ANFREL's Record in the 2026 Thai Elections

The Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem), as part of Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), participated in the monitoring mission for the 2026 Thai Parliamentary Elections and Constitutional Referendum on February 8, 2026. The monitoring included the campaign period, early voting, election day, and post-election stages.

ANFREL deployed 24 international observers in 31 provinces to provide a comprehensive overview of the process, quality of implementation, political environment, and level of inclusiveness of the electoral process in Thailand.

Perludem researcher Muhammad Iqbal Kholidin was part of the international

monitoring team and was directly engaged in field observations on election day and vote counting. In carrying out his duties, he directly observed the opening of polling stations (TPS), voting, and the closing and counting stages. Observations were conducted to assess procedural compliance, logistical readiness, voter accessibility, and transparency of the counting process.

Overall, the election proceeded peacefully and orderly. Approximately 36 million voters took participation, with a turnout rate of 65–70 percent. There was no systematic violence or intimidation, and basic voting and vote-counting procedures were generally carried out according to regulations. However, a number of long-standing issues persisted, particularly

Perludem researcher Iqbal Kholidin monitored the 2026 Thai elections.



regarding the quality of official training, inconsistencies in assessing the validity of ballots, and administrative errors during early voting.

The invalid ballot rate was recorded at 3.56 percent for district elections and 4.50 percent for party-list elections, meaning that for every 100 votes cast, approximately 3 to 4 were declared invalid and not counted in the final results. This figure is relatively high compared to international practice. According to Iqbal, this demonstrates the need for an evaluation of ballot design, clarity of regulations, and more consistent assessment standards oriented toward protecting voter intention.

Another finding is that access to vote tabulation center, which is not open to observers and the media, poses a serious transparency concern. While voting and vote counting at polling stations (TPS) are generally observable, the recapitulation process at higher levels takes place without adequate public access. This situation creates a perception gap, particularly when narrow vote margins or demands for recounts emerge in some areas.

In terms of inclusivity, female and young voter participation was quite high, but this was not fully reflected in the representation of candidates and political leadership. Meanwhile, 23 percent of polling stations observed were not accessible to people with disabilities without assistance.

The campaign environment was dynamic and relatively peaceful, but remained overshadowed by unequal access to resources, allegations of vote buying, and increased online disinformation, particularly regarding the constitutional referendum. Within the broader legal-political context, the solid role of judicial institutions and independent bodies in determining political contest also shaped the dynamics of electoral competition, including through candidate disqualifications near the election day.

Based on this monitoring, ANFREL recommended the standardization of the layout of voting booths, strengthening of staff training (especially regarding the coding of ballot envelopes), improvement of accessibility measures, and provision of full access for observers. ●

While voting and vote counting at polling stations (TPS) are generally observable, the recapitulation process at higher levels takes place without adequate public access.

Perludem

Executive Director, Heroik M. Pratama, delivered notes and views regarding the parliamentary threshold at the DPR's Public Hearing.

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



House of Representatives Commission II Public Hearing: Perludem Delivers Notes on Parliamentary Threshold

The Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem) issued critical comments regarding the implementation of parliamentary threshold in Indonesia's electoral system. This was conveyed during a Public Hearing (RDPU) of Commission II of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) discussing revision to the Election Law at the Parliament Complex in Jakarta (3/2).

Perludem Executive Director Heroik M. Pratama stated that parliamentary threshold is closely related to the disproportionality of election results and efforts to simplify political parties. However, he argued that the higher the threshold, the greater the loss to voters, as their votes fail to convert into seats.

"The higher the parliamentary threshold, the greater the disproportionality of the election, as many votes are wasted," Heroik explained to the leadership and members of Commission II of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia.

Based on data from the 2024 election, with a threshold of 4 percent, approximately 17.3 million votes were wasted by the 10 political parties participating in the election. These votes were not converted into seats in the DPR because the elected parties did not meet the national threshold. In a proportional representation system, this situation directly impacts the widening gap

between the percentage of votes received and the percentage of seats allocated.

Heroik further explained that raising the threshold would not automatically reduce the number of parties in parliament. According to Perludem data, in the 2009 election, with a threshold of 2.5 percent, there were nine parties in the DPR. However, when the threshold was raised to 3.5 percent in 2014, the number of parties actually increased to 10.

"This means that the parliamentary threshold does not deliver a significant impact on efforts to simplify political parties," he emphasizes.

According to Heroik, party system evaluation is not solely based on the number of parties, but also on the concentration of seats. He cited the UK for example, which remains considered a two-party system despite having 15 parties in parliament in the 2024 election. This is because the majority of seats are concentrated solely in the Labour Party and the Conservative Party.

Heroik also recalls the history of the 1999 Indonesian Elections. At that time, despite the absence of a parliamentary threshold and the large number of participants, the naturally formed party system was actually more streamlined, dominated by five major parties. Of the 48 participating parties, only a small fraction actually gained significant and consolidated support in parliament. ●



Reassessing the Parliamentary Threshold

Ahead of the Election Law revision, the issue of parliamentary threshold has again become a topic of concern. This follows Constitutional Court Ruling No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023, which ordered a reformulation and rational determination of the threshold for future elections.

Some political parties in parliament have proposed raising the threshold from the current 4 percent, citing a simplification of the party system. Others have opted to maintain the current figure. Conversely, non-parliamentary parties and new parties have pushed for a reduction, or even abolition, of the threshold, arguing it limits opportunities for representation (Kompas, 2026).

What Parliamentary Threshold Is?

Parliamentary Threshold (PT) refers to a stipulation regarding the minimum percentage of valid national votes a

political party must obtain to participate in the allocation of seats in the DPR. This stipulation determines whether a party's votes can be converted into seats at the national level.

The current parliamentary threshold is set at 4 percent of the total valid national vote. This means that only political parties that secure at least 4 percent of the national vote are eligible to participate in the DPR seat counting and allocation process. Conversely, if a party obtains less than 4 percent of the national valid vote, it cannot secure any seats in the DPR.

Incorrect Instrument

Since the 2009 election, the parliamentary threshold has been in effect, starting at 2.5 percent in 2009, raised to 3.5 percent in 2014, and then to 4 percent in 2019 and 2024. Increasing PT level in each election has always been intended to simplify the party system. However, in reality, increasing PT level has

not succeeded in simplifying the party system in the DPR.

In the 2009 Election with a PT level of 2.5%, nine parties won seats in the DPR, in the 2014 Election with a PT (3.5%) there were ten parties won seats in the DPR, in the 2019 Election nine parties won seats with a PT (4%), and in the 2024 Election with the same PT (4%) there were eight parties won seats in the DPR.

When perceived longitudinally, during the four elections with an increasing trend of parliamentary threshold, the number of parties in the DPR ranged from eight to ten. This fluctuation indicates that the increase in parliamentary threshold has not consistently resulted in a simplification of the party system. There is no linear pattern of decline with the increase in the number of parliamentary threshold. In other words, the threshold instrument has not proven effective in streamlining the multiparty system in parliament.

Disproportionality of Election Results

Rather than simplifying the party system, PT increases the number of wasted votes. The higher the PT, the greater the number of wasted votes due to large number of political parties failing to secure the minimum number of votes required to convert them into seats. Consequently, there is a disproportionality between vote acquisition and seat distribution in the DPR. Parties that pass the threshold secure seats greater than their actual proportion of the vote, while millions of other voters go unrepresented. This situation

undermines the principle of equal vote value in the proportional electoral system.

The wasting of many votes delivers an impact on disproportionate election results. In fact, as a country that uses a proportional electoral system, the balance between the number of votes and the number of seats won by parties should be maintained. Lijphart (2003) in his study explains that the basic principles aimed at by the proportional electoral system are: the percentage of seats obtained is commensurate with the number of votes won and there is equal treatment between large and small parties. However, due to the implementation of PT, there is different treatment between large and small parties.

It is at this point that the debate on parliamentary threshold should clearly be placed. If the main goal of the proportional electoral system is to ensure fair and equal representation, then any policy that poses the potential to increase wasted votes needs to be critically evaluated. The increase in PT should not be solely based on the assumption of simplifying the party system, especially since the data shows that its impact is not linear on the number of parties in the DPR.

Constitutional Court Ruling Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 has provided a clear direction: the threshold must rationally be formulated and based on measurable arguments. This means that the DPR is required to formulate transparent parameters, based on the level of fragmentation, disproportionality index, government effectiveness, or other indicators that can be academically tested.

Future revisions to the Election Law, therefore, will not suffice to simply discuss what percentage is considered ideal. What is more important is answering a fundamental question: does the threshold truly strengthen the quality of democracy, or does it actually narrow the space for citizen representation? Amidst a commitment to the principle of popular sovereignty, every vote should have equal value, and the electoral system must be designed to maintain, not diminish, that equality. ●

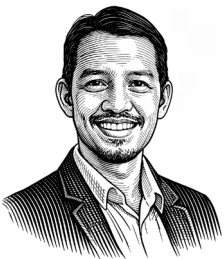
Comparison of the Number of Wasted Votes

ELECTION YEAR	NUMBER OF PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTION	TOTAL VOTES	PARLIAMENTARY THRESHOLD	NUMBER OF PARTIES IN THE DPR	WASTED VOTES	
					AMOUNT	%
1999	48	105,553,708	0	23	3,788,070	3.6
2004	24	113,490,795	0	15	7,567,285	6.7
2009	38	104,048,118	2.5%	9	19,047,481	18.3
2014	12	124,885,737	3.5%	10	2,964,975	2.4
2019	16	139,972,260	4%	9	13,595,842	9.7
2024	18	151,796,631	4%	8	17,304,303	11.4



Mestakung Revision of the Election Law

Compared to the context of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, the context of the revision of the election law for the 2024-2029 period has received more support from the political and legal community. All provisions that usually cause legislation to drag on have been constitutionally resolved. The Constitutional Court has issued many final and binding rulings that address the need for improvements to Indonesia's elections. This supportive situation (Mestakung) should be viewed positively by lawmakers.



Usep Hasan Sadikin
 Researcher of
 the Association
 for Elections
 and Democracy
 (Perludem)

Authority to Establish Electoral Districts

The first mestakung provision relates to the General Elections Commission's authority in establishing electoral districts. Constitutional Court Ruling No. 80/PUU-XX/2022 marks a significant shift toward a more impartial process in the allocation of electoral districts for the DPR and DPRD elections. By placing this authority in the hands of an independent electoral management body, the opportunity to uphold the principle of equal vote value (one person, one vote, one value) is greater. The allocation of seats per electoral district, balanced representation between Java

and outside Java, as well as proportional population size are now more likely to be guaranteed through technocratic mechanisms than through political compromise in parliament.

Prior to said Ruling, the House of Representatives, through an appendix to the law, held full authority to establish electoral districts for the DPR and even provincial DPRDs. This design has long been criticized for creating potential conflicts of interest. Politicians and party factions in the DPR could potentially maintain or alter electoral district boundaries based on electoral motives and power calculations, rather than solely on the need for fair representation. In electoral literature, this situation is often associated with partisan redistricting or even gerrymandering, which risk to reduce the quality of electoral competition.

The transfer of authority to the KPU through the Constitutional Court's ruling should therefore be interpreted as an effort to strengthen the integrity of Indonesia's electoral system. However, formal independence alone is not enough. Methodological transparency, meaningful public participation, and robust oversight mechanisms remain prerequisites for truly accountable electoral district formation

and freedom from political interference. Without these safeguards, the potential for bias remains, even though authority has been transferred from political actors to electoral management bodies.

Parliamentary Threshold

The Constitutional Court's ruling on parliamentary threshold also has the potential to expedite the revision of the Election Law. Ruling 116/PUU-XXI/2023 closes the debate that has long been a source of political deadlock. Parliamentary threshold provision often triggers a tug-of-war between large parties seeking to maintain or raise the threshold for party simplification, and smaller parties that feel disadvantaged and push for its elimination or reduction. With the Constitutional Court's ruling annulling this provision, the most sensitive issue in the revision discussions is automatically resolved within the constitutional realm, eliminating it from protracted political negotiations.

This situation simplifies and streamlines the legislative process. The DPR and the government no longer need to debate the threshold or compromise schemes, often fraught with electoral interests. Since the Constitutional Court's ruling is final and binding, lawmakers need only adjust technical norms related to seat allocation, the method of converting votes into seats, and the design of party system, without being burdened with calculating the political costs and benefits of the threshold. With one crucial issue removed,

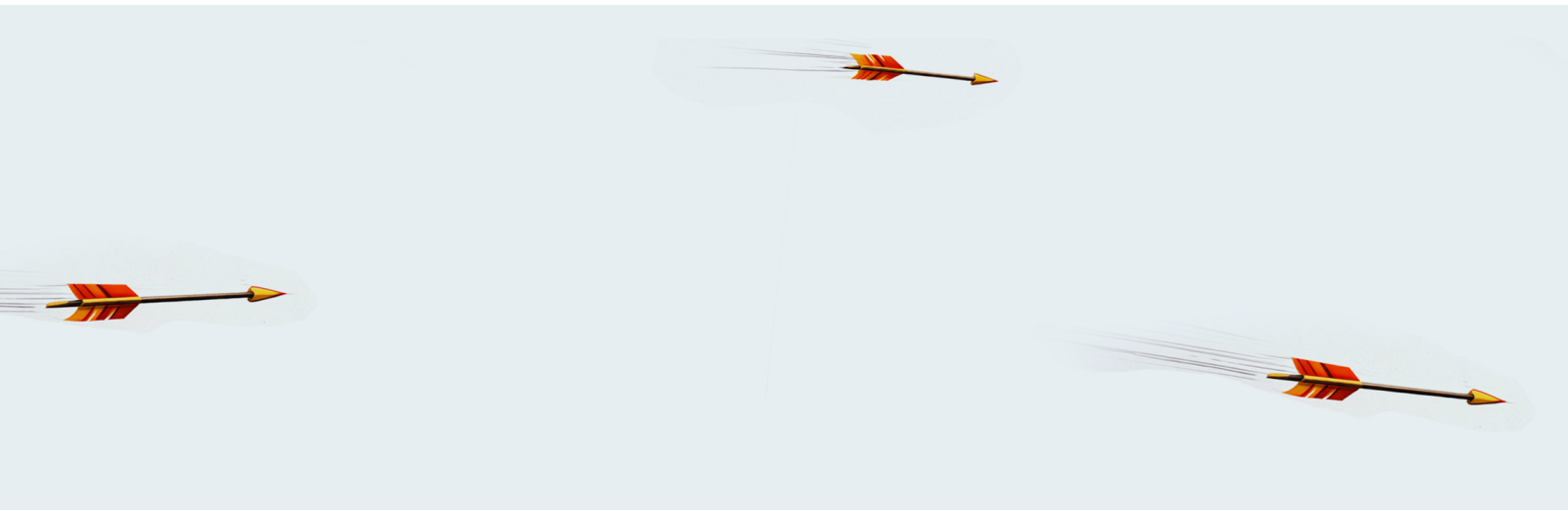
political time and energy can be focused on improving other aspects of electoral governance.

Furthermore, the Constitutional Court's removal of the parliamentary threshold also creates legal certainty, accelerating regulatory harmonization. Without provisions influenced by the preferences of large and small parties, the revision of the Election Law is more based on the principles of representation and electoral fairness, rather than simply a compromise between political forces. In this context, the Constitutional Court's ruling serves as a catalyst, mitigating conflicts of interest and paving the way for faster, more efficient, and more substantial deliberations on the law revision.

Presidential Threshold

The next Mestakung provision that could expedite and improve the revision of election law is the provision eliminating the threshold for presidential and regional head candidacy. This provision, based on Constitutional Court Ruling No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024 and 60/PUU-XXII/2024, could eliminate a crucial source of conflict of interest among political parties. Discussions on the revision of the Election Law have often been hampered by sharp differences between large parties, which tend to maintain a high threshold, and smaller parties, which advocate for its elimination or reduction. Once the Constitutional Court annuls this provision, the space for political compromise on

With the Constitutional Court's ruling annulling this provision, the most sensitive issue in the revision discussions is automatically resolved.



The elimination of debate over the threshold can also create certainty in policy direction.

the threshold issue is closed, preventing revision discussions from being held hostage by protracted debate.

With the option to maintain or change the threshold no longer available, lawmakers no longer need to allocate political energy to transactional negotiations. The Constitutional Court's final and binding ruling has constitutionally resolved the issue. Consequently, the focus of revisions can be directed to technical aspects and other system adjustments, such as the nomination mechanism, the schedule of stages, and the strengthening of electoral governance. This situation has the potential to accelerate the legislative process, as one of the most controversial issues has been resolved outside of the political forum.

Furthermore, the elimination of debate over the threshold can also create certainty in policy direction. The DPR and the government are no longer faced with the political dilemma of maintaining the dominance of large parties or accommodating the aspirations of smaller parties. With the basic framework established by the Constitutional Court, discussions on revision of the Election Law become more technocratic and administrative, rather than ideological or narrowly focused. In this context, the Constitutional Court's ruling actually functions as a "conflict simplifier," paving the way for accelerated revision of the law in a more efficient and focused manner.

Separation of National and Regional Simultaneous Elections

Another Mestakung provision concerns the separation of national and regional simultaneous elections. This provision, based on Constitutional Court Ruling No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, puts an end to the fundamental debate regarding the design of simultaneous elections. Differing views between those who wanted to maintain the five-box model simultaneously and those who advocated for separate stages have often hampered discussions on law revisions. With the Constitutional Court's final and binding ruling, the direction of the election design has been constitutionally determined, eliminating the scope for political friction over the simultaneous format.

Such situation simplifies the legislative agenda because lawmakers are no longer preoccupied with conceptual debates over election models. The DPR and the government can simply follow up on the Constitutional Court's ruling by formulating technical regulations related to the schedule, stages, and adjustments to terms of office impacted by the separation of national and regional elections. Without the option of returning to the old model or maintaining the previous design, the revision deliberation process becomes more focused on implementation and administrative aspects, rather than short-term political interests.

Furthermore, Constitutional Court Ruling No. 135 also creates certainty



If the revision of the Election Law is postponed again, we will enter the next election with a system that is obsolete, fragile, and no longer meets the demands of times.

regarding the direction of electoral system reform, which can accelerate the harmonization of other related regulations, such as laws on regional elections and regional government. With a well-defined overall design, the debate becomes more technocratic and based on the effectiveness of implementation and the quality of democracy, rather than on calculating the electoral advantage of each political force. In this context, the decision serves as a deadlock breaker, opening up space to accelerate the revision of the Election Law in a more structured and efficient manner.

Expediting the Revision

The final Mestakung provision concerns expediting the revision of election law, also included in Constitutional Court Ruling No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Unfortunately, the DPR and the government have been reluctant to expedite deliberations. The Election Bill's status as a priority law for 2025 has yet to be realized. What's happening is not DPR agility, but rather prolonged hesitation. Our politics are on the verge of major change, yet electoral regulations are being allowed to operate with outdated logic.

If the revision of the Election Law is postponed again, we will enter the next election with a system that is obsolete, fragile, and no longer meets the demands of times. At that point, the burden of election integrity crisis cannot be shifted to

the election organizers or voters. The root of the problem is clear: the lack of political courage.

If that's the case, what makes revision of the Election Law so difficult? The answer is simple yet political: changing the rules would alter the landscape of interests. Therefore, some actors in the DPR prefer to delay, minimize, or limit revisions to minor issues. Yet the public needs structural reform, not cosmetic patches.

The momentum for revision is actually wide open. In recent years, civil society, election organizers, academics, and many observers have put forward solid recommendations. This is because all political, technical, and social indicators point to an urgent need to update the law. Democracy doesn't collapse due to external threats alone. It slowly weakens when political actors are reluctant to amend outdated regulations. All that remains is political will: is the DPR willing to put the public interest above short-term electoral calculations?

It's time for Mestakung to act. The public must encourage, monitor, and demand that the DPR and the government open the revision process in a transparent, substantive, and inclusive manner. If this momentum is squandered again, Indonesian democracy will operate under old rules in a new world. Instead of improving Indonesian elections, Indonesian democracy will actually decline further. ●