

Eroded
Democracy,
Misguided
Legislation

Violence Against
Activists and Powers
Resistance to
Electoral Reform



Acidic
Democracy

PRLDM



BULLETIN

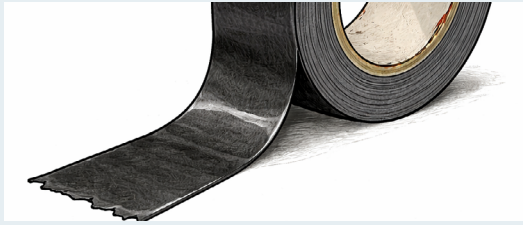
March 2026



UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

FROM ELECTIONS TO CIVIL SPACE

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Eroded Democracy,
Misguided Legislation



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**Heroik M
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Democracy never stands in a blank space. It grows, is tested, and often experiences setbacks along with the dynamics of power and citizen participation. In recent years, various indicators have shown that the quality of Indonesian democracy is facing significant pressure. The decline in the democracy index, the shrinking civic space, and the stagnation of political reform agenda are all signs that our democracy is not running on the right track.

This edition of the bulletin is compiled within the context of this anxiety. Through a series of articles, we attempt to document and reflect on several important events and trends affecting the quality of democracy, particularly in relation to the electoral system and civil liberties. From the stalled discussion of the Election Law revision, to the emergence of the idea of a shortcut through Government Regulation in Lieu of Law concerning Election (*Perppu Pemilu*), to

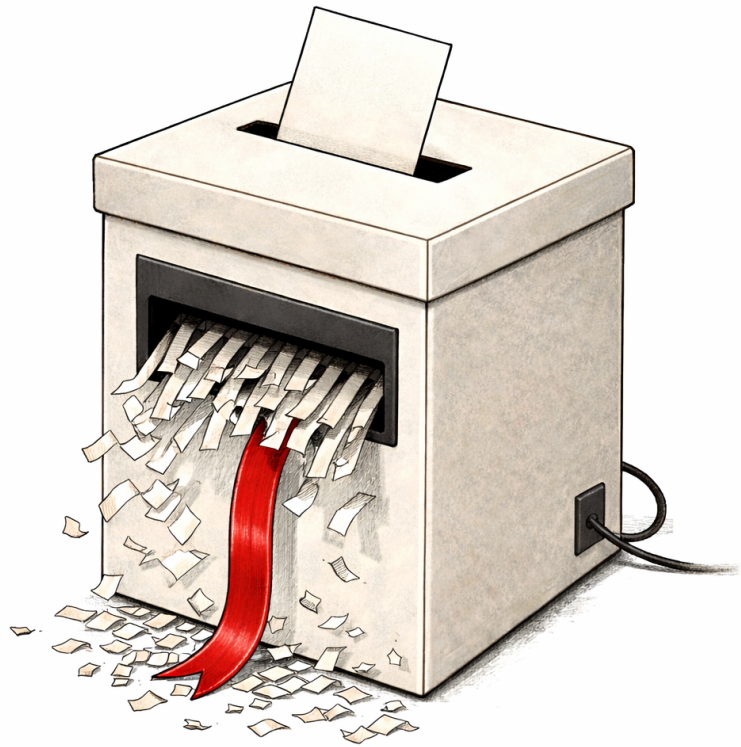
the escalation of violence and intimidation against activists, all demonstrate the interconnectedness of these issues.

This bulletin also presents an advocacy perspective, emphasizing the importance of upholding substantive, not merely procedural, democratic principles. We also present election monitoring experiences in other countries, such as Nepal, as a comparative reflection, demonstrating that democratic challenges are not unique to Indonesia. We hope this provides valuable lessons to encourage future improvements.

We hope this bulletin will be a reading space that is not only informative but also stimulates critical awareness. Ultimately, the quality of democracy is determined not only by institutions, but also by the extent to which the public continues to engage, speak out, and uphold the values of freedom and justice.

We wish you a great read.

Editorial Team



Eroded Democracy, Misguided Legislation

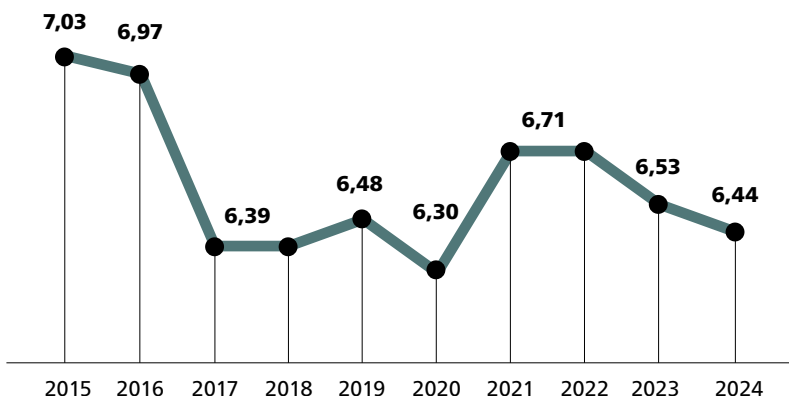
The past decade has demonstrated that Indonesian democracy has not yet fully matured. According to the latest report by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2025, Indonesia's democracy index for 2024 declined even deeper, with a score of 6.44 on a scale of

10, placing it in the "flawed democracy" category. Of the five dimensions measured, the lowest scores were in political culture and civil liberties.

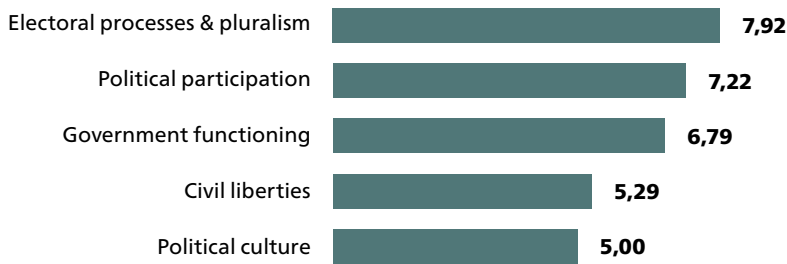
The score of 6.44 places Indonesia in 59th place out of 167 countries measured by the index. With this score, Indonesia is also categorized as a flawed democracy. This position has persisted for at least the past decade, and during that time, Indonesia's Democracy Index score has continued to decline. According to the EIU report, the decline began when Indonesia achieved a democracy index score of 7.03 in 2015 and continued to decline until 2024.

The EIU measures the democracy index across five dimensions: electoral processes and pluralism, government functioning, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. The total score is then

Declining Trend of Democracy Index (2015–2024)



Score Details (0–10)

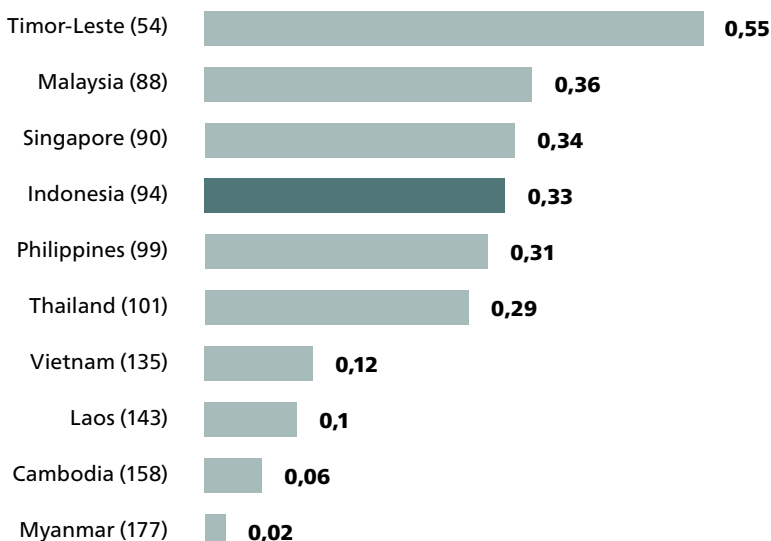


calculated by adding the scores across all dimensions and dividing by five. Of the five dimensions measured, Indonesia’s lowest score was in political culture (5.00), and its highest score was in electoral processes and pluralism (7.92).

In line with the EIU, based on Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute report entitled *Democracy Report 2025, 25 Years of Autocratization - Democracy Trumped?*, Indonesia’s liberal democracy index (LDI) score was 0.33 points in 2024. This score placed Indonesia in 94th place globally, while in the Southeast Asian region it was ranked fourth. The liberal democracy index in V-Dem report designates measurements on liberal aspects (civil-political freedoms) and electoral democracy (the implementation of free and fair elections) through 71 indicators. The index assessment was conducted on 179 countries.

In its report, V-Dem Institute categorized Indonesia as an electoral autocracy, experiencing a shift from

Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) Scores



an electoral democracy. V-Dem noted that declining freedom of expression, the degradation of election quality, and control over democratic institutions were factors in Indonesia’s classification as an electoral autocracy. Furthermore, Indonesian elections were also deemed to be increasingly poor due to several government interventions in the electoral process and declining transparency (V-Dem Institute, 2024).

Looking at this data, the past decade has indeed shown that Indonesian democracy has not only stagnated but also moved towards a more complicated and problematic form. In their analysis, Sana Jaffrey and Eve Warburton argue that Indonesia’s political developments, particularly in the 2024 elections, can no longer be explained as simply democratic backsliding; Indonesia is already on the brink of competitive authoritarianism (Jaffrey & Warburton, 2024).

The concept of competitive authoritarianism refers to a situation in which formal democratic institutions, particularly elections, remain in place and function, but are not conducted fairly due to abuse of power by incumbents (Levitsky & Way, 2010). In the Indonesian context, Jaffrey and Warburton observe that this injustice does not occur in the form of direct fraud on election day, but rather through systematic interventions that occur prior to the election (Jaffrey & Warburton, 2024).

These interventions encompass a variety of practices, such as the use of state apparatus to suppress the opposition, the manipulation of legal regulations for short-term political gain, and the mobilization of state resources for electoral gain. One notable example is the change in presidential and vice-presidential candidacy rules that allowed President Joko Widodo’s son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, to enter the 2024 election through ethically and institutionally problematic mechanisms (Jaffrey & Warburton, 2024).

This situation reflects a crucial transitional phase. Indonesia has not yet fully transformed into an authoritarian

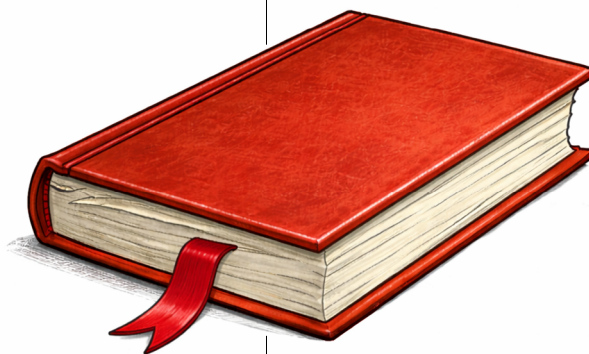
regime, but the foundations of fair political competition are beginning to systematically erode. Therefore, democracy does not collapse by all the sudden, but rather experiences gradual distortion through practices of power that deviate from democratic principles. Therefore, the direction of Indonesia's democratic development depends heavily on future dynamics. If interventions in political competition continue and become increasingly institutionalized, Indonesia has the potential to transform into a more established competitive authoritarian regime. Conversely, if checks and balances mechanisms remain effective, there is still a chance for democratic restoration.

In a broader sense, the decline in the quality of democracy is not only evident in index figures but also reflects real changes in daily political practices. This decline is particularly evident in aspects of civil

criticism of power. It also extends the list of violence and intimidation against activists and critical citizens.

Furthermore, the trend of criminalization and violence against activists also goes hand in hand with restrictions in digital spaces, particularly through the removal of critical content. In several cases, public expression containing criticism of state policies or officials has resulted not only in intimidation but also in being taken down, reported, or having its reach restricted on various digital platforms.

According to Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet), throughout 2025, freedom of expression in Indonesia's cyberspace experienced a significant escalation in violations. A total of 351 violations were recorded, with 344 victims, a sharp increase compared to 2024, when there were only 146



liberties and political culture. One example is the acid attack by military officers on Anderi Yunus, Deputy Coordinator for External Affairs at the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Indonesian: *Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan* (KontraS). This incident demonstrates that safe spaces for civil society, including human rights defenders, remain vulnerable to intimidation and acts of violence.

This very case also reflects issues within the political culture dimension, as violence against activists indicates the lack of strengthening of democratic norms that respect differing views and guarantee

cases with 170 victims. Political issues were the primary trigger, with 215 cases, closely related to the massive wave of protests in August–September 2025 against the House of Representatives' policies.

Such phenomenon demonstrates that the narrowing of civil space is no longer limited to physical spaces but has also penetrated online. In this context, freedom of expression, a crucial component of civil liberties, is under pressure through legal approaches, social pressure, and digital platform mechanisms.

This situation also emphasizes that democratic decline is not only occurring at the institutional level, but also in the daily

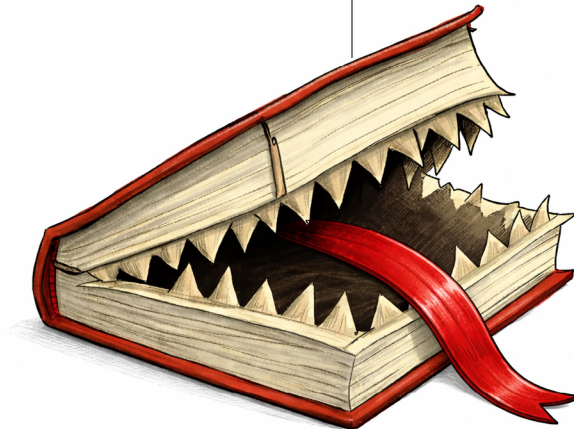
practices of citizens. Whether through criminalization, acts of violence, or the removal of critical content, all point to the same trend: the weakening of guarantees for civil liberties and the weakening of a democratic political culture.

A Shortcut That Threatens Democracy

Amidst the downward trend in Indonesian democracy, the stagnant discussion of the Election Law revisions demonstrates the absence of a serious commitment by the state to structural improvements to the quality of democracy. To date, discussions on the Election Law revisions have not yet begun in an open and participatory manner, based on a comprehensive evaluation of the various issues in previous elections. Yet, the findings from previous elections, ranging from the complexity of the system, the workload of election organizers, to the

The use of a Perppu not only risks ignoring the principle of checks and balances but also closes off the space for deliberation that is at the heart of democratic legislative process. The revision of the Election Law should be a momentum to absorb the lessons learned from previous elections, improve the design of the electoral system, and strengthen the integrity of electoral administration. However, if changes are instead pursued through a Perppu, the space for comprehensively examining these issues is likely to be severely limited, and even potentially be ignored.

Furthermore, the tendency to use Perppu instruments also reflects problems in political culture and governance, as reflected in the low democracy index scores. When strategic policies concerning democratic interests are hastily made and with minimal participation, this reinforces the impression that the democratic process



unfairness of the competition, clearly require a planned and meaningful legislative response.

Instead of promoting a transparent and accountable legislative process through the mechanism of revising laws, recent discussions have emerged about issuing a Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (*Perppu*) concerning Election. This discourse should be viewed as a serious threat to democracy. This is because a Perppu, which is constitutionally only permitted under a state of emergency, poses the potential to be misused to circumvent the deliberation process, which should involve broad public participation.

is increasingly moving away from the principles of openness and accountability.

Finally, in the context of declining civil liberties and increasing pressure on critical spaces, issuing a Perppu on Elections without a deliberative process will only exacerbate the situation. Democracy is not solely measured by the existence of elections, but also by how regulations are formulated through an inclusive, transparent, and public-interest-based process. Therefore, the commitment to returning democracy to its proper course must begin with the courage to create an honest, inclusive, and accountable space, before democracy loses its meaning. ●

Discussion held by the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law in Jakarta, Thursday (March 5).

PHOTO: RIKKY MF



The Stalled Revision of the Election Law, a Disrupted Democratic Reform

Discussion on the revision of the Election Law have yet to begin, despite the increasingly pressing need to address various issues in the electoral process. The lack of a clear agenda in the House of Representatives (DPR) raises concerns that the momentum for reform will be missed, especially since regulatory changes require considerable time and careful planning to address systemic issues in elections.

Heroik Mutaqin Pratama, Executive Director of the Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem), stated that revising the Election Law is crucial to address various issues that arose during the previous election. He stated that evaluating electoral regulations is

necessary to ensure a better functioning of the future election system as well as strengthen democracy.

“Revising the Election Law is crucial to address various issues that have arisen during the election process,” Heroik said in a discussion titled “What’s New with Our Election Law Revision?” in Jakarta (March 5).

Heroik perceives there’s currently no clarity regarding when and how the DPR will begin deliberations on the revised election law. He believes that changes to electoral regulations require sufficient time for deliberation, as they involve various aspects of the political system and electoral administration.

“To this extent, we haven’t seen any clarity on when and how the revision

of the Election Law will begin to be discussed," said Heroik.

He added that the revision of the Election Law should serve as a momentum for a comprehensive evaluation of various aspects of the electoral system. This includes the design of electoral system and a number of regulations that have sparked debate in the practice of politics.

Meanwhile, Hurriyah, Director of Center for Political Studies (Puskapol) at University of Indonesia, is of opinion that electoral regulation reforms must adhere to democratic principles, and that changes to electoral regulations should not be driven solely by short-term political interests. She believes that electoral regulations are a crucial foundation of a democratic system, and therefore, the process of changing them must carefully be carried out. Thus, discussions on revisions to the Election Law must be conducted openly and deliberatively to avoid undermining the quality of democracy.

"The process must be open and deliberative so as not to undermine the quality of democracy," she said.

Hurriyah outlined four key principles under scrutiny regarding the revision of the Elections Law (UU Pemilu): constitutionality, competitiveness, representation, and accountability, which could be proposed to political parties in parliament.

"In my opinion, there are at least four things we need to continually remind the DPR today, as well as to the political parties," said Hurriyah.

Furthermore, Hurriyah emphasized the importance of involving the public, academics, and civil society in the deliberations on the revised law. The involvement of various parties is considered to help ensure that changes to electoral regulations not only accommodate the interests of political elites but also genuinely aim to strengthen Indonesia's democratic system. ●

There's currently no clarity regarding when and how the DPR will begin deliberations on the revised election law.

Four Principles of the Revision of the Election Law



1

Constitutionality

Revisions to the Election Law must remain in line with the constitution and must not conflict with existing Constitutional Court (MK) rulings. MK rulings must serve as the primary reference to ensure electoral regulations remain valid and constitutional.

2

Fair Competitiveness

All political parties need an equal opportunity to compete. Practices that limit competition, such as barriers to candidacy or patronage politics, need to be eradicated to ensure more open and healthy competition.

3

Representation

Elections aren't just about voting, but also about ensuring that representatives truly represent the voices of voters in their regions. Elected candidates must establish strong bonds with constituents and champion their interests in the House of Representatives (DPR/DPRD).

4

Accountability

The organization of elections must be transparent and free from vote buying. Systems must be designed to ensure accountability and prevent practices that undermine electoral integrity.

Deputy Coordinator of the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan (KontraS)), Andrie Yunus.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Assault on Andrie Yunus: An Emergency Alarm for Indonesian Democracy

The Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem) strongly condemns the acid attack on Andrie Yunus, Deputy Coordinator of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Indonesian: *Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan* (KontraS)), in the early hours of Friday, 13 March 2026, in the Salemba area of Central Jakarta. The heinous act left the victim with serious burns to several parts

of his body, including his face and eyes.

Perludem expresses full solidarity with Andrie Yunus and the entire human rights defenders community. An attack on one human rights defender is an attack on all of us, and on the future of Indonesian democracy.

Perludem views the attack as a serious threat to civil liberties and the safety of human rights defenders in Indonesia. In a democracy, advocacy work, criticism of public policy, and citizen participation in



oversight of power are legitimate and protected by the constitution. Therefore, any form of violence against individuals fulfilling these roles is an attack on democratic principles.

Furthermore, this incident must be construed within a broader context of the weakening trend of democracy in Indonesia in recent years. Democracy indicators point to a decline in quality, particularly in civil liberties, freedom of expression, and the security of citizens' voices. In such a situation, the increasing intimidation, criminalization, and violence against activists and human rights defenders are not isolated symptoms but rather part of a concerning pattern.

The assault on Andrie Yunus poses the potential to intensify the chilling effect on civil society at large. When human rights

defenders can be brutally assaulted in public spaces without a sense of security, the message conveys a permissive attitude toward violence and a narrowing of citizens' participation. This will ultimately deliver a direct impact on the quality of democracy, including the public's oversight of state administration.

As an organization focused on strengthening democracy and election systems, Perludem emphasizes that the existence of a safe civic space is a primary prerequisite for free and fair elections. Without guaranteed security for civil society, including activists and human rights defenders, the integrity of the democratic process will continue to erode.

For this reason, Perludem urges law enforcement officials to:

1. **Thoroughly Investigate and Arrest the Perpetrators:** Urging law enforcement officials to immediately arrest the actual perpetrators and reveal the intellectual actors behind this assault.
2. **Guarantee Protection for Human Rights Defenders:** Demanding that the state provide actual security guarantees for humanitarian workers who often face intimidation and violence in carrying out their duties.
3. **Full Recovery for the Victim:** Ensuring that Andrie Yunus receives the best medical care, rehabilitation, as well as complete restitution of all material and immaterial losses.
4. **Quit All Forms of Terror:** Rejecting all attempts to silence critical voices through violent means that violate the principles of law, humanity, and democracy.

Furthermore, the state must demonstrate its commitment to protecting human rights defenders and ensuring that there is no room for impunity. Failure to fully identify and prosecute the perpetrator will only amplify the message that violence against civilians can be perpetrated without legal consequences. ●

Perludem

researcher, Haykal, monitors the 2026 Nepal Election.



Perludem's Participation in Monitoring Nepal's 2026 Elections: Notes and Findings

The Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem), as part of Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), took participation in monitoring the 2026 Nepalese Parliamentary Elections. This involvement is part of Perludem's commitment to enriching comparative perspectives in examining the various challenges of electoral administration. Through this monitoring, Perludem gained important lessons relevant to reflection and strengthening advocacy for electoral reform in Indonesia.

Perludem researcher, Haykal, became part of the international monitoring team and was directly engaged in field observations. Through this involvement, Perludem gained a firsthand view of the

dynamics of the electoral process, from the voting and vote counting process to the interactions between election organizers, security forces, and voters at the local level.

Based on ANFREL's findings, the 2026 Nepalese Parliamentary Elections were generally peaceful and orderly, with voter turnout maintained despite the previously turbulent political climate of September 2025. However, despite this procedural smoothness, several fundamental issues persisted, particularly related to weak enforcement of regulations, low transparency of campaign funding, and the unequal distribution of inclusiveness in the electoral process.

One key finding was the weak enforcement of electoral regulations, particularly regarding campaign

Table of Key Findings of the 2026 Nepal Parliamentary Election Monitoring

ASPECTS	KEY FINDINGS	NOTES
Electoral Administration	The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) is considered quite credible despite limited time and not in full members.	Lack of voter education and access to information, particularly in remote areas.
Regulatory Compliance & Accountability	The implementation of the campaign code of ethics is weak and inconsistent.	Many violations (vote buying, misuse of resources), law enforcement is not strict.
Campaign Funding	Regulations exist but implementation is weak.	Excessive spending, non-transparent reporting, inequality for women & marginalized groups.
Election Security	The apparatus help maintain order.	The presence of armed personnel near polling stations poses the potential to intimidate and disrupt confidentiality.
Inclusivity	Participation of specific groups exists but has not been optimized.	Women and marginalized groups are underrepresented, obstacles for the disabled and elderly, young candidates find it difficult to enter.
Election Observation	Civil society monitoring is quite active.	Limited capacity & funding, observer (especially international) access is hampered.
Voter Education	Voters understand the technical aspects of voting.	Lack of understanding of the electoral system as a whole, education is not evenly distributed.
Election & Vote Counting Days	The process is relatively orderly and efficient.	Delays in opening polling stations and procedural inconsistencies.
Post-Election Conditions	Participation of ±58% shows that public trust still retained.	Political reform, transparency and accountability still remain in high demands.



Perludem researcher, Haykal, together with election observers.

implementation. Various violations, including vote buying and misuse of resources, were widely reported, but were not followed-up by firm and consistent enforcement. This problem was further exacerbated by the lack of transparency in campaign finance. Despite expenditure limits and reporting requirements, in

practice, candidates’ expenditures often exceeded these limits, while financial statements were not adequately disclosed to the public. As a result, political competition tended to favor candidates with substantial financial resources, narrowing opportunities for women and marginalized groups to compete on equal terms.

ANFREL noted that representation of women and marginalized groups remains limited, particularly in competitive district-based electoral systems. Furthermore, accessibility for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups has not been fully met, both in terms of infrastructure and services at polling stations. While youth voter participation is high enough to drive political reform, young voters still face barriers to becoming candidates due to the strong dominance of elites within political party structures.

Another finding relates to limited voter education. While most voters understand basic voting procedures, comprehension of the overall electoral system remains low. This is because political education is unequal and does not reach communities in remote areas.

In terms of security, ANFREL assessed that the presence of security forces contributed to the stability of the voting process. However, the placement of security forces that were too close to polling areas in some cases raised concerns regarding the potential for intimidation and violations of the principle of voter secrecy. Furthermore, ANFREL noted restricted access for election observers in several locations, indicating a limited understanding of security forces’ role and mandate in election monitoring.

Overall, ANFREL’s findings confirm that while Nepal’s elections maintained procedural stability, significant structural issues remain in terms of accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness. This situation indicates that electoral democracy is not yet fully operational in a substantive manner and requires comprehensive reform to ensure that elections are not only conducted but also fair and meaningful. ●

Press conference of the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law, at STH Jentera, Jakarta (09/04).



Media Release of the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of Election Law

The Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law is comprised of:



The Association for Elections and Democracy (Indonesian: Perkumpulan untuk Pemilu dan Demokrasi (Perludem))



Network for Democracy and Electoral Integrity (Netgrit)

Accelerates the Discussion of Election Law Revision: Threats of Authoritarianism Behind the Status Quo of Election Law

To date, discussions on the revision of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections (the Election Law) have not yet been conducted by the House of Representatives (DPR) and the President. The absence of concrete steps reflects an unjustifiable legislative stagnation, considering that the urgency of updating electoral regulations has been repeatedly spoke up in various post-2024 election evaluation forums. From a constitutional law perspective, the neglect of the urgent need for regulatory

changes indicates a deficit in institutional commitment to strengthening substantive electoral democracy. This condition cannot be understood merely as an administrative delay, but rather as an indication of the weak political will of the lawmakers.

Furthermore, the failure to commence discussions on the revision of the Election Law raises suspicions of deliberate intent on the part of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the President to maintain status quo of existing regulations. The Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law views this situation as reflecting a lack of seriousness in substantive reform of the democratic system. In this context, the delay is no longer neutral but poses the potential to become a political strategy to maintain a power configuration that benefits certain actors. The protracted



Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW)



Center for Political Studies, University of Indonesia (Indonesian: Pusat Kajian Politik Universitas Indonesia (Puskapol UI))



Center for Constitutional Studies, Faculty of Law, Andalas University (Indonesian: Pusat Studi Konstitusi Fakultas Hukum Universitas Andalas (PUSaKO))



Themis Indonesia



Center for Indonesian Law and Policy Studies (Indonesian: Pusat Studi Hukum dan Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK))

postponement of deliberations on the Election Bill, even though it is already in its second year of the National Legislation Program (Indonesian: *Program Legislasi Nasional* (Prolegnas)), could even lead to a real threat of authoritarianism. In some literature, undemocratic elections can actually become a tool to strengthen authoritarian power, rather than a tool for democratic consolidation. Therefore, this legislative stagnation can be construed as part of a structural issue in Indonesia's commitment to democratization.

The lack of progress on revising the Election Law becomes even more problematic when combined with the increasingly tight timeline for the next election. The crucial phases of establishing a selection team and selecting election organizers must begin in October 2026. Without an updated legal framework, this process risks repeating the weaknesses identified in the evaluation of the previous election.

The Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law notes that the poor quality of electoral administration to date is inextricably linked to the design of substandard selection process, from the selection

team to the fit and proper test by the House of Representatives (DPR). This poor selection process directly impacts the capacity, integrity, and independence of electoral management bodies. Under these circumstances, maintaining the same regulatory framework without improvement will only increase the likelihood of similar problems recurring.

Amidst the stagnant legislative discussions, discourse has emerged about using a Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) as an alternative to revise the Election Law. The Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law considers this proposal to be an inappropriate approach and poses the potential to create new issues. Conceptually, the use of a Perppu in this context risks creating regulatory substance that is opportunistic and tends to accommodate only the short-term interests of certain groups. Changes through a Perppu would only address a handful of aspects partially, without delivering holistic reform of the Election Law.

Furthermore, the issuance of a Perppu will eliminate the space for public participation, which should be a crucial element in the lawmaking process, particularly on strategic issues such as elections. An open and participatory legislative process is a key pillar of a democratic state, ensuring the accountability of public policy. By relying on a Perppu, the deliberative process involving civil society, academics, and other stakeholders will be significantly reduced. This situation poses the potential to weaken the social legitimacy of the resulting regulations.

Furthermore, the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law also highlighted the high potential for conflicts of interest in using a Perppu to revise the Election Law. In the current political context, the President, as the authority to issue a Perppu, also holds a position as a political actor affiliated with a political party and bears the potential to become a candidate in future elections. This raises concerns that the resulting legal product will not be entirely free from practical



The Indonesian Women's Coalition (Indonesian: Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI))



Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet)



Remotivi



Migrant Care



Indonesian Association of Persons with Disabilities (Indonesian: Perkumpulan Penyandang Disabilitas Indonesia (PPDI))



Kawula17



Institute for Community Research and Advocacy (Indonesian: Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (ELSAM))



Center for Accessible General Elections (Indonesian: Pusat Pemilihan Umum Akses Disabilitas (PPUAD))

political interests.

In addition to the substantive and procedural issues, the discourse on issuing a Perppu on Elections is also deemed to fail to meet constitutional requirements as stipulated in constitutional practice. Issuing a Perppu requires the existence of a compelling emergency, one that objectively cannot be addressed through conventional legislative mechanisms. In the context of revising the Election Law, this condition is not met, given that the need for regulatory changes was anticipated well in advance. The use of a Perppu reflects a failure of legislative planning, not a solution to the emergency.

This series of dynamics places the current electoral reform situation in a condition that could be categorized as a legislative disaster. The inability of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the President to responsively carry out their legislative functions to answer democratic needs indicates a serious legal governance crisis. In the long term, this situation poses the potential to undermine the quality of democracy and erode public trust in political institutions.

The Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law views this situation as reflecting the weak political commitment of political parties in the House of Representatives (DPR) and the President to electoral reform agenda. As key actors in the democratic system, political parties have a responsibility to ensure that electoral rules are formulated fairly and democratically. However, the reality shows the opposite trend, with short-term interests being prioritized over strengthening the democratic system. This add up the concerns about a gradual decline in democracy.

Based on these developments, the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law emphasizes the importance of accelerating discussions on the revision of the Election Law through an open, participatory, and accountable legislative mechanism. Failure to promptly reform electoral regulations will not only impact the quality of future elections but also potentially strengthen authoritarian

tendencies within Indonesian political system. Based on these considerations, the Civil Society Coalition for Codification of the Election Law urges the following:

1. The DPR, as the proposer of the bill, must immediately complete the academic text and draft amendment to the Election Law, and publish them so that stakeholders and the public can provide feedbacks based on clear references;
2. The DPR and the President must immediately initiate and prioritize discussions on the revision of the Election Law in a comprehensive and planned manner;
3. All political parties must demonstrate their commitment to the election reform agenda by not maintaining the status quo of problematical regulations;
4. The chairpersons of political parties, especially political parties that secure seats in the DPR, must be active and immediately encourage their representatives to finalize the material for amending the Election Law and start discussing it;
5. The President should not designate the Perppu instrument to revise the Election Law because it does not meet the requirements of compelling urgency, makes the legislative process non-participatory and poses the potential to give rise to conflicts of interest; and
6. The DPR and the Government must ensure that the Election Law revision process is carried out in a participatory, transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based manner (evidence-based policy). ●



Violence Against Activists and Powers Resistance to Electoral Reform

The acid attack on Andrie Yunus, an activist from the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS), last March, may not seem directly related to the Election Law revision process. However,

when construed in a broader context, the incident represents the vulgar face of the authorities' resistance to legal advocacy work carried out by civil society.

This means that this violence is not simply a criminal act, but rather a sign of the increasingly limited space for

Several important Constitutional Court rulings related to electoral reform that need to be considered and adopted in the Election Law:

MK RULINGS	MAIN ISSUES	VERDICTS	IMPLICATIONS OF ELECTORAL REFORM
116/PUU-XXI/2023	Parliamentary Threshold	The Constitutional Court ordered lawmakers to amend the 4% parliamentary threshold before the 2029 elections.	The threshold needs to be revised to make it more proportional and not distort political representation.
135/PUU-XXII/2024	Separation of National and Local Elections	The Constitutional Court has ruled that elections will no longer simultaneously be held in a five-box mechanism, but will be separated into National Elections and Regional Elections with a gap of 2-2.5 years.	There is a need to redesign the simultaneous election system and phases of organization.
80/PUU-XX/2022	Arrangement of Electoral Districts (Dapil)	The Constitutional Court requires that electoral district arrangements follow seven principles, including equality of vote value and regional integration.	The arrangement of electoral districts must be fairer and in accordance with the principle of proportional representation.
62/PUU-XXII/2024	Presidential Threshold	The Constitutional Court removed the presidential nomination threshold of 20% of DPR seats or 25% of valid national votes.	Opening up the opportunity for all election participating parties to propose presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs.

If we draw a single line, violence against activists, the disregard for civil society’s aspirations, the rejection of Constitutional Court rulings, and the non-transparent legislative process are a series of interconnected phenomena.

civil society to engage in the policy-making process. In recent times, a similar pattern has been seen in other legislative processes, particularly the revision to the TNI Law and the Polri Law, where civil society aspirations have not only been ignored but also dealt with with intimidation and even threats of violence.

In the context of revision of the Election Law, this situation becomes even more complicated. The government elected in the 2024 elections has shown a tendency to be the most resistant to various electoral reform recommendations put forward by civil society. Rather than opening up space for inclusive dialogue, lawmakers tend to close themselves off to proposals based on empirical experience and critical evaluations of previous elections.

Several important provisions proposed by civil society appear to have been ignored, including norms that are actually a follow-up to Constitutional Court (MK) rulings. However, MK rulings are final and binding and should serve as the primary reference in the lawmaking process. Ignoring these decisions not only reflects a weak commitment to constitutional supremacy but also poses the potential to create inconsistencies in the electoral legal system.

On the other hand, considering the progress of the legislative process for revising the Election Law, it is proceeding without adequate transparency

and tends to experience continuous delays. The lack of a clear timeline for deliberations demonstrates the absence of political commitment to immediately addressing the fundamental issues in election governance. This delay is certainly dangerous for democracy, as it also narrows the space for meaningful participation in the deliberations of the Election Law. Furthermore, the delay also opens the door to shortcuts, such as the issuance of a Perppu (Government Regulation in Lieu of Law) concerning Election, which poses a risk to undermine broader public participation.

Thus, if we draw a single line, violence against activists, the disregard for civil society’s aspirations, the rejection of Constitutional Court rulings, and the non-transparent legislative process are a series of interconnected phenomena. All of this points to a tendency toward consolidation of power that is hostile to criticism and participation.

In the long term, this situation not only threatens the quality of electoral reform but also erodes the foundations of democracy. When civic space is suppressed and corrective mechanisms are weakened, what remains is a political process that operates without accountability. At this point, violent incidents can no longer be viewed as isolated incidents, but as part of a deeper crisis in the relationship between the state and civil society.





Acidic Democracy



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That night, the stinging pain that spread across Andrie Yunus's face and body was more than just a physical attack on a human rights activist from KontraS. The corrosive liquid thrown by a military personnel was the most blatant metaphor for our current political situation. The acid wasn't just burning the skin of a critical citizen, but was systematically working to dissolve the most fundamental bricks of our democracy building.

The acid attack on Andrie Yunus is a death knell for the sense of security in public spaces. When defense forces, whose constitutional mandate is to protect and serve, transform into primary sources of terror, the social contract between the state and its people has dropped into its nadir. A sound democracy requires a public sphere free from fear. However, when criticism is dealt with with permanent physical disability, we are not moving toward progress, but rather sliding back into the cold and repressive jungle of authoritarianism.

The Injured and the Rotting

We often get caught up in electoral proceduralism. Ballot boxes filled on time, high turnout, and lavish inauguration ceremonies. However, history shows that procedure without substance is a highway to tyranny. In their masterpiece, *"How Democracies Die,"* Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt remind us that today's democracy rarely dies at the hands of generals with tanks on the streets. It dies slowly through the legal and structural weakening of key institutions. Acid attacks are an extreme form of this weakening—a physical attempt to silence those who refuse to submit.

Our democracy is currently suffering from advanced burns. Powers that no longer adhere to human rights principles tend to view critical citizens not as dialogue partners or "loyal opposition," but as systemic anomalies that must be tamed. The methods of this taming are increasingly brutal and varied, ranging from hacking digital footprints and legal intimidation to direct physical attacks targeting bodily integrity.



If the state fails to guarantee the safety of those who speak the truth, then democracy's promises of prosperity are merely lip service. Without the freedom to criticize without fear of attack, power will grow into a cancer that devours itself due to the absence of honest mechanisms of societal control.

The Missing of Human Rights Anchor

The breakdown of our democracy is rooted in a single pathology: a lust for power unmoored from the anchor of human rights. When political stability is valued more than the physical integrity of citizens, the law becomes merely an instrument of power for those in seats, not a shield defending the poor.

This aligns with Hannah Arendt's description in *"the Origins of Totalitarianism."* Arendt explains that one of the early signs of the collapse of civic space is when the state makes citizens feel alone, afraid, and powerless in the face of a gigantic machine of power. Violence against activists is a message from the authorities to the people: "Be quiet, or you will suffer the same fate." This is what is known as the "acidic democracy," a corrosive attempt to obliterate the true face of popular sovereignty and replace it with a mask of power scarred by wounds and fear.

Furthermore, we perceive this phenomenon as a form of democracy without demos. The state desires to run its government as if it were democratic, but without the noisy involvement of the people. They want silent obedience. Yet, it is crucial for the state and its rulers to safeguard alternative sources of information and freedom of expression. If one source of information, the critical voices of civil society, is silenced with acid, then the pillars of control and alternatives are destroyed already.

Protector State or Predator State?

The acid attack on Andrie Yunus challenges the state's position within the social contract. Referring to Thomas Hobbes's thinking in *Leviathan*, citizens surrender some of their freedoms in exchange for security. However, when the state, through its instruments of violence, crushes critical citizens, this moral contract is broken, and the state transforms from Protector to Predator.

In many critiques and mass protests, armed forces no longer work for the public good, but rather to secure the accumulation of power. Acid that burns activists' skin is a physical manifestation of predatory policies. This sends the message that the law is no longer a sovereign commander, but merely an adjutant

**"Be quiet,
or you will
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same fate."**



Predatory states use state-sponsored fear and impunity as their primary means of control.

subservient to the narrow interests of the elite.

The state continues to implement electoral procedures, but fails to protect civil liberties and human rights. When people's taxes are used to finance physical intimidation of the people themselves, the state is essentially committing constitutional suicide. All of this is more than simply a transformation into a dictatorship going incognito.

Predatory states use state-sponsored fear and impunity as their primary means of control. If the intellectuals behind attacks on activists remain untouched, the law will become nothing more than a risk management tool for those in power. We must demand the return of the state's role as protector of its citizens, because without protecting the lives of its citizens, the state is nothing more than an armed gang bearing the seal of legality.

Remedy

Healing democracy from the acid that has wounded it must begin with placing human rights as the primary foundation of state governance. Simply changing bureaucratic regulations or amending laws regarding information technology will not be enough. The most important thing is not merely a moral promise that no citizen will be harmed or injured simply because

they criticize the government. Open law enforcement in public courts against elite actors who plan and order shall absolutely be guaranteed.

The violence case committed on Andrie Yunus must serve as a lesson to prevent similar incidents from recurring. No one should ever feel above the law simply because they hold a certain position, carrying weapon, or wearing uniform. A sound democracy can never effectively function if its citizens are constantly afraid to speak out.

Andrie Yunus will suffer the impact of the physical wounds for a very long time. If we, as a society, remain silent as this violence destroys the courage of human rights defenders, our national identity is in danger of being lost. We may still live in a country called Indonesia, but the values of justice within it have been destroyed, clouded by fear.

We must remember that freedom is not a gift from those in power. It is a right reserved by every person that must be continuously protected and fought for, despite the threat of acid attacks as well as other forms of violence. Those of us who fear it are the very manifestation of wounds of democracy that, if left untreated, will fester and kill our democracy.



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