

# The Indonesian Update

Monthly Review on Economic, Legal, Security, Political, and Social Affairs

## **Main Report**

**Negative Outlook for the Indonesian Economy:  
Government Policy Alarm**

## **Economy**

- The Analysis of the Impact of the Indonesia-US Trade Agreement on the Indonesian Economy and Policy Recommendations
- The US-Israel War vs. Iran in 2026: Economic and Energy Impact Analysis for Indonesia and Policy Recommendations

## **Laws**

- The Guilty Verdicts for Hundreds of Political Prisoners: A Reflection on Civic Space
- Good Governance Principles in the Dynamics of Indonesia's Participation in the Board of Peace

## **Social**

- The Urgency of Strengthening Indonesia's Commitment to Child Suicide Prevention
- The Benefits of Urban Public Health Protection against Air Pollution Threats

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## FOREWORD

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This edition of the Indonesian Update features a main report titled “Negative Outlook for the Indonesian Economy: Government Policy Alarm.” This paper examines warning signals about Indonesia’s economic prospects arising from various policy developments and global dynamics. Through this discussion, the main report also offers several policy recommendations that the Government could consider to strengthen Indonesia’s economic resilience amidst increasing global uncertainty.

In the economic field, this edition contains two thematic analyses. First, “Analysis of the Impact of the Indonesia–US Trade Agreement on the Indonesian Economy and Policy Recommendations,” which discusses the potential implications of the trade agreement between the two countries on trade, investment, and Indonesia’s economic competitiveness. Second, “A US–Israel vs. Iran War in 2026: Analysis of Economic and Energy Impacts for Indonesia and Policy Recommendations,” which examines the potential impact of geopolitical conflict in the Middle East on energy price stability, global supply chains, and Indonesia’s energy security.

In the legal field, the Indonesian Update presents two articles highlighting the dynamics of civil space and governance. The article “Guilty Verdicts for Hundreds of Political Prisoners: Reflections on Civil Space” examines the implications of the legal verdicts against hundreds of political prisoners for the state of civil liberties and democracy. Meanwhile, the article “General Principles of Good Governance in the Dynamics of Indonesia’s Participation in the Board of Peace” discusses the importance of good governance principles in ensuring that Indonesia’s participation in international forums remains in line with the principles of accountability, transparency, and national interests.

In the social sector, this edition addresses two important issues related to public health and well-being. The article “The Urgency of Improving Indonesia’s Commitment to Child Suicide Prevention” discusses the growing attention to children’s mental health and the importance of strengthening suicide prevention policies through a cross-sectoral approach. Furthermore, the article “The Benefits of Urban Public Health Protection against Air Pollution Threats” highlights the importance of public health protection policies in urban areas facing increasingly serious air pollution risks.

Through the monthly publication of the Indonesian Update, which raises various strategic and current issues, it is hoped that this report could contribute to policymakers in government institutions, business actors, academics, researchers, think tanks, and civil society, both at home and abroad, to obtain contextual analysis of the economic, legal, and social dynamics in Indonesia, while enriching understanding of the challenges and direction of future public policy.

**Happy reading.**

Main Report

## Negative Outlook for the Indonesian Economy: Government Policy Alarm

-Felicia Primaresti-



For quite some time, global rating institutions have provided no positive signals normal about the prospect of the Indonesian economy. Moody's, which is one of the international credit rating institutions, has lowered Indonesia's debt rating from negative to stable (Bloomberg.com, 4/3/2026). At the same time, S&P Global Ratings also warned that the pressure from potential fiscal issues would lower Indonesian credit profile if trend the continues (CNBC Indonesia, 5/3/2026).

The changes in prospects do not necessarily means economic crisis economy. Indonesia still has a number of relatively strong economic fundamentals, such as moderate debt to GDP ratio ( Directorate General of Taxes, 2026), relatively safe economic growth, and resilience against external goods. However, the signals conveyed by rating institutions show that the current risks for the Indonesian economy do not solely originate from fiscal issues but from structural factors; namely, uncertainty due to government policies and the quality of the economy .

Therefore, this writing shall not only highlight issues related how big the deficit or debt is but how much credible and consistent the direction of the policies of the government in the long term.

## Uncertainty due to Policies and the Erosion of Credibility

In the one year of the Prabowo – Gibran leadership, Indonesia experienced changes of fiscal directions. This is at least due to the existence of priority programs of the Government; that is, the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) programme.. This program requires a very large budget. According to the National Nutrition Agency (2025), the MBG program budget is IDR 335 trillion For 2026. This amount is equivalent to approximately 10% of Indonesia's total state budget, and is even larger than the accumulation of several strategic budgets, such as those of education and health sectors.

The size of the MBG budget has also raised concerns among rating agencies and financial markets, as any expenditures of this magnitude have the potential to impact the Government's fiscal flexibility. One major concern is the potential loosening of the fiscal framework that has been the anchor of Indonesia's economic stability, which has already occurred. This loosening has forced the Government to implement budget efficiency measures across various institutions through Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 1/2025 , which regulates spending efficiency in the State Budget (APBN) and Regional Budgets (APBD) for Fiscal Year 2025, with a total savings target of IDR 306.7 trillion.

The emphasis on budget efficiency has even forced judicial institutions to review and cut operational expenditures, from transportation for judges and clerks, courtroom maintenance, to the procurement of administrative facilities. According to a report by Christina Clarissa Intania (2025) from The Indonesian Institute , these savings free up judicial funds to cover urgent needs while also significantly eroding the judiciary's ability to plan its budget independently.

This naturally has implications for case handling, which, if hampered, not only leads to a backlog and delays in decisions, but also opens up the potential for misuse of funds or corruption. With pressure to cover urgent operational needs, court staff and officials may be pushed to seek alternative ways to meet routine needs.

This ultimately erodes the integrity and credibility of judicial institutions. Similar impacts are felt by other ministries and institutions, which must adjust routine spending and priority programs to stay within state budget targets, putting pressure on the quality, speed, and effectiveness of program implementation.

## Main Report

Since post crisis in 1998, Indonesia has had discipline fiscal measures, including the maximum budget deficit of 3 percent of GDP, as well as the maximum government debt limit of 60 percent of GDP. However, there have been signs that fiscal foundations have been weakening.

If the fiscal framework has loosened its strong accountability, then the Government may face a larger deficit in the future. In the perspective rating institutions, this is not only a fiscal problem but also a trust and commitment that the Government will safe guard the stability of the economy.

On the other hand, the warning from S&P Global Ratings has highlighted the increasing fiscal pressure due to the increasing debt interest payments. If the ratio of interest payments to state revenue continues rise and pass a certain threshold, this could trigger negative evaluations of Indonesian credits.

This phenomenon show the existence of more fundamental problems in Indonesia's fiscal structure; namely, the basis of state revenue that is relatively weak. Compared with other countries with the same credit, the Indonesian government's response to GDP is still classified as low . In the long term, this would make fiscal room become limited, especially if the Government makes an effort to expand government expenditures to push economic growth.

As a result, the Government could face a classic dilemma in economic policy; namely, a dilema between guarding fiscal discipline and expanding government expenditure. Without structural reforms in the taxation system and state revenue, the pressure on fiscal foundation would keep going strong.

Another factor highlighted by the rating agencies is the ambition of the government to have 8-percent economic growth, far above Indonesia 's average growth of 5 percent in the past years. To achieve this target, the Government push various large expenditure programs for the public, including the national social programs.

These programs are basically not problematic if they are supported by adequate capacity and accompanied by good governance in fiscal implementations. However, in the condition that state revenues are still limited and that there are political dynamics, the aggressive expansion overspending could cause concerns about fiscal sustainability.

For global investors, a policy that is too expansive without a clear fiscal framework could increase the risk perception. This has been reflected in the change *outlook* by rating institutions.

### **Governance and Quality Institution**

In the Indonesian context, these concerns extend beyond fiscal figures to the quality of governance and institutional credibility. Investors and rating agencies consider key appointment decisions, particularly at technocratic institutions like Bank Indonesia, to be an important indicator of the consistency and professionalism of economic policy. The meritocracy issue that emerged following the appointment of Thomas Djiwandono, President Prabowo Subianto's nephew, as Deputy Governor of Bank Indonesia in early February 2026, reinforced market perceptions of political risks that could impact economic stability. In other words, fiscal expansion and personnel decisions at strategic institutions are intertwined, and together shape investor perceptions of risk.

The speculation about placement mechanisms also emerged when Chair of Commission I of the DPR Utut Adianto sent a signal of cabinet *reshuffle* in a meeting of the Commission I of the DPR (Kompas.com, 26/2/2026). One of rumors mentioned about a scenario of replacing Foreign Minister Sugiono with Budi Djiwandono, another nephew of President Prabowo. Although the *reshuffle* has not yet realized, the dynamics show that the issue of meritocracy of has become the talks of the public .

In the greater sense of meritocracy, there has been a question about the appointments of serving TNI officials to in strategic civilian positions. The *INDONESIA 2025* report published by the Indonesian Institute mentions a number of names, such as Major Teddy Indra Wijaya as the Cabinet Secretary Cabinet, Major General Maryono as the Inspector General of Land Transportation, Major General Irham Waroihan as the Inspector General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Admiral Ian Heriyawan at the Hajj Organizing Agency. These appointments have raised a question about whether their skills were the main considerations. If meritocracy is understood as the harmony between competency and position, the practice of appointing TNI officers to technocratic civilian positions without clear track records is worthy to be criticized .

The appointment of Thomas Djiwandono has triggered criticismd from public civil and academic, while at the same time being perceived negatively by market players. The JCI recorded a decrease of around 8 percent after the announcement his appointment. Meanwhile, Moody's Ratings revised

*outlook* to negative from previously stable for seven non-financial companies in Indonesia, following the affirmation of government debt rating at Baa2 level and changes *sovereign outlook* become negative on February 5, 2026. In the report officially (10/2/2026), Moody's confirmed that changes in were due to the increasing risks to credibility of the policies of the Indonesian government .

The issue of meritocracy has already passed beyond the realm of ethics to the stability of economy, market confidence , and international perceptions towards the Indonesian Government. This could have negative impacts on policy credibility, political reputation, and investor confidence.

If it is traced more far, some big concerns include the quality of institutions and government policies. Fitch Ratings in general explicit touch on the existence of declining consistency of policies as well as increasing centralization in the process of taking decision economy . This could reduce transparency and weaken coordination between institutions . In a modern economy, the credibility of policies is the main factor in guarding the stability of macroeconomics. Investors and market players do not only monitor the current conditions but also the direction of government policies in the future .

If economic policies viewed as not consistent or changed in a sudden way, the risks perceived by investors would also increase. Some circles often perceive rating institutions as external actors trying to influence developing countries' policies. However, in practice, the assessments of rating institutions could influence big access to international financing.

For Indonesia, maintaining investment grade status is very important because it has impacts on the costs of government loans, foreign investment, as well as the stability of domestic financial market. Therefore, signals from global ranking institutions should be viewed as a momentum for the evaluation of the quality of government economic policies.

In the long term, the Government would still have fiscal room. However in the long term, sustainable economic policies are highly dependent on the quality of institutions, the transparency of policies, as well as the ability of the Government to safeguard fiscal discipline.

## Main Report

*In recent years, Indonesia has faced significant fiscal pressures and policy dynamics, impacting economic stability and market perceptions. Not only the deficit or debt ratio are of concern, but also the quality of governance, transparency, and consistency of government policies. This paper shall examine these factors, including their implications for public institutions, policy credibility, and market and civil society responses.*

### Recommendations

- a. The Government should maintain fiscal discipline by ensuring a maximum deficit of 3% of GDP and a debt ratio below 60%. Furthermore, relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Finance and Bappenas, should strengthen oversight mechanisms and *real-time audits* of priority spending programs such as the MBG. This is crucial to maintain controlled fiscal expansion without compromising budget sustainability.
- b. Technocratic institutions like Bank Indonesia and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, should be based on sectoral competence and professional track records, as well as a transparent and accountable process. The House of Representatives (DPR) should seriously play its role in legislative oversight and approval of official appointments. Meanwhile, the media and civil society should act as public watchdogs through independent reporting and analysis, ensuring transparency and legitimacy in appointments.
- c. Cross-agency coordination, for example between the Ministry of Finance, Bappenas, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and independent institutions like the Ombudsman, is necessary to develop a fiscal and social policy roadmap. The House of Representatives (DPR) can facilitate legislative discussion forums, while the media and civil society can encourage information transparency and public participation, ensuring that priority programs operate synergistically and avoid budget conflicts or duplication.
- d. The Government should consistently and transparently communicate fiscal policy direction and priority programs to domestic and global investors. The media plays a role in disseminating accurate information. Meanwhile, civil society continues to participate and raise public awareness and advocate for policies through discussion forums, public campaigns, and policy analysis. This transparency is crucial for reducing market risk perceptions, maintaining investor confidence, and strengthening long-term policy legitimacy.

Economy

## The Analysis of the Impact of the Indonesia-US Trade Agreement on the Indonesian Economy and Policy Recommendations

-Putu Rusta Adijaya-



In recent years, the global geopolitical landscape has shown changes in which there is a trend of increasing fragmentation of the world economy. Several analyst opinions summarized in weforum.org (June 26, 2024), said that trade tariffs were increasingly being raised and industrial policies are being revived to encourage economic development and competitiveness due to geopolitical divisions, especially between the United States (US) and China as the largest economies in the world, and existing conflicts, such as the US-Israel war with Iran. As a result, economic relations became divided and trade routes changed. In fact, free trade has provided many benefits and determined the world economy.

With the increasing practice of protectionism and changes in the international trade system, the Indonesia-US trade agreement which was finalized some time ago through the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) can no longer be seen as just a tariff or market access agreement, but also looks at the impact of the agreement on the Indonesian economy.

Thus, this paper shall try to analyze the impact of the Indonesia-US trade agreement and policy recommendations for the Government of President Prabowo Subianto.

## **Impact of the Indonesia-US Trade Agreement Based on the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART)**

In the midst of escalating global conflicts, such as the US-Israel war with Iran, analyzing the Indonesia-US trade agreement could use an economic approach that is not just an analysis of tariffs or short-term export increases. It is important to remember that trade agreements are no longer economically neutral, but are full of strategic interests.

Classic trade economic theories, such as the theory of trade creation and trade diversion by Jacob Viner (1950), are still relevant and can be used to analyze the Indonesia-US trade agreement. In ebsco.com (accessed March 9, 2026), trade creation refers to “an increase in overall trade resulting from the movement of domestic production” and trade diversion is defined as “the diversion of existing trade due to the movement of imported goods and services”.

In the case of trade creation, new trade between Indonesia and the US would be created when the price of imported goods or services is lower than the cost of producing the same goods or services domestically, both in Indonesia and in the US. In other words, production in Indonesia would be replaced by more efficient imports from the US. For example, when food production from wheat as raw material in Indonesia is more expensive, Indonesia would import wheat from the US at a zero percent tariff, so that the price of wheat imports becomes cheaper. As a result, expensive production costs in Indonesia would be reduced, imports from the US would increase, consumers in Indonesia would get cheaper product prices. Vice versa in the US case. This is trade creation which would increase the efficiency and welfare of the people of both parties.

In the case of trade diversion, if we use the example of the US importing goods from Indonesia, such as manufactured goods and textiles, the US would have the potential to import these goods from Indonesia even though Indonesia is not a country that produces these goods cheaply at global production costs. However, for the US, this decision is still strategically and economically rational because it allows diversification of global supply chains while reducing dependence on China, which has dominated world manufacturing. Apart from that, shifting some US imports to Indonesia also has the potential to strengthen US economic and geopolitical partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. As a result, US imports of manufactured goods and textiles from efficient countries would decrease and imports from the US to Indonesia for these goods would increase. This is trade diversion. In

the context of US–China rivalry, Indonesia has the potential to gain positive trade diversion if companies in the US shift their supply chains from China or other countries to Indonesia.

According to calculations by an Economist at the University of Indonesia and Lead Expert at the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Communications Agency, Fithra Faisal Hastiadi, as reported in *money.kompas.com* (February 28, 2026), US trade diversion to Indonesia reached US\$7.11 billion. According to him, the manufacturing sector has the potential to contribute US\$3.38 billion, the textile sector at US\$2.22 billion, and the agricultural sector to contribute US\$1 billion.

However, in social sciences, the positive impact of trade creation and trade diversion for Indonesia is not automatically permanent, because it really depends on several things, including political stability, the quality of infrastructure and human resources, and the certainty of Indonesian regulations. Apart from that, in the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the US, the most prioritized strategic interests are US interests. This policy has the potential to cause serious pressure on Indonesian industry.

For example, regarding Indonesia opening access to 99 percent of products from the US with zero percent tariffs, it would have a negative impact in the form of deindustrialization in Indonesia because US products, which are actually more efficient, high quality and high technology, could flood the Indonesian market. These US goods could enter at more competitive prices, so that local Indonesian industries, especially infant industries or industries that are still developing, would have difficulty competing in the Indonesian market. Even though the price of US goods is cheaper, the majority of people would have the potential to buy these goods because of the quality and ‘made in U.S.A’ status.

Moreover, the agreement in the ART also shows the potential for imbalance in market access in Indonesia. Even though Indonesia opens 99 percent of its market to US products, some Indonesian products entering the US market that are not included in the ART still face tariffs of a certain value. These conditions would have an impact on trade that is not completely fair. In other words, the increase in Indonesian exports to the US would not be as big as the increase in imports from the US to Indonesia. This situation could cause losses in Indonesia’s trade balance in the long term, especially if there is an increase in the number and value of imports from the US that is faster than the growth of Indonesia’s exports to the US.

Thus, several strategies are needed that can be carried out by President Prabowo Subianto's government considering that there is currently a geopolitical conflict between the US, Israel and Iran.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Facing the complexities previously explained, here are several recommendations for President Prabowo Subianto's government. First, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs synergizes and collaborates with other relevant ministries and must be able to manage relations flexibly with superpower countries in economic, trade, industrial, technological, diplomatic and other cooperation. The Indonesian government must stop 'choosing' and 'bandwagoning' to support one big power, but instead act strategically by referring to national interests and maintaining balanced relations with all strategic partners. This strategy can encourage Indonesia's opportunity to take advantage of trade diversion opportunities from the US without losing market access and investment from China or other strategic partner countries.

Second, the government through the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Trade together with related ministries/institutions must be able to strengthen industrialization (or downstream) policies in Indonesia that are more selective and strategic. Even though Indonesia has opened access to most US products with zero percent tariffs, the government still has policy space to protect and strengthen certain important industrial sectors through fiscal incentives, R&D subsidies, and industrial productivity improvement programs.

Third, all elements of the central government and regional governments must be able to encourage and strengthen the competitiveness of domestic industry through improving the quality of human resources, policies and a healthy and conducive economic freedom ecosystem, production technology and efficiency. Trade diversion, which has the potential to divert efficient global supply chains from other countries to Indonesia, can only be utilized if Indonesia has a skilled workforce or human capital, adequate infrastructure, certainty of regulations and other related policies, as well as accountable and transparent implementation.

Therefore, the government needs to increase investment and work with the private sector in vocational education, industrial workforce training, as well as technology and innovation development programs. In the process, public policy must also be based on a serious commitment to the implementation

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***The government must be strategic in anticipating the impact of the trade agreement with the United States. First, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs synergizes and collaborates with other related ministries and must be able to manage relations flexibly with superpower countries in working based on national interests. Second, the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Trade together with related ministries/institutions must be able to strengthen industrialization (or downstream) policies in Indonesia that are more selective and strategic. Third, all elements of the central government and regional governments must be able to encourage and strengthen the competitiveness of domestic industry through improving the quality of human resources, policies and a healthy and conducive economic freedom ecosystem, production technology and efficiency.***

of general principles of good government, as well as governance with strong related institutions. Moreover, the industrial downstream program that has been implemented over the last few years also needs to be expanded, strengthened and monitored so that Indonesia not only exports raw commodities, but is also able to produce high added value products that are more competitive and needed in the global market.

## Economy

# The US–Israel War vs. Iran in 2026: Economic and Energy Impact Analysis for Indonesia and Policy Recommendations

-Putu Rusta Adijaya-



The war between the United States (US)-Israel vs. Iran has entered a much more intensive phase since the death of Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as a result of the US-Israel attack. The conflict between these three countries has influenced world geopolitical conditions, especially in the Middle East region or around the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf), and has had a direct impact on countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar and Egypt. For example, [aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com) (March 5, 2026) noted that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi had warned that Egypt was in a “near state of emergency” economically, as well as Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince of Dubai, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum “condemned the aggressive attacks” affecting countries around the Persian Gulf.

In addition, this war has also stopped some fossil energy production, such as oil and gas, which is produced around oil fields in the Persian Gulf which is still needed. Based on Sky News’ notes on YouTube entitled “Analysis: What are the economic consequences of Iran War?” (March 3, 2026), the Persian Gulf region is the region with the largest concentration of hydrocarbon energy in the world which holds strategic oil and natural gas reserves. What is no less surprising is that there are four of the largest oil fields which “happen” to be in the Persian Gulf region.

According to the data compiled from several reports including Sky News records, the largest oil field in the world is the Ghawar oil field located in Saudi Arabia. Oil production is approximately 3.8 million barrels per day. For example, with the US-Israel vs. Iran, operations at the Ras Tanura refinery were stopped by Saudi Aramco after a fire occurred following reports of a drone attack (thenationalnews.com, March 2, 2026).

The Ras Tanura Refinery processes and ships crude oil, one of which is sourced from the Ghawar oil field. Furthermore, the second largest oil field in the world is Burgan in Kuwait (oil production approximately 1.7 million barrels per day), the fourth largest oil field in the world is Ahvaz in Iran (oil production approximately 800 thousand barrels per day), and the fifth largest oil field is Upper Zakum in the UAE (oil production approximately 750 thousand barrels per day).

The US-Israel conflict with Iran has not only disrupted the energy supply chain, but also stopped tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, which is a vital route for world oil and gas supplies. Its location is very strategic, namely between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman which is also very close to Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Oman. Based on U.S. data Energy Information Administration in cnbcindonesia.com (March 4, 2026), Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar are the oil exporting countries most affected because they use the Strait of Hormuz for transportation. Saudi Arabia exports 37.2 percent of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, followed by Iraq at 22.8 percent, UAE (12.9 percent), Iran (10.6 percent), Kuwait (10.1 percent), Watar (4.4 percent) and other countries only 1.9 percent. Not only these exporting countries, oil importing countries will also be greatly affected, especially countries in the Asian region.

This is because China is the largest oil importer through the Strait of Hormuz, accounting for 37.7 percent of the total import volume, followed by India (14.7 percent), South Korea (12.0 percent) and Japan (10.9 percent). Meanwhile, the combined share of other Asian countries is around 13.9 percent. Europe's percentage is only 3.8 percent and the US is only 2.5 percent (cnbcindonesia.com, March 4, 2026).

### **The Impact of Closing or Not Operating the Strait of Hormuz on the Economy and Energy in Indonesia**

Like a water hose that is clamped when the tap is flowing, closing or not operating the Strait of Hormuz will disrupt the energy supply chain, such as oil from the Middle East, which has been the backbone of global oil distribution. When supply is blocked, the supply of energy will decrease if there is still demand or an increase in demand for that energy.

As a result, there was a spike in energy prices, especially oil, as well as general global market chaos. Energy analysts say oil prices could reach US\$100 a barrel if the Strait of Hormuz is closed for a prolonged period. In fact, the price of Brent Crude, which is the global benchmark, has risen to US\$80 per barrel or almost 10% since the outbreak of the conflict (cnbc.com, March 3, 2026). As of this writing, world crude oil prices have touched US\$120 and dropped to US\$90 with the statement by US President Donald Trump who said the war was “very complete, pretty much” (bbc.com, March 10, 2026).

For Indonesia, the impact of disrupted energy supplies will have a direct impact on economic growth, especially the threat of stagflation (a situation of high inflation with stagnant economic growth). High energy prices will affect many sectors that use this energy, such as logistics, manufacturing, industry, and others. If production and logistics costs are high, the direct impact will be an increase in goods prices or inflation. If inflation becomes increasingly uncontrolled, people’s purchasing power will become increasingly depressed, especially for low-income or poor groups.

Moreover, Indonesia is also still importing energy, which if energy prices skyrocket, this will widen the trade balance deficit. This has the potential to weaken the Rupiah exchange rate against the US Dollar, leading to an increase in foreign debt, higher import costs, and so on. Not to mention, Indonesia has entered the Board of Peace (BoP) chaired by the US and there is a trade agreement with the US which is very detrimental to us. This makes Indonesia “like eating simalakama fruit”, where if it is seen as siding with the US it will be risky, if it remains neutral there will be economic consequences.

However, regarding the condition of energy security in Indonesia, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Bahlil Lahadalia clarified that the status of national fuel stocks at the 21-25 day level was dynamic storage capacity and not dead stock (voice.com, March 11, 2026). He also appealed to the public not to panic buy and explained that the national fuel supply was maintained through a combination of domestic production and imports (voice.com, March 11, 2026).

### **What Indonesia Could Do and Policy Recommendations**

At least, there are several things that the Indonesian Government could still do. First, the Indonesian Government through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) and related ministries/institutions should be able to strengthen the diversification of energy partner countries and accelerate the diversification of new and renewable energy sources (EBET). This requires strong regulations so that the EBET Bill and policies related to new

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***Anticipating the impact of the US-Israel War vs. Iran, the government must take several steps.***

***First, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) and related ministries/institutions must be able to strengthen the diversification of energy partner countries and accelerate the diversification of new and renewable energy sources (EBET).***

***Apart from that, the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Trade and related ministries/institutions must be able to encourage the development of energy efficiency technology, stabilize domestic fossil energy supplies which are still needed to reduce dependence on imports, and provide social protection or direct cash assistance if inflation becomes higher due to this war, especially for the middle and poor. The monetary authority must also implement a very careful monetary policy to deal with potential pressures and stabilize the Rupiah exchange rate. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must also be able to maintain and strengthen good relations with all the superpower countries involved, including China and Russia, and maintain a strategic position in carrying out a free and active foreign policy.***

energy and renewable energy must be immediately passed and implemented properly.

In addition, the Indonesian Government through the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Trade and related ministries/institutions should be able to encourage the development of energy efficiency technology, stabilize domestic fossil energy supplies which are still needed to reduce dependence on imports, and provide social protection or direct cash assistance if inflation becomes higher due to this war, especially for the middle and poor. These ministries must also coordinate with Bank Indonesia as the monetary authority in Indonesia.

The government, through the monetary authority, must also implement a very careful monetary policy to deal with potential pressures and stabilize the Rupiah exchange rate. What is no less important, even though Indonesia has almost no chance of reconciling the US-Israel vs. Iran, Indonesia as members of the BoP, part of the international community and wider diplomatic relations, as well as sovereign countries which also have an interest in ensuring national interests and good relations with other countries, must be able to take strategic steps to strengthen their position in international relations and diplomacy to support peace solutions in the Middle East region in accordance with the mandate contained in the 1945 NRI Law.

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, must also be able to maintain and strengthen good relations with all the superpower countries involved, including China and Russia, as well as maintain a strategic position in carrying out a free and active foreign policy. In this case, it is important to strategically redefine Indonesia's national interests and foreign policy to ensure Indonesia's role in the international arena.

Laws

## The Guilty Verdicts for Hundreds of Political Prisoners: A Reflection on Civic Space

-Christina Clarissa Intania-



Since the demonstrations that took place in August 2025, waves of arrests targeting participants have continued for months afterward. As of February 14, a total of 703 people had been recorded as political prisoners linked to those events. Of that number, 506 had been found guilty by the courts (Fact-Finding Commission, 2026), a remarkably high figure within a relatively short period following the demonstrations.

The majority of charges brought against the detainees centered on Article 170 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) relating to public violence (Fact-Finding Commission, 2026; Databoks, 2026). Other articles, including aggravated theft, dissemination of false information, and others, were also used and are discussed in this article.

Civil society has raised concerns that this series of prosecutions is not merely ordinary law enforcement, but rather a reflection of an increasingly alarming narrowing of civic space. Individuals who were essentially exercising their right to express opinions in public are now facing serious criminal consequences. This article stems from those concerns and seeks to analyze how the guilty verdicts against hundreds of political prisoners reflect the current state of civic space in Indonesia.

## **The Legal Process of Political Prisoners from the August 2025 Demonstrations**

The August 2025 demonstrations unfolded in three waves. Various civil society elements organized under the Fact-Finding Commission (KPF) conducted independent investigations and open-source intelligence (OSINT) regarding the events. According to the KPF's report, the first (August 25–27) and second (August 28) waves were relatively peaceful, before a sharp escalation occurred during the third wave (August 29–31), triggered by the killing of Affan Kurniawan, an *ojek* online driver who was run over by a Brimob armored vehicle on August 28, 2025 (KPF, 2026).

Arrests began on August 25. The Metro Jaya Regional Police stated that they detained 351 people on the first day, 196 of whom were minors (KPF, 2026; tangerangnews.com, 29/8/2025). The Advocacy Team for Democracy (TAUD) recorded a higher figure: at least 370 people arrested that day (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, 28/8/2025). In subsequent waves, police also carried out mass blockades at commuter rail (KRL) stations and arterial roads around Jakarta, arresting students who had not even reached the demonstration sites (KPF, 2026).

Arrests also took place in other regions (KPF, 2026):

- a. The West Java Regional Police designated 42 people as suspects in Bandung;
- b. 315 people were reported detained and 33 designated as suspects in Surabaya;
- c. 61 people were arrested in Malang;
- d. 44 people were arrested and 17 designated as suspects in Makassar; and
- e. The Central Java Regional Police arrested approximately 400 people.

In total, Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections Yusril Ihza Mahendra (27/9/2025) stated that 6,719 people were arrested and detained across Indonesia, with 5,858 subsequently released.

Law enforcement subsequently targeted activists, literacy advocates, and individuals who were vocal on social media. In one case, literacy activist Ahmad Faiz Yusuf was arrested at his home in Nganjuk by plainclothes

officers without showing any assignment letter, arrest warrant, or court search permit, a clear violation of the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP) then in force (projectmultatuli, 16/10/2025; KPF, 2026). In November 2025, another figure, Mansurni Abadi, was also arrested and detained at the Metro Jaya Regional Police. The charges applied to Mansurni could not be confirmed by the KPF in its report (KPF, 2026).

The KPF's report documented 23 types of articles used by law enforcement against the demonstrators.

Article	Criminal Offense	Count	Frequency
170 Criminal Code	Mass assault in public	348	Extreme
363 Criminal Code	Aggravated theft	166	High
212 Criminal Code	Resisting authorities (individually)	147	High
214 Criminal Code	Resisting authorities (together)	123	High
406 Criminal Code	Destruction of others' property	108	High
187 Criminal Code	Arson and explosion of objects	54	Medium
160 Criminal Code	Incitement in public	53	Medium
28 (2) ITE Law	Hate speech in digital space	32	Medium
1 (1) Emergency Law	Weapons possession	27	Medium
213 Criminal Code	Violence against authorities	22	Medium
28 (3) ITE Law	Hoaxes causing unrest	17	Low
218 Criminal Code	Insulting the president	15	Low
216 Criminal Code	Disobeying authorities	10	Low
362 Criminal Code	Ordinary theft	7	Low
211 Criminal Code	Coercion against officials	7	Low
480 Criminal Code	Receiving stolen goods	7	Low
76 Child Protection Law	Endangering children in action	6	Low
161 Criminal Code	Broadcasting incitement	5	Low
32 ITE Law	Destroying electronic information	4	Low
351 Criminal Code	Ordinary assault	4	Low
24 Flag Law	Damaging the red and white flag	2	Low
118 Criminal Code	Treason against the head of state	2	Low
338 Criminal Code	Taking another person's life	1	Low

Source: Fact-Finding Commission (KPF), 2026.

The KPF (2026) identified several procedural violations in the legal processes carried out across a number of cases. Many arrests were made without assignment letters, arrest warrants, or court search permits, in violation of the old KUHAP. In Magelang, 26 children aged 15–17 years were wrongfully arrested. A 15-year-old identified by the initials DRP stated he was subjected to physical torture during detention, including being slapped, beaten with a hose, forced to chew *kencur* (a type of root), denied food and water, and forced to sleep on the floor (Radio News Agency, 4/11/2025). The family’s police report was subsequently met with a visit by four police officers urging the family to resolve the matter “peacefully” (Kompas.id, 17/9/2025).

The legal proceedings also moved quickly and at scale. As of February 14, 2026, the KPF’s report recorded 703 political prisoners undergoing legal proceedings, with 506 found guilty representing 71.98% of the total. Cases were spread across dozens of cities in 14 provinces, with the highest concentrations in East Java (191 cases), Jakarta (163), Central Java (113), West Java (72), and South Sulawesi (54) (KPF, 2026).

The cases of Delpedro Marhaen, Muzaffar Salim, Syahdan Husein, and Khariq Anhar were among the most prominent. They underwent legal proceedings for approximately half a year before the Central Jakarta District Court ultimately acquitted them on March 6, 2026, in case number 742/Pid-Sus/2025/PN.JktPst. All charges brought by the Public Prosecutor, including spreading false information, incitement causing unrest, and using children as instruments, were found unproven.

TAUD emphasized that these prosecutions should never have taken place. What the defendants expressed was part of legitimate political expression and the rightful criticism of young people confronting chaotic policies that harm the public, as well as anger over the brutal violence carried out by law enforcement. Advocate Nabil Hafizhurrahman questioned how many people had been forcibly arrested without sufficient evidence, and who would bear responsibility for the delayed educational and professional rights of those detained. Advocate Gema Gita Persada asserted that differing data findings or the use of different terminology in describing an event cannot be criminalized as the dissemination of false information, and that authorities must not indiscriminately use criminal instruments against expressions or information that arise from the monitoring work of civil society (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, 6/3/2026).

The KPF (2026) also found that the presumption of innocence was not applied in law enforcement. Officers acted on the basis of predetermined conclusions, such as the narratives of “masterminds” and “provocateurs”,

constructed before any open investigation had been carried out, ultimately resulting in mass criminalization (malicious prosecution). SAFEnet (2025) documented 169 people arrested in connection with cyber-related activities and found that cyber patrols contributed to an increase in arrests of activists and social media users. Even an ordinary TikTok user, Juman (@jomblo6hari), was arrested just six hours after reposting a critical video.

### **Efforts to Reclaim Civic Space**

Referring to the chronology and dynamics of law enforcement described in the previous section, it is deeply concerning how easily the state has been able to arrest, detain, and secure convictions against hundreds of people in a very short period of time, particularly individuals who were essentially exercising the constitutionally protected right to express opinions and criticism.

It is evident that due process of law, the principle requiring respect for all individual legal rights and ensuring fair, transparent, and non-arbitrary procedures, was not reflected in many of the arrests of demonstrators now classified as political prisoners. Citizens have every reason to be alarmed knowing that approximately 6,000 people were arrested within a short span of time. A review of several cases in the KPF report and media coverage shows that anyone could be arrested regardless of whether they happened to be present at a demonstration site, were underage students, or had simply voiced critical opinions on social media.

Another factor that warrants attention is the enactment of the new KUHAP, which took effect in 2026. Under the new code, searches, seizures, and investigation blocks can be carried out more readily by investigators without a court order, provided the investigator deems it an emergency. This provision misinterprets the principle of swift and simple justice, and grants authorities broad and unchecked powers to act unilaterally without clear, transparent, or accountable deliberation and evidentiary process. This provision effectively curtails the due process rights of suspects and all those subjected to criminalization.

The dynamics of arrests and guilty verdicts against hundreds of political prisoners sends a troubling message to members of the public who wish to voice critical opinions in the public sphere for any reason. This risks generating a climate of fear in civil society, where individuals may feel that even the smallest expression on social media could expose them to doxxing or arrest. For a democratic country, this is deeply regrettable.

On the other hand, the acquittals of several detainees offer a breath of fresh air. Delpedro (6/3) expressed hope that his acquittal would establish jurisprudence for all judges currently presiding over similar political prisoner cases, prompting them to deliver the same verdict. TAUD urged the Attorney General not to appeal the decision, so that it may set a precedent for preserving the democratic climate through freedom of expression, and demanded comprehensive police reform. Minister Yusril (7/3) also stated that public prosecutors should not file a cassation appeal against this acquittal in line with the new KUHAP, cautioning against reviving the distinctions between “pure acquittal” and “non-pure acquittal” that had become a feature of law enforcement under the old code ([tempo.co](http://tempo.co), 7/3/2026). This is also important to ensure that justice and truth are upheld through the legal process, and that the reputations of those wrongfully detained are restored.

The acquittal should serve as a precedent for the future. Arrests without clear due process are wrong, and democracy still has a place in Indonesia. The call to “don’t be afraid to be an activist” (Mochtar, 2026) becomes relevant when Indonesia demonstrates that the legal process can still be counted on to fight for justice, as shown in the cases of Delpedro, Muzaffar, Syahdan, and Khariq.

### **Recommendations**

Referring to the analysis above, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

- a. The National Police should ensure that every arrest is carried out in accordance with the KUHAP by providing assignment letters, arrest warrants, and court search permits. In this regard, efforts toward National Police reform should also be advanced to ensure that practices of arbitrary arrest, torture during detention, and out-of-court “peaceful settlement” approaches toward victims and their families are stopped and firmly sanctioned through existing mechanisms in a transparent manner;
- b. The Attorney General should accept the acquittals handed down by the courts for political prisoners and refrain from filing appeals or cassations against those verdicts;
- c. Public Prosecutors throughout Indonesia should ensure that every prosecution is based on strong evidence and free from investigator pressure in all ongoing cases;

## Laws

***The dynamics of arrests and guilty verdicts against hundreds of political prisoners send a troubling message to members of the society who wish to voice critical opinions in the public sphere, for any reason. The tendency to criminalize those who speak critically risks generating a climate of fear in civil society, where individuals feel they too could be unilaterally detained on the basis of existing regulations, no matter how small their voice. Law literacy, awareness of rights and responsibilities as citizens, and transparent, accountable law enforcement that upholds justice and truth are essential to building the trust that democracy is still functioning and meaningful in Indonesia.***

- d. The Government and the House of Representatives should review the provisions of the new KUHAP that permit searches, seizures, and investigation blocks without court authorization, as these provisions risk narrowing the rights of suspects to a fair legal process;
- e. The Supreme Court, through its courts, must adopt the acquittals of Delpedro, Muzaffar, Syahdan, and Khariq as jurisprudence in handling similar political prisoner cases throughout Indonesia. Judges should assess each case based on the facts presented at trial independently, rather than following the “mastermind” and “provocateur” narratives constructed by investigators;
- f. The National Human Rights Commission, drawing on the KPF Report, should also conduct an independent investigation into all cases of arrested August 2025 demonstrators that indicate human rights violations, including cases of torture against minors. The findings should be published openly and serve as the basis for binding policy recommendations;
- g. The Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Corrections and Immigration should carefully monitor the conditions of criminalized civil society members who have been mistreated during detention. The Ministry of Human Rights should also intensively ensure the fulfillment of detainees’ rights, and the Ministry of Corrections and Immigration must ensure systematic changes are made to guarantee this;
- h. Civil society and legal aid organizations should continue to support the 197 political prisoners who are still undergoing legal proceedings, ensuring they have access to legal counsel from the outset of their detention; and
- i. The public need not be afraid to voice opinions and criticism in the public sphere or on social media, as freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution and has been reaffirmed through the court’s ruling in this case. The public should strengthen their law, democratic, political, and policy literacy in order to understand their rights when dealing with law enforcement, so they are not easily subjected to criminalization.

Laws

## Good Governance Principles in the Dynamics of Indonesia's Participation in the Board of Peace

-Christina Clarissa Intania-



Photo Source: Tribunnews.com

During the administration of President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka, several complaints have frequently been voiced by the public. These range from unclear communication with minimal strategy as state officials (Muchtar, 2025), lack of transparency in several policies (Transparency International Indonesia, 2025), the need for improved policy impact assessments and planning (Center of Economic and Law Studies, 2025), to the need for more meaningful public participation in decision-making (Intania, 2025).

Regarding the Board of Peace (BoP) policy in particular, the government, through Foreign Minister Sugiono (4/2), stated that this policy aligns with the state's goal of bringing peace to Palestine and was based on careful deliberation. However, its implementations have suggested otherwise. Deputy Speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly Hidayat Nur Wahid (25/2) noted that the government swiftly declared itself part of the BoP without prior consultation with the House of Representatives. The Government had also not considered the full landscape of Indonesia's diplomacy (theconversation.com, 5/2/2026). Following pressure from citizens and other statesmen, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has since held back discussions on the future of membership, prioritizing first the safety of Indonesian nationals living in Middle Eastern countries (hukumonline.com, 9/3/2026).

Drawing from these two policy cases, it is necessary to critically examine how the current government applies the general principles of good governance (AUPB), or good governance principles, in its various actions. This article therefore shall attempt to discuss how the Prabowo-era government implements good governance principles.

### **General Principles of Good Governance in Decision-Making**

This article shall refer directly to the AUPB as regulated under Law Number 30/2024 on Government Administration (the Government Administration Law). According to Article 10 of the Government Administration Law, several principles are set out as the foundation for how the government should act in designing, implementing, and evaluating policies. The following are the principles that should guide our government in executing its policies:

- a. Legal certainty: Every government policy should be grounded in applicable legislation applied fairly and consistently;
- b. Benefit: Every policy should consider a balance of benefits for all parties including individuals, groups, and ecosystems without exception;
- c. Impartiality: Government bodies/officials should make decisions fairly by considering the interests of all parties without discrimination;
- d. Diligence: Every government decision/action must be based on complete information and documents, prepared carefully before being finalized;
- e. Non-abuse of authority: Government bodies/officials must use their authority in accordance with the purpose for which it was granted, without exceeding its limits or misusing it for personal interests;
- f. Openness: The Government should provide access to truthful, honest, and non-discriminatory information to the public while maintaining protected confidentiality;
- g. Public interest: The Government prioritizes public welfare through policies that are aspirational, accommodating, and non-discriminatory; and
- h. Good service: The Government services should be timely, with clear costs, and in accordance with applicable standards and legislative provisions.

In decision-making, the AUPB serves to help the government make decisions that make the best use of resources, prevent corruption, enhance public participation, prevent injustice, and increase legitimacy and public trust (Sari, 2023).

### **The Dynamics of Indonesia Joining the Board of Peace (BoP)**

Indonesia first announced its decision of joining of Trump's Board of Peace on January 21, 2026, alongside seven other countries. The following day, January 22, 2026, President Prabowo Subianto officially signed the membership charter at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, calling it a historic opportunity to promote peace and the reconstruction of Gaza (kompaspedia.kompas.id, 19/2/2026).

This decision sparked debate among civil society groups that opposed it, arguing it demonstrated a lack of solidarity with Palestine, as expressed by the Indonesian Ulema Council, the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, and The Indonesian Institute, Center for Public Policy Research (tempo.co, 2/3/2026; Intania, 2026). In response to differing public perspectives, Foreign Minister Sugiono appeared before Commission I of the House of Representatives on January 27, 2026, to explain that Indonesia's involvement was solely aimed at preserving the two-state solution and Palestinian independence, not a shift in its foreign policy principles (kompaspedia.kompas.id, 19/2/2026).

Civil society groups, including the Gusdurian Network represented by Director Alissa Wahid, pressed for Indonesia to withdraw. She argued that the Council was heavily influenced by the interests of the United States and had not involved Palestine from the outset. In response, Prabowo held a discussion with 19 national Islamic organizations on February 3, 2026, which resulted in a shared understanding that the government was prepared to withdraw from the Council if its policy direction contradicted national values. The following day, Prabowo also invited former foreign ministers such as Hassan Wirajuda and Marty Natalegawa to more deeply assess the policy risks. Muhammadiyah also submitted written recommendations to the President (kompaspedia.kompas.id, 19/2/2026).

On February 10, 2026, Israeli media reported indications that Indonesian military (TNI) troops would be deployed to Gaza as part of an international stabilization force (thejerusalempost, 10/2/2026). Indonesia had also signaled its readiness to deploy troops if requested, with an estimated number of 8,000 soldiers. The Ministry of Defense, represented by the

Head of the Ministry's Information Bureau, Brigadier General Rico Ricardo Sirait (28/2), emphasized that the troop deployment would serve a peace mission consistent with UN peacekeeping missions and the Indonesian Constitution.

The most recent peak came on February 16, 2026, when Trump announced that the Board of Peace had gathered pledges of 5 billion US dollars for the reconstruction of Gaza. Prabowo was scheduled to attend the Council's inaugural meeting in Washington ([kompaspedia.kompas.id](https://kompaspedia.kompas.id), 19/2/2026). At that inaugural meeting in Washington, President Prabowo emphasized Indonesia's full support for the 20-point plan initiated by President Donald J. Trump and stated "mutual understanding as well as a strong commitment to actively contribute to its implementation" ([setneg.go.id](https://setneg.go.id), 20/2/2026).

### **Application of the General Principles of Good Governance (AUPB)**

According to the chronology described above, several AUPB principles appear to have not been applied in the Indonesian government's decision to join the BoP. In making this decision, the Government of Indonesia did not fully reflect the AUPB. Indonesia failed to uphold the principles of legal certainty, non-abuse of authority, and openness. This is reflected in the fact that the decision to join the BoP was made by the government, represented by President Prabowo himself, without involving the House of Representatives. This is particularly concerning given that membership would require expenditure of up to Rp16.7 trillion and necessitates ratification into national law. The President should have first consulted with and obtained the approval of the House of Representatives before joining, which is a requirement explicitly stipulated in Article 11 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The decision-making was unilateral and closed, bypassing the required parliamentary approval.

The principles of benefit, diligence, and public interest were also not fulfilled in this decision-making process. From the chronological account, it is evident that the Government decided to join the BoP without parliamentary approval and without public consultation. The public was only brought into consultations through meetings with international relations experts and civil society organizations after Indonesia had already declared its membership. This reflects decision-making that was not based on thorough deliberation and disregarded public input and participation in the policy process.

In terms of substance, some experts argued that Indonesia's BoP membership had one potential benefit: it could help facilitate trade agreement negotiations with the United States (the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade/ART), which

could be more advantageous for Indonesia (Yuliantoro, 2026). However, this was disputed by the Government through Foreign Minister Sugiono (19/2) and Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto (2/2), both of whom stated that the BoP and ART have no correlation.

Considering Indonesia's intended contribution to the BoP as described above, compared to the BoP's stated vision and actions thus far, the commitments Indonesia would undertake are predicted to fall short of achieving the goal of Palestinian independence. The BoP does not explicitly recognize Palestinian interests within its framework. Meanwhile, Israel, a close ally of the United States, has clearly stated its position against Palestinian independence (news.detik.com, 12/9/2025). It is therefore highly likely that the resources Indonesia would allocate to the BoP would not contribute to Palestinian independence and could affect the quality of domestic policy and the national situation by diverting those resources (i.e., TNI troops).

Extending from the previous explanation, the principle of good service is also indirectly affected. If significant resources are expended to deploy 8,000 TNI troops and pay membership dues (once that decision is made), this could have an impact on the fulfillment of domestic resource needs. Deploying 8,000 personnel entails enormous costs, and several domestic affairs also require the presence of TNI. Furthermore, Rp16.7 trillion drawn from the State Budget could affect allocations for other domestic priorities. It is highly probable that public services and domestic public policy program priorities would be disrupted as a result.

Regarding the principle of impartiality, the government's failure to obtain parliamentary approval before making this decision indirectly reflects a decision-making process that falls short of fairness, as it does not take into account the interests of all parties. The BoP itself, in substance, also reveals a bias toward one side, the Israeli bloc, without meaningful consideration of Palestinian participation. In essence, the BoP fails to demonstrate impartiality. This is also reflected in the manner in which the government made its decision.

### **Recommendations**

Referring to the discussion above, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

- a. The House of Representatives should immediately request the government to conduct a formal discussion regarding Indonesia's membership in the BoP in accordance with Article 11 of the 1945

***President Prabowo Subianto's decision for Indonesia to join the Board of Peace without the involvement and approval of the House of Representatives reflects decision-making that was not based on thorough deliberation and disregarded public input. The public was only brought into consultations through meetings with international relations experts and civil society organizations after Indonesia had already declared its membership.***

- Constitution. Legislative approval must be obtained before the financial commitment of Rp16.7 trillion and the deployment of TNI troops is realized.
- b. The President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be urged to commit to opening meaningful public consultations before strategic foreign policy decisions are made, not after. This process must involve civil society, academics, and community organizations from the planning stage.
  - c. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should advocate for a revision of the BoP Charter to explicitly include Palestinian independence and the involvement of the Palestinian Authority as conditions for Indonesia's participation as a demonstration of Indonesia's commitment to being a force for change. If revision is not possible, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should recommend withdrawal to the President.
  - d. The Ministry of Finance should conduct a fiscal impact assessment of the membership dues and the cost of deploying TNI troops on domestic public service budget allocations. The results of this assessment must be published openly before any commitments are finalized.

Social

## The Urgency of Strengthening Indonesia's Commitment to Child Suicide Prevention

-Made Natasya Restu Dewi Pratiwi-



In February 2026, the Indonesian public was once again shocked by the increasing frequency of suicides among young children. A 10-year-old elementary school student in Ngada, East Nusa Tenggara, reportedly took his own life. Initial reports suggested that the incident was triggered by the child's inability to buy books and pens, as well as repeated reprimands. In another region, Demak, a 12-year-old child also died by suicide, although the exact cause is still under investigation.

These two incidents are not isolated cases, but rather part of a series of child suicide incidents that have occurred in recent years. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia/KPAI*) in 2026 recorded 120 cases of child suicides between 2023 and 2026. This figure underscores the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the child protection system and the national mental health response to prevent further loss of life.

The trend of child suicide also aligns with findings from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey, which revealed that 2% of adolescents aged 15–24 experienced depression, higher than the national prevalence of 1.4%. Meanwhile, the prevalence of suicidal ideation in this age group reached 0.39%, exceeding the national average of 0.25%.

If not addressed promptly, suicidal behavior, often rooted in mental health problems not only creates a double burden of disease but also results in the loss of productive years (Ministry of Health, 2025). This situation clearly contradicts the fourth point of the Asta Cita development mandate, which aims to create superior and productive human resources. In response to this issue, this paper shall analyze how formal systems through public policy and informal systems such as community relations surrounding children's lives could be implemented in a balanced manner to support improvements in community mental well-being, particularly among children.

### **Suicide Prevention Situation in Indonesia**

Currently, policies specifically addressing suicide are still governed by general mental health regulations under Law Number 17/2023 concerning Health. This regulation stipulates that every individual has the right to protection of mental well-being so that they can engage in productive activities and live free from excessive stress.

This means that investment in mental health prevention should be prioritized, as it generates significant benefits in preventing potential losses in human resource productivity due to mental health problems, family stress, social conflict, and environments that are unsupportive of mental well-being.

This mandate was later operationalized in Minister of Health Regulation Number 12/2025 concerning the Ministry of Health Strategic Plan for 2025–2029, which set out the Prabowo administration's commitment to expanding referral services for ten priority diseases, including mental health conditions. While this commitment is highly commendable, it also requires a simultaneous evaluation of disruptions in mental health referral services for at-risk populations.

More specifically, the Government, through the Ministry of Health, published the "Guidelines for Suicide Prevention and Management" in 2021. These guidelines outline early detection mechanisms, referral pathways, and treatment for mental health problems and suicidal behavior that can be identified by communities at the village, school, and civil society levels. Normatively, Indonesia does not lack policy documents or technical guidelines.

Outreach efforts for families vulnerable to parent-child conflict have also been conducted through the "1001 Ways to Talk" module developed by the Ministry of Population and Family Development, which aims to encourage parenting styles that support children's mental health.

However, in practice, parenting patterns in Indonesia are often characterized by limited empathy due to a tendency toward authoritative parenting styles shaped by cultural norms passed down across generations (Sembiring et al., 2023).

In reality, involving parents and caregivers in strengthening understanding, empathy, and support for children's well-being has been proven to increase children's self-confidence and their ability to cope with stress. This indicates that efforts to optimize family empowerment in suicide prevention in Indonesia still need to be strengthened to ensure that access to information about healthy parenting does not become elitist and accessible only to families with adequate socioeconomic resources.

Despite the availability of policies, guidelines, and modules, the repeated incidents of child suicide last February should prompt critical reflection on the governance of mental health services in Indonesia. The question is no longer about whether guidelines or policies exist to support mental health, but rather whether actors on the ground truly understand the warning signs of individuals at risk of suicide, actively monitor cases, know how to provide empathetic support to children, and are capable of referring at-risk individuals to the nearest professional services.

This implementation gap highlights the need to prioritize future research to identify the most relevant and effective suicide prevention intervention designs in the Indonesian context. Current scientific evidence also suggests that support for safety planning an intervention considered effective for children and adolescents at risk of suicide remains limited (Albaum et al., 2025). This underscores the importance of collaboration between government, academia, civil society, and the private sector to develop contextual and evidence-based approaches.

In conclusion, several fundamental issues require attention in reconstructing the design of suicide prevention and management in Indonesia. First, the suicide prevention framework is not yet institutionally understood because its implementation scheme remains largely top-down, with minimal community empowerment to seek appropriate referrals to mental health professionals.

For example, data from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (*Survei Kesehatan Indonesia/SKI*) shows that the low coverage of mental health services for children and adolescents is partly due to their high preference for seeking mental health assistance from school staff (38.2%) and religious or community leaders (20.5%). As a result, many children and adolescents

with mental health problems are not registered in health facilities and do not receive the professional support they require. This information gap regarding service referrals requires immediate intervention to prevent further suicides caused by the state's failure to protect the mental health of its citizens.

Second, the benefits of mental health interventions are often considered non-strategic because their impacts are typically measured only in the long term, making them vulnerable to being sidelined in development priorities. The absence of specific state priorities for investing in mental health is evident in the lack of budget allocation to optimize early mental health detection, which should be an integral component of the suicide prevention framework (Center for Budget Analysis and State Financial Accountability, 2025).

Third, optimizing the empowerment of children's immediate environments, particularly parents is a strategic point that requires long-term strengthening. Parental skills in resolving parent-child conflicts can increase children's sense of physical and emotional security starting from the family environment.

### **The Importance of Strengthening Commitment to Child Suicide Prevention**

Moving forward, a more systematic and integrated referral system for suicide-risk cases is urgently needed. A key focus of cross-sectoral understanding should be ensuring that screening through Free Health Checks (*Cek Kesehatan Gratis/CKG*) in schools and community health centers functions as a gateway for identifying individuals experiencing suicidal ideation and referring these cases to professionals for psychological support.

This process should not stop at screening alone. It must also be accompanied by education for individuals and families, as well as a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation cycle to identify barriers to services and refine community-based approaches.

Strengthening this referral system has strategic benefits. Risk factors for suicide can be identified more quickly. Individuals at risk can receive timely and appropriate psychological support. Suicidal impulses could be prevented before they become fatal. Furthermore, service integration will be strengthened, preventing fragmentation between referral systems from schools, integrated service posts (*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu/posyandu*), community health centers (*Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat/Puskesmas*), and professional services.

Education on psychological first aid also forms a crucial foundation for prevention. This education includes the ability to recognize one's own mental health condition, understand the warning signs that someone needs professional help, and learn about available mental health services and peer support communities that are safe and affordable.

Such efforts need to be intensified at the village, school, and workplace levels to increase public awareness and encourage proactive help-seeking behavior. Suicide prevention must also be implemented across sectors using a social determinants of health approach, given that the root causes of suicide are multidimensional. Cross-sector collaboration must therefore be prioritized to create safe environments, particularly for children to express their needs and emotions, so that emotional burdens do not accumulate and lead to suicidal thoughts under extreme stress.

Ultimately, strong community mental health could be achieved through optimal and integrated early detection of cases. In the long term, improved community mental health will contribute to higher human development outcomes. However, this opportunity will be lost if suicide prevention interventions are not prioritized in policy implementation, monitoring systems, and budget allocation.

Therefore, consistent commitment, integrated referral governance, and data-driven leadership are essential to ensure that every Indonesian child grows up within a socially, psychologically, and economically safe ecosystem, in line with the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations aim to strengthen governance in the child suicide prevention agenda:

- a. The Ministry of Health should direct regional health offices to integrate suicide risk indicators into national and regional public health surveillance systems. These indicators could be derived from mental health screening results from the CKG program in schools and community health centers. The Ministry of Health should also lead regular cross-sectoral coordination to evaluate the implementation of early detection guidelines and ensure that a dedicated budget is allocated for screening and psychological support for high-risk populations.
- b. Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Ministry of Higher Education together with regional education offices, schools,

***Without strengthening integrated early detection systems, raising awareness of child suicide issues, establishing clear and accessible referral pathways, allocating dedicated budgets, and implementing data-driven monitoring and evaluation, child suicide prevention would remain merely a policy commitment on paper. Consistent implementations and cross-sector collaboration are essential prerequisites to truly protect child mental health and prevent it from undermining Indonesia's aspirations for human resource development.***

and community health centers, should conduct routine suicide risk assessments, for example during school orientation or health screenings. They must also clarify referral pathways from CKG screening to professional services and provide comprehensive training for teachers and education personnel. This training should equip them to educate children about emotional literacy, the impacts of trauma, and how to respond empathetically and without judgment when children share their experiences.

- c. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection together with local governments, religious organizations, civil society, and community cadres, should collaborate with the Ministry of Population and Family Development to expand the inclusive implementation of the "1001 Ways to Talk" module. The goal is to strengthen empathetic parenting practices, encourage open communication, and improve parents' ability to recognize signs that children need psychological support, ensuring that access to healthy parenting knowledge does not become elitist.
- d. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, the National Commission on Violence Against Women, the Ministry of Health, public policy research institutions, and civil society organizations should develop integrated data systems on risk factors for suicidal ideation and behavior among children. This system should include mapping of referral services and child-friendly mental health hotlines, while also guaranteeing protection of the rights of suicide victims and their families from post-incident discrimination.
- e. Local governments, community health centers, civil society organizations, businesses, and educational institutions should organize community-based training on psychological first aid and emotional literacy. This training should involve teachers, health workers, village officials, parents, religious leaders, and children themselves, enabling communities to recognize risk signs, provide initial support, and understand safe and affordable referral mechanisms.
- f. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Bappenas, and regional governments should integrate child suicide prevention into social protection and poverty alleviation policies. This integration will ensure that mental health interventions are positioned as long-term development investments that contribute to improving the quality of human resources, as mandated in the Asta Cita development agenda.

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## The Benefits of Urban Public Health Protection against Air Pollution Threats

-Made Natasya Restu Dewi Pratiwi-



According to the World Air Quality 2024 report by IQAir, air quality in Indonesia continues to decline, particularly in the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek) areas. The report noted that the concentration of fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) in Jabodetabek exceeded the threshold set by the World Health Organization (WHO). In this region, PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations ranged from 30–55 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), or approximately six to eleven times higher than the WHO's recommended safe threshold of  $5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

High concentrations of these fine particles pose serious health risks because these particles could easily penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream. Without a systematic commitment to responsibly control sources of air pollution, urban populations will bear the greatest health burden.

Today, the air pollution problem has reached a critical level and requires a stronger policy response from the government. Globally, Indonesia ranks 15th among countries with the highest air pollution levels and ranks first among Southeast Asian countries (IQAir, 2024). This situation demonstrates that controlling air pollution in urban areas, particularly in Greater Jakarta, must become a priority for urgent policy intervention.

Various challenges continue to hinder progress in air quality control in Greater Jakarta. These include increasing emissions from industrial

activities, biomass burning, coal-fired power plants, and the transportation sector (IQAir, 2024). The rapid growth in motorized vehicles and high population mobility also contribute to higher emissions of hazardous exhaust gases and particulate matter, which negatively affect human health and the environment (Bappenas, 2022). These factors must therefore become a primary focus for government interventions in air quality control.

In an effort to strengthen the government's commitment to maintaining clean air quality in urban areas, this study examines the current position of government policy commitments and identifies priority improvement steps that need to be addressed.

### **Current Policy Situation**

Until this article was written, Indonesia does not yet have a national commitment that clearly establishes targets for reducing air pollutants harmful to health within a specific timeframe. In addition, national air quality monitoring capacity still needs to be strengthened in order to produce more comprehensive, specific, and reliable data that can support evidence-based policymaking.

Government Regulation Number 22/2021 concerning the Implementations of Environmental Protection and Management regulates environmental quality standards, including ambient air quality standards and emission standards, as well as monitoring and reporting mechanisms. However, this regulation does not include measurable targets for reducing air pollutants, making it difficult to accurately assess the effectiveness of current policies.

Indonesia also has Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 12/2021 concerning Measurement of Air Pollutant Loads and Emission Monitoring. This regulation requires business actors to install a Continuous Emission Monitoring System (CEMS) to continuously monitor emissions. The policy is designed to ensure industrial accountability in minimizing the environmental impacts of their production activities. However, public information regarding the extent to which violations of these provisions have been enforced remains limited.

The lack of transparency and accountability in government reporting indicates that Indonesia has not yet fully translated regulatory mandates into concrete actions. This includes the need to establish a truly transparent ambient air quality monitoring system that supports participatory, collective, and data-driven air pollution management.

One strategic sector that requires immediate anticipatory action in responding to the growing impacts of air pollution is the health sector, particularly in strengthening early detection systems for diseases related to air pollution and improving responsiveness in handling pollution-related health conditions.

On the other hand, the Government's efforts to develop an air quality monitoring dashboard for major cities through the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (*Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi, dan Geofisika/BMKG*) Metro website deserve recognition. This platform provides hourly updates on air quality information based on the Air Pollution Standard Index (*Indeks Standar Pencemar Udara/ISPU*), which measures pollutant concentrations such as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, and CO. However, the information provided through this platform still needs to be disseminated more widely so that communities in affected cities can easily understand real-time air quality conditions, take appropriate precautionary actions in daily activities, and benefit from integration with surveillance systems for pollution-related diseases.

The commitment to formulating environmentally responsible regulations also requires continuous monitoring. In Jakarta, for example, the local government is currently developing policy innovations to strengthen air pollution control governance. This initiative is being pursued through an evaluation of the effectiveness of Gubernatorial Decree Number 576/2023 concerning the Air Pollution Control Strategy. The Jakarta Provincial Government is considering upgrading this document into a Gubernatorial Regulation while also adding emergency preparedness measures to respond to high air pollution episodes, including integration with health protection measures for vulnerable groups (Media Indonesia, February 11, 2026).

This step represents an important milestone in strengthening the regional policy framework for air pollution control and offers valuable lessons that can be replicated by other highly polluted cities in Indonesia. However, the development process must also ensure broader participation from the public, the scientific community, and research institutions so that the resulting policy has a strong scientific foundation and can better address public needs.

In addition, the formalization of this policy should include clear performance indicators, including integration between air quality monitoring systems and early detection systems for increased risks of diseases related to air pollution, such as acute respiratory infections (ARI) and the heightened risk of tuberculosis transmission in areas with high pollution levels.

## The Impact of Unmanaged Air Pollution

Several studies have demonstrated the significant health and economic impacts of air pollution in Jakarta. Research indicates that more than 10,000 deaths each year in Jakarta can be attributed to exposure to air pollution (Syuhada et al., 2023). In addition, more than 5,000 hospitalizations annually are estimated to be associated with poor air quality.

The impact of air pollution on children's health is also highly significant. Studies estimate more than 7,000 health impacts among children each year, including approximately 6,100 cases of stunting, around 330 infant deaths, and about 700 babies who experience health complications at birth.

Air pollution also imposes significant economic costs. The total annual cost associated with the health impacts of air pollution in Jakarta is estimated to reach US\$2,943.42 million. Because of these substantial health and economic losses, the World Health Organization has identified air pollution as a major risk factor for various non-communicable diseases, including ischemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and several types of cancer (WHO, 2021).

More concerning is the situation in many industrial areas such as mining zones, chemical industrial areas, and areas surrounding power plants. Communities in these areas are often exposed to pollution without adequate health monitoring systems. As a result, the long-term health impacts of pollutant exposure remain poorly measured, delaying early detection of disease. This situation can significantly increase healthcare costs because pollution-related diseases are not identified or treated in their early stages. In the long term, it may widen socioeconomic disparities, particularly among vulnerable communities who must bear high medical costs due to pollution exposure (Shidiq et al., 2025).

For example, national data on cancer and chronic diseases already exist, but these data have not yet been integrated with maps of pollutant exposure that may contribute to the development of such diseases. This situation makes it difficult for the Government to fully understand the relationship between air pollution and the increase in high-cost chronic diseases. Identifying the most vulnerable population groups and determining the dominant pollutant sources that trigger disease also becomes difficult without a robust monitoring system.

As vulnerability to air pollution in urban areas increases, the government needs to strengthen surveillance systems to monitor the impacts of industry

and pollution on public health. Surveillance systems should not only record disease incidence but also systematically link health data with air quality data.

The Government needs to strengthen registries for cancer and pollution-related diseases across different regions, conduct spatial mapping of pollution exposure, and ensure that air quality data are transparent and publicly accessible. Without integrated and open data, it becomes difficult to determine whether increases in chronic disease cases in certain areas are related to specific industrial activities.

Environmental policy in Indonesia must also ensure the independence of regulatory agencies and strengthen scientific capacity for environmental risk assessment, even during periods of budget efficiency. If economic growth and investment interests dominate policy decisions without adequate precautionary measures, communities living near industrial areas risk becoming invisible victims of development processes.

Another important reflection is the need to integrate environmental justice principles into national policy. Poor urban communities, coastal communities living near coal-fired power plants, and residents in industrial areas often have limited access to specialized health services, including early detection for chronic diseases such as cancer. Without policy interventions that prioritize vulnerable populations, weak environmental oversight may deepen health inequalities and worsen social impacts.

Therefore, efforts to improve urban air quality are not only related to the existence of environmental regulations but also to ensuring that industrial accountability policies in managing environmental impacts are accompanied by comprehensive, transparent, contextual, and evidence-based public health monitoring systems.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations aim to strengthen governance in urban planning and public health protection against air pollution threats.

- a. The Central Government, through the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Industry, together with regional governments in metropolitan areas, should strengthen industrial compliance with air emission standards and monitor the use of hazardous chemicals using a prevention-based approach. This could be achieved through

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***Integrated urban air quality monitoring combined with surveillance of pollution-related diseases should become an immediate priority to protect long-term public health. Without such efforts, economic growth and increasing industrial activity in cities could risk being offset by a growing burden of chronic disease, widening socioeconomic inequality, and significantly higher healthcare costs in the future due to unmanaged air pollution.***

stricter emission standards, stronger supervision of industries and power plants, and improved real-time emission monitoring systems so that potential violations can be detected more quickly.

- b. The Government should maintain the independence of environmental monitoring agencies and strengthen research capacity on the impacts of air pollution, coordinated by the National Research and Innovation Agency (*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional/BRIN*). This strengthening could be achieved through increased funding for environmental research, collaboration with universities, youth groups, and research institutions, and greater transparency in the authority of regulatory agencies to conduct environmental audits in the industrial, transportation, and energy sectors.
- c. The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health, together with environmental data management institutions, should expand the transparency of information on air pollution exposure so that communities can better understand health risks in their areas. This could be achieved through integration of national air quality monitoring systems, open and easily accessible publication of air quality data, and the development of early warning systems that allow communities to take independent health protection measures.
- d. Central and Regional Governments should integrate environmental justice principles into development policies. In practice, environmental and health protection should prioritize communities most affected by pollution, including low-income populations in dense urban areas, residents living near industrial zones, and coastal communities located near power plants and energy facilities.
- e. The Ministry of Health must ensure the availability and accessibility of data on the prevalence of diseases related to air pollution so that these data could serve as a primary reference for improving governance that supports long-term public health protection.

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