

In Solidarity With Comrades Imprisoned in Malang and Tangerang, Indonesia

Local Autonomous Network

May 2020

It seems that blame-game is a common tactic of different states during a pandemic. As petty violators in the local are blamed to cover up the late travel ban and late mass testing imposed by the government, the same is done by the Indonesian government by cracking down those who are critical to their incompetency.

Along with comrades from Australia, the Netherlands and other countries, we, individuals and collectives of the Local Autonomous Network, denounce the actions of the Indonesian government against comrades in Malang and Tangerang who were accused of inciting public disorder when disorder is already evident in the grassroots.

Following are the reasons for this condemnation:

- The hacking of social media accounts, as confirmed by Whatsapp, in the case of the journalist Ravid Patra. He announced that after being hacked, he was not able to control his own account and has received incriminating messages such as “ It’s already crisis, it’s time to burn, Let’s loot on the 30th of April!”
- The isolation tactics applied to five individuals in Tangerang, near Jakarta, who were arrested for vandalism, allegedly inciting to public disorder. They were arrested using warrants which did not contain their names. The state has also been depriving them of legal assistance and communication with their families since their arrests. The Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) demanded that the police should substantiate their charges.
- The illegal detention of a minor involved in the Tangerang incident, on which the state has not disclosed any information to the public.
- The authorities forcing a petty criminal to confess in a video, stating that he is the “sole leader” of the plan to provoke nationwide looting when looting was already prevalent due to lack of government support amidst the loss of jobs of 1.5 million formal and informal workers.
- The arrest of three individuals in Malang in East Java for the same charges, “public provocation”, who were actively involved in struggles against land-grabbing, state corporations, and for being simply “anti-capitalists”
- The confiscation of books and other materials owned by the arrested five in Tangerang, which the police claim are effectual to the vandalisms. The books include Tan Malaka’s *Aksi Mass* (Mass Action), Eka Kurniawan’s *Core Core Di Toilet* (Doodles in the Toilet), and *Indonesia Dala Krisis 1997–2002* (Indonesia in Crisis 1997–2002) which are actually not illegal in Indonesia. The Rights Group for Missing Person and Victims of Violence (KontraS) adds that “The arrests should not be based on suspicion and certain analyses.”

Political opportunism during the pandemic comes in many forms. In the so-called Philippines, tens of thousands have been arrested due to non-criminal charges, resulting to the cramming of non-violent violators in prisons and other detention facilities. Demolitions continue. Extraction of resources for foreign companies remain unhindered. A media corporation, slightly critical to the government, was shut down. Government armed forces are conditioned into being desensitized robots by encouraging them to kill in the presence of the slightest misbehavior.

Now, more than ever, we need to express solidarity with comrades from all over the world. As we demonstrate our aspirations through resource-sharing, mutual aid and cooperation in our localities, we should stay connected to strengthen mutual protection.

In solidarity!

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