

We Are All Puppeteers

42 People from Anti-Authoritarian Networks Named as Suspects After Demonstrations
#bubarkanDPR (abolish parliament)

Serikat Tahanan



September 17, 2025

From August 25 to September 5, Indonesia was a sea of fire. A wave of simultaneous demonstrations ended in street battles, the burning of government buildings and police stations, and the looting of politicians' homes. A total of 3,195 people were detained in various locations during this period. *This does not include subsequent arrests.*

As part of post-demonstration operations, the police investigated and arrested activists, administrators of social movement social media accounts, and influencers. They got enough spotlight, plus the support they deserve. But at the same time—at the grassroots level—dozens or perhaps hundreds of people were arrested, beaten, cut off from communication with their families, and denied legal assistance from the Lembaga Bantuan Hukum — LBH (Legal Aid Institute). Some of them were reported by local media, but most remained *silent*: they suddenly disappeared and the entire movement immediately went “underground,” and was overcome with paranoia.

Our fears are well-founded. We know that the state can be the perpetrator of human rights violations and terrorism. We have collective memories of 1965 killings, disappearances of activists in 1998, the Killing of the Human Rights activist, Munir, of everything bad that happens to people who dare to fight. *Who would dare to deny that the same thing will not happen again today?*

Finally, on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, the West Java Regional Police held a press conference announcing 42 suspects involved in acts of vandalism in Bandung. However, they were all the result of a nationwide investigation and arrests carried out as far as Jombang and Makassar. They were accused of being *anarchists*.

During the press conference, the West Java Regional Police revealed that anarchist groups were involved in acts of vandalism, incitement to violence, distribution of materials on how to assemble Molotov cocktails, and fundraising/management of funds from international anarchist organizations amounting to 1 billion Indonesian rupiah (60,795 USD).

We are not denying these accusations. We are simply highlighting how the government is trying to convince the public that the wave of mass unrest is not entirely due to popular anger. The government always thinks in a *puppeteer-centric* logic: believing that everything is centrally mobilized by a handful of intellectual actors. Some think this is orchestrated by the political opposition, which is impossible considering Prabowo's solid coalition that embraces the entirety of the predatory elites. Some accuse this of being orchestrated by foreign minions financed from abroad. Some conspire about military intelligence work. Or, 42 *anarchists* orchestrated the riots.

Let's say that the accusations about *anarchists* are true. Even so, the government is still looking for a scapegoat while underestimating the public's reasoning. They think that if thousands of Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) members, thousands of anarchists, or foreign agents, or the opposition are arrested, then millions of other Indonesians, such as Ojol (motorcycle taxi drivers), students, university students, and housewives, will not carry sticks, throw stones, and prepare glass bottles filled with gasoline? Our government is not stupid. They deliberately deny it and say, “everything is fine.” They are afraid to admit that the people, that is, *all of us*, are the *puppeteers*.

We are all puppeteers. This insurrection is the most magnificent political performance we have ever staged. Our story is a script that has yet to be written. Our dialogue begins with the words, “Cukup!” (Enough!), and ends with “Merdeka 100%” (100% Independence). Our role is to be protagonists in our own liberation.

In a short time, the insurrection will subside, the fire will die out, and the smoke will be blown away by the wind. The buildings of the parliaments (DPR) will be rebuilt even stronger, the post-insurrection military budget will skyrocket, but the forests of Indigenous peoples will continue to be cleared, workers will still enjoy low wages, and the one percent—the ruling class—will continue to benefit from this exploitative system.

Let us organize again, join labor unions, organize community forums, and student alliances. Let us read and discuss, hold educational classes, recruitment, and regeneration (kaderisasi). *Show that prisons do not scare us.*

The Serikat Tahanan (Prisoners' Union) is a collective of anti-authoritarian prisoners. We organize primarily inside, but also outside prisons throughout Indonesia, to reach out to fellow anti-authoritarian activists who have been imprisoned and to educate the public about prison conditions in Indonesia. This initiative, driven by prisoners, began as a simple act of solidarity among us—to nurture hope—so that we do not feel marginalized or leave prison

as people are more broken than before. By organizing, we are constantly reminded of why we began our struggle. Reach out to us for more information <sociabuzz.com/serikattahanan>.

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