



East Timor *and* Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)

PO Box 21873, Brooklyn, NY 11202 USA

+1-718-596-7668; cell: +1-917-690-4391

etan@etan.org

www.etan.org, Twitter @etan009

Indonesia's Militarized Democracy: Candidates bring proven records of violating human rights

East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)

ALTHOUGH Indonesia has made strides toward consolidating its democracy, some of its leading presidential and vice-presidential candidates continue to have deeply troubling backgrounds of gross human rights violations. This report provides a brief background on Indonesian democratization and examines some of the contenders for the nation's highest political offices.

Indonesia is in the midst of an election campaign. On April 9 voters will elect members to the national and regional legislatures. Once that election is completed Indonesia will hold its third presidential election following its transition to democracy after 32 years of military dictatorship. Candidates for the July 9 presidential election will be determined in part by the election for the People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR). A presidential ticket must be supported by a party or coalition of parties with at least 25 percent of the vote or 20 percent of the seats in the DPR election. While many parties have announced their favored candidates, only two – Golkar and PDI-P – out of – out of 12 registered national parties are thought to have a chance at passing the threshold.¹ The final determination of candidates will occur after the official DPR results, scheduled to be released on May 7, when coalitions of parties may form to put together tickets. The presidential and vice-

presidential candidates have often come from different parties.

Current president and former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) is completing his second term and is barred by term limits from running again. For months potential candidates have been jockeying for support – from both the general population and from political parties. Below, we briefly examine some worrisome candidates, based on their human rights and military records.

INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Democratization is a process. When Suharto was forced from office in May 1998, Indonesia did not democratize overnight. In fact, it took a year for the first nationally contested election, which eventually brought the Muslim intellectual Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur, to the presidency.

Today, most Indonesian political parties are personality-based, with limited platforms. Parties with major media owners behind them are thought to have an advantage and in some areas politics is a family business. Corruption accusations and convictions have affected the popularity of several political parties, including SBY's Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) and the Islamic Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS).

¹http://www.iseas.edu.sg/documents/publication/ISEAS_Perspective_2014_14-Contestants_2014_Indonesian_Parliamentary_Elections.pdf

And elections do not make a democracy - elections were regularly held during the Suharto period, albeit with little competition and highly predictable results. And while elections in Indonesia are now more open than before, they are merely the most superficial aspect of democracy.

MEANINGFUL democracy includes more than electoral competition. Government should be responsive to people's needs and not just the demands of elites. It should work to ensure equality of opportunity, minimum social guarantees for the population, freedom from entrenched corruption in the economic, political and legal spheres, the elimination of military influence in politics and the economy, an end to racism and religious persecution, and the respect of basic human rights for Indonesia's marginalized populations. Yes, democratization is chugging along in Indonesia, but when one views the plight of indigenous West Papuans and the ongoing impunity of the security forces it is impossible to think of Indonesia as a mature, consolidated democracy.

Indonesia has come a long way since 1999. Timor-Leste is now independent, Indonesia's press is much freer, a nervous peace hangs over Aceh, and some politicians, judges and business owners have been tried for corruption. Under President SBY, however, religious and ethnic tensions have risen, notably against Indonesia's Shiite, Ahmadi, and Christian populations. Repression continues in West Papua. Local legislatures across Indonesia have passed discriminatory laws. Thugs and gangsters from groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front have provoked and intimidated minorities, and have literally gotten away with murder. Military reform has stalled and even modest efforts to address past violations of human rights have gone nowhere.

INDONESIA has a long and firm history of military-trained national leaders. Since Sukarno, only three Indonesian presidents, who governed for a combined total of six years, have not been in the military. Although having an ex-military president does not necessarily mean hostility toward democracy, those who served during the dictator General Suharto's New Order period of 1965-1998 became acculturated to a system in which the military was granted tremendous political, economic and military power.² Gus Dur's attempts to check this power was one of the reasons that his presidency failed, and many in the military remain disgruntled with any moves to disengage them from politics and the economy.

Where Indonesia will be in another five years – the length of a presidential term – is difficult to predict. But for those interested in human rights and democracy, it is all too easy to envision a rollback of positive reforms under the wrong president. That some of the men described below are serious candidates for Indonesia's highest office (and that many others with highly tainted records play powerful roles in most Indonesian political parties), speaks to the country's failure to confront the violations of human rights on which they built their careers. This lack of justice and accountability will only reinforce the sense of impunity that pervades Indonesia and undermines its democracy.

Below are potential candidates for president with deeply troubling human rights records. Disturbingly, their violations are viewed positively by some, as signs of toughness. While their records have been questioned at times during their political campaigns, they deserve constant attention and deeper investigation as Indonesians go to the polls.

² <http://etan.org/news/2008/01suharto.htm>

PRABOWO SUBIANTO

Prabowo spent much of his military career in Indonesia's notorious Kopassus special forces, becoming its commander from 1995-1998.³ He now leads the Gerindra Party, which is largely funded by his millionaire brother. Prabowo had close ties to Suharto during the New Order (he married and has a son with Suharto's daughter Titiek). He received military training in the U.S. The *Washington Post* reported in 1998 that his "ties to the U.S. military are the closest of any among the U.S.-trained officer corps."⁴ Former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Robert Gelbard described Prabowo as "somebody who is perhaps the greatest violator of human rights in contemporary times among the Indonesian military. His deeds in the late 90s before democracy took hold, were shocking, even by TNI standards."⁵

Prabowo served several tours in Timor-Leste, where he "developed his reputation as the military's most ruthless field commander."⁶ Among other actions he was involved in the 1978 capture of Fretilin leader Nicolau Lobato, who was shot and killed while in custody. In the 1990s, he organized gangs of hooded killers, known as "ninjas," and the Tim Alfa militia in Los Palos to terrorize and cow the population. Prabowo is also accused of being involved in the September 1983 Kraras massacre,⁷ where more than 300 people were killed by Indonesian soldiers, and several East Timorese have accused Prabowo of torturing them. Prabowo denies involvement. Release of Prabowo's complete military records, including his locations on particular dates, would clarify his role.

In 1996, Prabowo led a team to secure the release of environmental researchers taken

hostage by West Papuan guerrillas. He aborted a planned Red Cross supervised release of the hostages to prevent his sister-in-law from getting credit. According to Ed McWilliams, a former U.S. diplomat, "The aborted hostage transfer led to a brutal campaign of reprisal attacks by the Indonesian military (largely Kopassus) against highland villages." This campaign began with an assault from "an Indonesian military helicopter disguised to look like the helicopter that ICRC mediators had been using" in violation of well-established international humanitarian law.⁸

As the tumult associated with the East Asian economic crisis in 1997-98 threatened the political legitimacy of the Suharto regime, Prabowo spearheaded campaigns to kidnap, arrest, intimidate and torture student activists. Protesting students at Trisakti University were killed and wounded by military snipers. Prabowo has acknowledged his role in the kidnappings, but has said his "conscience is clear."⁹ Convicted by a court of honor for "exceeding orders," Prabowo was forced to retire.

He is also accused of having a central role in sparking the May 14, 1998 anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta and other major urban areas. At the time, Prabowo was head of the Kostrad (the Army Strategic Reserve) based in the capital. In 2003, the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) accused Prabowo of responsibility "for gross human rights violations that occurred during the extensive rioting in Jakarta in 1998." The Komnas HAM report said that "security authorities at that time failed to curb the widespread riots that took place simultaneously." The spread of the riots was a result of a specific policy based on the "similar

³ <http://www.etan.org/news/2008/04brikop.htm>

⁴ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/indonesia/stories/rights052398.htm>

⁵ <http://www.etan.org/et2008/7july/19/16rghts.htm>

⁶ Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So Distant Horror, Mass Violence in East Timor*, Cornell University Press, 2005: 61)

⁷ <https://lists.riseup.net/www/arc/east-timor/2013-12/msg00181.html>

⁸ <http://etan.org/issues/wpapua/2013/1301wpap.htm>

⁹ <http://etan.org/et2009/02february/22/20prabo.htm>

pattern at almost all places where the riots took place, which began with provocation, followed by an attack on civilians.”¹⁰ Recently, while campaigning in Aceh, Prabowo offered a vague apology for unnamed actions his troops took there.¹¹

Shortly before Suharto resigned, Prabowo, backed by armed men, confronted the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Subagio at his home. The next morning Prabowo was removed as Kostrad commander. Later that day, B.J. Habibie succeeded Suharto as president, and Prabowo demanded command of the military. On May 22, he deployed troops around the presidential palace.¹² Prabowo reportedly, “took his demotion badly – at one point strapping on a sidearm, summoning several truckloads of troops and confronting guards at the presidential palace as he tried to win an audience” with Habibie.¹³ Soon after he was forced to resign from the military. In a speech in late 2012 he said, “I am a retired lieutenant general who once attempted to overthrow a president. But I failed to do it, and I regret that I failed.”¹⁴ Recently, while campaigning in Aceh, Prabowo offered a vague apology for unnamed actions his troops took there.¹⁵

Prabowo was the first person denied entry into the United States in 2000 under the UN Convention against Torture.¹⁶

After leaving the military Prabowo went into business and has tried to remake himself as a populist, becoming president of the Indonesian Farmers’ Association (HKTI) in 2004. The same year, he tried unsuccessfully to become the Golkar (Suharto’s New Order party) nominee for President. In 2009 he was Megawati

Sukarnoputri’s vice-presidential candidate (a PDI-P/Gerindra split ticket).

Until recently, Prabowo led most opinion polls of declared candidates for President. Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo (Jokowi), who officially entered the race in mid-March as the PDI-P candidate, is the current favorite.

WIRANTO

Wiranto is another general with deep ties to Suharto’s New Order regime. He served as Suharto’s Aide de Camp from 1989-1993. In February 1998, while Indonesia was in the throes of financial and political crisis, Suharto named him commander of the Armed Forces of Indonesia and a month later he was given the portfolio of Minister of Defense and Security. Although viewed as a reformer for his outward support for reducing the military’s role in politics, he nonetheless bears responsibility as commander in the deaths of protesters at the hands of the military in Jakarta during the May 1998 tumult. Wiranto was implicated for rights violations in the 2003 Komnas HAM report on the anti-Chinese riots in 1998.¹⁷

As head of the military, there is no doubt that he was aware – if not involved in the planning – of the scorched earth campaign unleashed on the East Timorese following their vote for independence in 1999. In February 2003, the UN-backed Serious Crimes Unit indicted Wiranto charging him “with Crimes Against Humanity for Murder, Deportation and Persecution in that these crimes were all undertaken as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against the civilian population of East Timor and specifically targeted those who were believed to be

¹⁰ <https://lists.riseup.net/www/arc/indonesia-act/2013-02/msg00021.html>

¹¹ <http://us.politik.news.viva.co.id/news/read/488023-prabowo-minta-maaf-atas-ulah-kopassus-di-aceh-dulu>

¹² http://www.perspektif.net/article/article.php?article_id=428

¹³ <http://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1998/05/29/0083.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/12/19/prabowo-wants-guided-democracy-if-elected.html>

¹⁵ <http://us.politik.news.viva.co.id/news/read/488023-prabowo-minta-maaf-atas-ulah-kopassus-di-aceh-dulu>

¹⁶ <http://www.etan.org/et2001a/january/01-06/01prabow.htm>

¹⁷ <https://lists.riseup.net/www/arc/indonesia-act/2013-02/msg00021.html>

supporters of independence for East Timor.”¹⁸ For reason of *realpolitik* the government of Timor-Leste has never followed up on the indictment.

Wiranto recently told Al Jazeera “that he followed state policies [in Timor-Leste] and that President Habibie was responsible for those. Habibie rubbishes his claims and says there are no facts to suggest he instructed Wiranto and his soldiers to kill.”¹⁹

He served briefly as Coordinating Minister of Politics and Security under President Wahid, but was soon dismissed. Wiranto ran as Golkar’s vice-presidential candidate in 1999, Golkar’s presidential candidate in 2004, and as the party’s vice presidential candidate in 2009.

In 2006 Wiranto established the People’s Conscience Party (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura Party), which earned 17 seats on 3.77% of the vote in the last national parliamentary elections.

DJOKO SANTOSO

Djoko Santoso headed the Indonesian military from 2007- 2010 but is less well known than the above two generals. Some Indonesians view him as free from the taint of crimes against humanity (which is setting the bar very low for electability). He served during Operasi Seroja, the invasion and occupation of Timor-Leste, however. He was also put in charge of the Moluccas region in 2003 in the aftermath of the sectarian violence there. He supported censoring the Australian film *Balibo* that depicts the Indonesian military’s murder of foreign journalists during the beginning of the invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975.²⁰ In June 2013 he expressed interest in running for President. At

the time, he said he was considering running in the Democratic Party’s convention, which will be held after the parliamentary elections.

PRAMONO EDHIE WIBOWO

Lieutenant General (ret.) Pramono Edhie Wibowo is SBY’s brother-in-law. He was Indonesian Army Chief of Staff from mid-2011 to May 2013, and is the former head of Kostrad, the Army Strategic Reserve Command. His relationship to SBY fueled accusations of nepotism after his appointment, and some questioned whether it was a ploy to shore up SBY’s relationship with the Indonesian military. Human rights groups such as Imparsial have questioned his human rights record.²¹

Pramono was in Timor Leste in 1999 as head of Kopassus’ “anti-terrorism” unit. According to Masters of Terror, following the referendum on independence his unit “slipped into Dili on 5 September 1999, the day before Bishop Belo’s house was attacked.” The Indonesian government’s Commission for Human Rights Violations in East Timor (KPP-HAM) included him on a list of suspects warranting further investigation for their roles in the 1999 violence.²²

He is running for the Democratic Party nomination. Despite his high profile military appointments, he is not especially well-known or popular. Pramono’s father, Sarwo Edhie Wibowo, was commander of Indonesia’s Special Forces during the 1965/66 mass killings and arrests which followed Suharto’s seizure of power.²³ SBY has generated controversy by recommending that his father-in-law receive the official title of “National Hero of Indonesia.” The bar for that honor is low, as it includes, for example, military men who committed terrorist

¹⁸ <http://etan.org/news/2004/04wiranto.htm>, <http://www.etan.org/et2003/february/23-28/28info.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeracorrespondent/2013/10/brutal-retreat-2013102665244845520.html>

²⁰ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/12/04/indonesia-drop-censorship-critical-film>

²¹ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/06/14/pramono-track-record-questioned.html>

²² <http://www.villagechief.com/mot/Pramono.htm>

²³ <http://www.change.org/petitions/the-president-of-indonesia-don-t-make-sarwo-edhie-a-hero-sbyudhoyono>, <http://etan.org/action/SaySorry/saysorry2.htm>

acts against civilians in Singapore and who were executed for their crime.

ENDRIARTONO SUTARTO

Endriartono Sutarto is also a former TNI Chief (2002-2006), as well as former Army Chief of Staff. During the 1999 period, he was the Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, a key place in the chain of command, and he therefore had intimate knowledge of the Indonesian military's plans for the Timor-Leste.

He repeatedly made excuses for violence by the military and its militia before and after the 1999 referendum. In an October 2000 interview, Sutarto said: "It is in the psychology of our soldiers, because, for so long, they've had links, to work together [with the militias] to secure East Timor as part of Indonesia."²⁴ According to Masters of Terror, "In August 1999 Gen Wiranto ordered him to prepare a contingency plan in the event of East Timor voting for independence." That plan "foresaw with considerable accuracy the level of destruction and chaos unleashed after the announcement of the result." The plan also "provided a detailed outline of an evacuation operation and the logistics required. The code word 'rise' (terbit) was to signal the start of the operation, and 'sink' (tenggelam) its end."²⁵ Hundreds of thousands of East Timorese were forced into West Timor in the immediate aftermath of the independence vote.

As a young officer, he was involved in Operation Seroja and in operations in West Papua. He received training in the U.S. and UK. He has been implicated in the kidnapping and murder of Indonesian labor activist Marsinah in 1993.²⁶ He was a hardliner who pushed for martial law and a greater military role both in Aceh and in

Maluku. While he was TNI chief, martial law was imposed on Aceh in 2003, after militia backed by the military undermined a ceasefire.

Although Sutarto joined the National Democratic (Nasdem) Party in 2012, he is competing to become the nominee of the Democratic Party.

DJOKO SUYANTO

Air Chief Marshall Djoko Suyanto was the first air force officer to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian military (2006-07). He has served as Coordinating Minister for Legal, Political and Security Affairs since October 2009. Unlike other presidential hopefuls, he has not resigned from his position, indicating that he is no longer seriously contemplating a run. He has expressed interest, however, in becoming the vice presidential running mate of PDI-P's Joko Wibowo. He received military training in the U.S. and Australia. He has been a fierce critic of rights supporters in West Papua, including the official government human rights body Komnas Ham and KontraS, a leading NGO. He has denied there are political prisoners in Papua, saying that they are "only criminals who have broken the law."²⁷

Djoko has also defended the mass killings in 1965, criticizing the report of Komnas HAM that the 1965 purge was a gross human rights violation.²⁸ "Define gross human rights violation! Against whom? What if it happened the other way around?" Djoko said in 2012. "This country would not be what it is today if it didn't happen. Of course there were victims [during the purge], and we are investigating them,"²⁹ Djoko added. Paradoxically, in a speech in Singapore in December 2012, Djoko warned that Indonesia did not need a "strongman" with a military background as

²⁴<http://www.villagechief.com/mot/Endriartono%20Sutarto.htm>

²⁵<http://www.villagechief.com/mot/Endriartono%20Sutarto.htm>

²⁶ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/27070>

²⁷ <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/opinion/the-thinker-see-no-prisoners/484522>

²⁸<http://etan.org/action/SaySorry/Komnas%20HAM%201965%20TAPOL%20translation.pdf>

²⁹<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/10/01/1965-mass-killings-justified-minister.html>

president, and he dismissed polls that suggested former military officers would do well in 2014: "We must look to the future and not be tempted to look back to the past,"³⁰ he said.

DINO PATTI DJALAL

Dino Patti Djalal does not have a military background but has defended gross violations of human rights. A diplomat through most of his career, he was most recently Indonesia's ambassador to the U.S. and prior to that SBY's spokesperson. While defending the Indonesian security forces in East Timor (now independent Timor-Leste) during the Suharto years, he would often attack human rights investigators and organizations.³¹ He sought to portray the violence there as civil conflict among East Timorese, rather than from repression of resistance to Indonesia's illegal and brutal occupation. In 1999, during and after the UN-organized vote, Djalal was based in Timor-Leste as the spokesperson for the Satgas P3TT (the Indonesian "Task Force for Popular Consultation in East Timor"). As Task Force spokesman, Djalal took the lead in leveling false accusations against UNAMET (UN Assistance Mission for East Timor).

As ambassador to the U.S., Djalal was key in arranging the controversial awarding of Statesman of the Year to SBY by the Appeal to Conscience Foundation.³² The foundation says that it works "on behalf of religious freedom and human rights throughout the world" and "promotes peace, tolerance and ethnic conflict resolution." Many in Indonesia and abroad said that President Yudhoyono is unworthy of the award.³³ During his time in office, religious intolerance grew and his government

established an unprecedented discriminatory legal infrastructure.

Djalal is seeking the nomination of the Democratic Party.

SUTIYOSO

Retired Lieutenant General Sutiyoso is the chair of the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia, PKPI), a party founded in 1999 by a group of retired senior Indonesian army officers from the Suharto period.³⁴ He is the former Governor of Jakarta. While he is not running for president, he has expressed interest in running for vice president with PDI-P's Jokowi. He received training from the U.S., Australia and UK.

Sutiyoso was a captain in 1975 and part of the Indonesian special forces team involved in the attack on Balibo. In 2007, he visited Australia. When his testimony was sought by an official coroner's inquest in Sydney investigating the deaths of journalists he quickly fled the country.

In addition to his involvement in the illegal invasion of Timor-Leste, he served in Aceh and is accused of involvement in "the summary execution of thousands of alleged gangsters in Jakarta."³⁵ He was Jakarta military commander when thugs backed by troops and police attacked the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).³⁶ Its head, Megawati Sukarnoputri was replaced by someone more favorable to the regime. Former pro-independence fighters in Baucau, Timor-Leste, "accused Jakarta Governor Sutiyoso of conducting regular torture sessions there in the 1970s."³⁷

³⁰ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/12/11/ri-needs-no-strongman.html>

³¹ <http://etan.org/news/2010/09djalal.htm>

³² http://etan.org/action/action2/sby_award.htm

³³ <http://thediplomat.com/2013/06/does-indonesias-sby-deserve-the-world-statesman-award/>

³⁴ http://www.iseas.edu.sg/documents/publication/ISEAS_Perspactive_2014_14-Contestants_2014_Indonesian_Parliamentary_Elections.pdf

³⁵ <http://www.etan.org/et2007/may/31/32six.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.tapol.org/news-and-reports/bulletin/168-september-2002#Generals>

³⁷ <http://www.etan.org/et2007/july/14/14sutiyo.htm>

See also:

Masters of Terror

<http://www.villagechief.com/mot/>

The roles of various Indonesian military figures in the 1999 destruction of East Timor, including sections on Prabowo, Wiranto and Edriantono Sutarto

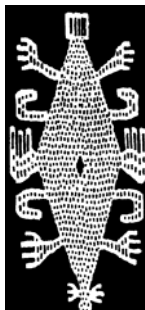
Tapol: The Rise and Fall of Military Candidates in the Indonesian Elections (Sept. 2008)

<http://tapol.org/sites/default/files/Elections%202009%20Issue%201.pdf>

Serious Crimes Unit: "Brief in Support of Application for the Issuance of an Arrest Warrant for Wiranto"

<http://www.etan.org/et2003/february/23-28/28info.htm>

The East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN) was founded in 1991. ETAN supports democracy, human rights and justice in Timor-Leste, West Papua and Indonesia. ETAN is non-partisan. It works on issues and does not support candidates or political parties in any country.



www.etan.org

Twitter: @etan009
