

Indonesia: Workers stage protest against new wage formula - 24 workers arrested

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24 workers arrested during demonstration in front of State Palace

Jakarta Post - October 31, 2015

Jakarta — As many as 24 workers were arrested during a demonstration in front of State Palace on Friday demanding the government revise its new regulation regarding the annual minimum wage determination mechanism.

Tribunnews.com reported that two activists from the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta) — Tigor Gempita Hutapea and Obed Sakti Luitnan — also suffered from serious injuries when the police violently dispersed the protesters.

"Tigor and Obet were hit by police officers as they tried to document the event with their smart phones. They were forcibly dragged and beaten even though they said that they were only accompanying the protesters," said LBH Jakarta director Alghiffari Aqsa on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the police accused the arrested workers of provoking other demonstrators to conduct violence when addressing the crowd through loudspeakers mounted on the mini trucks used to bring workers to the demonstration.

Based on the existing regulations, the demonstration had to end at 6 p.m. and police officers first warned the protesters to immediately leave Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara, in front of State Palace at 6:30 p.m.

"After the warning around 2,000 protesters left the location, but some 3,000 workers were still there," he said.

A third warning was made at 7:15 p.m. and finally, the police used bodily force to disperse the protesters after a water canon failed to expel them from the street. The vast majority of protesters left after tear gas was used, but 24 workers still did not leave the street.

"There were 24 protesters who did not leave the location after we had warned them three times. They even continued provoking us from their vehicle," said Jakarta

Police spokesman Sr. Comr. Muhammad Iqbal on Saturday as quoted by kompas.com.

Some 12,000 workers from Jakarta and its surrounding cities demonstrated in front of the state palace on Friday. Many of them wanted to spend the night on the street and await a government response to their demands.

According to Alghifari, the workers' demonstration was peaceful and it was the police's violent actions that had sparked the turmoil. He demanded that Jakarta Police chief Insp. Gen Tito Karnavian punish the police officers involved and free the 24 workers. (BBN)

Source:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/31/24-workers-arrested-during-demonstration-front-state-palace.html>

Workers stage protest against new wage formula

Jakarta Post - October 31, 2015

Corry Elyda, Jakarta — Thousands of workers from dozens of alliances in Greater Jakarta staged a protest against Government Regulation (PP) No. 78/2015 on minimum wages on Friday, a day after the Jakarta administration set a new minimum wage of Rp 3.1 million (US\$226).

The workers were delivered by buses and mini-trucks and gathered on Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat, near the Arjuna Wijaya Monument, before marching to Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara to congregate in front of the State Palace where they voiced their concerns over the new wage formula.

They demanded the government revoke the regulation and that next year's wages should be increased by 22 to 25 percent. If those demands were ignored they said they would stage a nationwide protest from Nov. 1 through Dec. 30.

The new regulation, issued last week, stipulates a measured annual wage increase that takes into account the current fiscal year's inflation and gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates.

It replaced the old formula that was based on a cost of living (KHL) survey of 84 basic commodities and other daily needs of workers.

At City Hall, Jakarta Governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama said that the city administration tried to accommodate the new wage regulation and the demands of both parties — businessmen and workers.

Ahok said that if the city used the new PP, the provincial minimum wage (UMP) would be Rp 3.03 million, while if the city administration used the previous calculation, which used the cost of living index, the UMP would be Rp 3.13 million.

"I have to follow the new regulation, but I asked the company representatives

to add Rp 70,000, so the UMP becomes Rp 3.1 million. It means the workers should lower their proposed amount," he said. Workers wanted to raise the wage to Rp 3.32 million.

Ahok said that although he had not signed the gubernatorial decree on the wages, there would not be any changes. He added that the city administration would not grant any postponements proposed by any companies.

Separately, Suprayitno, the head of the Jakarta chapter of the Indonesian Employers Association (Apindo), said that the association was disappointed with the new UMP.

"The amount is not in accordance with the new PP. If using the PP, the UMP will be Rp 3.01 million," he said. He said that the governor should have followed the regulation. "We have tolerated the setting of a KHL of Rp 2.98 million," he said.

Suprayitno said the level of the new KHL was even higher than this year's UMP, which was Rp 2.7 million. "Hence, making it into Rp 3.1 million is not fair and does not follow the regulation," he said.

Suprayitno said he would let President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla reprimand the regional leaders who did not follow the new regulation. "The city administration is also not supposed to reject companies that ask for postponements," he said. (saf)

Source:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/31/workers-stage-protest-against-new-wage-formula.html>
