

Indonesia: Prabowo plans big expansion of Suharto era territorial military commands

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Medan — Defense Minister (Menhan) Prabowo Subianto has revealed a plan to reinforce military forces in every part of Indonesia's territory by establishing Regional Military Commands (Kodam) in every province, every regency having a District Military Command (Kodim) unit and each sub-district having one Sub-District Military Command (Koramil).

"As Menhan, I plan to build this force, we're planning that Kodams must be strengthened. I'm currently proposing this. The Kodams, later one province must have one Kodam, meaning there will be 34 Kodams", said Prabowo in the North Sumatra city of Medan on Friday January 27. "Every regency must have one Kodim. One sub-district one Koramil. It can't be that one Kodim commands two or three regencies. Every Kodim will later control a battalion", he said. This was conveyed by Prabowo when he was giving directions to some 2,000 Babinsa — non-commissioned military officers posted in villages and wards — from the Bukit Barisan I Kodam in Medan on Friday. The plan, said Prabowo, also emerged because it is known that there are still parts of Indonesia that do not yet have TNI (Indonesian military) commands. Prabowo said that there are several regencies in Kalimantan that do not have TNI commands and that the absence of security by the TNI makes the natural resources of these regions vulnerable to being stolen by other parties. "I conveyed to the DPR [the House of Representatives], that there are regencies that to this day don't have any troops. Yet these regencies are rich, in Kalimantan. These regencies are rich, there's nickel, there's bauxite, there are so many riches, [but] there are no troops", said Prabowo. "Imagine an extensive area such as this, rich like that, there are no troops. How would it be if someone was to take our wealth and riches", he said. Aside from building up military forces in each region, Prabowo also asserted that they would equip all Babinsa with a new motorcycle and communication devices to support their operational duties. "We will equip all Babinsa in Indonesia with motorbikes, new motorbikes so their operations are faster", said Prabowo. "I hope that in the next few months we will have acquired the communication devices. Every Babinsa can communicate, [every] Dandim [District Military Commanders], Danramil [Sub-District Military Commander], Pangdam [Regional Military Commanders] up to Jakarta. Even the president will be able to speak directly with a Babinsa later", explained. During the event Prabowo also symbolically handed over 100 motorcycles to Babinsa from the Bukit Barisan I Kodam. North Sumatra Governor Edy Rahmayadi, North Sumatra Regional Police Chief Inspector General Panca Putra Simanjuntak, Medan Mayor Bobby Nasution and troops from the Bukit Barisan I Kodam also attended the event. (fnr/chri) Notes Babinsa or Bintara Pembina Desa, are non-commissioned military officers posted in villages and wards and affiliated with the civilian administration. These officers provide a community level presence for TNI's territorial command structure which mandates the deployment of military command posts and detachments at all levels of the civil administration: provincial, district, sub-district and village. This structure provides the organisational framework for the TNI to act as a political security force at all levels of society.

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