

Indonesia: Numerous irregularities cited in fatal soccer stadium stampede trial verdicts

Friday 31 March 2023, by [WIRYONO Singgih](#) (Date first published: 17 March 2023).

Jakarta — The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) says there were a number of irregularities in the acquittal of two defendants in last year's fatal Kanjuruhan soccer stadium stampede.

Likewise also with the light sentence handed down against a third defendant in the tragedy that killed 135 soccer fans. "The irregularities that we are referring to include that the police officers who were prosecuted were only the actors in the field", said Kontras Legal Division head Andi Rezaldy in a press release on Friday March 17. In addition to this, irregularities during the court hearings could also be seen when access for visitors and monitors wanting to attend the trials were tightly restricted right from the start of the hearings. The next irregularity was that it was declared that the defendants would only appear online and the presence of national police members as legal counsel in the hearings that were cited as a conflict of interest. Kontras also noted irregularities in the behaviour of the judges and public prosecutors who tended to be passive in examining material evidence. "[And] the minimal involvement of victims and their families as witnesses in the hearings (which was also an irregularity)", said Rezaldy. The composition of witnesses that was dominated by police officers was also very irregular, as well as intimidation by police officers who created a commotion during the hearings. "[Then] there was the blurring of facts about the firing of teargas into the spectator stands, through to the incidents of violence and the suffering of supporters, both inside as well as outside the stadium that was not completely revealed", said Rezaldy. Because of this, Kontras along with the Civil Society Coalition is convinced that the trial that acquitted two of the defendants and handed down a light sentence against a third was a miscarriage of justice. "We also see that the trial process was part of a miscarriage of justice (malicious trial process). Our allegations are also reinforced by various oddities during the hearings that we found", he said. On March 16 the Surabaya District Court in East Java handed down verdicts against three police officers who were defendants in the Kanjuruhan soccer stadium tragedy. Two of the officers were acquitted. The officers that were released were former Malang district police (Polres) tactical police unit chief (Kasat Samapta) Deputy Police Commissioner Bambang Sidik Achmadi and former Malang Polres operational division chief Police Commander Setyo Pranoto. Meanwhile the third police officer, who was sentenced to 18 months in prison, was former East Java regional police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) 1 Company commander Deputy Police Commissioner Hasdarmawan. Two others have also received sentences over the same case, namely Arema Football Club acting committee chief Abdul Haris who was sentenced to 18 months in jail and security officer Suko Sutrisno who was sentenced to one year behind bars. The Kanjuruhan tragedy was caused by teargas that was fired by police into the spectators stand during a soccer match between the Arema Football Club and Persebaya Surabaya on October 1, 2022. The teargas resulted in mass panic and a crush of people at the stadium exits resulting in the death of 135 people.

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