

Indonesia: Human rights have gone backward under President Widodo's watch

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Kristian Erdianto, Jakarta — Amnesty International Indonesia executive director Usman Hamid believes that during the four years of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo leadership the protection of human rights has gone backwards.

According to Hamid, the Widodo administration has given too much priority to economic development and sidelined human rights and democracy.

"President Jokowi is a president who prioritises economic development over all other agendas. The human rights agenda is not considered important and has been sidelined. One of the biggest victims of this is the human rights agenda", said Hamid speaking at a Kamisan (Thursday Action) in front of the State Palace on Thursday October 18.

Hamid detailed the results of several international research agencies which show a decline in the human rights and democracy index in Indonesia.

The result of research by Freedom House in 2018, said Hamid, showed that the human rights freedom and democracy index in Indonesian has deteriorated. "Indonesia had initially been included in the category of countries enjoying democratic freedoms, but now it has returned to partly free", said Hamid.

Data released by the well known British magazine The Economist also concluded the Indonesia's democracy index had declined. One of the main indicators of this was the electoral process and pluralism which was evaluated as poor.

Other case which can be used as references are attacks on minority groups, both religious minority groups as well as minority groups with a different sexual orientation. "For example the jailing [on blasphemy charges] of former Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama", said Hamid.

Other indicators outlined by Hamid included data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). BPS data for 2017 shows that the score for democracy in Indonesia has dropped from a figure of 72 to 70.

In addition to sidelining the upholding and protection of human rights, the Widodo government has also allowed other forms of new human rights violations to take place.

Based on the most recent research by Amnesty International Indonesia, over the last eight years there were 69 cases of extrajudicial murder and 95 people have been killed in Papua.

According to Hamid, out of all these cases, not one has been taken to trial. "Not one family of the victims has received justice. Including cases that President Joko Widodo pledged [to solve], namely the killing of four youths in Paniai in 2014", said Hamid.

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