

Covid-19 (Indonesia): Union slams corona rapid test plan for House while workers still on the job

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Jakarta — Confederation of United Indonesian Workers (KPBI) Deputy Chairperson Jumisih has criticised the plan to carry out rapid test for the coronavirus (Covid-19) on 575 members of the House of Representatives (DPR) and their families this week.

Jumisih said that the people's representatives should not give priority to themselves while millions of workers are still on the job and lack adequate protection against the threat of being infected by the corona virus.

"The political elite should not be egoistic. It is inappropriate for the House members to use their special position in order to be safe from corona, meanwhile millions of ordinary people who can't take a recess have to risk their lives to ensure their economic security", Jumisih told CNN Indonesia on Tuesday March 24.

Jumisih warned that millions of workers, — the majority of which are women — are still working in close proximity to maintain production and are working without any protection.

Jumisih also warned that workers are currently facing an uncertain future with many company owners nervous in the face of the economic impact of the corona virus.

"The interests of labour intensive workers should be the prioritised for the government and the DPR", she said.

Contacted separately, Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (KSPI) communication and media department head Kahar S Cahyono also opposed the corona tests for house members.

According to Cahyono, workers and less-well-off people need to be prioritised because the majority of them are still working in close quarters to each other during the pandemic.

"Moreover the government, right, is still not prepared to give all workers leave. Meanwhile the DPR has extended its recess period", Cahyono told CNN Indonesia on Tuesday.

Earlier, it was announced that corona virus rapid testing would be conducted for the 575 members of the DPR and their families. DPR Secretary General Indra Iskandar from President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), estimates that some 2,000 DPR members and family members will undergo corona virus test at the end of this week.

Iskandar said that the test on the DPR members was at the request of lawmakers and claimed that the fund for doing the tests will be taken from money collected from DPR members.

Following the announcement however, a number of political parties in the house rejected the plan including the Islamic based Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) and the Democrat Party, who said they would not take part in the test and asked that the ordinary people be prioritised.

(dhf/ain)

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- CNN Indonesia - March 24, 2020:
<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20200324081539-20-486294/ironi-buruh-tetap-bekerja-dan-dpr-ajak-keluarga-tes-corona?>
- Translated by James Balowski. The original title of the article was "Ironi Buruh Tetap Bekerja dan DPR Ajak Keluarga Tes Corona".