

Five reports on clashes between Papernas and right-wing thugs

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Right wing, military-linked groups mobilise to prevent Papernas declaration

Media Indonesia - March 29, 2007

Wisnu, Jakarta — Around 2,000 people from various mass organisations from East Java, West Java and the Greater Jakarta area gathered at the Proclamation Monument in Central Jakarta on Thursday March 29 to prevent the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas) from holding a declaration there later in the day. The groups accused Papernas of being a new manifestation of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

The groups from East Java consisted of some 60 people from the Islamic Youth Front (FPI), the Forum for Unity among Muslim Communities (FUI) and the Red-White Forum (FMP). The West Java groups comprised around 100 members of the Anti-Communist Front (Permak) and the Community Forum for Sons and Daughters of the Armed Forces (FKPPI). The remainder meanwhile came from the Greater Jakarta area and were made up of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (FBR), the Indonesian Movement of National Patriots (GNPI) and the Community of Sons and Daughters of the Police (KBP3).

FBR general chairperson KH Fadloli El Munhir said that the action was held to prevent the Papernas declaration that is scheduled to be held at 11am today at the monument. According to Munhir, the new political party is tangible evidence that the communist movement has started to revive in Indonesia. "This party is based upon the Three Banners(1), the same principles as the PKI", he asserted.

Munhir argues that if the Papernas declaration goes ahead it means that the government is allowing communist ideology to grow and develop in Indonesia. Moreover he continued, this communist party has consistently spread hostility against the New Order regime of former President Suharto, the army and has been campaigning to bring down Pancasila as the state ideology. "Because of this, we will use any means to thwart the revival of communism in Indonesia. Even if it requires violence", asserted Munhir.

Initially the action proceeded in a peaceful and orderly manner guarded over by personnel from the Metro Jaya police. At around 11.30am however, around 200 people from one of the FPI groups separated and moved off towards Jl. Sudirman. "They are conducting a sweep for Papernas members", Central Jakarta District Police Deputy Chief Henri Wibowo said at the Proclamation Monument.

Wibowo said that many as 1,500 Papernas members are planning to gather in front of the Department of Education on Jl. Sudirman in Central Jakarta. He went on to explain that the people conducting the sweep ran into the Papernas members and a clash broke out. "But it took place in Dukuh Atas, Setiabudi, in the area covered by the South Jakarta

district police", he added.

Wibowo went on to say that the Central Jakarta police had deployed 500 officers to maintain security. According to Media Indonesia's observations, aside from uniformed police officers, three were at least 30 intelligence officers in the vicinity of the monument and two units of fully armed anti-riot police.

Based on field reports the group conducting the sweep at Jl. Sudirman succeeded in stopping 16 Metro Mini busses being used by Papernas. In the ensuing clash, five of the busses were severely damaged.

At around 1.30pm most of those gathered at the monument were pulled out because according to Munhir they had received a guarantee from the head of the Central Jakarta district police that the Papernas declaration had been canceled. "Our struggle has succeeded, I appeal to our members to return to their respective areas and not be provoked so that another clash occurs", he instructed before leaving the monument.

The chairperson of GNPI's central leadership board, Alfian Tanjung asserted that their members will continued to be ready at any moment to return to the Proclamation Monument if Papernas goes ahead and holds a declaration. "The thing is, the demonstrators from Papernas are going to the offices of the Nahdlatul Ulama's Central Board to meet with Gus Dur [former President Abdurrahman Wahid] to obtain support so that they can declare the party today", he said.

Notes:

1. Papernas' Three Banners of National Unity are abolishing the foreign debt, nationalising the mining industry and building the national industry for the welfare of the people.

[Slightly abridged translation by James Balowski.]

Scores injured in clashes between Papernas and right-wing thugs

Media Indonesia - March 29, 2007

Bagus BT. Saragih, Jakarta — Members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (FBR) clashed with demonstrators from the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas) in the Dukuh Atas area on Jl. Sudirman in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta on Thursday March 29.

Scores of people suffered minor injuries and one person was seriously hurt in the clash. Police meanwhile have detained five people suspected of being provocateurs. One of those seriously injured was Ahmad Sobari from the FPI who suffered cuts to their neck after being hit by glass. He is now being treated at the Tarakan Public Hospital in Central Jakarta.

As of late this afternoon, four people had been detained by the Tanah Abang sectoral police and one other, FPI militia member Mohamad Rofik was detained by the Central Jakarta district police.

The clash itself took place at around 10.30am when a convoy of Papernas demonstrators heading towards the Proclamation Monument encountered a group of FPI and FBR members in Dukuh Atas.

According to one eyewitness, Iwan, the FPI and FBR members had been marching around the area near the Hotel Indonesia roundabout since morning. "They brought weapons, wooden and metal truncheons. There were some who brought sickles", said the motorbike taxi driver who is usually based at Dukuh Atas when speaking with Media Indonesia.

A clash was clearly unavoidable. The FPI and FPI members greeted the Papernas demonstrators with a hail of rocks. The Papernas members, the majority of whom were housewives and small children ran and scattered trying to save themselves. "The fled into the alleyways", said eyewitness Ibut.

Even though the Papernas demonstrators retreated the angry FPI and FBR members continued to pursue them shouting, "You're PKI! [Indonesian Communist Party] You're PKI!".

A short time later around 400 Papernas members riding three Mayasari Bakti busses arrived. This

time most of them were men.

Seeing that their colleagues were under attack, the newly arrived Papernas members immediately began chasing after the FPI and FBR. "Counter attacked it was the FPI's turn to be chased", continued Iwan.

The FPI and FBR members were eventually forced back as far as the Shangri-La Hotel on Jl. Karet Pasar Baru Timur alongside the West Flood Canal River around 500 meters from where the clash first broke out.

The Papernas demonstrators who had not brought any weapons used broken pieces of glass from the damaged buses which they threw at the FPI and FBR. "Many suffered head injuries because of being hit by rocks and glass", said Iwan.

The police arrived at around 11am. "Six hundred personnel were deployed from the Metro Jaya municipal police and the Central Jakarta district police", said Tanah Abang Sectoral Police Chief Superintendent Budiyanto. Seeing the arrival of security personnel, the protesters disbanded at round 11.30am.

When asked to comment on the incident, FPI general secretary Irwan admitted that they stopped the Papernas convoy. "We asked them to turn back but they didn't want to, yeah so we can't be held responsible for what happened", he said when contacted by Media Indonesia.

According to Irwan, the FPI mobilised as many as 700 people while the FBR mobilised around 1,200. This does not include people from 14 other mass organisations that were part of the coalition opposing the planned Papernas declaration at the Proclamation Monument.

Irwan said that they oppose Papernas because they are PKI. "I have read the statutes and rules of association, and I also have evidence that they are PKI. We don't want the country to be infiltrated by the PKI again", he said. (* /OL-06)

[Translated by James Balowski.]

Papernas calls on police to fully investigate FPI attack

Detik.com - March 29, 2007

Arifin Asydhad, Jakarta — The National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas) is calling on the national police to fully investigate the attack on its members by the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). The attack should be categorised as a criminal act.

The head of Papernas' Legal and Human Rights Department, Iwan Dwiellaksono, conveyed this request when contacted by Detik.com on Thursday March 29. "We are calling on security forces, the national police in particular to immediately investigate this criminal act", he said.

The FPI attack on Papernas is a form of anarchy and intimidation. On account of the attack, Papernas has clearly been adversely affected. "Our members were injured, while many busses were damaged. A mobile sound system was also damaged", he said.

According to Iwan, in order to hold the mass rally at the Proclamation Monument Papernas had already submitted an official notification to the national police. Papernas was exercising its freedom of expression in accordance with procedures. Because of this therefore, if a group then disrupts the event, it become the responsibility of security forces.

Contrary to accusations from a number of groups, Iwan also asserted that his party is not communist. "In our statutes and rules of association, the principles of our party are the principles of populist democracy based on [the state ideology of] Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution", explained Iwan.

Iwan said he keeps wondering why his party's events are constantly disrupted and attacked by certain groups. Prior to the attack in Jakarta, Papernas was also attacked as many as three times at events held in Surabaya, Yogyakarta and Malang. "There are indications that the attackers are from the same group", he said. (asy/asy)

Despite FPI attack, Papernas to go ahead with launch in June

Media Indonesia - March 29, 2007

Agustinus, Jakarta — Despite being attacked by right-wing thugs on March 29, the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas) will declare itself in June. This was confirmed by Papernas general secretary Haris Sitorus during discussions with Media Indonesia in Jakarta on Thursday March 29.

The Papernas mass rally to declare the party that was to be held in Jakarta ended in a clash after it was attacked by members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (FBR).

According to Haris, Papernas is taking up a number of issues including fighting for the abolition of the foreign debt, the nationalisation of the mining industry and building an Indonesia that is strong and independent.

Haris said that Papernas currently has local leadership boards in 23 provinces and 185 regencies/municipalities. The preparatory committee for the formation of Papernas has been working since June 2006.

"There many struggles happening on the ground. One of these is that we will take part in the 2009 general elections", he said. Haris added that the existing political parties have become contaminated with broker type mentality. He said that have no hesitation about pawning of the states interest for personal gain. (Aka/Ol-03)

Gus Dur urges police to take action against right- wing thugs

Detik.com - March 30, 2007

Ramdhan Muhaimin, Jakarta — Former President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) has condemned the attack on the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas) by the Islamic Defenders Militia (LPI) which is affiliated with the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).

"If in this case the government just stays quiet it will be extremely dangerous for the future life of the nation. I am asking for Pak Sutanto (National Police Chief General Sutanto) to [act] firmly", said Gus Dur who was wearing a brown batik shirt.

Gus Dur conveyed this when answering journalists' questions at the offices of the Nahdlatul Ulama's Central Board on Jl. Kramat Raya in Central Jakarta on Friday March 30.

Gus Dur said that the attack, which took place yesterday in the Dukuh Atas area of Jl. Sudirman was an unconstitutional act. "The FPI's actions against a political party that was to declare itself yesterday was unconstitutional", said the former president. (nik/nrl)

[Translated by James Balowski.]