

The long list of repressive and violent acts by the Indonesian police

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Jakarta — The police have again come under public scrutiny for committing repressive and violent acts after a police officer threw a student to the ground during a protest action in Tangerang, West Java on Wednesday October 13.

Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) Chairperson Asfinawati said that this adds to the long list of repressive actions which have been committed by police.

In 2019 alone, the YLBHI recorded 68 cases of violence by police against demonstrators with some 3,539 people being arbitrary arrested, 326 being arbitrary detained and 474 people being tortured.

"The 474 were only the cases that LBH-YLBHI handled. Yet we only have offices in 17 provinces. Torture is mostly committed at police stations or when people are arrested", Asfinawati told CNN Indonesia on Wednesday October 14.

Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Jakarta) public defender Teo Reffelsen tells a similar story and has also compiled a brief list of the repressive and violent actions committed by the police.

2019-2020

1. The May 21-22, 2019 riots in Jakarta

Many reports circulated about uniformed police officers committing violence and assaulting demonstrators. As many as four people were killed after being shot by live rounds with another person dying after being hit by a blunt instrument.

2. Demonstrations opposing revisions to the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Corruption Eradication Commission Law in Jakarta (the #ReformCorrupted protests)

While conducting security operations police committed acts of violence against at least 88 people, two of which had to be rushed to the Pertamina Central Hospital suffering head injuries.

The Advocacy Team for Democracy received 390 complaints from victims of police violence, 201 of which were university students, 50 high school students, two civil servants, two freelance journalists and one online motorcycle taxi driver.

3. The August 2020 demonstrations against the Omnibus Law

Scores of videos circulated on social media showing the police committing violence against demonstrators. Based on the complaints received by the Advocacy Team for Democracy, some 187 people were arrested and taken to the Metro Jaya regional police. According to information from the victims, they suffered violence during the arrests.

4. Police violence against journalists

According to the Independent Journalists Alliance's (AJI) records, some 28 journalists suffered violence at the hands of police while covering the protest actions against the Omnibus Law on Job Creation.

5. The shooting of Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) members.

2021

6. The police summoning of Indonesian Trade Union Congress Alliance

Confederation (KASBI) Chairperson Nining Elitos during the 2021 commemoration of International Women's Day.

7. The arrest and indictment of nine participants of National Education Day rallies.

8. The arrest, detention and questioning of one paralegal and three assistant public defenders from the LBH Jakarta by the South Jakarta district police.

9. The arrest and questioning of three Jakarta Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI) paralegals during protest actions against the military coup in Burma.

10. The pursuit of street artists and the removal of murals and graffiti critical of the government.

11. The arrest and indictment of Jakarta DJ Dinar Candy over a "bikini" protest against Covid-19 social restrictions.

12. The arrest of a farmer in Blitar for holding up a poster during a visit by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo.

13. The arrest of 10 Eleven March University for holding a protest during a visit to the university by Widodo.

14. The arrest of 17 Papuan activists during a demonstration marking the Rome Agreement at the US Embassy in Jakarta.

15. The "smackdown" of the student protester in Tangerang.

16. The assault on a youth following a traffic violation in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra.

Reffelsen said that this list of incidents is only fraction of the many repressive acts committed by police. He predicts that there are still many other acts of violence which have not been recorded.

"Especially in regions that are hard to reach", Reffelsen told CNN Indonesia. (yul/DAL)

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