

Indonesia: Labour Party rally protests discrimination against working class candidates

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Jakarta — The Labour Party held a protest action in front of the Elections Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) offices in Central Jakarta on Tuesday afternoon, January 2.

The demonstration was held to protest alleged obstacles faced by Labour Party members who are running as legislative candidates (caleg) in the upcoming 2024 legislative elections.

Labour Party Election Campaign Team Chairperson Said Salahudin said there has been discrimination against labour group members who have become legislative candidates, namely obstructing workers from taking part in politics. Yet, said Salahudin, senior company officials are free to join political parties.

One of the cases that was touched on was the removal of a legislative candidate running for the North Sulawesi (Sulut) Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), Ferdinand Lumenta, who was removed from the final legislative candidate list (DCT) by the North Sulawesi General Elections Commission (KPU).

Salahudin said that the removal has been confirmed by the KPU on the pretext of formal grounds.

“Today we are asking that Ferdinand Lumenta, a DPRD candidate in North Sulawesi, be put back [on the candidate list], his rights restored, as a DPRD caleg from the Labour Party”, said Salahudin at the Bawaslu offices on Tuesday.

In addition to this, Salahudin said that there were a number of other cases related to alleged obstruction of workers getting involved in politics.

These cases, he said, can be divided into three categories. First, candidates being removed from the DCT. Second, candidates listed in the DCT being asked to withdraw by employers or their rights will be taken away or they are asked to take leave. Third, not being allowed to convey political views on social media.

“Now, it is these three categories that we are reporting, but the majority are those being asked to withdraw their candidacy because the company doesn’t want to have workers becoming legislative members. We suspect they don’t want there to be caleg from the Labour Party because if the Labour Party has representatives [in a legislator] it is seen as or it is feared it will be detrimental to their interests”, he said.

He said that a total of 32 cases had been recorded in around 30 districts and municipalities spread across 13 provinces. Salahudin admitted however that there were hundreds of other cases that had not been recorded.

Furthermore, the Labor Party is also urging Bawaslu to issue an appeal to government agencies, state-owned enterprises (BUMN), regional government-owned enterprise (BUMD) and private companies not to make prohibitions, threats or intimidation against workers who are members of or administrators in the Labor Party, including legislative candidates.

Regarding the Labor Party's action in front of Bawaslu, the police deployed 283 personnel including paramilitary police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) officers to provide security.

"283 personnel, including Brimob", said Central Jakarta municipal police chief Senior Commissioner Susatyo Purnomo Condro on Tuesday.

The Labor Party rally took up part of the road on Jalan M.H. Thamrin in front of Bawaslu. Police officers could be seen securing the demonstrators while traffic remained busy and moving smoothly. (pop/kid)

CNN Indonesia

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