

Indonesia: Kamisan action slams dirty practices used to ensure Prabowo-Gibran election win

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Jakarta — The 805th Kamisan (Thursday) Action, which was held in front of the State Palace in Central Jakarta on February 15, touched on the issue of the organisation of the 2024 elections. Sumarsih, the mother of a victim of the Semanggi I student shootings in 1998, read out an open letter entitled “Stop Betraying Democracy and the Agenda of Reformasi”.

In the letter, Sumarsih addressed the victory of presidential and vice presidential candidates Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka based on the results of the quick count. She said civil society condemns the dirty practices employed during the 2024 election contestation.

“We condemn the dirty practices surrounding the 2024 election contestation which prove the regime’s efforts to weaken democracy through manipulation of the law, abuse of power for personal interests and silencing criticism”, said Sumarsih.

Sumarsih believes that the Prabowo-Gibran candidacy and President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s support for the candidate pair was a betrayal of the 1998 reform agenda, referring to the political reform process that began in 1998.

According to Sumarsih, collusion and nepotism were demonstrated and law was manipulated to enable Rakabuming Raka — who is Widodo’s eldest son — to qualify as a vice presidential candidate.

She said various reports also stated that state institutions and resources funded by public money were used to ensure the victory of the Prabowo-Gibran ticket.

“Starting from reports of the mobilisation of village heads, pressure from security forces through to the distribution of social aid [by Widodo]”, she said.

Sumarsih also used the occasion to explain that Kamisan actions are a way for them to survive, fight to reveal the truth, seek justice and fight impunity.

“So at this Thursday’s action we are not supporting any presidential or vice presidential candidates or legislative candidates, because we already know it all because of our experience every five years that we are always lied to, their sweet promises are never fulfilled”, she said.

The first Kamisan action was held on January 18, 2007. Civil society organisations, activists, victims and families of human rights violations gathered in front of the State Palace to demand that the state fully investigate cases of gross human rights violations.

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