

# From Promises to Patronage

A YEAR OF THE  
PRABOWO-  
GIBRAN  
ADMINISTRATION





Indonesia Corruption Watch  
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# From Promises to Patronage: A Year of the Prabowo-Gibran Administration

Indonesia Corruption Watch

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## Introduction

After one year in power, the Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming government has started to show its policy approach and true colors in respect of corruption eradication. Promises and commitments to eradicate corruption from the Republic are not reflected in the facts on the ground. Instead of strengthening law enforcement and pursuing strategic measures, Prabowo-Gibran are choosing to perpetuate the *status quo* of eroding corruption eradication.

No meaningful steps have been taken to reinstate independence of processes to eradicate corruption and shore up principles of transparency and accountability within government processes. Even worse, public oversight is being progressively weakened. Over the past year, several policies have been implemented exhibiting pursuit of the politics of patronage and bias in favour of cronies' interests rather than the public good.

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG for short) and the sovereign wealth fund Danantara, for example, are being implemented in a haphazard way without sound planning. Community participation in these programs has been marginalized, making it progressively more difficult to scrutinize them. And that is happening, even though the two programs are using up trillions of rupiah of taxpayers' money. Other policies are also being implemented in a comparable way, once again indicating that the Prabowo-Gibran government is putting to one side principles of good governance and not making corruption eradication a principal item on its agenda.

Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) is providing this critique of one year of government by Prabowo-Gibran. The conclusion of this sketch is that this one year of government points to a failure in corruption eradication. The critique also acts as a reminder that criticism, oversight and public pressure are necessary to ensure that corruption eradication measures proceed as they should. Furthermore, the practice of electoral corruption in the form of scandalous manipulation of electoral processes – to smooth the way for the Gibran Rakabuming candidacy – to the point of widespread irregularities in the conduct of the 2024 elections, was an early warning signal that corruption eradication would not be a priority of this government.

## **Asta Cita and the Politics of Anti-corruption Image Building**

In their Asta Cita election promise, Prabowo-Gibran made corruption eradication one of the principal items on their agenda. The seventh point of Asta Cita reads: "Bolstering reform of politics, the law and the bureaucracy, together with reinforcing prevention of corruption and the eradication of drugs." But, in practice, these commitments have not truly been implemented.

Political reform is not being seriously addressed. Instead of making changes to the political party and electoral systems to strengthen transparency and government accountability and to shore up the system of checks and balances, Prabowo-Gibran have made moves in the opposite direction. Those moves include transactional politics in the divvying up of government positions, consolidation of political parties to deny scope for an opposition, practising patronage, and pursuing non-transparent and hurried legislative processes. And all this even though the changes referred to above are imperative for prevention of the incremental spread of corruption.

In respect of law enforcement, Prabowo-Gibran have not restored the independence of the Corruption Eradication Commission in the wake of the 2019 revision of the Corruption Eradication Commission Act. Accountability and oversight of the Attorney-General's Office has also not been strengthened. These eventualities could have consequences for the rule of law in the sense that the law could become a tool in the exercise of power. What is needed instead is application of the principle of the rule of law so that law enforcement in cases of corruption can proceed as it should.

Prabowo-Gibran are also not addressing reform of the bureaucracy as a serious agenda item. But ICW's observations year on year have indicated that it is precisely the bureaucracy which is the principal perpetrator of corruption. No meaningful steps have been taken to promote a culture of integrity and public service ethics, or to simplify the bureaucracy or clean up problematic groups or individuals within the bureaucracy. On the contrary, Prabowo-Gibran have installed an oversized ministry inconsistent

with an agenda to reform the bureaucracy. When first installed, the “Merah Putih” Prabowo-Gibran Cabinet had 48 ministries and 5 agencies, later in 2025 increased to 49 ministries. In addition, the practice of having the same person occupying more than one official position within the bureaucracy and state owned enterprises has been allowed. Moreover, some official positions are occupied by serving members of the military and the police. Thus, measures in conflict with the principle of civilian supremacy have been espoused by Prabowo-Gibran.

## **A Tainted Cabinet : from Appointment to Multiple Positions to Corrupt Track Records**

Prabowo-Gibran formed their Merah Putih Cabinet in a way reflective of the political machinations of a cartel: power divvied up evenly among supporters to guarantee stability. Appointment of Cabinet members and those in other strategic positions made light of integrity, competence and track records.

From the outset, Prabowo-Gibran formed an oversized Cabinet: a total of 34 ministries to start, later expanded to 48. From across those ministries there are at least 56 deputy ministers. These statistics make the Merah Putih Cabinet the most oversized since the beginning of the New Order up to the era of *Reformasi*. This increased number of ministries reflects a practice of divvying up power in a way laden with repayment for political services rendered. Such a practice is evidence not only of cartel-like machinations in respect of power sharing, but also a significant waste of public money incurred without a clear agenda.

In addition, Prabowo-Gibran have put to one side the principles of integrity, competence and track records when making appointments to their Cabinet and strategic positions. ICW notes that among them are several names connected with corruption cases, ranging from being a witness in court or having been cited more than once in legal proceedings, to being a suspect in a corruption case. Those so named include Deputy Minister of Law Edward Omar Sharif Hiariej, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Immigration & Corrections Yusril Ihza Mahendra, and Minister of Youth and Sports Ario Bimo Nandito Ariotedjo, as well as former Coordinating Minister of Politics & Security Budi Gunawan removed from Cabinet in September 2025.



Such haphazard appointments to strategic positions have subsequently proved to be harbingers of cases of corruption. One example is the case involving the Deputy Minister of Manpower Immanuel Ebenezer (aka Noel). Not yet a full year in office, Noel was caught up in a sting operation conducted by the Corruption Eradication Commission in August 2025 relating to an extortion case involving occupational safety and health certificates. Prabowo-Gibran are suspected of having given Immanuel the position of Deputy Minister of Manpower because in the 2024 election he was the founder of a volunteer group called Prabowo Mania.<sup>1</sup> Unless a revamping of Cabinet occurs, various forms of corrupt practice will continue to recur.

## Budget Cuts and Their Impact on Citizens

Prabowo-Gibran have cut public budgets to promote their ambitions while in power and to benefit their cronies. Cuts in budget funding have been redirected to priority programs such as the MBG and Danantara,<sup>2</sup> which are widely suspected of being instruments of political patronage and enrichment for cronies. Meanwhile it is the citizenry which bears the brunt of ill effects of those budget cuts.

Starting with Presidential Instruction No. 1/2025, as much as Rp. 306.69 trillion was cut from government budgets at the central and local government levels.<sup>3</sup> The justification provided was that budget cuts were necessary to prevent wastage on unnecessary activities.<sup>4</sup> Among the cuts Prabowo-Gibran included reductions to fiscal transfers to local governments in the regions (TKD for short). By way of Minister of Finance Decision No. 29/2025, TKD budget allocations for 2025 were cut by up to Rp. 50.59 trillion,<sup>5</sup> leaving a total Rp. 848.52 trillion. In 2026, TKD budget allocations will be cut further and will total Rp. 693 trillion.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tempo, "Immanuel Ebenezer's Shining Career: From Ojol Driver to Deputy Minister," <https://www.tempo.co/politik/karier-moncer-immanuel-ebenezer-dari-driver-ojol-hingga-jadi-wakil-menteri-2062144>, 23 August 2025.

<sup>2</sup> [Kompas.id](https://www.kompas.id), "Efisiensi Anggaran Dipakai untuk MBG dan Danantara, Apa Dampaknya ke Rakyat?" <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/efisiensi-anggaran-dipakai-untuk-mbg-dan-danantara-apa-da-mpaknya-ke-rakyat>, 17 February 2025.

<sup>3</sup>Antara News, "Budget Cuts: Learning From the Experiences of Other Countries.", <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/4646389/pemangkasan-anggaran-belajar-dari-pengalaman-negara-lain>, 13 February 2025.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Antara News, "Sri Mulyani cuts transfer funds to regions by Rp50.59 trillion", <https://sulteng.antaraneews.com/berita/339501/sri-mulyani-pangkas-dana-transfer-ke-daerah-rp-5059-triliun>, 6 February 2025.

<sup>6</sup> [Kompas.id](https://www.kompas.id), "Regional Transfer Funds Cut, Minister of Home Affairs: Bureaucratic Spending Efficiency",



Prabowo-Gibran's justification appears to show support for corruption eradication through budget policies skewed in favor of the public. But that justification is open to doubt, given that Prabowo has not given the public clear and transparent reasons for what he has done. No information is available on the findings of any evaluation of the policies underpinning the decision to make such budget cuts. Moreover, the processes involved were completed at lightning pace and hurriedly.

More broadly, the above budget cuts will give rise to at least two sets of problems. Firstly, the cuts could impede the delivery of services to the public.<sup>7</sup> For example, the budget for secondary and primary education has been cut by approximately 23.8% of Rp. 33.5 trillion,<sup>8</sup> resulting in possible impediments to access to education. Ironically, cuts to the security sector's budget have been minimal: the Ministry of Defence's budget has only been cut by 16.1%<sup>9</sup> of Rp. 166.2 trillion.

Secondly, cuts to TKD fiscal transfers could erode the fiscal capacity of local governments in regional areas to finance public programs and could force them to seek other sources of funding which could be burdensome for their constituents. One example of this development is increased taxation in various local government areas which is believed to be aimed at making up for budget shortfalls. One such measure has been an increase in City and Village Land and Buildings Taxation (PBB P2 for short) in 104 local government areas. 20 of those local governments have even increased their PBB P2 taxes by over 100%.<sup>10</sup> Protests by local people in the districts (Kabupatens) of Pati and Bone are widely regarded as being in response to such measures.

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<https://www.kompas.id/artikel/dana-transfer-daerah-dipangkas-mendagri-efisiensi-belanja-birokrasi>, 16 October, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Tempo, "Efisiensi Anggaran Akan Pengaruhi Pelayanan Publik Di Beberapa Kementerian Dan Lembaga",

<https://www.tempo.co/politik/efisiensi-anggaran-akan-pengaruhi-pelayanan-publik-di-beberapa-kementerian-dan-lembaga-1208094>, 17 February 2025.

<sup>8</sup>BBC News Indonesia, "Budget Efficiency: Primary and Secondary Education Budget Cut by Rp8 Trillion – What About Honorary Teachers and School Construction?"

<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/ckgxe99qyzno>, February 10, 2025

<sup>9</sup>CNN Indonesia, "Details of the Efficiency of the Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces, Total Reaches IDR 26.9 Trillion.",

<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20250214062925-20-1198121/rincian-efisiensi-kemhan-dan-tni-total-tembus-rp269-triliun>, 124 February 2025.

<sup>10</sup>Tempo, "Ministry of Home Affairs: 104 Regions Increase PBB, 20 Regions Increase Above 100 Percent.",

<https://www.tempo.co/politik/kemendagri-104-daerah-naikkan-pbb-20-daerah-naik-di-atas-100-persen-2060902>, 20 August 2025.

## From Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) to Merah-Putih Cooperatives : A Portrait of Haphazard Governance

There have been several policy priorities in the era of the Prabowo-Gibran government but they have been seen to be hit and miss in their implementation. Among those priorities are MBG, Danantara and the Merah-Putih Cooperatives scheme. These policies have been put in place without proper planning, and implemented haphazardly, resulting in wastage of public funds, potential for misappropriation and violation of rights of members of the public.

In 2025 budget allocation for the MBG program amounted to Rp. 71 trillion , to be increased from the start of 2026 to Rp. 335 trillion.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, as of 12 October 2025, as many as 11,566 children suffered from poisoning because of this program. The government has done nothing by way of being held accountable for the scandal. Instead of putting the program on hold and conducting a comprehensive evaluation, the government has let it continue without meaningful corrective measures .

The MBG program has also been problematic because it reflects political patronage, cronyism and conflicts of interest – a situation which has had the potential to impact upon oversight of the program. Those running the kitchen management program have connections with people who supported Prabowo-Gibran in the 2024 elections.<sup>12</sup> In addition, as at the end of September 2025, at least 339 MGB kitchens were registered as being managed by the Indonesian Armed Forces<sup>13</sup>, with a further 102 kitchens in the hands of the Indonesian National Police - numbers which will continue to increase.<sup>14</sup> Some MBG kitchens also have connections with politicians in the National Parliament.<sup>15</sup> Even worse than all this, details of the MBG's budget and its procurement processes are not transparent. In addition, as of mid-October 2025, the statutory basis for implementation of the MBG program had yet to be put in place.

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<sup>11</sup> [Kompas.com](https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/09/24/114657126/mbg-2026-sedot-rp-335-triliun-ambil-jatah-pendidikan-rp-223-triliun), "MBG 2026 Sedot Rp 335 Triliun, Ambil Jatah Pendidikan Rp 223 Triliun", <https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/09/24/114657126/mbg-2026-sedot-rp-335-triliun-ambil-jatah-pendidikan-rp-223-triliun>, 24 September 2025

<sup>12</sup>Tempo, "Prabowo's Family and Cronies in the Free Nutritious Meal Project", <https://www.tempo.co/investigasi/kroni-prabowo-makan-bergizi-gratis-1233283>, 20 April 2025.

<sup>13</sup>Metro TV Central Java & DIY, "TNI Commander Opens 339 MBG Kitchens in All TNI Units", [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlkz\\_etTBIQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlkz_etTBIQ), 30 September 2025.

<sup>14</sup>Tempodotco, "617 Police MBG Kitchen Units Included in the National Development Map", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR-V8XAdO0U&pp=ygUPcG9scmkqZGFwdXlqTUJH>, 22 September 2025.

<sup>15</sup> [Tempo.co](https://www.tempo.co/politik/badan-qizi-nasional-akui-ada-anggota-dpr-punya-dapur-mbg-2072349), "National Nutrition Agency Admits There Are Members of the House of Representatives Who Have MBG Kitchens", <https://www.tempo.co/politik/badan-qizi-nasional-akui-ada-anggota-dpr-punya-dapur-mbg-2072349>, 23 September 2025.

Like the MBG program, other programs, namely Danantara and the Merah-Putih Cooperatives scheme are wasting public money, having been established without due care and providing widespread scope for corruption. The Prabowo-Gibran government has provided Rp 300 trillion of taxpayers' money to Danantara.<sup>16</sup> But problems surround issues of transparency, legal immunity and the way in which funding is to be apportioned for expenditure. The public has no knowledge of Danantara's mechanism for decisions on investments to be put in place or how much funding will be allocated, including on projects funded by Danantara. Danantara has the potential to turn into a free-for-all spoils-sharing feast. Furthermore, Law No. 1/2025 re State-Owned Business Enterprises (BUMN) stipulates the need for the National Parliament (DPR) to approve any audit of Danantara. It follows that instead of being managed by individuals who are independent professionals, Danantara is under the control of elite politicians and oligarchs who are close to circles surrounding Prabowo-Gibran.

The Merah Putih Cooperatives Program will expend up to Rp. 83 trillion of taxpayers' money. That funding will be provided in the form of credit to Merah Putih cooperatives with an individual loan ceiling of up to Rp. 3 billion. The problem is that misappropriation of funds and political patronage could occur in the program's implementation. Without transparency and strict oversight, a Rp. 3 billion loan is susceptible to misappropriation. Evidence unearthed by ICW in 2023 indicated that corruption cases were rampant at the village level (with 187 cases being identified) and that public funding was one of the targets of corrupt activity. Furthermore, without careful management, funding provided for the Merah Putih Cooperatives Program could serve as a source of patronage for local elites to be divided up as political spoils.

## Manipulating the Law : Continuing an Old Scandal

The practice of manipulating statutory provisions during the Joko Widodo era has continued under the Prabowo-Gibran government. The law continues to be used as a means of smoothing the way for political interests. In the Joko Widodo era, the scandalous manipulation of statutory provisions was characterized by legislative processes which were non-transparent and rushed. Various problematic legal provisions were

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<sup>16</sup> [Detik.com](https://www.detik.com/sumut/berita/d-7792646/rp-300-t-hasil-efisiensi-anggaran-dialokasikan-ke-danantara), "Rp 300 T in Budget Efficiency Results Allocated to Danantara", <https://www.detik.com/sumut/berita/d-7792646/rp-300-t-hasil-efisiensi-anggaran-dialokasikan-ke-danantara>, 24 February 2025.

enacted into law such as in the revised Corruption Eradication Commission Act, the revised Mining Act, the revised Omnibus Job Creation Act, the revised State Capital City Act and others like them. The Prabowo-Gibran government has subsequently continued the practice.

Prabowo-Gibran first enacted the revised State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) Act on February 4, 2025. Revision of the BUMN Act was done to smooth the way for the establishment of Danantara and to provide it with legal immunity. Danantara was subsequently set up in a non-transparent way and was replete with individuals or groups who were cronies of Prabowo-Gibran. From the beginning Danantara was supported by elite politicians and businesspeople. By contrast an ideal revision of the BUMN Act would have had the objective of improving the performance of BUMNs. According to information gathered by ICW, between 2016 and 2023<sup>17</sup> there were at least 212 cases of corruption within BUMNs, which cost the State's public purse up to Rp. 64 trillion.

Next the Prabowo-Gibran government cleared the way for discussion of a revised Mining Act, adopted on 18 February 2025. The revision turned the Mining Act into another means of exercising political patronage. Under the enacted revised legislation, community organizations (*ormas* for short) are now permitted to manage mining activities. This revision is widely suspected of having been enacted to look after networks of patronage – namely *ormas* – to enlist their support for the Prabowo-Gibran government.

Manipulation of the law was next evident in the revision of the Armed Forces Act, enacted on 20 March 2025. The Prabowo-Gibran government argued that the government was making “regulatory adjustments” and “strengthening the role of the Indonesian Armed Forces in the face of new challenges.” In fact, through revision of this law, the Prabowo-Gibran government was seeking to legitimize the involvement of serving members of the military in civilian positions – a backward step resurrecting the concept of the dual functions (termed *dwifungsi*) of Armed Forces and contravening the principle of civilian supremacy.

Apart from legislated statutory provisions, manipulation of other regulatory provisions was evident in Presidential Regulation No. 46/2025 re Procurement of Goods and Services. The aim of the manipulation in this

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<sup>17</sup>Indonesia Corruption Watch, "After the Newest State-Owned Enterprises Law, Corruption in State-Owned Companies Will Be Increasingly Rampant!", <https://antikorupsi.org/id/pasca-uu-bumn-terbaru-korupsi-di-perusahaan-pelat-merah-akan-samakan-meniamur>, 8 May 2025.

case was thought to be to smooth the way for priority projects like MGB. Article 38 paragraph (5) subparagraph (a) of the regulation permits direct appointment of suppliers of goods and services for priority governmental projects or for cases involving presidential assistance. This means that procurement of goods and services for MGB can occur without a strict procurement process.

Moreover, the regulation provides for an increase in the permitted threshold for direct procurement of goods and services, allowing for transactions valued at up to Rp. 400 m with a maximum of Rp. 100 billion without an open tender process being required. Thus, Presidential Regulation No. 46/2025 endows the government with too much authority over the management of procurement of goods and services, which could ultimately open the door for abuse to occur.

## Law Enforcement Small Talk

One year of the Prabowo-Gibran government provides no evidence of meaningful progress in law enforcement and corruption eradication. Instead of strengthening the law enforcement apparatus to shore up accountability and independence, this government uses law enforcement to consolidate its power. What should be important efforts to bolster corruption eradication do not go beyond verbal clichés. Discussion of a draft Bill re Confiscation of Assets came to a halt without clarification. No concrete steps have been taken. Even worse, Prabowo has, on one occasion, gone as far as talking publicly about the idea of pardoning corruption offenders.

Prabowo has intervened in law enforcement processes in ways widely suspected of being part of his efforts to consolidate power. He made history as the first President of the Indonesian Republic to grant abolition and amnesty to people accused of criminal acts of corruption. The recipient of his act of abolition was Thomas Trikasih Lembong, former Minister of Trade under Jokowi between 2015 and 2016. Meanwhile the recipient of an amnesty was Hasto Kristiyanto, Secretary-General of the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP). Thomas Lembong was defendant in a case of suspected corruption in the import of sugar between 2015 and 2016. For his part, Hasto was allegedly involved in a case of suspected bribery of a commissioner of the National Electoral Commission (KPU) in respect of mid-term replacement of DPR member Harun Masiku.

Although in law the granting of such an abolition/amnesty is the rightful prerogative of the President, the above grants of abolition/amnesty marked dark moments in the history of efforts to eradicate corruption. The reason for saying this is that these actions amounted to intervention in the anti-corruption law enforcement process which should be free from interference of any kind. The President should provide an explanation of the corrections he wishes to make by granting an abolition or amnesty. If he does not do so, it is appropriate to surmise that such action is politically motivated. The grants of the abolition and amnesty referred to above are suspected of being a form of transactional politics between Prabowo and the PDIP. Several days after the grant of the amnesty to Hasto Kristiyanto,<sup>18</sup> PDIP Chairperson Megawati Soekarnoputri directly affirmed her support for President Prabowo.<sup>19</sup> This series of events creates the distinct impression that the decision to grant an amnesty was not genuine law enforcement but a form of political compromise. It follows that the grant of this amnesty was evidence of settling cases of corrupt activity politically to the detriment of the principles of justice.

In addition, efforts to enhance the performance of law enforcement agencies have thus far not shown signs of being successful. According to ICW records, between October and December 2024 there were 131 cases of corruption being pursued by law enforcement agencies, but there was minimal transparency in processes involved in investigation, the laying of charges and the imposition of sentences. This situation shows that law enforcement is still far from respecting principles of accountability and transparency.

Prabowo-Gibran have also not yet been able to resolve problems at the heart of law enforcement agencies like the Indonesian National Police. On the contrary, action taken so far has given rise to uncertainty and an overlapping of authority. For example, to address issues within the National Police, the government established a Police Reform Commission with the mandate of evaluating and making recommendations on improvements to the entire police force. The Commission was to comprise 9 people representing civil society, government officials, the State and former National Police chiefs. But, as of mid-October 2025, these 9 people had not yet been installed by Prabowo.

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<sup>18</sup> [Detik.com](https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8044178/hasto-kristiyanto-jadi-satu-hanya-tahanan-kpk-dapat-amnesti-dari-prabowo), "Hasto Kristiyanto Becomes the Only KPK Prisoner to Receive Amnesty from Prabowo", <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8044178/hasto-kristiyanto-jadi-satu-hanya-tahanan-kpk-dapat-amnesti-dari-prabowo>, 4 August 2025.

<sup>19</sup> [Kompas.com](https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/08/01/00515671/megawati-syaratkan-kader-pdip-dukun-g-pemerintahan-prabowo), "Megawati Orders PDIP Cadres to Support Prabowo's Government", <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/08/01/00515671/megawati-syaratkan-kader-pdip-dukun-g-pemerintahan-prabowo>, 1 August 2025.

Separately, the National Police Chief formed a National Police Reform and Transformation Team, comprising 52 senior and middle ranking officers. This team has been given similar terms of reference, namely to provide data and assessments for the betterment of the National Police. The result is that these two teams of people could have overlapping roles and powers. Without clarification of their mandate and direction, efforts to reform the National Police will not produce meaningful change.

## **DPR: Bereft of Supervision, Beholden to Prabowo-Gibran**

During one year of the Prabowo-Gibran government, the Indonesian National Parliament (DPR) has progressively lost track of its checks and balances role. Instead of exercising oversight, the DPR has functioned as a legitimizer, or in other words a rubber stamp, for government policy.

In fact, from the moment of their election, Prabowo-Gibran have consolidated their power by courting, as best they could, political parties to shore up their support for their government. That effort is evident in the formation of the so called Advanced Indonesia Plus Coalition (KIM Plus for short), the members of which dominate the DPR. As many as 470 seats in the DPR are occupied by parties in the KIM Plus Coalition.<sup>20</sup> As a result, there is almost no space left for an effective opposition.

The lackluster role played by the DPR and its tendency to serve the interests of the government have been evident in its legislative processes which have been non-transparent, rushed, with minimal community participation and always ready to fall in line. For example, during discussion of the revised Indonesian Armed Forces Act, which was bruited as being an initiative of the DPR, discussion was fast tracked and turned into a national legislation item following the issue of Prabowo's Presidential Edict No. R12/Pres/02/2025 on 13 February 2025.

The government and the DPR were at one in pushing for provisions in the law which enabled serving members of the military to occupy civilian positions. But such an approach was clearly a betrayal of the principle of civilian supremacy – part of the agenda of *Reformasi* – and inconsistent with the principle of meritocracy within the bureaucracy. Moreover, the processes around revision of the State-owned Business Enterprises (BUMN)

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<sup>20</sup> [Bisnis.com](https://bisnis.com), "DPR Political Map 2024-2029: PDIP 110 Seats vs KIM Plus 470 Seats!", 26 August 2024.



aimed at legitimizing Danantara were conducted in a similar fashion. Indeed, after its enactment, the text of the revised Act was not openly published..

Furthermore, the role played by the DPR as a protective shield for the government has been evident in their silence on problematic policies. Take for example the MBG program: the DPR has not proffered any meaningful criticism or oversight for this program. And that has happened, even though MBG has been shown to be a waste of public money, has been chaotically managed, has proceeded without clear mechanisms of control and has resulted in tens of thousands of our citizenry suffering from poisoning.

In addition, at the end of August 2025, the DPR provoked public anger over its granting DPR members housing subsidies of Rp. 50 m. These subsidies raised the salary and allowances received by DPR members to the incredible level of Rp. 100 m per month.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of those increased subsidies, recess funding was also increased from a starting base of Rp. 400 m to Rp. 702 m for the period 2024-2029. To boot, such large payments were not regulated by way of transparency in their disbursement and use.

## A Bleak Future for Corruption Eradication

One year of the Prabowo-Gibran Government has evidenced a serious failure in the eradication of corruption. Law enforcement is backtracking; oversight has lost its edge; and the principles of good governance have been intentionally put to one side. In addition, the agenda for political and bureaucratic reform required for the prevention of corrupt activity has been disregarded, opening the door for more widespread abuses.

At the same time, manipulation of the law and orchestration of policies and funding to serve political interests of patronage and cronyism, an oversized Cabinet replete with officials with problematic track records and holding multiple offices in strategic positions along with serving members of the Armed Forces and the National Police, all exacerbate the risks of abuse of power and corruption. This situation indicates that corruption eradication will not proceed in a positive direction. Accordingly, there is a need for stricter public oversight of government processes and more robust public pressure to ensure that corruption eradication proceeds as it should. Public

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<sup>21</sup>BBC Indonesia, "House of Representatives Members' Salaries and Allowances Over Rp100 Million, What Are They Used For?", <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/cvqvly37vp1o>, 20 August 2025.

focus can be directed at the work of those in executive government, legislatures, the judiciary and law enforcement agencies, looking into policies, budgets, decisions etc.

In exercising its focus, the citizenry should be continually alert not to accept unquestioningly the jargon and claims of the Prabowo-Gibran Government. Critical antennae will be needed to assess whether policy is genuinely oriented towards the public interest. Criticism becomes important in countering the tendency of the State to manipulate public opinion.

In addition to all that, public focus must also be directed at economic and political structures, which contribute to the widespread occurrence of corrupt activities. Instead of being oriented towards the public good, these structures are in place precisely to serve the interests of oligarchs and the cronies of those in power. Distortions of access to natural resources and political power will only serve to bolster political patronage and cronyism. Accordingly, making sure that the resources of the State are distributed in a way that is just and oriented towards the public good is a necessity.

