



The Rise and Fall of Military Candidates in the Indonesian Elections

Elections are an indication of several things: the popularity or otherwise of the government as well as other political trends. In a complex country like Indonesia, they also involve efforts by groups within the power elite to secure victory or by those who have lost out to make a comeback. Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, the military elite have lost much of their political clout and are now officially excluded from the political arena. It is therefore no accident that many retired officers, in particular army generals, are keen to return to the political arena. Many have been nominated as candidates in the 2009 parliamentary elections while several heavyweights have put themselves forward for the presidential election later in the year.

This can be interpreted in several ways. For more than three decades, Suharto presided over a military dictatorship whose key doctrine was *Dwifungsi*, or Dual Function. This granted the military the right to play a role in politics, which they exploited on a massive scale. Although members of the armed forces were not allowed to vote, they were allotted up to 100 seats in the national and regional parliaments. However, after the fall of Suharto, the *Dwifungsi* was thrown into the dustbin of history.

Throughout its history, Indonesia has had several experiences of military involvement in politics. During the so-called liberal era (1952-1959), the military were disgruntled because they were excluded from the political arena and set up their own political party, **IPKI**, (*Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, Union to Support Indonesian Independence) which performed woefully in the 1955 election. Their political aspirations re-emerged when several military organisations established a new platform called **Golkar**, (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Groups) in 1964. The intention was

that Golkar would counter the growing influence of the PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party. Golkar became the powerful political machine of Suharto and his generals after they seized power in October 1965 and purged the left-wing movement.

For almost 30 years Golkar remained the sole political vehicle of the military but it was constantly dogged by internal power struggles. In the 1990s, Suharto became increasingly isolated and decided to 'civilianise' the top ranks of Golkar. In 1993, he appointed a civilian Harmoko as chairman, and five years later, Akbar Tandjung took over. Last year, Jusuf Kalla, the country's vice-president, was elected as the party's chairman.

These developments ushered in the third phase of military involvement in politics: with their role now in decline, several key generals began to set up political organisations outside Golkar.

Some older politicians argue that fielding generals in elections is positive because

civilians lack authority and are weak at decision-making. But there is much more to it than that. Many officers are firmly convinced that the military are the only force capable of safeguarding the country's integrity, and that politicians always make a mess of things. This is undoubtedly the ideological framework and thinking of retired generals like Wiranto, Prabowo and many others.

The three generals all have notorious records of gross human rights violations

It is certainly true that the military remain the strongest institution in Indonesia and that strong-willed, authoritarian and tough administrators have often emerged from its ranks. During the long period of Suharto's *Orde Baru*, a caste of military administrators was created. In present-day Indonesia, many of the new administrators are civilians, elected through a democratic process, but they are often seen as indecisive and weak as compared with the authoritarian office-holders from the past.

Two new kids on the block: Hanura and Gerindra

Of the many retired officers who are keen to secure a political position, the most ambitious are the generals Wiranto, Prabowo and Sutyoso who will be making bids for the presidency. Many others are trying to get top-ranking positions in one or other of the 38 political parties that will be contesting the national and regional parliamentary elections, or attemptin to become provincial governors or district chiefs (bupati). Others hope to secure strategic positions within the regional bureaucracies.

The three generals all have notorious records of gross human rights violations and their political prominence reflects the failure of criminal accountability in the post-Suharto era of putting them on trial to account for their crimes. All three are forever appearing in

public and have secured positions as leaders of new political parties hoping to challenge the current president, retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY).

Four-star General Wiranto was SBY's senior in the army. During the tumultuous days of 1998-1999 before and after the fall of Suharto, when there was mayhem in many cities and the vote for independence in East Timor which led to the army's wilful destruction of the country, Wiranto held the highest rank in the Indonesian armed forces. Retired Lt General Prabowo has a similarly gruesome human rights track record. He was one of the key figures in counter-insurgency activities against the resistance in East Timor and was responsible for the training and financing of militia groups that went on the rampage there in 1999. As commander of the notorious red berets unit, Prabowo was also responsible for the kidnapping and disappearance of pro-democracy activists in the days just prior to the fall of Suharto (then his father-in-law). Retired Lt General Sutyoso was also a commander of the red berets and served in several conflict areas such as East Timor, Aceh and West Papua. He subsequently served two terms as governor of Jakarta and it is this position that whetted his appetite for the presidency.

Prabowo was also responsible for the kidnapping and disappearance of pro-democracy activists

General Wiranto has set up a new party called *Hanura* (*Hati Nurani Rakyat*, People's Conscience) which has its head office just opposite the official residence of the vice-president, in Jakarta's Menteng Area. Branches of Hanura have been set up all over Indonesia, thanks to a plentiful supply of money. Hanura is performing reasonably well in the opinion polls and is expected to win anything up to 7% of the votes. The party has attracted support from people in the army, navy and air force and from police officers,

businessmen, former Golkar members and even some pro-democracy activists.

As the chairman of Hanura, Wiranto has surrounded himself with an array of retired officers: Lt General Arie Mardjono and Rear Admiral Abu Hartono who are both vice-chairs of the advisory board. The seven Hanura vice-chairmen are Major General Aqlani Maza and Admiral Bernard Kent Sondakh, Rear Marshall Budhy Santoso, Police General Chaeruddin Ismael, Lt. General Fachrul Razi, Lt General Suaidi Marassabessy and General Soebagyo. The deputy treasurer is Major General Iskandar Ali.

Wiranto started his military career as an infantry officer and gradually climbed up the ranks by holding several territorial positions. In 1989, he became the adjutant of President Suharto and held the position until 1993. From then on, his career blossomed and he became known as a staunch Suharto loyalist. He subsequently served as military commander of Jakarta (1994), Kostrad (Reserve) Forces (1996), chief-of-staff of the army (1997), commander-in-chief of the armed forces (1998) concurrently holding the post of minister of defense and security at the time of Suharto's downfall. He continued to hold this ministerial post during the Habibie and Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid) presidencies until he was sacked in 2000. From then on, it was clear that Wiranto nurtured presidential ambitions.

Wiranto has been able to build his party very effectively and it is surprising to see that quite a few civilians, including some well-known pro-democracy activists, have decided to join its ranks. Some analysts half jokingly compare Hanura to a tupper ware sale. Anyone is able to set up a branch as long as the right goodies are sold. People with not much money are sure to get plenty of cash if they set up a branch while some businessmen have invested their own money in a branch or promoted other Hanura activity. Each Hanura branch is required to set up a cooperative as a sign of its social responsibility so as to attract more supporters.

It is questionable whether the rank and file of Hanura is really loyal to General Wiranto. One

of the key persons in Hanura is Indro S. Tjahyono who was a prominent student activist in 1978 with impressive anti-military credentials. Indro became one of the key opposition leaders in the late eighties and was involved in many important pro-democracy activities. He is now a vice-chair of Hanura though it is doubtful whether he will support Wiranto's bid for the presidency. Other people like Indro are clearly using Hanura as a vehicle to get into parliament.

Prabowo and 'his' peasants

Lt General Prabowo has a formidable background. His father was a celebrated economist who served as a minister both under Sukarno and Suharto. Prabowo married Suharto's second daughter and became part of the country's 'first family'. Despite this background and his time at a public school in England, he entered the military academy. His military career was highly successful until his dismissal from the armed forces in 1998. During his years in the military, he held a number of prestigious military posts including Kopassus commander and Kostrad commander.

Prabowo received excellent military training and undertook a counter-insurgency course in Germany in 1981 and a Special Forces Officer Course in Fort Benning in USA also in 1981. He later became Indonesia's youngest lieutenant-general at the age of 46 and some people suggested that he could emerge as the successor of his father-in-law Suharto. However, he is now a successful businessman and the CEO of several companies involved in mining, pulp and paper, agriculture and palm oil plantations.

In 1998, as Suharto's downfall was imminent, Wiranto and Prabowo emerged as rivals. With the regime about to sink, Wiranto, who held the key military post, supported the idea of Suharto stepping down while Prabowo defended Suharto's presidency till the bitter end. There are many versions of the events in May 1998 which has produced a number of books on the subject. After Suharto finally stepped down,

Prabowo left the country for Jordan where he remained for several years.

Prabowo has since changed his image and is now seen as a respectable businessman. A few years ago, he made another bid to promote his public image by grabbing hold of the leadership of the peasants' organization, the HKTI. This organization was set up during the Suharto era as the sole umbrella for the many millions of Indonesian peasants though it is highly doubtful whether it is now capable of mobilizing its constituency.

Prabowo is also a so-called ordinary member of a party called Gerindra. It is clear that he will become the presidential candidate of Gerindra and can perhaps expect the support of the many branches of HKTI around the country. This is a typical example of Javanese modesty. On paper at least, Prabowo has again emerged as a public figure.

Gerindra deputy chair, Muchdi, is being tried for the murder of Munir

Gerindra (*Gerakan Indonesia Raya*, Greater Indonesia Movement) was not actually set up by Prabowo but it was clear from the beginning

that it would become his political vehicle. Two notorious officers are members of the Gerindra board: Retired Major-General Muchdi Purwopranyoto who is deputy chairman, and intelligence officer retired Major-General Gleny Kairupan also deputy chair who played a sinister role in East Timor. Muchdi is at present being tried for the premeditated murder of Munir, one of Indonesia's key human rights activists.

As already described, both Wiranto and Prabowo have been very close to the palace. This background is probably what encouraged the two men to make bids for the presidency. There is nothing special in the programmes of these parties and both are lacking in any political skills.

While there is no evidence that Gerindra has a well-oiled machine comparable to that of Hanura, it will obviously use the HKTI in an attempt to win votes. Gerindra is trying to attract new members by offering free life insurance. Like Wiranto, Prabowo has also attracted some former activists to his camp, notably Pius Lustrilang and Desmond Mahesa, both of whom were kidnapped in 1998 by an outfit commanded by him.

Lt. General Sutyoso and his boundless ambitions

Retired general Sutyoso also thinks he is capable of running the country and regards his military background as an advantage. Like the two other generals, he is Javanese though he never reached a peak in the military. His highest position was as military commander of Jakarta, which became the springboard to him becoming the governor of Jakarta from 1997 till 2007. Being the governor of the capital is at least as powerful as any senior cabinet post as we have seen with the mayors of London, Paris, New York and Beijing.

Sutyoso served in many conflict areas. As a young non-commissioned officer in the mid-sixties, he was sent to Kalimantan to crush the Paraku/PGRS rebellion. Later on he served in Aceh, East Timor and in West Papua. His name was mentioned in connection with the killing of five foreign journalists in Balibo, East Timor in 1975. In 1993 he became a territorial officer; he served in Bogor and then became chief-of-staff of the Jakarta military command in 1994. His position as governor of Jakarta gave him the opportunity to build a wide network of business people. He also took on other prestigious functions in the world of sports: as the head of a shooting association, head of the basketball association, head of the golf association and most recently, head of the badminton association.

His election strategy is quite different from Wiranto and Prabowo. He has initiated several small parties such as **Partai Republikan**, **Partai Bela Negara (PBN)**, **Partai Nasional Banteng Kemerdekaan (PNBK)** and **Partai Pemersatu Bangsa (PPB)**. He has also

managed to gain some influence and support within several of the medium-sized parties such as **Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)** and **Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)**. With the support of this coalition, he hopes to become better known. Moreover, the fact that 60% of the electorate is Javanese gives Sutyoso, himself Javanese, the prospect of winning plenty of votes. He is expected to get the support of several key generals who have not themselves entered the political arenas, including retired General Try Sutrisno, a former vice-president under Suharto and former intelligence supreme, retired Major General Hendropriyono.

Gerindra is trying to attract new members by offering free life insurance

All three retired generals enjoy similar advantages and common agendas. They belong to the political elite of Jakarta, they have unlimited amounts of money and it looks as if they have been able to built a large following. All three are adversaries of President SBY and part of their motivation is that they see SBY as a failed officer. In fact, both Wiranto and Sutyoso were SBY's seniors and now feel undermined by his achievements. But there are fundamental flaws in all three men. They have no political programmes nor do they represent any coherent political or ideological thought. The message is simply nationalist rhetoric and a campaign of pushing themselves forward as saviours of the nation. It is highly unlikely that urban middle class voters will vote for them nor is it likely that their political machines can reach out to the rural electorate.

There are also questions about the intentions of some of the so-called followers of the three generals. As long as they get plenty of money and perhaps even seats in parliament, they will remain loyal. But the general elections and the direct presidential election are two very different things. Most of the retired generals failed woefully in their bids for local administrative posts and this is certain to

happen again during the 2009 parliamentary elections.

Dazzling array of generals in different parties

There are retired officers in practically all the parties but there are important differences: they have joined some to play a leading role, but joined others for ideological or religious reasons. In some of the Muslim or Christian parties, retired officers occupy nothing more than a marginal role. This is also the case in the secular parties like PDI-P and Golkar. There has been a striking change in Golkar, which in the Suharto days was the regime's main political vehicle, but by the mid-nineties was being gradually abandoned because military personnel began to realize it could not fulfil their political aspirations.

Even before the post-Suharto era, retired generals were trying to gain a foothold in the political arena outside Golkar through a party called **PKP (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan, Justice and Unity Party)** headed by retired General Edy Sudradjat. After his demise, many left the party and went elsewhere.

They have no political programmes nor do they represent any coherent political or ideological thought

Among the 38 parties that will take part in the elections there are civilian parties which have officers in their leading bodies and others which are led by military officers and have a militaristic outlook. Among the latter is **PKPB (Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa, Concern for the Nation Functional Party)** with retired General Hartono as general chairman. Retired Major-General Hartarto is the secretary-general while the vice-chairmen include three retired officers: Major-General H.Namoeri Anoem, Brig-General Suhana Bujana and Rear Marshall Suharto.

Several of the newly-established parties also have their share of retired military. **PRN (Partai Republik Nusantara**, Nusantara Republican Party), which uses the word Nusantara in its title rather than Indonesia, will focus primarily on the regions. Retired Lt. General Syahrir MS is a member of the Presidium of PRN, while both General Syarnubi and Brig. General Husein Thaib share the position of chair.

Another new party is **PDK (Partai Demokrasi Kebangsaan**, National Democratic Party) which is the vehicle of lower-ranking officers; it too has a strong nationalist agenda. Retired Police Senior Commissioner Iyer Sudaryana is chairperson while three retired colonels (all of whom now hold civilian jobs) are in the leadership: Colonel Bahar Mallarangan is vice chair of the National Ombudsman Institute, Colonel Tasno HP, is concurrently vice head of the Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries Development Agency and Lt Colonel Haryanto is vice head of the Forestry and Agricultural Development Agency. Both are on the board of the PDK. They represent the group of military personnel who occupied *kekaryaan* (civilian) positions in the Suharto administration. A majority of military were able to gain positions during the New Order period and have since retirement (at the age of 55) become top-ranking officials, having previously shifted from the military to a civilian career.

Inside the two major parties **Golkar** and **PDI-P**, retired military still play a role, albeit only marginal. Retired Lt General Sumarsono is secretary-general of Golkar but rarely appears in public. One of the senior politicians in PDI-P is retired Major General Theo Syafei, a former commander in East Timor, who has served two terms in parliament. It is likely that both men will be replaced in the near future.

The party of President SBY, the **PD (Partai Demokrat**, Democrat Party) also includes several retired officers. SBY himself is chair of the advisory board but is rarely involved in its daily activities. The general chair is retired Colonel Hadi Utomo while retired Major General Nur Aman and retired Police Commissioner General Nurfaizi both are board members. The officers within the PD are surprisingly civilian in their political outlook.

Within the Muslim party **PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang**, Star Crescent Party), there are several retired officers. They include Police Senior Commissioner Bambang Sutedjo, Lt General Sugiono and Lt General Sanif, who are all members of its board.

Others might emerge later

Some key active or retired officers have not yet emerged onto the political scene but are likely to push their weight around in the coming months. They include: Ryamizard Ryacudu, Muh. Yasin and Djoko Santoso. Hardliner retired four-star General Ryamizard Ryacudu is notorious as the man who tried to undo all the reforms introduced after 1998. He tried to sabotage the peace process in Aceh and in an act of defiance, he held a military parade in front of the palace during Gus Dur's presidency. On the following day, Gus Dur was impeached by the MPR in a process that was certainly instigated by Ryacudu. He is known to be close to Megawati, PDI-P's candidate for the presidency. Were it to happen, his re-appearance on the political stage, could signify a setback for some of the democratic changes that have been put in place.

Until recently a staunch SBY loyalist, Lt General Muhammad Yasin has emerged as a strong opponent of the President. He spent his whole career as an intelligence officer and is therefore unknown to the general public but he is above all a fixer. Quite unexpectedly, he has been put forward as the presidential candidate of a small party called **PKP (Partai Karya Perjuangan**, Functional Struggle Party) a spin-off from Golkar. Yasin was part of SBY's inner circle and worked in the presidential office. In a rare interview, he stressed the four 'jewels' of the nation: the 1945 Constitution; Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity); NKRI, the Unitary State and Pancasila (the Five Principles). Although Yasin is not a serious presidential contender, he could play a similar game as Sutyoso in building a wide-ranging anti-SBY coalition.

The other four-star general is General Djoko Santoso, currently commander-in-chief of the armed forces. President SBY has carefully

chosen the present top echelon in the armed forces and they are mostly SBY loyalists. SBY himself is one of the first generation of officers who are post-DwiFungsi. This means that they have adopted a non-political position, leaving state and political affairs to the government and parliament. Santoso will soon reach retirement age and it is not clear whether he will continue to be a neutral political figure.

These days, the TNI (the armed forces) is going through lean years. It has lost a lot of its political and economic clout during the past decade. Meanwhile, the police force has been upgraded; it has won much more public attention and also has seized a sizable chunk of the economic cake. In a number of regions, there have been public conflicts between police and TNI units, mostly about the division of the cake. Djoko Santoso could likely represent the frustrations of the present batch of officers who never experienced the fat years of Wiranto, Prabowo and Sutyoso.

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Military dominance in Indonesian politics

There was a period, in the early years of Suharto's *Orde Baru*, when the military held an exceptionally high number of positions. Most cabinet positions were in its hands while two-thirds of the provincial governors were generals. Lower-ranking officers took over from many of the district and village chiefs who had fled or had been killed during the anti-Communist drive from 1965 till 1969. Over the years, things improved somewhat because a large number of competent civilians, many of them academics, have shown themselves to be more capable than officers of running an administration.

The best criterion to judge the military-civilian proportionality is the situation inside Golkar, the ruling party (but also the party of the ruler, Suharto). Initially Golkar was set up as a vehicle of several anti-Communist officers, but in 1969 Suharto decided to use Golkar as his political machine. During the 32 year of Suharto's reign, the military remained dominant within Golkar. This situation was also evident from the number of military personnel within the administration. But gradually Golkar became more civilian. This is reflected in the fact that the chair of Golkar chair at the time of the fall of Suharto was Akbar Tandjung who is arguably one of the most skilful politicians in present-day Indonesia.

There are many countries in Asia where the military has never played an important role in politics such as India, China and Vietnam. But there are also many countries with a strong military political tradition, notably Thailand, Pakistan, Turkey and Indonesia. History has shown that it is not easy to remove the military from the political arena. In the last 10 years, Indonesia has made big strides in reforming the military and removing them from the political arena. But time is still needed to change the mindset of the military and to ensure that they focus solely on non-political affairs.

See also: 'Former generals unpopular choice for president amongst Indonesian military'

The Indonesian Parliamentary System

Indonesia describes itself as Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI), Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. It is divided into 32 provinces which were granted autonomy under Undang-Undang Pemerintahan Daerah No 22/1999, Regional Government Law 22/1999.

This backgrounder to the 2009 elections describes Indonesia's parliamentary structure at the national and regional levels and the composition and powers of the various bodies.

The National Parliamentary bodies are as follows:

Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) – People's Representative Council

This body is composed of 550 members. The current DPR was voted into power in 2004 and includes representatives of 16 parties. Seven parties which contested the 2004 elections failed to reach the threshold and have no seats in the DPR. The next election for the DPR will take place on 9 April 2009.

The Election Law establishes a threshold according to which a party is required to obtain at least 2.5% of the total votes; if it fails to gain the necessary number of votes, it will not be allowed to take part in the following elections. This has the effect of eliminating the chances of small parties, who may have obtained many votes across the country, from getting a single seat in the legislature

The largest party in the DPR is **GOLKAR, (Functional Groups)** which has 128 seats. This was the party that dominated the political scene during the Suharto era. Although it gained the most seats at the last general election, it has done badly in a number of local elections held in the intervening period and is not expected to do well in 2009. The present chairman of the party is Jusuf Kalla, who is currently Vice-President of Indonesia.

The second largest party is **PDI-P, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Indonesian Democratic Party–Struggle**, which has 109 seats. This party is led by former President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, who together with Mohammed Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's

PDI-P are expected to do well in 2009 and are likely to become the largest party in the DPR

independence in 1945. This party is the successor of the **PDI**, one of three parties

permitted to exist under Suharto with Megawati as the chair. During the final years of the Suharto era, grassroots members were increasingly critical of the regime and of the party leadership's acquiescence to Suharto. It reconstituted itself after the fall of Suharto in 1998, adding the word *perjuangan* (struggle) to its name.

This party is expected to do well in 2009 and is likely to become the largest party in the DPR. Megawati will also stand for President in October 2009 though it is not clear who will be her running-mate.

The other major secular party is **Partai Demokrat** which has 57 seats. This is the party of (retired general) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, currently President of Indonesia.

The largest Muslim party is **Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party**. This was another of the three parties permitted to exist during the Suharto dictatorship. It now has 58 seats but is not expected to retain its position as the leading Muslim party in 2009.

Several other Muslim parties have a substantial number of seats, among them **Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, National Awakening Party** with 52 seats. This is the party of

Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur who was President from 1999 till July 2001 when he was impeached, giving way to Megawati who was his Vice-President. The party has faced serious internal wrangles, resulting in the formation of a split-off party, which could affect its fortunes in 2009.

The **Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party**, also Muslim, but claiming to be open to non-Muslims, has 45 seats. It has been making significant strides forward in the past few years and is expected to do well in April 2009.

The **Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party**, has 52 seats in the DPR and is also a Muslim party. It too could do well in 2009.

The smaller Muslim parties are **Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Star Party**, with eleven seats, and **Partai Bintang Reformasi, Reform Star Party**, with 13 seats.

Partai Damai Sejahtera, Prosperous Peace Party, with 12 seats, is a Christian party.

There is little political difference between the various parties, which are all required, under law, to uphold the Constitution and the five principles of the state ideology *Pancasila* (Belief in One God, Humanity, the Unity of Indonesia, Democracy Reached through Consensus, and Social Justice). Failure to do so would mean a party would not gain recognition or be permitted to take part in the elections.

There is little political difference between the various parties

The Powers of the DPR

Under the present constitutional arrangements, the main function of the DPR is to adopt legislation (*Undang-Undang*) and to hold the President, Vice-President and government to

account. Members of the government do not have seats in the DPR. The DPR is elected for a fixed term of five years; the term of the present DPR ends in April 2009.

Bills adopted by the DPR are not subject to oversight, amendment or annulment by any other parliamentary body. They are submitted to the President for approval, but he does not have the power of veto. A bill becomes law after 30 days whether or not it has been signed by the President.

In September this year, the Constitutional Court declared its support for a constitutional commission to be set up to address the powers of the DPR and empower a second chamber, the DPD (see below), to act as a check on the legislative body. It could be years before the reforms are implemented.

The reputation of the current DPR has been severely damaged by revelations of corruption; two members are in custody and under investigation in connection with alleged payments to ensure the passage of a 2003 banking bill. The DPR's law-making process has also been far from satisfactory and it rarely completes the legislative timetable set for each session. The new DPR will inherit a large backlog of bills from its predecessor.

2009 DPR elections

The DPR elections are scheduled to take place on 9 April 2009. 38 political parties are registered, having complied with the requirements for political parties. Parties must have a base in at least two-thirds of the 32 provinces and have branches and sub-branches in the requisite number of districts and sub-districts in each of these provinces. This excludes the possibility for local parties to be set up.

However, the 2005 Law on the Governance of Aceh made provision for the establishment of local parties in Aceh. But these local parties may field candidates only in local elections, not in the national elections. The 2001 Special Autonomy Law on West Papua includes a provision for the establishment of local parties, but implementing regulations requires the

approval of the Department of the Interior, which has not yet been forthcoming.

It is estimated that dozens of legislative candidates of all parties are related to party leaders

According to the law, parties are required to draw up a list (*urutan*) of candidates from which they will select the persons who are allotted seats in the DPR according to their placing on the list. This system which gives excessive powers to party leaderships over the choice of who becomes a member of the DPR is now under severe strain. Local elections which have been held in the past year or so have drawn attention to the popularity of some local party leaders who are low down on the party's *urutan*, leading to challenges questioning the party lists, in favour of party activists who obtained a majority vote in local elections. Several of the major parties have now decided to incorporate the principle of 'majority votes' rather than party lists.

Some parties have been criticised for their candidate selection process which depends heavily on the decisions of party elders or family connections. It is estimated that dozens of legislative candidates of all parties are related to party leaders. *Partai Bulan Bintang* has admitted that 90 percent of its women candidates are from the same family. The candidates of the PDI-P and GOLKAR both include the offspring of several senior party leaders. Some parties also include celebrities such as well-known artists on their lists as vote-getters, a practice that has also been criticised.

Under the election law, parties are required to ensure that 30 percent of their candidates are women.

Casting the vote

In 2004, voters were required to pierce the ballot paper with a sharp instrument (*coblos*).

For the coming elections, voters will be instructed to inscribe a tick (*contreng*). The new method has been criticised by many parties and commentators for several reasons. The word 'contreng' is Javanese and is not understood in many parts of the country. Millions of people who are illiterate would have difficulty using a pen or pencil; it would also be more difficult for blind people. It is not yet clear how the matter will be finally resolved.

Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR), People's Consultative Council

There are 678 members of the MPR, consisting of the 550 members of the DPR and the 128 members of the DPD (see below). Like the DPR, it runs for a fixed term of five years.

Under Suharto, the MPR wielded extensive powers which included electing the president and vice-president and establishing the *Garis Besar Haluan Negara*, GBHN, or Broad Lines of State Policy. These powers have now been greatly reduced. Since 2004, it no longer adopts broad policy lines nor does it elect the president and vice-president. Furthermore, under the recent reforms, its standing in law is now equal to that of the DPR and other state institutions. It usually convenes once every five years.

Its powers now include among others:

- Amending the Constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar UUD),
- Swearing in the president and vice-president,
- Approving a decision by the DPR to impeach the president or vice-president,
- Choosing a new president and vice-president in the event that the incumbents retire, are impeached or die during their term of office.

The DPD is arguably the most democratically constituted of all the state institutions

Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD), Regional Representatives Council

The DPD is arguably the most democratically constituted of all the state institutions. It was set up in November 2001 and is composed of four representatives from each of the 32 provinces and currently consists of 128 elected members who are independents, not party appointees.

Its tasks and rights are among others:

- To submit bills to the DPR pertaining to central and regional autonomy affairs, the creation or splitting up of provinces, the exploitation of natural resources and other economic matters, and matters relating to the financial division between the centre and the regions.
- To give advice to the DPR pertaining to laws on finance, taxes, education and religious affairs.
- To exercise supervision of laws pertaining to regional affairs

The establishment of the DPD transformed Indonesia from a unicameral to a bicameral country and was based on the need to accommodate regional aspirations and requirements.

The elections for members of the DPD will take place at the same time as the elections for the DPR.

Provincial and district governments

Indonesia has 32 provinces each of which has a provincial assembly called **Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD), Regional Representative People's Council**. They are elected according to the same conditions which apply to the election of the DPR and at the same time. Each province has a governor and deputy governor who are elected as a team by the populace of the province at various times. The only provincial government which bears the name of the province is the provincial assembly of Papua which is known as the DPRP - *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Papua*.

Provinces are further divided into **Kabupaten** (districts), **Kota** (cities/towns) and **Kecamatan** (sub-districts). Below the sub-districts are **Kelurahan** (urban village) or **desa** (rural village), each of which has its own **kepala desa** or village chief. The heads of these administrations are also elected on the basis of party lists.

The elections for the governor, vice-governor and district chiefs in Aceh which were held on 11 December 2006 represented a significant departure from the norm; in all cases where independents stood, they easily defeated candidates fielded by national parties.

The establishment of the DPD transformed Indonesia from a unicameral to a bicameral country

President and Vice-President

Under the reforms introduced before the 2004 elections, the President and Vice-President are no longer elected by the MPR but are directly elected. The election is between duos of candidates standing on a joint ticket for the posts. The next presidential elections will be held in October 2009. If no one gets the required majority, there will be a run-off between the two leading duos.

The Cabinet

The present Indonesian Cabinet is headed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice-President Jusuf Kalla and is composed of 23 ministers of government departments, twelve state ministers and the Attorney General.

There are three Coordinating Ministers with oversight of the government departments:

- * Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs
- * Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs
- * Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare.