



## Election Update

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### A Victory for Mainstream Politics in Indonesia

*Organising elections in huge countries like India and Indonesia is a logistical nightmare. Both countries held general elections in April, which proceeded relatively peacefully despite the many flaws. Although it is widely accepted that holding general elections is the easiest part of the democratic process, Indonesia is today regarded as the third largest democracy in the world. It is only ten years since it shook itself free of a 32-year authoritarian regime and rejoined the ranks of the world's democratic regimes.*

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world with no fewer than 17,000 islands and a population of 232 million. Although there were 171 million registered voters, the number of people who cast their votes on 9 April was 104 million, a 61 percent turnout as compared to 84 percent in 2004 and an even higher percentage in 1999. No fewer than 67 million people failed to vote for one reason or another. Another worrying feature was the huge number of 17 million invalid votes.

**Holding general elections is the easiest part of the democratic process**

It is generally accepted that the General Elections Commission (KPU) performed woefully in its compilation of voter lists and failed to ensure that voters were properly informed about voting procedures. That was especially important given the large number of parties contesting for seats and

the fact that voters cast votes not only for the national parliament but also for a regional representatives council and provincial and district assemblies. For the first time, voters were required to mark their choice with a tick instead of piercing the ballot paper, a change that might have confused people not accustomed to using a pencil or pen.

#### **THE RESULTS**

The clear victor of the 2009 elections was *Partai Demokrat*, the party of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). This came as no surprise. Numerous opinion polls had given the incumbent president a commanding lead in popularity ratings. His victory in the 2004 elections had been solid. In many ways his presidency was by no means an easy ride. During the past four years, Indonesia has been hit by a number of severe natural disasters, starting with the devastating tsunami in Aceh and Nias in December 2004. Then in May 2006, a massive mudflow hit East Java

killing many people and rendering unusable thousands of hectares of land. Thousands of peasant families are still suffering the effects of inadequate compensation for the mudflow caused by drilling for gas by a company whose owner was a prominent member of SBY's government. There was also a serious earthquake in Yogyakarta, Central Java two years ago. To make matters worse, the country's economy has been badly affected by the global economic meltdown, the first effects of which were felt in April 2008, hitting the level of exports. However, the President's popularity has not been affected by these problems.

**Until now, *Partai Demokrat* has functioned more or less as an SBY fan club**

There are several reasons for this. The first was the launching of an anti-corruption campaign. Ever since the birth of the Republic in 1945, successive governments have tried to grapple with the scourge of corruption. The SBY government established two institutions: the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and *Tipikor*, a special anti-corruption court. Both institutions have been given strong mandates. The KPK was able to bring a number of high officials to court, including provincial governors, former cabinet ministers, district chiefs and even the vice-governor of the country's central bank. Another institution, with a different focus, known as the BLT (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*, Direct Cash Handouts) has been set up to assist the country's poorest people.

In general SBY has taken a middle-of-the-road track, managing to build bridges with most of the many political groups. His cabinet is an expression of this policy; practically all the major political groups

have been given ministerial posts. This accommodation policy turned out to have been very successful.

SBY's political vehicle, *Partai Demokrat* (Democrat Party, PD) can hardly be called a professional party with a proper structure. Until now, it has functioned more or less as an SBY fan club. The party's vote in 2009 increased threefold as compared with 2004, the year in which the party was founded. SBY holds no position on the PD's central board although he bears the title of chair of its supervisory board. Having now become Indonesia's largest party, it is expected that the PD will soon begin to function as a more effective political vehicle.

Besides the PD, two other parties won significant support. One was Golkar (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Groups), which was the ruling party from 1971 until 1998, during the Suharto era. The other was the PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan*, Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle), a mainstream nationalist party founded during the Dutch colonial period by Sukarno, the country's first president. Whilst there are differences between them, all three are secular parties in a country which has the largest number of Muslims in the world. The three parties are similar in many ways: their programmes are more or less identical. Golkar, which topped the polls in 2004, fared rather badly this time around, primarily because of rivalries at the top. The PDI-P also did worse than in 2004, largely because its chair, Megawati Sukarnoputri, performed so badly during her three-year presidency from 2001 till 2004.

Another interesting outcome was the regional vote. Most outstanding were the results in the western province of Aceh, on the tip of Sumatera. A conflict that had

aged there for more than fifteen years was resolved within a year of SBY becoming president in 2004. This happened in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami that struck Aceh with terrible force, killing around 140,000 people. Before that, talks had already been in progress between the conflicting sides. It was Yusuf Kalla, the vice-president, and his team who were largely responsible for the agreement reached which also resulted in a special provision allowing the Acehnese to set up and field local political parties in the local assembly elections. The majority of votes in the national parliament election went to *Partai Demokrat*, while the local party, *Partai Aceh* won almost half the votes for the local assemblies. This is the party set up by GAM, the organization that had waged the struggle in Aceh since 1976 as a pro-independence movement. The Aceh Party has since declared its support for Aceh to remain part of Indonesia. Recent developments in Aceh have set a good precedent, proving that regional autonomy is no threat to the unity of the state.

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Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about West Papua, where the elections were marred by violence. Although it too was granted special autonomy in 2001, with many provisions similar to the special autonomy granted to Aceh, attempts to set up local parties were blocked by the central government, as a result of which the Papuan electorate were only able to vote for national parties, virtually none of which has shown any interest in addressing the pressing problems confronting the West Papuan people. Some organizations in

West Papua called for a boycott of the election but, given that almost half the population of West Papua are now non-Papuan, it is difficult to assess how Papuans responded to the elections. We hope to write about voting trends in West Papua as more information becomes available.

It is widely accepted that regional autonomy, introduced in 2001, has helped ensure greater stability. In the first years of post-dictatorship Indonesia, it seemed that Indonesia might fall apart because of ideological, religious and ethnic conflicts. The 2009 elections are evidence that the opposite is the case. The three secular parties which gained the most votes displayed a similarity in their economic and political views with none of them adopting ideological positions. This can be described as a victory for mainstream politics. At the same time, it has resulted in a shift towards pragmatic politics for the Indonesian electorate as a whole, which has certainly helped the cause of political stability.

## ***DECLINE OF MUSLIM PARTIES***

Another striking feature was the decline in popularity of the Muslim political parties. In every election held since 1955 (the first general election), not including the Suharto era when elections were nothing but a sham, Muslim parties won an average of around 40 percent of the votes. In 2004, this fell slightly to 39 percent. However, in 2009, eight Muslim parties between them won only 29 percent of the votes, the lowest in Indonesian history.

There are several reasons for these disappointing results. In the first place, members of the several Muslim socio-religious organizations have joined a variety of parties. On top of that, the three

secular parties have been able to accommodate large sections of the Muslim vote and have succeeded in drawing religious power brokers into their own ranks.

The PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, Prosperous Justice Party), the Indonesian version of the worldwide *Ichwanul Muslimin*, suffered the most disappointing result. The PKS emerged as a significant middle-ranking party in 2004 with a strong urban vote, particularly in Jakarta and other cities of West Java. This time around, many observers were predicting that the PKS would double its vote from 7 to 14 percent but in the event, it barely increased its share. Its key slogan was the need to combat corruption, an issue that had been hijacked by SBY with his successful anti-corruption measures. Another factor was that the party had promoted fundamentalist Islamic views by introducing shariah law in some districts where it had gained a foothold; this includes measures that directly affected people's lifestyles such as banning alcohol, banning traditional dancing for its allegedly immoral gestures, and imposing restrictions on women's rights. Nor was the electorate happy about the intrusion of faith into politics. Although it failed to meet expectations, the PKS emerged as the largest Muslim party with 7.88 percent of the votes, a slight increase over the percentage it secured in 2004.

**In the past ten years, the political transformation of Indonesia had been remarkable**

The other more mainstream Muslim parties faced a number of problems and were dogged by internal and external rivalries. The leading Muslim party, the PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United

Development Party) was split internally while the six other parties more or less represented the views of the two major socio-religious organisations, *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, with members giving their votes to a number of smaller Muslim parties. Two parties, the PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang*, Moon and Star Party) and the PBR (*Partai Bintang Reformasi*, Reform Star Party) failed to reach the threshold and will no longer be represented in the national parliament. PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, National Mandate Party), which represents the bulk of the *Muhammadiyah* following, fielded many non-Muslim candidates, including well-known artists, and won 6.01 percent of the votes.

## OVERVIEW

In the past ten years, the political transformation of Indonesia had been remarkable. After 32 years of authoritarian rule under Suharto, Indonesia is now seen as the third largest democracy in the world after India and the US. Since Suharto was forced to resign in May 1998, there have been three general elections, restoring Indonesia to the tradition of a pluralistic political system with a rainbow of secular and religious parties.

This time around the Indonesian electorate was able to choose from 38 political parties. In the province of Aceh, six additional local parties were registered to nominate candidates for the regional assembly. A total of 560 seats were contested for the DPR, the national parliament. The 2009 Indonesian elections are very similar to the elections held in India with all the figures being huge. There were about one million candidates from 44 parties, contesting as many as 50,000 seats in national and regional assemblies.

The political system in Indonesia is based on two very different principles. The general elections are a contest between the political parties while the seats in the national and regional parliaments are allocated according to the principle of proportional representation.

**The PD's victory has transformed the political landscape and elected PD members will need to mature very quickly**

While in the vast majority of democratic countries, the party with the most seats in the legislature takes over the premiership or presidency, in Indonesia the president is chosen by direct election. In 2004, Golkar won the largest number of seats in the DPR but a few months later it was SBY who won the presidential election even though his party, the PD, won only 7 percent of the votes. When forming his cabinet, SBY needed to include several other parties so as to secure a working majority in parliament.

The 2009 parliamentary elections were badly organised. It is widely accepted that this was primarily due to the failings of the KPU, the General Elections Commission. The most serious error was in the compilation of the final voter lists. Despite efforts by well-meaning citizens and concerned members of political parties to assist the KPU, the final voter lists were unsatisfactory. Millions of voters were either listed wrongly or not listed in their neighborhoods. More than 60 million voters were not registered at all and things became even worse when 17 million votes were declared invalid. The large number of people disenfranchised because of administrative failings has led to scores of

complaints being filed with the Constitutional Court.

Procedures for voting were quite complicated. Once inside the polling booth, the voter was required to cast a vote in four separate elections: for the national parliament, for regional assemblies (provincial and municipal) and the DPD (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*, Regional Representatives Council), the new first chamber. Moreover, since the seventies, moves to boycott elections have become quite a tradition. A boycott vote is known as golput (*golongan putih*, or non-voting group). Ballot papers are left blank or tampered with to invalidate them. Any attempt to establish the proportion of golput 'voters' is rendered very difficult indeed because of a number of complexities.

According to the final figures published by the KPU, the 9 April election for the national parliament produced the following results:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>% Votes</u>
1. Demokrat	21,703.137	150	20.85%
2. Golkar	15,037.757	107	14.45%
3. PDI-P	14,600.901	95	14.03%
4. PKS	8,206.955	57	7.88%
5. PAN	6,254.580	43	6.51%
6. PPP	5,533.214	37	5.32%
7. PKB	5,146.122	27	4.94%
8. Gerindra	4,646.406	26	4.46%
9. Hanura	3,922.870	18	3.77%

Source: KPU

None of the other parties reached the 2.5 percent threshold, as a result of which they are disqualified from taking part in future

elections unless they can re-constitute themselves under a new name or enter into a coalition with other parties.

In the regional elections, several of the smaller parties with a strong regional base were able to win seats in regional parliaments.

## ***PARTIES WITH SEATS IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (DPR)***

### ***Partai Demokrat (PD, Democratic Party) 150 seats***

The PD won votes all over the country, becoming the largest party, nearly tripling its vote at the 2004 elections when it won 7.46 percent of the votes. The party lacks a well-oiled party structure and its victory can only be explained by the strength of SBY's popularity. This huge increase since 2004 means that, almost out of the blue, the PD now occupies 150 seats in the national parliament along with several thousand seats in regional assemblies. The PD's victory has transformed the political landscape and elected PD members will need to mature very quickly. Having emerged as a young, successful party, it attracted all kinds of people, including many genuine supporters but also fortune seekers and adventurers. Much depends on the PD being able to prove its worth. One thing is certain: many PD members will take over key positions in the governance of the country. But the fact is that the majority of the 150 PD members of parliament are newcomers who are lacking in experience.

### ***Golkar (Functional Groups) 107 seats***

Golkar was set up in the mid-1960s as an electoral vehicle for army officers and later became the vehicle for Suharto from the early 1970s until his downfall in May 1998. It is undoubtedly a well-oiled political

machine, full of experienced bureaucrats and Golkar stalwarts. It was initially thought that the PD and Golkar would join together in a coalition, as in 2004. But when the PD from the start insisted that Golkar should provide more than one name as candidate for the position of the vice-presidency, Golkar representatives felt humiliated and the coalition fell through.

**For the first time in nearly four decades, Indonesia will have a government without ministers from Golkar**

The SBY-Yusuf Kalla partnership, which has occupied the presidency and vice-presidency since 2004, is no longer feasible. For the first time in nearly four decades, Indonesia will have a government without ministers from Golkar. The party is devoid of any ideology and has been geared towards winning power and ruling the country. In the wake of Suharto's downfall, many predicted that Golkar, for so long the vehicle of the Suharto authoritarian era, would fall apart. However, it consolidated itself remarkably well, got rid of most of the army generals in its ranks and is these days a party with the bureaucracy as its backbone. Despite all its problems, Golkar still enjoys nationwide support, like the PD.

However, Golkar is strongly divided internally, with at least three interest groups. Yusuf Kalla, the present chairman and incumbent vice-president will bear the brunt of complaints about the party's defeat and will find it increasingly difficult to hold the party together and retain the chairmanship. Whereas Golkar has lost its position as the largest party, there are now two new parties run by two retired generals, both former Golkar stalwarts, which succeeded in passing the electoral

threshold. Wiranto and Prabowo won more than eight percent of the votes between them.

**PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan*, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) 95 seats**

This staunchly nationalist party is also continually in crisis. Five other parties using the same symbol, the buffalo head, also ran in the elections, all of them splits or spin-offs from the PDI-P. The party is chaired by Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, Indonesia's first president and the party still bears the old nationalist, popular tradition. But her political career has been dogged by defeats and failures. For more than three years (2001-2004), she held the presidency after her predecessor, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), was impeached. In 2009, her party lost heavily to SBY, winning a mere 14 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections.

**PKS's Muslim agenda was too far-reaching and mainstream Muslims appear to have turned their backs on the party**

At the top of the party, some of the old generation of nationalists has given way to a younger generation, including former pro-democracy activists with good track records. The PDI-P also fielded some well-known TV and movie stars. But this renewal has been undermined by the fact that Megawati and her inner core, including her husband Taufiq Kiemas, have remained entrenched at the top. The PDI-P is now licking its wounds and is very likely to re-emerge under a new leadership,

which would result in the political demise of Megawati.

The PDI-P does not enjoy a nationwide following: its support is based primarily in Java and Bali.

**PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, Prosperous Justice Party) 57 seats**

It came as a big surprise when the PKS took more than 7 percent of the votes in the 2004 elections. A young, modern urban Muslim party with a strong organization, the PKS is arguably the best organized party in Indonesia. As stated above, the PKS has a fundamentalist agenda and its public face has two aspects. One is based on a solid religious agenda and the other is based on a more general agenda of anti-corruption and humanitarian activities. In the 2004 elections, the second face won it a great deal of popularity but in this year's elections, the electorate appears to have turned it down. Its Muslim agenda was too far-reaching and mainstream Muslims appear to have turned their backs on the party.

However, the two faces of PKS have become a reality in the ranks of PKS activists. One group wants to stick to the fundamentalist line while the other wants to focus on attracting more secular voters. Following its disappointing results this year, there will certainly be intense internal discussions within the party. On the global front, recent developments are certain to affect the PKS. Its strong opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has drawn a lot of support from younger voters, in particular among students. Moves by the new administration in Washington to end those conflicts could directly affect the PKS

**PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, National Mandate Party) 43 seats**

PAN was set up by a group of intellectuals brought together by Amien Rais, the popular former chair of *Muhammadiyah*, the modernist Muslim organization. It never managed to achieve its aim of becoming an open Muslim party. PAN became a middle-ranking party and has remained in this position despite many changes. The present chairman is the flamboyant businessman Sutrisno Bachir who opened up the party to an array of TV and movie stars, including comedians, attracting many new voters. PAN has an urban following, many of whom are from the *Muhammadiyah*, members of which have also joined other parties, including secular parties like the PD and Golkar.

**There is a tradition of dishing out money to poor people to entice them to attend mass meetings and Gerindra was the only party that succeeded in doing this**

Two Muslim parties, the PBB and the PBR, which were successful in winning seats in the 2004 parliamentary elections, failed to reach the threshold this time. The two parties also have a *Muhammadiyah* background. PAN's original intention to become the sole political expression of *Muhammadiyah* has never materialised.

**PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United Development Party) 37 seats**

The PPP is also a leftover from the Suharto era when it was forced into a fusion of four Muslim parties in the seventies. It functioned as a junior political partner during the Suharto period and this role

continued into the post-Suharto era. When freedom of assembly was restored and various Muslim parties began to emerge or re-emerge, the PPP attracted many voters because a section of the Muslim elite within the PPP was occupying strategic positions of state. During the Megawati presidency, the PPP chair, Hamzah Haz, was her vice-president but his track record, like hers, was abysmal. The PPP's present leadership continues to be weak and divided and its internal conflicts are widely reported in the media.

**PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, National Awakening Party) 27 seats**

The PKB is in many ways similar to PAN. It was set up by Gus Dur, the country's president from 1999 till 2001, along with other ulamas in the post-Suharto era, hoping to become the political expression of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), the traditionalist Muslim organization, one of the country's oldest organisations. This never happened because of internal conflicts; the present leadership of the party should consider itself lucky to have won 27 seats. When Gus Dur was ousted from the party, he started to campaign vigorously against his former party. The NU is structured around thousands of religious boarding schools and the present PKB leadership has been able to consolidate sections of its grassroots followers. In the recent elections, two other parties, the PKNU and the PNUI drew votes away from the NU but neither reached the threshold. Most PKB's followers are concentrated in East Java.

**Gerindra (*Gerakan Indonesia Raya*, Greater Indonesia Movement Party) 26 seats**

This is a newcomer to the scene and was able to win 26 seats, a remarkable achievement considering the fragile

organisation of the party. But organisational failings were compensated for by substantial funding. Its leader is retired general, Prabowo Subianto, a notorious combat officer with a terrible track record in East Timor and West Papua. Gerindra is the youngest of the nine parties which managed to win seats in parliament. Its success is due primarily to its ability to mobilise thousands of people to fill stadiums. There is a long tradition in Indonesia of dishing out money and even food parcels to poor people to entice them to attend mass meetings and Gerindra was the only party that succeeded in doing this. Entire neighbourhoods in a number of big cities were mobilised by Gerindra; according to media reports, Prabowo forked out more than Rp 1 trillion to fund his campaign. His elder brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, a very wealthy businessman, was the only other contributor to Prabowo's campaign.

The Gerindra campaign was the most colourful of them all. Unlike other retired generals, Prabowo campaigned hard to woo peasants and workers. He was also able to attract some former pro-democracy activists and halfway through the campaign, he replaced his nationalist agenda with a socialist one. The socialist rhetoric certainly had some influence on voters but because so many Gerindra candidates were men with highly suspect reputations, including former intelligence officers, they failed in the end to win round many voters.

#### **Hanura (*Hati Nurani Rakyat*, People's Conscience Party) 18 seats**

The four-star general, Wiranto has made no secret of his political ambitions for a number of years. In 2004, he contested the presidency but lost heavily to SBY who was of a lower rank than Wiranto during their days in the army. His party was set up

not long after SBY became president and it looks as though Wiranto's ambitions were part of a vendetta against his former junior in the army. At one point, Wiranto was Suharto's adjutant, which helped to secure his military career for years. He later became chief-of-staff and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

**Yusuf Kalla has now withdrawn from his partnership with SBY, which can only be described as an act of political suicide**

Hanura has a reasonably effective organization and Wiranto has invested a lot of money in the party. But at some point, the flow of money dried up and Hanura's seemingly successful campaign started to stagnate. Money politics has always been an important factor in Indonesian politics but Wiranto has been unable to find money from other sources. His campaign was much less colourful than Prabowo's and its nationalist rhetoric failed to attract many new voters.

#### ***POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE JULY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS***

Following the parliamentary elections, it looks as though all the cards have already been stacked. SBY initially had many options to choose from in selecting a running-mate for the vice-presidency. He finally chose a non-party man, Boediono, the present governor of the country's central bank, Bank Indonesia. SBY's position was strong enough for him to opt for somebody outside any of the parties. Alliances with other parties are bound to happen. Already 23 political parties including the PKS, PAN, the PPP, the PKB

and 18 other parties, along with the PD, have declared support for his nomination as president.

Yusuf Kalla who has been vice-president since 2004, has now withdrawn from his partnership with SBY, which can only be described as an act of political suicide. He has chosen Wiranto as his running-mate, with the official support of Golkar and Hanura. It is more than likely that large sections of Golkar will find ways to enter into a coalition with the SBY grand coalition. This is very likely to result in Kalla being ditched as the chairman of Golkar.

The Megawati-Prabowo duo has the support of nine parties, none of which reached the threshold in the parliamentary elections.

One very disturbing fact overshadowing the presidential contest is that all three duos include a former general - SBY with Boediono, Wiranto with Yusuf Kalla and Prabowo with Megawati. Indonesia is saddled with the fact that there still are many retired generals with ambitions to win a position at the very highest level of governance.

Current opinion polls suggest that the SBY-Boediono duo will score a landslide victory on 8 July without the need for a second round.