



Analysis of the demonstration of the Indonesian house of representatives' allowances in 2025

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ABSTRACT

Background: This article analyzes the dynamics of constitutional democracy in Indonesia in the context of a multiparty presidential system and the relationship between the state, political elites, and the people. The main focus of the study is on the response of the government and the House of Representatives to the demonstrations against the 2025 House of Representatives allowance as an expression of people's sovereignty outside the formal electoral mechanism. **Methods:** This study shows that the practice of democracy in Indonesia still faces serious challenges in the form of a gap between policy makers and the socio-economic conditions of the people. **Findings:** The findings of this study confirm that political participation is not only realized through elections, but also through collective action by the community in demanding accountability and social justice. **Conclusion:** The 2025 demonstrations show that political legitimacy is highly dependent on the state's sensitivity to public aspirations. In addition, the role of digital space as a new arena for political discourse contestation also influences the escalation of conflict and the formation of public opinion. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** Therefore, sustainable democracy requires the state's ability to listen to, respond to, and substantively integrate the voices of the people in the policy-making process.

KEYWORDS: constitutional democracy; presidential system; people's sovereignty; political demonstrations; state accountability.

1. Introduction

Politics in Indonesia has always been an important part of the country's history. As a country with a diverse population and a large territory, political dynamics are often marked by conflicts of interest, compromises between elites, and various forms of social participation. From a constitutional point of view, Indonesia is defined as a united country that adopts a democratic system, as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The country's constitution also affirms the supremacy of democracy or people's authority, as stipulated in Section 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "*kedaulatan berada di tangan rakyat dan dilaksanakan sesuai dengan Undang-Undang Dasar* / Sovereignty rests in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution." This constitutional requirement interprets democracy as a means to achieve the country's goals. Therefore, the democracy practiced in Indonesia is constitutional democracy based on the values of *Pancasila*, in which the people have the

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highest sovereignty through general elections to fill strategic political positions, such as the President, Governors, Mayors, and Regional Heads.

The meaning of the application of people's authority in accordance with the Constitution is based on the requirement that the government must be based on the Constitution. This principle is explicitly stated in Section 1 Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "*kedaulatan berada di tangan rakyat dan dilaksanakan sesuai dengan Undang-Undang Dasar*/Sovereignty rests in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution"; while Section 1 Paragraph (3) further emphasizes that "*Indonesia adalah negara hukum*/Indonesia is a state based on the rule of law". For a government to be considered constitutional, it must meet three main requirements. First, the formulation and implementation of policies must be based on the interests of the people as a whole. Second, all government actions must be based on laws that are enacted in accordance with the law and must not be arbitrary. Third, government actions must not be carried out by force or coercion. The main basis for the functioning of the government is the will of the people, as stated in the constitution.

In fact, democratic practices in Indonesia do not always run smoothly. For example, during the New Order period, leaders were elected primarily through a representative system in the legislature, which resulted in various political agreements that were often considered far from social justice. As Abraham Lincoln emphasized, the essence of democracy is government of the people, for the people, and by the people. In accordance with this principle, governments elected through general and local elections in Indonesia should be a faithful reflection of the sovereignty of the people.

According to Munafrizal (2012), a democratic political system is considered capable of supporting the existence of free, independent, and healthy political parties. In other words, the political system as a whole must first be democratic before political parties can function democratically. Without this, it will be difficult for political parties to develop freely, independently, or competitively. This view is in line with the concept of polyarchy put forward by Robert A. Dahl in his book *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971), in which he emphasizes that democracy is characterized by open political competition and broad public participation. Similarly, Samuel P. Huntington in his work *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) emphasizes the importance of political institutions and political parties as key indicators in the democratization process.

In the Indonesian context, this dynamic is clearly evident in the old and new administrations. The authoritarian political system gave a very dominant role to the political elite. As explained by Haryanto (2009:145), the transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic system had a major impact on the political structure. During the New Order era, the political structure was seen more as a restriction on some local political elites, whereas after democratic reform, the structure gave them more opportunities to strengthen their power. However, some political elites who considered the old structure to be beneficial to them viewed this change as a restriction. Therefore, the ability of local elites to adapt to the new system became the key to maintaining their power. This adaptation is often seen in creative strategies that Giddens refers to as "entroutinization," which is an effort to resist the existing structure and at the same time change it.

The system of government is essentially designed to maintain the stability of the state. However, in practice, it is not uncommon for separatist movements to emerge as a form of resistance against a system of government that is considered unfair or detrimental to certain segments of society. Systems of government generally have strong foundations and tend to be difficult to change. When such systems are static and absolute, pressure from minority groups within society can arise in the form of demands for change.

One form of pressure is separatism. According to Firmansyah (2011), separatism is a tendency for a group within a sovereign state to seek to secede and form an independent region or state. Separatist movements can take various forms, ranging from political and economic struggles to armed violence. Its emergence is generally triggered by dissatisfaction with government policies, development inequalities, discrimination, and a perceived lack of justice among certain groups.

In the Indonesian context, separatist movements have emerged since the era of independence, such as in Aceh, Papua, and East Timor. Concrete examples of separatism in Indonesia are the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka/Free Aceh Movement (GAM)* and the *Gerakan Papua Merdeka/Free Papua Movement (OPM)*. *GAM* was motivated by the Acehnese people's disappointment with the central government, particularly regarding the distribution of natural resources and disharmonious relations, which led to a decline in nationalism. Meanwhile, the separatist conflict in Papua was triggered by *OPM* resistance, exacerbated by issues of discrimination and racism, including racist insults against Papuan students in Surabaya in 2019, which triggered an escalation of conflict in various regions.

Separatist conflicts have the potential to be destructive and threaten the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia if not managed seriously. Therefore, the government must play an active role in comprehensive conflict management, one of which is through the implementation of asymmetric decentralization as an effort to resolve conflicts in regions with unique social, cultural, and political characteristics.

According to Amanwinata (2001), the system of government can be understood as the relationship between executive power and legislative power. In this case, the executive branch is interpreted narrowly, referring to the head of the executive branch or the supreme head of the executive department. In relation to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia/*Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia (UUD NRI 1945)*, the head of the executive branch referred to is the President as the head of government. This is confirmed in Section 4 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution, which states that "*Presiden Republik Indonesia memegang kekuasaan pemerintahan menurut Undang-Undang Dasar/The President of the Republic of Indonesia holds executive power in accordance with the Constitution.*"

In general, the system of government serves to maintain social stability, regulate the behavior of both the majority and minority, and strengthen the foundations of the state through political, defense, economic, and security aspects. Thus, the system of government is expected to be sustainable and democratic, with the people playing a role in the development of the country. However, to date, only a few countries have been able to fully implement this system.

In most cases, countries that embrace democracy implement one of two main models, namely the parliamentary system or the presidential system, although in practice there are often (quasi) variations that are adapted to the situation and conditions of each country, such as quasi-parliamentary or quasi-presidential. The parliamentary system is characterized by a close relationship between the executive and legislative branches, in which ministers are accountable to parliament. Consequently, every cabinet formed must obtain a majority vote in parliament in order to govern.

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia adheres to a presidential system of government. This is stated in Section 1 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "*Negara Indonesia ialah Negara Kesatuan yang berbentuk Republik/Indonesia is a unitary state in the form of a republic.*" In this system, the President, as the head of the executive branch, appoints colleagues to lead their respective departments, where they are solely accountable to the President.

Section 4 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution affirms that executive authority rests with the President. This is reinforced in Section 17 of the 1945 Constitution, which states that the President, as head of government, has the right to appoint and dismiss ministers. These two sections show that the administration of government in Indonesia is led directly by the President as head of government, who is assisted in his duties by state ministers.

State administrators play an important role in realizing the national objectives as mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. These objectives include protecting the entire Indonesian nation and all of Indonesia's bloodshed, promoting general welfare, educating the nation, and playing a role in creating world order based on independence, eternal peace, and social justice. Since the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has been determined to carry out its governmental functions to realize this ideal. Section 4 of the 1945 Constitution stipulates

that the President holds governmental power in accordance with the Constitution. In exercising this power, the President is assisted by ministers who are appointed and dismissed by him.

During President JK's administration, the management of political party coalitions has demonstrated a flexible and pragmatic approach to Indonesia's multiparty presidential system. Since the 2014 elections, JK has formed the Great Indonesia Coalition (KIH) to gain support in parliament in order to maintain government stability and policy continuity. However, political dynamics have led to the emergence of opposition through the Red and White Coalition. To overcome this situation, JK expanded his political support by involving parties outside the initial coalition, including those that had previously been in opposition. This approach confirms that coalitions in the JK era are based more on the need for government stability than on ideological similarities. Coalition consolidation was also carried out through the distribution of positions in the cabinet and state institutions, although this step was often criticized for being inefficient.

Meanwhile, during President PS's era, the formation of coalitions was carried out in a more centralized and planned manner after the 2024 elections. Through the *Koalisi Indonesia Maju Plus/Indonesia Forward Coalition Plus (KIM Plus)*, P managed to control the majority of seats in the House of Representatives, thereby strengthening the government's position in implementing its policy agenda. To maintain the solidarity of the coalition, P formed the Red and White Cabinet with a large number of members. This policy was considered effective in maintaining political stability, but it also drew criticism regarding the effectiveness of the bureaucracy, budget management, and the potential weakness of legislative oversight. The idea of forming a permanent coalition until the 2029 elections further demonstrated efforts to consolidate power in the long term.

These differences in domestic political approaches are also reflected in Indonesia's foreign policy. During the JK era, foreign policy tended to be pragmatic and focused on national development interests, particularly in the areas of economy, investment, and infrastructure. Diplomacy was used as a tool to support economic growth and maintain stability in order to keep the investment climate conducive. In contrast, during P's era, foreign policy has taken a more assertive and strategic direction, with an emphasis on strengthening defense, national independence, and enhancing Indonesia's position in the global arena. Thus, while JK utilizes foreign policy as a means to support development, P views it as a strategic instrument for strengthening Indonesia's sovereignty and role at the international level.

State ministries are formed to carry out government affairs that are the overall responsibility of the President. These affairs include: (1) government affairs whose nomenclature is explicitly mentioned in the 1945 Constitution, (2) government affairs whose scope is listed in the 1945 Constitution, and (3) government affairs related to the refinement, coordination, and synchronization of government programs. State ministries are established to carry out government affairs that are the overall responsibility of the President, as specified in the 1945 Constitution, affairs whose scope is outlined in the 1945 Constitution, and affairs related to the refinement, coordination, and synchronization of government programs. Within this framework, ministries serve as the President's primary instruments for translating constitutional authority into public policy and government implementation.

In practice, during the administration of President PS, the implementation of these governmental affairs has shown an emphasis on strategic sectors of the state. Defense and security affairs have received primary attention as part of strengthening national sovereignty and stability. In addition, the government has also focused on food and energy security affairs to ensure sustainable development and community welfare. Meanwhile, matters of governance that are coordinated and program synchronization in nature are carried out through institutional consolidation and expansion of the role of ministries in the cabinet. This approach aims to strengthen political support and maintain government stability, although on the other hand it poses challenges related to bureaucratic effectiveness and inter-ministerial coordination.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical methods to understand the dynamics of constitutional democracy and the relationship between the state, political elites, and society in the Indonesian context. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to analyze political phenomena in depth, particularly those related to the practice of power, legitimacy, and public participation outside of formal electoral mechanisms.

Research data was obtained through library research by examining legislation, official state documents, academic literature, and scientific publications relevant to democracy, the multiparty presidential system, and protest movements. In addition, secondary data in the form of national media reports and policy analyses were used to reconstruct the events of the 2025 House of Representatives/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR)* allowance demonstrations and the state's response to public pressure.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques, linking empirical findings to the theoretical framework of democracy, people's sovereignty, and political stability. This process aimed to identify patterns of relationship between state policy, public reaction, and their implications for the quality of democracy and the legitimacy of government in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussion

Indonesia is always referred to as a democratic country. Therefore, to demonstrate the tangible form of public political participation, there are actions known as "demonstrations," which refer to expressing opinions, protests, or demands regarding government policies or state institutions. Through these actions, the public can openly channel their aspirations as a form of participation in public policies that are considered biased or not in the interests of the people.

In Indonesian law, the right to demonstrate is protected by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly Article 28E paragraph (3), which states that "*Setiap orang berhak atas kebebasan berserikat, berkumpul, dan mengeluarkan pendapat/Everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly, and expression.*" This guarantee is further reinforced in Law No. 9 at 1998 on Freedom of Expression in Public, which states that demonstrations are carried out as a means of expressing opinions in public, conducted freely and responsibly in accordance with the law. Section 6 of the Law stipulates that in carrying out demonstrations, citizens must respect the rights of others, uphold moral values, and obey applicable laws. This means that demonstrations are not only a form of political rights, but also a form of social responsibility to convey the aspirations of others in a peaceful and responsible manner.

Demonstrations reflect the increasing political awareness in society regarding government policies. In certain situations, these actions become a form of public correction of policies that are considered to deviate from the principles of social justice. This is in line with Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which states that "*kedaulatan berada di tangan rakyat dan dilaksanakan menurut Undang-Undang Dasar/Sovereignty rests in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution.*" Therefore, the people have the fundamental right to voice their dissatisfaction with state institutions when the policies taken do not reflect the public interest.

Similarly, Law No. 9 of 1998 states that demonstrations must be conducted peacefully, orderly, and responsibly. Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 9 of 2009 contains the Procedures for Service, Security, and Handling of Cases of Public Expression of Opinion and also emphasizes that state officials are obliged to ensure public security and order during demonstrations. Freedom of expression in Indonesia is not only protected by Section 28E paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, but is also reinforced by Section 28F of the 1945 Constitution, which gives every Indonesian citizen the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information using all available means. This

article emphasizes that the state not only recognizes freedom of expression, but also has an obligation to guarantee public space for expression as part of democratic life.

Freedom of expression must be united within the framework of legal and social responsibility, as stipulated in Section 28J of the 1945 Constitution. This section emphasizes that every Indonesian citizen must uphold human rights and comply with the provisions of the law in order to maintain public order, morality, and national interests when exercising their rights and freedoms. When demonstrations are carried out peacefully, morally, and in accordance with the law, they reflect a mature democracy and do not pose a threat to the state order. In this case, demonstrations serve as a reminder that state power is not autonomous, but is always bound by the will of the Indonesian people as the holders of supreme sovereignty. This is in line with Section 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which affirms that sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution.

Demonstrations can be interpreted as a legitimate form of expression of public oversight of state policies that are deemed to deviate from social justice. Demonstrations serve as a tangible means of maintaining the constitutional balance between the government and the citizens of Indonesia. Indonesia's political system is the result of a long historical journey, starting from the colonial period, the Old Order era, the New Order era, to the Reformation era. After the 1998 Reformation, Indonesia's political system underwent fundamental changes, especially with the introduction of the Trias Politica principle as the main framework for state administration. This principle emphasizes the importance of dividing power into three branches, namely the legislative, executive, and judicial, each of which has different but interrelated functions. The aim is to prevent the concentration of power in one party, while ensuring a mechanism of mutual oversight or checks and balances.

Within the bureaucratic framework, the legislature plays an important role as the lawmaker, budget planner, and supervisor of the government. The legislative body consists of the *DPR*, Regional Representative Council/*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD)*, and People's Consultative Assembly/*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR)* at the central level, as well as the Regional House of Representatives/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD)* at the regional level. The *DPR* is tasked with drafting policies in the form of laws and overseeing the performance of the government through its rights of interpellation, inquiry, and expression of opinion. The *DPD* represents the regions so that central government policies continue to take local interests into account. Meanwhile, the *MPR* has greater authority in the areas of constitution and state administration, including the inauguration of the President and Vice President. At the regional level, the *DPRD* also carries out legislative functions together with regional heads, for example through the formulation of *Peraturan Daerah/Local Regulation (Perda)*. The legislative bureaucracy itself involves a secretariat and expert staff who support the work of legislators, so that it not only functions administratively but also channels the aspirations of the people into the formal realm of the state.

The executive branch is the main driving force of government bureaucracy. The president, as head of state and head of government, is assisted by the vice president and ministers in the cabinet. In addition to ministries, there are also non-ministerial institutions such as *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/National Disaster Management Agency (BAPPENAS)* that strengthen the running of the government. At the regional level, the executive branch is led by governors, regents, or mayors together with local bureaucratic apparatus. The executive function is very broad, ranging from implementing laws that have been passed by the legislature, formulating national strategic policies, to ensuring that public services run smoothly. However, the executive often faces classic bureaucratic problems such as overlapping regulations, corrupt practices, and administrative inefficiency. Therefore, the bureaucratic reform agenda is aimed at creating a transparent, professional, and accountable government so that services to the public can be truly optimal.

Meanwhile, the judiciary serves as the pillar of law enforcement and guardian of the constitution. This institution ensures that all rules and policies are in accordance with the 1945 Constitution. The Supreme Court/*Mahkamah Agung (MA)* is the highest institution in the judicial system, overseeing the general courts, religious courts, military courts, and administrative courts. The Constitutional Court/*Mahkamah Konstitusi (MK)* has a strategic role, namely reviewing laws against the constitution, resolving disputes between state institutions, and deciding on election result disputes. The Judicial Commission (*Komisi Yudisial*) acts as a supporting institution to maintain the integrity of judges. With this structure, the judicial bureaucracy not only resolves legal cases but also functions as a watchdog to ensure that the legislative and executive branches do not exceed their authority. In its development, the idea of a fourth branch of power has also emerged, occupied by the Constitutional Court and other independent institutions, to strengthen the system of checks and balances.

In addition to these three main branches, post-reform Indonesia has also given birth to a number of independent institutions that exist outside the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. These institutions are designed to close the gaps in power and strengthen oversight. The *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi/Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK)* was established to eradicate corruption that is deeply rooted in the bureaucracy. The *Komisi Pemilihan Umum/General Elections Commission (KPU)* is tasked with organizing elections that are direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair. The *Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan/Audit Board of Indonesia (BPK)* oversees the use of the state budget, while the *Otoritas Jasa Keuangan/Financial Services Authority (OJK)* plays a role in maintaining the stability of the financial system. These institutions complement the structure of the modern state bureaucracy, while also strengthening the quality of democracy.

Despite facing various challenges such as corruption, political elite domination, and weak coordination between institutions, this structure remains an important foundation for the sustainability of democracy. Indonesia's political system not only emphasizes public participation through elections and freedom of expression, but also requires the bureaucracy to work professionally, transparently, and accountably, so that the principle of people's sovereignty can truly be realized in the practice of state life.

The *DPR* is a high state institution that holds legislative power in Indonesia. The *DPR* functions as a representation of the people, whose members are elected through direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair legislative elections. Politically, the *DPR* has a very strategic position because it occupies a central role in Indonesia's democratic system. The *DPR* is a formal forum where the aspirations of the people are collected, processed, and then realized in the form of laws that regulate the life of the nation and state. Thus, the *DPR* does not merely carry out administrative functions, but is also the main instrument of people's sovereignty in the political sphere.

As a legislative body, the *DPR* has three main functions, known as the legislative function, the budgetary function, and the supervisory function. The legislative function makes the *DPR* a co-legislator with the President. The laws produced by the *DPR* are not merely legal texts, but the result of political compromise between factions, political parties, and the government. This shows that the legislative process is not merely a legal process, but also fraught with political dynamics that bring together various interests. The budgetary function gives the *DPR* the authority to discuss, determine, and oversee the use of the state budget. In this case, the *DPR* plays a role in ensuring that fiscal policies and the use of state finances truly serve the interests of the people. Meanwhile, the supervisory function gives the *DPR* the right to monitor, criticize, and even reject executive policies that are considered to deviate from the constitution or are not in line with the aspirations of the people.

The position of the *DPR* as a legislative body cannot be separated from its role in maintaining the balance of power. The *DPR* acts as a counterweight to the executive branch, ensuring that the President and the government do not exercise power arbitrarily. Through its rights of interpellation, inquiry, and opinion, the *DPR* can hold the executive branch accountable and, in certain circumstances, even initiate the impeachment of the President. This is what gives the *DPR* significant political weight in upholding the principle of checks

and balances. However, in practice, the role of the *DPR* is often influenced by internal political dynamics, mainly because the majority of its members come from political parties. Coalitions, opposition, and the tug-of-war between party interests often make the *DPR* appear to lack independence in overseeing the executive branch.

Politically, the *DPR* also serves as an arena for contesting diverse ideas, concepts, and interests of the people. It consists of various factions representing political parties participating in elections. The existence of factions makes the *DPR* a miniature of Indonesian politics, where legislative decisions are the result of a long political negotiation process. This makes the *DPR* not only a law-making institution, but also a political stage that reflects the dynamics of democracy. Therefore, every policy or law produced is often the product of political compromise between the government, the *DPR*, and the interests of the people they represent.

Despite its strong position, the *DPR* is not immune to criticism. Many people believe that the *DPR* has not fully carried out its legislative functions in an ideal manner. The most common criticisms are the low quality of legislation, transactional political practices, and the weak oversight function that should be at the forefront of controlling the executive. On the other hand, the *DPR* is often accused of being too close to the government, thereby rendering the check and balances function less effective. This situation shows that politically, the *DPR* still has a lot of work to do to build its image as an institution that truly represents the people, not just fighting for the interests of party elites.

The *DPR* is the main pillar of the legislative branch in Indonesia's political system. The *DPR* is not only a lawmaker, but also a regulator of national political direction, an overseer of the government, and an arena for the representation of the people in democracy. Its strategic position makes the *DPR* one of the barometers of the quality of democracy in Indonesia. When the *DPR* is able to perform its functions well, democracy will be healthier. Conversely, when the *DPR* fails to represent the people, political legitimacy and the quality of democracy will be questioned.

According to the Constitution, Indonesia is declared a democratic country, which means that all decisions made originate from the people, are for the people, and are directed at the people. This is stated in Section 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which reads, "*Kedaulatan berada di tangan rakyat dan dilaksanakan menurut UUD/Sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution.*" This article represents Article 37 paragraphs (1) and (2), which stipulate that general elections are held every five years for every individual who intends to run for the House of Representatives, Regional Representative Council, Regional Representative Council, and President and Vice President.

Although the people are declared to be the highest authority in the country, this is only evident during the general elections held every five years during a specific period. However, outside of this, the voice of the people is often not heard by the House of Representatives, and sometimes the wishes of the people are only listened to but not implemented. There have also been instances where the people's wishes have been twisted so that the House of Representatives can gain more benefits rather than prioritizing the welfare of the people. The people's voices, which are not conveyed and even seem to be rejected, create a greater distance between the people and the House of Representatives. As a result, the people choose to demonstrate, either peacefully or violently, so that the House of Representatives has no choice but to listen to the people in accordance with their position.

In Indonesia's constitutional system, members of the *DPR* are state officials who receive financial and administrative rights as compensation for their position and responsibilities as representatives of the people. These rights include not only a basic salary, but also various allowances and performance support facilities, such as position allowances, housing allowances, transportation allowances, and various other forms of compensation that are regulated by law.

According to media reports on the structure of the *DPR*'s financial rights in 2025, the total basic salary and allowances of *DPR* members can reach IDR 65.6 million per month after tax deductions, including position allowances, communication costs, legislative

honoraria, and honorary allowances (Asia-Pacific Solidarity). This does not include rice allowances, spouse allowances, and child allowances, which are part of the financial rights of state officials. All of this is far from the average nominal value of the Regional Minimum Wage/*Upah Minimum Regional (UMR)* in Indonesia.

One of the most controversial allowances in the financial rights structure of members of the DPR is the housing allowance of Rp 50 million per month. This fact is not due to the nominal amount, but to the social gap that exists when this allowance is compared to the economic conditions of the majority of Indonesians. This housing allowance is almost ten times the *Upah Minimum Provinsi/Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP)* and even far exceeds the minimum wage in most regions of Indonesia. This comparison shows the vast gap between the standard of living of the political elite and the economic reality of the people they represent as the 'People's Representative Council', thereby triggering a sense of distributive injustice among the general public.

From a socio-political perspective, the DPR's housing allowance is no longer seen as merely a work facility, but as a symbol of structural inequality and the upper class's lack of sensitivity to the real conditions of society. When these allowances were maintained amid economic pressures, rising prices of basic necessities, and increasing responsibilities and obligations of the lower-middle class, this policy was seen as not reflecting the priorities of the state budget and the actual needs of the people. Public criticism of the DPR's housing allowance began to increase, ranging from administrative and moral issues to political representation.

A wave of criticism among the public from the mass media, social media, and demonstrations finally prompted all factions in the House of Representatives to agree to abolish the housing allowance by the end of August 2025. This decision was made in response to social pressure and public aspirations voiced through demonstrations, known as part of the "*17 + 8 Tuntutan Rakyat* (The demand of Indonesia people)." The fact that the policy was only abolished after mass mobilization shows that public pressure remains the primary means of holding politicians accountable.

The issue of DPR allowances was one of the main triggers for large demonstrations in various Indonesian cities in 2025, particularly among school and university students, workers, and civil society groups. These groups considered that the size of the allowances and facilities received by members of the legislature were not merely administrative policies, but symbols of socio-economic inequality institutionalized by the state. This inequality is even more pronounced when compared to the conditions faced by the people, who are still struggling with rising prices of basic necessities, job insecurity, and stagnant welfare. The DPR allowance policy is seen as a form of political insensitivity of the upper class to the actual social realities faced by the people, while also demonstrating the distance between 'people's representatives' and their duties.

Criticism of DPR allowances comes not only from public demonstrations, but also from parliamentary watchdog organizations such as the *Forum Masyarakat Peduli Parlemen Indonesia/Indonesian Forum for Parliamentary Concerned Citizens (FORMAPPI)*, which believes that the distribution of large allowances gives the impression that DPR members do not fully reflect the aspirations of the people. This dissatisfaction arises when the response to the balance between the services provided by legislators and the compensation they receive becomes vastly disproportionate, especially amid an economic situation that puts pressure on many people.

In the eyes of some citizens, demonstrations are seen as anarchic activities that incite others to distrust the government. This perception is caused by demonstrations that always result in chaos, such as damaging the gates of the House of Representatives or scribbling on walls to express aspirations. This stigma is further reinforced by the actions of demonstrators who loot the homes of officials, and there are even allegations that individuals have burned police stations and Transjakarta bus stops, increasing suspicion and concern. These actions drew comments from other street activists who said that acts of arson, such as using Molotov cocktails, were not the work of "their side," because Transjakarta bus stops are public facilities that benefit activists, who are the majority of

public transportation users. This has made it difficult for demonstrators who aim to voice their demands to distinguish between “friends” and “enemies” in the field.

The spark that ignited the protests was when President PS proposed increasing the salaries of members of *DPR* in order to reduce corruption. The allowance was worth Rp3,000,000 per day. This policy attracted a lot of attention from netizens on social media, knowing that several members of the *DPR* who would receive the allowance had a history of corruption cases that had not yet been resolved. The anger intensified when BBC News Indonesia revealed the total salaries of the *DPR* before the special allowance was granted by President Subianto. As a result, citizens took to the streets again to voice their opposition, which had not been heard on social media.

DPR Salary Breakdown
Every seat costs IDR 100 million

Salary and Attached Allowances:	IDR/month
Basic Salary	4,200,000
Spouse Allowance	420,000
Child Allowance	168,000
Meeting Allowance	2,000,000
Position Allowance	9,700,000
Rice Allowance (for 4 people)	120,360
PPh 21 Allowance	2,699,813
Others Allowances:	
Honorary Allowance	5,580,000
Communication Allowance	15,540,000
Oversight and Budget Function Enhancement Allowance	3,750,000
Other Facilities:	
Electricity and Telephone Subscription Assistance	7,700,000
Member Assistant	2,250,000
Car Loan Facility IDR 70 million / person per period	
Housing Allowance IDR 50 million / month	50,000,000
TOTAL	104,128,173
When multiplied by 580 members	60,394,340,340

Fig. 1. DPR salary breakdown (Instagram account @algorsearch)

At that time, the police dispersed the demonstration using *Brimob* (Mobile Brigade Corps/*Brigade Mobil*), dispersing the crowd as quickly as possible to the sidewalk so they would not be hit. Unfortunately, one of the residents was hit by *Brimob* and died while being rushed to the hospital. The resident was a *Gojek* delivery driver, AK, who was delivering food and was accidentally caught up in the chaos. The news sparked sympathy and anger, compounded by live video footage of the incident that fueled speculation that the *Brimob* driver deliberately hit the victim, resulting in comments that “the police no longer work to protect the public.”

A press conference of the Indonesian House of Representatives/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia (DPR RI)* discussing the wave of demonstrations in August-September 2025 was held on Friday, September 5, 2025, at the Senayan Parliament Complex in Jakarta. The event was led by Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, SDA, along with several other leaders. This press conference was a follow-up to a consultation meeting between the leadership of the House of Representatives and all factions held the day before, on Thursday, September 4, 2025. During the meeting, the *DPR* conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the mass demands compiled in the document “17+8 *Tuntutan Rakyat* (The demand of Indonesia people).” The meeting discussed measures for efficiency, transparency, and strengthening the legislative function, which then became the basis for six points of decision announced to the public.

In its statement, the *DPR* emphasized six points of the decision. First, the termination of housing allowances for all *DPR* members, effective August 31, 2025. This decision was one of the most highlighted points because the allowances were previously considered inappropriate amid the difficult economic conditions faced by the people. Second, the *DPR* imposed a moratorium on overseas business trips for its members, except when attending official state invitations. Third, the *DPR* cut various other facilities and allowances such as electricity costs, telephone services, intensive communication allowances, and transportation facilities. These cuts were announced as a form of efficiency and a response to public criticism of the luxurious lifestyle of the people's representatives.

The fourth decision is that members of the House of Representatives who have been suspended by their political parties are no longer entitled to financial benefits. This is reinforced by the fifth decision, which affirms that the *Mahkamah Kehormatan Dewan/* House of Representatives Ethics Council (*MKD*) must coordinate with party courts to ensure that this rule is consistently enforced against problematic members. Meanwhile, the sixth decision contains the *DPR's* promise to increase transparency and public participation in the drafting of future legislation and policies, including opening up wider communication channels so that the public can participate in monitoring the *DPR's* oversight function.

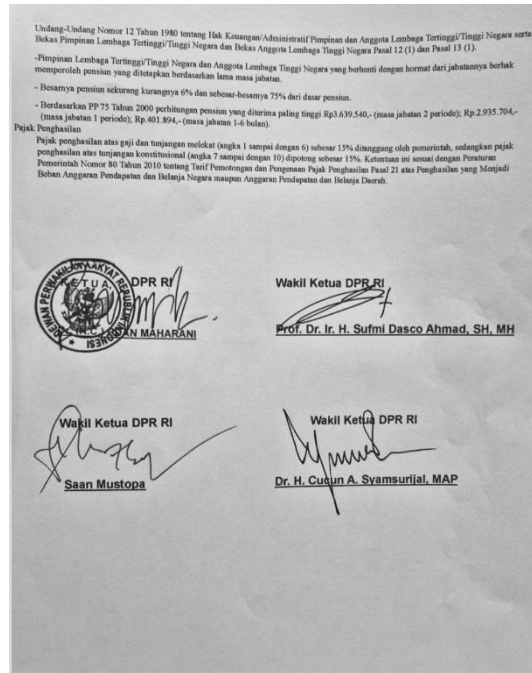
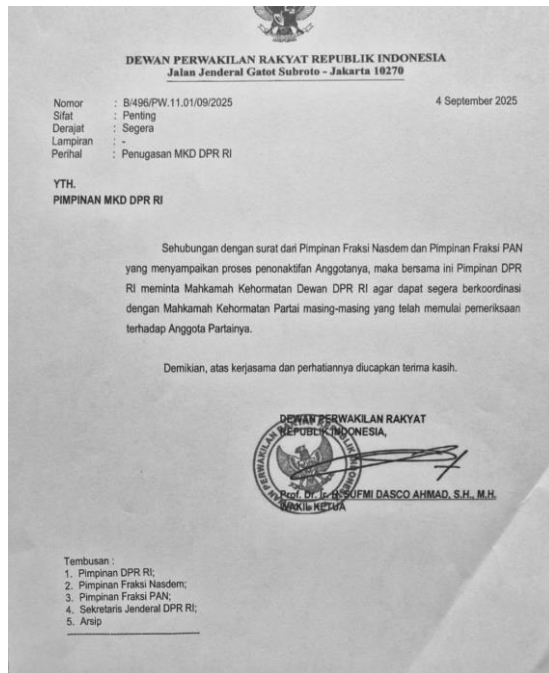
In addition to these six key points, the press conference also included various additional emphases. The *DPR* repeatedly asserted that the cuts to allowances and facilities were not merely a spontaneous reaction to public pressure, but rather a form of "moral commitment" by the people's representatives to adjust to national economic conditions. This statement was made to build an image that the *DPR* was aware that it was in the public spotlight and had to show solidarity.

Regarding the moratorium on overseas business trips, the *DPR* leadership emphasized that this policy was not only related to budget efficiency, but also symbolized a restriction on elitist lifestyles. During the moratorium period, every request for a business trip would be strictly evaluated to prevent abuse. Meanwhile, regarding coordination between the *MKD* and the party court, the *DPR* highlighted the importance of maintaining political integrity. In a press conference, this was referred to as an effort to close loopholes for members who have ethical problems but still enjoy financial rights, so that the *DPR* wants to show that they are no longer tolerant of ethical violations that have often escaped sanctions.

The promise of transparency also received considerable attention during the press conference. The leadership of the House of Representatives not only spoke about public participation in legislation, but also mentioned plans to use digital channels to disclose data related to official travel, budget use, and the legislative agenda so that the public could monitor these matters directly. This was in response to criticism that the House of Representatives had not been transparent enough in carrying out its institutional functions.

However, even though the content of the press conference seemed comprehensive, the public still felt that there were major issues that were deliberately not touched upon. For example, the *DPR* did not take a firm stance on the formation of an independent team to investigate allegations of violence by the authorities during the August-September 2025 demonstrations, nor did it provide clarity on accountability for the death of AK, who has become a symbol of resistance. Both of these issues were actually included in the mass demands, but the *DPR* chose to respond to internal institutional issues and budget efficiency, which were considered safer politically.

The Indonesian House of Representatives press conference on September 5, 2025, not only contained six points of decision, but was also laden with narratives of moral legitimacy, promises of transparency, and rhetoric of solidarity. However, when compared to the 22 points in the "17+8 *Tuntutan Rakyat* (The demand of Indonesia people)" document, this press conference only addressed a small portion related to financial issues, facilities, and transparency. Other substantial demands, particularly regarding the enforcement of human rights, accountability of officials, protection of civil liberties, and structural reforms within the *DPR* and the government, have not been clearly addressed.



Hak Keuangan Anggota DPR RI

No.	Komponen	Satuan	Besaran (Rp)	Dasar Hukum per Mei 2025
Gaji Pokok dan Tunjangan Jabatan (melekat)				
1.	Gaji Pokok	ob	4.200.000	Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 75 Tahun 2000
2.	Tunjangan Suami/istri Pejabat Negara	ob	420.000	Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 51 Tahun 1992
3.	Tunjangan Anak Pejabat Negara ¹	ob	168.000	Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 51 Tahun 1992
4.	Tunjangan Jabatan	ob	9.700.000	Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 59 Tahun 2003
5.	Tunjangan Beras Pejabat Negara	ob	289.800	Keputusan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 9 Tahun 1982
6.	Uang Sidiang/Paket	ob	2.000.000	Surat Keputusan Presiden Nomor 60 Tahun 2003
Total Gaji dan Tunjangan (Melekat)			16.777.800	
Tunjangan Konstitusional				
7.	Biaya Pengkajian Komunikasi Internal dengan Masyarakat	ob	20.033.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
8.	Tunjangan Kehormatan Anggota DPR RI	ob	7.187.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
9.	Pengingatan Fungsi Pengawasan dan Anggaran sebagai pelaksanaan Konstitusional Dewan	ob	4.830.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
honorarium kegiatan peringatan fungsi dewan				
a. Fungsi legislasi		ob	8.481.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
b. Fungsi pengawasan		ob	8.481.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
c. Fungsi anggaran		ob	8.481.000	Surat Izin Prinsip Menkeu Nomor S-31/1/MK.02/2025
Total Tunjangan Konstitusional			31.433.000	
Total Bruto			74.210.800	
Pajak PPS 15% (Total Tunjangan Konstitusional)			8.814.960	
Total Home Pay (TTP)			65.395.840	

Catatan:
Pimpinan Anggota DPR RI
Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 1980 tentang Hak Keuangan/Administrasi Pimpinan dan Anggota Lembaga Tertinggi/Tinggi Negara serta Besaran Pimpinan Lembaga Tertinggi/Tinggi Negara dan Besaran Anggota Lembaga Tinggi Negara Pasal 12 (1) dan Pasal 13 (1).
- Pimpinan Lembaga Tertinggi/Tinggi Negara dan Anggota Lembaga Tinggi Negara yang berhenti dengan hormat dari jabatannya berhak memperoleh prestasi yang ditetapkan berdasarkan lama masa jabatan.
- Besarnya prestasi sekurang-kurangnya 6% dan sebesar-besarnya 75% dari dasar pensiun.
- Berdasarkan PP 75 Tahun 2000 perhitungan pensiun yang diterima paling tinggi Rp3.639.540,- (masa jabatan 2 periode); Rp.2.935.704,- (masa jabatan 1 periode); Rp.401.894,- (masa jabatan 1-6 bulan).

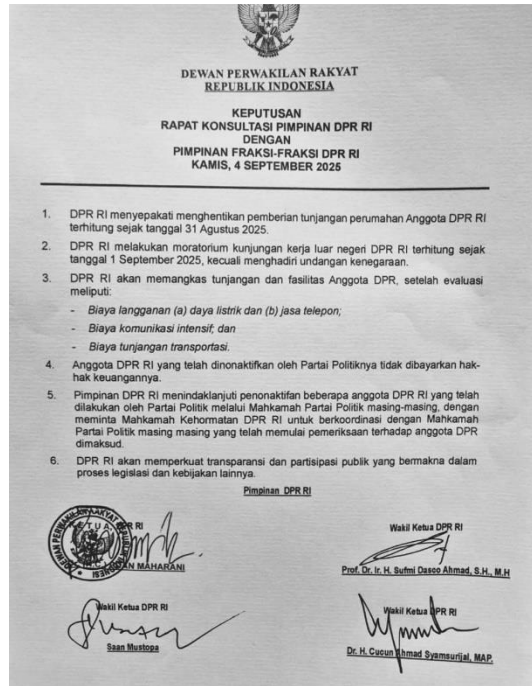


Fig. 2. Instagram account @bijakmemantau.id

This led to public opinion that the press conference was more of a strategy to quell public anger than a substantive response to the entire “17+8 *Tuntutan Rakyat* (The demand of Indonesia people).” Real implementation, data transparency, and consistency in follow-up actions are key to determining whether the DPR's decision truly addresses public concerns or is merely a short-term political maneuver. After the DPR RI announced six points of decision in a press conference on September 5, 2025, in response to the “17+8 *Tuntutan Rakyat* (The demand of Indonesia people)” document, public attention then shifted to the State Palace. The public awaited President PS's stance, especially since the DPR's steps were considered to have not addressed substantial demands related to state violence and political accountability.

Prior to President PS's official statement at the Palace on August 31, 2025, the political situation had heated up due to massive demonstrations in Jakarta and a number of other cities. On August 30, 2025, both President PS and Speaker of the House of Representatives

Puan Maharani apologized to the public through their official Instagram accounts. In their posts, both expressed concern over the loss of life during the demonstrations and promised to thoroughly investigate the causes of the violence and violations that occurred on the ground. The apologies were accompanied by calls for restraint and order, so that the expression of aspirations would remain peaceful.

However, a report by *Bisnis.com* entitled “*Kala PS hingga PM Gagal Redam Amarah Massa/When PS to PM failed to calm the anger of the masses*” (Tolok & Kamalina, 2025) noted that the apology was not enough to quell the anger of the masses. Many protesters considered the apology too late and merely symbolic, while acts of violence and clashes with authorities continued into the night. As a result, public dissatisfaction continued to rise, putting pressure on the government and the House of Representatives to take concrete action immediately. President PS's response to the demonstrations did not stop at moral and symbolic statements delivered through social media. As an initial step to control the crisis, on August 30, 2025, the President held a closed meeting with the National Police Chief and the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia/Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)* Commander in Hambalang, Bogor Regency. The meeting reaffirmed the country's security policy, particularly in responding to anarchic actions that occurred during the demonstrations. The President instructed the *TNI* and *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia/Indonesian National Police (Polri)* to act decisively in accordance with applicable laws, while emphasizing that security measures must remain within the bounds of legality. This step demonstrates the government's efforts to restore state control over the security situation without explicitly affirming the public's right to express their aspirations.

This response continued on August 31, 2025, when the President led a Plenary Cabinet Meeting with the Vice President at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta as a form of internal government consolidation. This meeting discussed cross-ministerial strategic measures to maintain national stability amid increasing public pressure and socio-political dynamics. On the same day, the President also made a strategic decision to cancel his planned state visit to Beijing, China. This decision was communicated openly by the Minister of State Secretary as a form of prioritizing domestic stability, as well as a political symbol that affirmed the President's direct presence in managing the crisis at home.

On August 31, 2025, the President gathered the leaders of political parties at the State Palace as part of the consolidation of the political elite. During the meeting, the President emphasized the state's commitment to respect and listen to the aspirations of the people expressed peacefully. A number of *DPR* policies that drew public criticism, such as the amount of *DPR* member allowances and overseas work visits, were agreed to be revoked or put on hold in response to public demands. The President also received reports that the police had prosecuted officers found to have committed violations, and that political parties had taken internal measures against legislators deemed insensitive to the public situation. In addition, the President encouraged the leadership of the House of Representatives to open a dialogue with community leaders, students, and other civil groups as a mechanism for institutionally channeling aspirations.

The government's response was then reinforced on September 1, 2025, through the President's visit to the Kramat Jati Police Hospital to visit the injured victims, both from the police and the civilian community. On that occasion, the President emphasized the difference between peaceful demonstrators and perpetrators of anarchic acts. The statement regarding the granting of extraordinary promotions to officers who were injured while on duty shows the state's efforts to maintain the legitimacy of the security apparatus, while controlling the conflict so that it does not develop into a complete delegitimization of state institutions. On the same day, the President also held a meeting with religious leaders, political leaders, youth organizations, and labor union leaders. This cross-element forum became a space for articulating various structural issues, such as taxes, corruption, official behavior, and increases in *DPR* allowances, and emphasized that crisis management is carried out not only through a security approach, but also through dialogic and inclusive communication.

Overall, this series of steps reveals a layered pattern of crisis communication, ranging from asserting state authority, coordinating government structures, consolidating political elites, to engaging in dialogue with civil society. This combination of symbolic empathy, administrative action, and socio-political consolidation became the government's strategy to ease tensions and restore public trust. This was then followed by the President's statement on August 31, 2025, which was important as a transition in political discourse: from a legislative response to an executive stance. In his speech at the State Palace, attended by the leaders of the House of Representatives, the leaders of the coalition and opposition political parties, and a number of high-ranking state officials, PS expressed concern over public unrest and emphasized the need for open dialogue between the government, the House of Representatives, students, and civil society. PS himself emphasized that the government respects freedom of expression, while stressing the need to distinguish between genuine aspirations and anarchic actions. The President also emphasized that the actions of students and the people should be viewed as an expression of democracy, not a threat, although he warned that there was a potential for other agendas, such as "treason," to be infiltrated, which must be anticipated.

PS emphasized two main points: first, requesting that the House of Representatives immediately invite student representatives and community groups to sit together in a formal dialogue forum; second, encouraging political parties to immediately take action against cadres who are considered insensitive to the situation. From this forum, the leaders of the DPR and political parties agreed to revoke a number of facilities that had been criticized by the public, such as housing allowances, and to implement a moratorium on overseas work visits as a quick measure to quell public anger. A day after the President's statement, political parties responded quickly. On September 1, 2025, the NasDem Party announced the suspension of AS and NU as members of the House of Representatives, while the PAN also suspended EP and UK. These decisions were internal party matters, but they were announced publicly to show the seriousness of the parties' response to public demands. These steps are seen as a form of political consolidation, as well as a signal that the parties are trying to maintain their image amid public pressure.

At the same time, the House of Representatives, as the legislative body, held an official press conference to confirm six key policy points. These points include the termination of housing allowances for DPR members effective August 31, 2025, a moratorium on overseas work visits effective September 1, 2025, and confirmation that the financial rights of DPR members whose parties have been deactivated will not be paid. This decision was announced as a form of institutional solidarity with the people's demands.

However, in the early stages of implementation, a number of critical issues arose. Several legal and media experts highlighted legal contradictions related to the termination of the financial rights of suspended members. Normatively, temporary suspension by the party does not automatically revoke the financial rights of DPR members without a more complete administrative procedure. This means that even though the DPR has explicitly stated that these rights will not be paid, in practice there is still the potential for members to continue receiving some of their rights due to bureaucratic rules that have not been changed.

This situation highlights the difference between political statements and administrative mechanisms. From a political perspective, the steps taken by President PS and the DPR are clearly aimed at easing tensions and restoring public trust. However, from a technical standpoint, the realization of these promises is still being closely monitored by the public and the media, as there are concerns that symbolic statements do not automatically lead to real change. Thus, this dynamic emphasizes that in addition to political communication efforts, regulatory consistency and administrative execution are necessary for the announced policies to have a real impact on the ground.

A few days before his speech at the State Palace, President PS also showed empathy by visiting the funeral home of the late AK, an online motorcycle taxi driver who died in an incident during a demonstration in Jakarta. The visit took place on the evening of August 29, 2025, in the Blora area of Menteng, Central Jakarta. On this occasion, the President wore a

light brown safari suit and black cap, and was accompanied by the Minister of Defense, the Minister of State Secretary, and the Cabinet Secretary. He spoke directly with the family of the deceased, embraced AK's parents, and expressed his deep sorrow over the tragic incident. PS also emphasized his commitment to thoroughly investigating the cause of AK's death in a transparent and fair manner, while reminding everyone that any act of violence in handling crowds cannot be tolerated. This gesture was one of the President's efforts to calm the situation amid rising tensions and public anger towards the authorities and the government.

Not only that, a few days after apologizing on social media and visiting A's house, President P did not stop at symbolic gestures. On September 1, 2025, he visited the Police Hospital in Kramat Jati, Jakarta, to visit victims of the demonstration, both police officers and civilians who had been injured. To a victim named N, whose motorcycle was stolen and whose leg was broken, P even promised to replace his motorcycle. In addition, he also issued strict instructions to the security forces: the National Police Chief and the TNI Commander were asked to deal with anarchist actions in accordance with the law. He also stipulated that demonstrations must be peaceful, have permission, and stop at 6 p.m. as part of the rules that must be obeyed. These concrete actions show that the government is trying to respond directly to the suffering of the victims, while establishing a legal and security framework to protect peaceful demonstrations but punish those who violate the rules.

4. Conclusions

The 2025 DPR allowance demonstration was the culmination of accumulated public dissatisfaction with political policies that were considered insensitive to the economic realities of the people. The plan to increase allowances and the DPR's overseas trips, which took place while the people were still suffering from economic hardship, sparked collective anger and highlighted the widening gap between policymakers and the people affected by these policies. This phenomenon proves that the legitimacy of the government and the legislature will always be shaky when the voice of the people is not used as the main basis for public policy making.

The government's response, which came in the form of canceling state agendas, cabinet meetings, consolidation with the political elite, empathetic visits, and the opening of dialogue, shows that public pressure can trigger policy shifts. However, the most important lesson from this series of events lies in the fact that the state only acts when the people's voices have reached the level of mass protest. This means that listening to the people is not only a moral or political ethical duty, but a prerequisite for the continuity of power itself. A government that is unable to read the unrest of its citizens from the outset will always be trapped in a cycle of crisis-response, rather than prevention and improvement. In addition, the 2025 demonstration also revealed that the digital space has become a new arena for political battles where disinformation can influence public opinion and trigger conflict. Therefore, the government's communication strategy must also ensure that the official messages conveyed truly respond to public needs, not just build image.

This event underscores the importance of the House of Representatives and other state institutions to actively and responsively listen to the voice of the people. Public aspirations are not merely a formality, but a moral and political responsibility of the people's representatives to ensure that the policies adopted truly serve the interests of the community. Ignoring the voice of the people or responding only partially will widen the gap between the people and their representatives and increase the potential for social conflict. The 2025 demonstrations prove that democratic mechanisms do not only function through five-yearly elections, but also through direct public participation in demanding transparency, accountability, and social justice. Thus, listening to the people is not merely a constitutional obligation, but also an important instrument for maintaining political stability, strengthening public trust, and upholding the principles of mature democracy.

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