



Victim's Letter on the Occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared 2025

Letter by Wahyu Susilo, brother of Wiji Thukul

Dear brother Wiji Thukul, how are you?

Last 26 August 2025 was your birthday. I presented to you a gift, a collage creation made by your niece, Meicesia Kasih Yushiva, which was inspired by your poem titled '*Bunga dan Tembok (Flower and Wall)*'. Your niece has grown older, she is a university student now. Her Instagram stories are filled with bold criticisms against Prabowo's regime. She is very angry when people who were involved in enforced disappearances are now in power.

Dear brother, I know, you do not like to celebrate your birthday. Yes, when we were still together, not once you celebrated it. For you, the days passed the same, as when you were 20 years old and wrote the poem "twenty years old living is only a story." Yes, the days that we passed together were survival from poverty and you interpreted it as a focal point for change and resistance.

Dear brother, now your birthday is celebrated by many people. Not with festive parties but as a resistance to forget. Now, indeed your poems must be read and sung loudly to deafen the ears of power!

Dear brother, with sadness I inform you, there are your friends who now double-crossed, tempted for a taste of power. But there are still a lot of my friends who are tirelessly loyal in this steep road of struggle and without a fear of loneliness.

Dear brother, the power structure today is exactly the same as you described in your poems. Your resistance poems reflect the despotism and greed of the New Order. Well, the situation today has turned into the newer version of the New Order. Hence, your poems became increasingly more frequently read in labour protests, students protest, women protest, and the Thursdaysilent protests.

Dear brother, 30 August is the International Day against Enforced Disappearance. This is the world's willingness to end enforced disappearance. Brother Wiji Thukul, you are a victim of this form of gross violations of human rights as well as a victim of vile and dirty political practice.

Dear brother, to end this vile and dirty political practice, the United Nations encourages every state to ratify the International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Surely, if you are here with us today, you would say, "how can Indonesia ratify the Convention if its leaders are people with bad track records and were involved in the enforced disappearances against political activists?"

Dear brother, this is surely a hard time to remain resisting the tyranny of power. However, just like your poem, "take a deep breath"—we will continue to resist and the sustained breath of struggle will always be voiced out with young people who always clenched their fists while shouting your poem: "There is only one word, resist!"

Wahyu Susilo
(Brother of Wiji Thukul, victim of 1997-1998 Enforced Disappearances)
