



Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances

A world without *desaparecidos*



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AFAD Stands in Solidarity with Indonesian Citizens: End Repression of Peaceful Protests

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The **Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)**, together with its Indonesian member organizations: the **Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)** and the **Indonesian Association of Families of the Disappeared (IKOHI)**, stands in solidarity with workers, students, and citizens across Indonesia who are facing violent repression for exercising their democratic rights.

The recent clampdown on peaceful labor and civic protests is deeply concerning, reflecting a broader pattern of shrinking civic space and unchecked police brutality. Instead of dialogue, the state has chosen indiscriminate force, arbitrary arrests, and intimidation actions that erode public trust and threaten the foundations of democracy.

These protests culminated on 28 August with a large labor rally at the House of Representatives, where demonstrators demanding an 8 - 10% wage increase, tax reforms, and a new labor law gathered peacefully. Three days earlier, on 25 August 2025, hundreds of students and civilians had already been protesting in front of the DPR building after reports that lawmakers were granted upgrades on allowances, including a monthly housing allowance of 50 million rupiah (\$3,000 per person), ten times the minimum wage in Jakarta, while over 80,000 laborers faced layoffs, and property taxes doubled. Budgets for education and universities were cut. Yet instead of dialogue, the state's response was brutal and indiscriminate.

According to KontraS, the raid resulted in 12 injured civilians and 370 detainees, including minors who were subjected to short-term enforced disappearance, as they were held in secret detention without access to their families or lawyers. KontraS further documented a series of excessive force practices by the Indonesian National Police (Polri) during the 28-29 August protests, including live bullet shootings, torture, assaults, arbitrary arrests, forced dispersals, and uncontrolled use of crowd-control weapons. These actions left at least 113 civilians severely injured, 3 dead, and 734 arrested - figures that illustrate an alarming pattern of systematic violence against civilians exercising their constitutional rights.¹

Similarly, during a mass tax protest in Pati on 13 August, police again deployed tear gas and water cannons against a peaceful crowd of some 100,000 residents; more than 34 protesters (including journalists) were wounded in that incident.² These patterns of repression, repeated beatings, baton-charges, and mass arrests have been widely condemned. Alarming, an armoured police vehicle was driven into fleeing bystanders, fatally running over a 21-year-old motorcycle delivery driver, Affan Kurniawan. He was not participating in the protest but delivering food home when he was struck.³ Prabowo Subianto himself later acknowledged the "excessive actions" of the officers and promised an investigation⁴, but the fact remains that security forces' reckless tactics have harmed innocent civilians.

¹ KontraS - [25th August Protest: A Blatant Manifestation of State Violence](#)

² FORUM ASIA - [Ensure police accountability for police violence during mass protest in Pati](#)

³ Amnesty International - [Indonesia: Authorities must investigate police killing of motorcycle taxi driver during protest in Jakarta](#)

⁴ Indonesia Business Post - [Massive labor protest demands higher wages, tax Reforms, new labor law](#)



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These incidents highlight a systemic problem of impunity for police brutality. Human rights monitors emphasize that under Indonesian and international law, force may only be used by police in a **legal, proportionate, and necessary** manner. Chief of Police regulations explicitly forbid arbitrary detention and excessive violence (*KontraS*). Yet authorities have repeatedly ignored these rules. In the face of this oppression, we stand **in solidarity** with Indonesian workers, students, and all citizens exercising their democratic rights. We salute the peaceful, orderly nature of the labor march on 28 August, and the legitimate demands for living wages and social justice it represented. We therefore demand the following actions:

- **Release detained protesters:** All individuals held solely for participating in peaceful demonstrations must be released immediately and unconditionally. As these detainees are being held in secret detention with no access to family or legal counsel, they must be recognized as victims of short-term enforced disappearance under Article 17 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.
- **Investigate and hold accountable:** A transparent, impartial investigation must be launched into police violence at recent protests, including the killing of Affan Kurniawan and other abuses. All officers, including commanders suspected of wrongdoing, must face criminal prosecution, not mere internal discipline.
- **Respect rights to assemble:** Police must respect the constitutional right to peaceful assembly and cease any policy of criminalizing dissent. Security forces should be instructed to use non-violent methods of crowd management in line with international best practices.
- **Address protester demands:** The government should address the root causes of unrest, from steep tax hikes to rising inequality, through genuine dialogue with community representatives and urgent policy reforms. Neglecting these issues risks fueling further turmoil.

We urge the Indonesian government to remember its commitments under both domestic law and international human rights law, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and even relevant ILO Conventions on labor rights. The stated goals of these protests, such as a livable minimum wage and transparency of the parliament's budget, deserve to be heard, not met with bullets and batons. International partners and solidarity networks should also take note that the repression of Indonesian protesters is cause for urgent attention. We invite global labor unions, human rights defenders, and democratic allies to stand with Indonesia's movement for justice and to pressure authorities to end the abuse.

We call on the Indonesian government to immediately end the use of excessive force, release arbitrarily detained protesters, and uphold the people's constitutional right to peaceful assembly.