

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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INDONESIA: AUTHORITIES MUST IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS ATTACKS ON ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION STAFF

Amnesty International urges the Indonesian authorities to take concrete steps to end attacks on the staff of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK or *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*), a government agency tasked with fighting corruption. The latest attack happened on 13 September at the KPK's office building in Jakarta, when around a hundred people tried to storm the building. The attackers threw rocks, beat KPK's security personnel — so badly that some had to be admitted to the hospital — and destroyed a journalist's equipment.

Police officers on the ground failed to take adequate action to stop the mob attack and to date the police have not arrested or named any suspects responsible for it. Worryingly, the September attack was the latest in a series of incidents over the past few years, involving physical attacks, threats, and intimidation of KPK staff, which have particularly targeted its investigators and commissioners (often referred to collectively as KPK's leadership)— all of which have gone unpunished. The government's continued failure to address the violent harassment of anti-corruption officials undermines the country's fight against corruption, a phenomenon that deprives the state of the resources needed to respect, protect, promote and fulfil a range of human rights.

The background to the recent attack suggests that it was politically motivated. In the past few weeks, nearly all KPK staff belonging to the KPK workers' union (WP KPK or *Wadah Pegawai KPK*) took part in a series of symbolic protests at their offices, which were supported by some members of KPK's management. The protest actions involved covering the KPK logo at the building's entrance with a huge black cloth and were meant to draw attention to recent changes in the selection process for KPK's commissioners, in which the selection process had been criticised by anti-corruption activists, and amendments to the Anti-Corruption Law that anti-corruption activists say will limit the KPK's mandate and weaken its independence. The KPK staff protest received broad support from Indonesian civil society organizations and members of the public, who showed their solidarity by joining peaceful protests and by putting flower bouquets in the vicinity of KPK office building and other symbolic forms of encouragement.

On 13 September at about 2pm, approximately one hundred people organized a counter protest in front of the KPK office building. Separated from WP KPK members by an iron fence, at first the counter-protesters simply made speeches criticising WP KPK, supporting newly chosen KPK commissioners, and welcoming the new amendments to the Anti-Corruption Law. They then started to burn the flower bouquets while shouting at WP KPK members to remove the black cloth that covered the KPK logo. The approximately 40 police officers on the scene also asked WP KPK staff to remove the black cloth, and did nothing when, at approximately 4 pm, one of the counter-protesters began climbing the building's iron fence.

After the first person scaled the fence, other counter-protesters followed, and the crowd tried to enter the building's lobby. KPK security personnel tried to block the attacking crowd from entering, and some were beaten badly. Some of the attacking crowd beat a KPK internal security officer, who had to be admitted to a hospital. Further the counter protesters threw rocks and firecrackers at the building and destroyed equipment belonging to a journalist.

A staff member of Amnesty International Indonesia was inside the KPK building at the time of the attack, and was able to observe the police response, noting that police officers on the scene did very little to prevent the crowd from entering the building or to quell the crowd's violence. In addition, the police have not to date arrested or named any suspects as being responsible for the incident.

The lack of a police response to the present incident is part of a larger pattern. Over the last few years, there have been numerous incidents of attacks, intimidation and threats against KPK investigators that have gone unaddressed by the police. In April 2017, for example, the KPK investigator Novel Baswedan had a vial of hydrochloric acid thrown into his face by two men on a motorcycle, when he was returning home after morning prayer at a local mosque. At the time of the attack, Novel was the head of the WP KPK and a critic of attempts to employ more police officers as KPK investigators. Novel was also leading an investigation into the misappropriation of funds for an

electronic ID card project, an investigation in which implicated high-ranking government officials and members of parliament. At the same time, he was facing reprisals from the police force due to another investigation, being undertaken by a separate KPK team, which involved allegations of a police general receiving bribes.

On the same day in January 2019, two KPK commissioners — Agus Rahardjo and Laode Syarief — were violently attacked. Someone placed a mock pipe bomb in a plastic bag and hung it on Agus' front fence, and a Molotov cocktail was thrown at Laode's house.

To date, no suspects have been arrested for any of these attacks on KPK investigators and commissioners, even though the police claim to have set up different teams to investigate them.

Several KPK staff have told Amnesty International that other KPK investigators have also faced intimidation and threats, in some instances by police officers, while investigating corruption cases implicating high-ranking police officers.

Anti-corruption officials and activists, as well as human rights defenders, have long been the victims of threats and attacks in Indonesia, with almost all incidents being left unresolved. It is clear that the authorities need to take decisive action to end the problem of impunity and ensure that anti-corruption officials and activists are able to carry out their important and necessary work without fear, while fully respecting the rights of those suspected of corruption. The lack of progress in addressing these ongoing attacks is a dark stain on Indonesia's efforts to tackle corruption, instill good governance, and protect human rights. It also further reinforces the culture of impunity in relation to human rights violations, which presents an imminent threat to the country's rule of law.