

Quo Vadis: Indonesian SSR Ten Years On

On 28-29 May 2008, [IDSPPS](#) (Institute for Defence, Security and Peace Studies), [Lesperssi](#) (Indonesian Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies), and [HRWG](#) (Indonesia's NGO Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy) in collaboration with [DCAF](#) (the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces), organised a symposium on 10 years of SSR in Indonesia. The event assessed Indonesian actors working on SSR in government, academia and civil society, evaluating and identifying important achievements of and challenges to reform since the democratic transition began in May 1998. The symposium also proposed some important keys issues for future SSR.

Generally, most SSR issues discussed related to the reform of the Defence Ministry, military, police, intelligence and Parliament, as well as evaluating civil society strategies and methods to influence SSR during 1998-2008. The large question remains as to whether SSR measures in post-New Order Indonesia have succeeded in constructing security institutions which are professional, and abide by the democratic and respect for human rights principles that inspired the organisation of this national symposium.

The symposium concluded that various reforms have been undertaken since May 1998. These are related to amendments of legislation and policy at the national and local level; the establishment of various extra judicial institutions to strengthen the control on the government's performance; parliamentary political functions; internal reform within government institutions; and civil society participation in, monitoring of and influence upon decision making at the executive, legislative and judiciary levels. However, these developments require further action in order to be fully identified as positive indicators of democracy transition as expected by the Indonesian people.

Alongside this, the symposium noted state weaknesses in implementing, monitoring and evaluating various policies. The executive-legislative-judiciary performance has deteriorated, and seemingly slipped back to its previous condition. As a result, the phenomenon of political status quo and impunity has become a large obstacle that still undermines the ongoing democratic transition process.

Critical aspects of SSR policies have not been implemented properly, this often being dependent upon policy interpretation and willingness of security institutions to implement them. Various issues have not been properly resolved due to the complexity of the nation's political structure and actors in the security elite. There are still questions to be answered on the commitment to development of culture and attitudes towards professional security actors, submission towards the civilian political authority and legal regulations.

With regards to the role of civil society, the symposium agreed that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are expected to continuously consolidate and reformulate their advocacy strategy. This is despite the fact that ten years on CSOs still face resistance from security actors, having to deal with a government's ambiguous political acts, and striving to obtain their position during the poor political support.

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