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One Year Reflection on the Prabowo–Gibran Administration: Governance, Social Justice, and the Democratic Crisis

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ONE YEAR REFLECTION ON THE
PRABOWO–GIBRAN ADMINISTRATION:
GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND
THE DEMOCRATIC CRISIS

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This analysis is part of the #CloseTheGap advocacy effort to reduce inequality in Indonesia. This advocacy is conveyed through critical, evidence-based narratives on inequality issues in Indonesia. It is hoped that this brief review will be useful as campaign material, a shared understanding, or discussion points among INFID staff, members, and networks.

This article may be cited in research or other documents.

INTRODUCTION

One year into the administration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka marks an important moment for evaluating the trajectory of democracy, governance, and social justice in Indonesia. The administration assumed power under grand promises of sustainable development, improved public welfare, and strengthened political and legal reform as outlined in the Asta Cita vision. However, critical observations from various civil society organizations indicate that the past year has, instead, demonstrated significant regressions in good governance principles, human rights protection, and environmental balance.



Keterangan: Kabinet Merah Putih. (Foto: Antara)

This report is summarized from the 'One Year of Prabowo-Gibran Administration' records compiled by INFID and its member organizations, namely Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), the Indonesian Forum for Environment (WALHI), the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), Solidaritas Perempuan, and Migrant CARE. These organizations conducted a collective reflection on the trajectory of government policies. This document consolidates findings and analyses from these institutions, along with INFID's commentary on the Draft State Budget (RAPBN) 2026.

This reflection employs a qualitative–descriptive methodology, examining policy trends and their socio-economic-environmental impacts over the past year. The analysis focuses on three main dimensions: (1) governance and democracy, (2) social and economic justice, and (3) environmental and food crises.

I. Governance and Democracy

1. Patronage Politics and Cronyism

One of ICW's most striking findings is the persistence of patronage politics and cronyism within the Prabowo–Gibran administration. The cabinet, consisting of 48 ministries and 56 deputy ministers, is the largest since the reform era, strongly indicating political power-sharing among supporting parties and volunteer groups.

ICW noted that the appointment of several officials with corruption records reveals a weak commitment to integrity and bureaucratic reform. Moreover, the placement of active military and police officers in civilian posts demonstrates a patronage tendency that violates the principle of civilian supremacy. The corruption case involving Deputy Minister of Manpower Immanuel Ebenezer represents only the tip of the iceberg of opaque governance.

Furthermore, the prevalence of multiple office holdings across state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and public institutions blurs the boundaries of professionalism and creates conflicts of interest. These phenomena reveal that the Asta Cita vision of eradicating corruption and reforming bureaucracy remains little more than political rhetoric.

2. Militarization of Civil Space and the Decline of Civilian Supremacy

Reports by WALHI and YLBHI emphasize that the Prabowo–Gibran administration has expanded military involvement in civilian governance. The 2025 revision of the Military Law (TNI Law) broadened the scope of Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP) without sufficient civilian oversight, opening the door for the military to intervene in non-defense sectors such as forestry, food, and national strategic projects.

WALHI regards this policy as a form of the “return of the dual function of the military” through new legal legitimization. For instance, Presidential Regulation No. 5 of 2025 on Forest Area Reclamation allows direct military involvement in reclaiming forest areas, which in practice has led to the eviction of Indigenous communities from contested territories.

Meanwhile, YLBHI found that deliberations on the revised TNI Law and the Draft Criminal Procedure Code (RKUHAP) were held behind closed doors in hotels without public participation, signaling a return to authoritarian and opaque decision-making. Consequently, the checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches have been further eroded.

3. Recentralization and the Crisis of Local Democracy

INFID's commentary on the 2026 Draft State Budget (RAPBN) reveals that the administration has undertaken an extreme fiscal recentralization. Regional dependency on central transfer funds reached 80–87 percent, while local revenue stood at only 7–12 percent. As a result, local governments have virtually no fiscal space, losing the ability to fulfill political promises or basic public services.

This recentralization was accompanied by a reduction in Transfers to Regions (TKD) of up to IDR 50.59 trillion in 2025, and a further decline to IDR 693 trillion in 2026. The direct impact was felt in regions where local governments raised property taxes (Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan, PBB) drastically—up to 1,000 percent in areas such as Cirebon and Jombang.

Beyond deepening fiscal inequality, recentralization undermines the principle of regional autonomy, one of the core pillars of the 1998 political reform. The central government increasingly dictates development agendas without regard for local context or community participation.

4. Authoritarianism and the Suppression of Civil Liberties

YLBHI's reflection records a sharp increase in repression against civil liberties. Mass demonstrations in August 2025 protesting property tax hikes and centralist economic policies resulted in the arrest of 5,444 people, with 997 citizens charged as suspects, making it the largest wave of criminalization since reform.

The government's official narrative labeling these demonstrations as “acts of treason” exemplifies the classic pattern of silencing opposition under the pretext of national security. The collaboration between the military and police in managing civil protests further entrenches the administration's militaristic character.

II. Social and Economic Justice

1. Fiscal Policy, Debt, and Taxation

INFID noted that the Prabowo–Gibran administration faces a national debt of IDR 1,353 trillion in 2025, with a significant upward trend to finance ambitious projects such as Danantara and the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program. State revenue remains dominated by taxation (85–90 percent), yet the tax ratio remains low (10–11 percent). Rather than expanding a progressive tax base, the government has introduced new taxable objects that disproportionately burden the lower and middle classes.

Budget cuts in education and health to fund populist programs like MBG indicate a short-term orientation that neglects long-term social investment. The MBG program absorbs up to IDR 335 trillion in the 2026 state budget, with 71.7 percent sourced from central education funds.

Such fiscal behavior reflects a pattern of fiscal populism—using large-scale populist programs to maintain political legitimacy while undermining essential public services.

2. Exploitation of Migrant Workers

Migrant CARE's reflection shows that the condition of Indonesian migrant workers has deteriorated under the Prabowo–Gibran administration. The state's remittance-driven policy treats migrant workers as mere "foreign-exchange cash cows" rather than citizens entitled to social and legal protection.

The number of overseas placements continues to increase without corresponding improvements in protection mechanisms in host countries, while private agencies still dominate the placement scheme. Migrant CARE also reports weak oversight of remittances and widespread unofficial levies in workers' home regions, exacerbating the exploitation of women migrant workers in the domestic sector.

3. Gender Justice and Women in the Food Crisis

Solidaritas Perempuan highlights that food and agrarian policies under the current administration have strayed further from gender justice principles. Large-scale programs such as the food estate and MCG reinforce state and corporate control over agrarian resources, while women—traditionally the main actors in household food production and management—are increasingly marginalized.

Industrialized, large-scale food policies ignore ecosystem sustainability and women's local knowledge of seeds, land, and traditional food systems. As a result, women farmers lose access to land and food sources and become seasonal laborers in corporate projects.

Solidaritas Perempuan stresses the importance of gender-just food sovereignty, in which women have authority over resources and production decisions. In contrast, the Prabowo–Gibran administration has reinforced the masculinization of the agrarian sector through militarization and corporatization.

III. Environmental and Food Crises

1. Expansion of Extractivism and the Loss of Environmental Sovereignty

WALHI's report portrays the Prabowo–Gibran administration as a continuation of an extractive economic paradigm. The targeted 8 percent economic growth has spurred the expansion of industries dependent on natural resource exploitation—ranging from mineral downstreaming and forestry projects to the enlargement of food estates.

This approach disregards environmental carrying capacity, accelerating deforestation and the climate crisis. The food estate project in Merauke, for example, has cleared two million hectares of Indigenous forest and displaced the Malind people and other Indigenous communities. Such policies not only erase Indigenous cultural identities but also increase carbon emissions by hundreds of millions of tons of CO₂ annually.

2. The Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program and Populist Politics

The MBG program has been promoted as the administration's flagship initiative to demonstrate concern for child welfare and food security. However, multiple findings reveal serious irregularities. ICW reported that over 11,000 children were poisoned due to unhygienic food distribution, while YLBHI found that 70 percent of MBG personnel were members of the military, police, or political party cadres.

Aside from lacking a clear legal basis (regulated only through Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2024 on the National Nutrition Agency), the program displays a strong pattern of political patronage. MBG kitchens across various regions are managed by volunteers and security personnel, extending the government's political influence down to the community level.

From an environmental standpoint, WALHI estimated that organic waste from MBG could generate 25,500 to 51,000 tons of CO₂e emissions annually, aggravating the climate crisis.

3. Danantara and Koperasi Merah Putih: The Rise of a New Oligarchic Economy

ICW and YLBHI draw attention to the establishment of the Danantara superholding, which merges 844 state-owned enterprises with total assets reaching US\$1 trillion, representing a new manifestation of state-driven economic oligarchy. Its leadership structure is dominated by active politicians and individuals affiliated with ruling parties, raising serious conflicts of interest.

This mechanism has been utilized to fund national strategic projects—especially in energy and infrastructure—often entangled with agrarian conflicts. Consequently, Danantara risks becoming an instrument of political-economic consolidation for the regime rather than a means of equitable development.

Conclusion and Critical Reflection

One year of the Prabowo–Gibran administration marks a profound shift in Indonesia's democratic character—from procedural democracy toward authoritarian neoliberalism. The government has strengthened central control through fiscal recentralization, expanded military roles in civilian affairs, and consolidated economic oligarchies through flagship programs like MBG and Danantara.

Social inequality has deepened, the rights of migrant workers and women have been undermined, and ecological crises have worsened due to extractivist expansion. Simultaneously, weakened oversight institutions, bureaucratic politicization, and the criminalization of citizens signify the erosion of substantive democracy.

The Civil Society Coalition recommends:

1. Restoring civilian supremacy by revising the Military Law (UU TNI) and halting military involvement in civil affairs.
2. Fiscal and decentralization reform to provide greater fiscal autonomy for regions.
3. Strengthening budget transparency and accountability in the MBG and Danantara programs.
4. Restoring civic space and protecting human rights, including ending the criminalization of citizens.
5. Pursuing a just ecological transition by ending extractive projects and strengthening gender-responsive, community-based economies.

This reflection serves as a reminder that democracy, social justice, and sustainability can only endure if the state reaffirms its commitment to the constitution, the rule of law, and the sovereignty of the people.

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TENTANG INFID

International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) merupakan organisasi non-pemerintah berbasis anggota sejak tahun 1985. Sebagai forum organisasi masyarakat sipil di Indonesia, INFID mendorong pembangunan berkeadilan yang diwujudkan melalui demokrasi, kesetaraan, keadilan sosial, perdamaian, serta terjamin dan terpenuhinya Hak Asasi Manusia di tingkat nasional dan global. INFID mewujudkan visi tersebut melalui serangkaian kegiatan yang akuntabel, berbasis bukti, dialogis bersama anggotanya, serta mengedepankan solidaritas dan kesetaraan. INFID memiliki 80 anggota di seluruh Indonesia dan Special Consultative Status untuk UN ECOSOC.

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