



Statement ahead of the Presidential and Legislative General Elections in Indonesia on 14 February 2024

13 February 2024

Protection International (PI) is an international non-profit organisation. Our ethos is centred around people's right to defend human rights safely and the protection of human rights defenders (HRDs).

Ahead of the Presidential and Legislative General Elections in Indonesia on February 14 2024, Protection International calls on the Government of Indonesia and its state institutions to ensure that all citizens can voice their aspirations and opinions, and exercise their right to vote freely, without any pressures, threats or intimidation. It is imperative that people's rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression – including the right to access information, to engage in public debates and discourses, journalistic activity and commentary on matters of public interest and human rights – are respected, honoured and protected.

PI is following with concern the news about the elections and we denounce incidences of abuse and violence by state officers during the pre-election period. Civil society organisations and several media outlets have recorded and exposed different forms of violence against human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, students, and other civil society actors while they advocated for peaceful, free and fair elections. Such forms of violence include criminalization, surveillance, cancellation of activities and intimidation, both in person and through social media.

PI emphasises that fundamental rights and freedoms should be upheld every day, and that during election periods – often characterized by their high-stakes nature – these rights take on special significance and must be guaranteed to all. Civil society organisations and HRDs working and calling for free and fair elections must be able to carry out their work unhampered. International standards recognise the key role of HRDs, their communities and their organisations in the participation of public affairs for upholding democratic values, the rule of law, and the realisation of human rights, and these must at all costs be respected and protected.



“In the pursuit of genuine democracy and in upholding fundamental human rights, Protection International calls on the Indonesian government to ensure that every Indonesian can exercise their rights to vote and to freedom of expression. We call on the Indonesian government and all stakeholders to ensure that all processes related to the election are conducted in a transparent, safe and fair manner.” - Mae Ocampo, PI Executive Director

With regards to the election on 14 February 2024, PI calls on the Indonesia government and its agencies to:

- Uphold and protect genuine democracy and the rights of all in Indonesia at this crucial time, with strong integrity; in particular, we urge the government to recognise and promote the key role that HRDs play in promoting peaceful and fair elections;
- Take swift and preventive action to ensure the protection of HRDs and civil society organisations involved in election monitoring against threats and attacks, including in the digital space. There should be a commitment to a “zero tolerance stance” on violence against HRDs and the people of Indonesia;
- Ensure that elections take place peacefully and fairly, without interference from any parties, including state administrators, security forces or any other parties that could challenge the democratic principles. It is PI’s hope that after the Feb 2024 election, the government of Indonesia and all relevant stakeholders will enable the environment for HRDs, civil society, and the people of Indonesia by drafting a constitution that paves the way for true democracy and upholds human rights, social justice and fundamental freedoms.

For any press queries, please contact **Mae Ocampo**, PI Executive Director, by writing to ao@protectioninternational.org.