

**Open Letter to Concerned Indonesian Authorities
regarding the case of intimidation of a journalist**

10 June 2016

To: General Badrodin Haiti, Chief of the Indonesian National Police
Minister Yasonna Laoly, Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Mr Bagir Manan, Chariman of the Indonesian Press Council

Your excellencies,

On behalf of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), a Bangkok-based regional network of press freedom advocates, I write to call your attention to an incident of harassment of an Indonesian journalist named Febriana Ferdaus, a multimedia reporter of Rappler Indonesia. As you might be well aware, Febriani was gravely threatened and expelled from her coverage of a public symposium in Balai Kartini in Jakarta last week on 2 June 2016.

According to news reports, Febriani was conducting interviews when she was accosted by men believed to be members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the State Defenders Movement (GBN). Members of both groups began shouting and threatening her, and as a crowd gathered organizers of the symposium expelled Febriani from the venue.

The actions of the mob as well as the organizers prevented Febriani from performing her duty as a journalist to cover the public event, including relaying the information she collected as news.

At the time of the incident, Febriani was a journalist on duty and interviewing members of a Catholic student group who objected to the use of their logo in the symposium entitled, "Securing Pancasila From Threats Rise of PKI & Other Ideology" which was organized by several groups including GBN and FPI.

SEAPA raises this matter before your good offices as we believe that the incident must not be ignored as it involves serious offences threatening the life of a person and is a violation of the right of journalists protected by Indonesian law.

In our view, the actions of members of both groups (FPI and GBN) clearly violate Article 4 clause 3 of Indonesia's Press Law (Undang-Undang 40/1999) that protects the right of the national press right to seek, obtain and disseminate ideas and information.

The Press Law contains specific provisions to protect this specific right with violations punishable by up to two years of imprisonment, and 500,000,000 rupiah.

Furthermore, those responsible for intimidating Febriani must also be held for violations of the Indonesian Penal Code as they threatened her personal safety and her life.

For this incident, it is important to use the provisions of the Law on the Press of Indonesia as this involves the right of members of the press to cover such events, regardless of their media affiliation or opinion. We note that the mob who threatened Febriani expressed contempt for her reports during the symposium's first day. We believe it was the basis of the threats to her.

Also, organizers of the event have a duty to protect journalists covering their events, and should have taken steps to stop the mob from threatening Febriani instead of expelling her from the venue.

SEAPA believes that the best way to protect press freedom in Indonesia is to use the provisions of the Press Law to address such incidents against the media, who have a special role in the basic human right to freedom of opinion and expression.

SEAPA further expresses concern over similar recent incidents in the country where mobs have successfully intimidated civil society and the media from conducting activities related to the commemoration of the anti-communist purges of 1965.

Indonesian authorities have a role to guarantee diversity of opinion and views in the country. Taking concrete measures to protect the rights involved in these issues is the best indicator of its commitment to protect democracy, accountability and the rule of law.

We Look forward and thank you in advance for your positive action about this matter.

Respectfully yours,



Edgardo Legaspi

Executive Director

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