

Government Promise to Resolve Human Right Abuse Remains Unkept

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Indonesia is known as a country with strong optimism and potential to play the role as leader, especially in ASEAN. Still, Indonesia has dark history of past conflict and human right abuse to resolve.

“Basically, a strong future for Indonesia has to be built on justice principle. To really be able to progress and realise its potential, Indonesia has to look backwards and overcome their past history,” said Secretary General of Amnesty International, Salil Shetty, when giving a public lecture at Senate Hall UGM on Friday (24/3).

In the event of *Yap Thiam Hien Human Rights Lecture II*, he gave the lecture themed *Looking Backwards to Look Forwards: A Stronger Future for Indonesia Rooted in Justice*. Salil invited participants to confront past human right abuse and gave suggestion on better future for all Indonesians.

“I need to say that Indonesia has great potential and the biggest asset is its people. It’s a country where the marginal people can raise their voice and people ‘s participation is strong and deep,” he

said.

He further regretted the fact that numerous perpetrators of human right can evade gross violations. Humanitarian crime, extrajudicial killing, disappearance, sexual abuse, and other human right abuses seem to evade investigation. Salil mentioned three cases in which Indonesia failed to resolve, namely humanitarian crime after the failed coup in 1965-1966, humanitarian case in Aceh between 1976 - 2005 that killed 10 - 30 thousand people, and the murder case of Munir that has yet to resolve.

He added with the rise of Joko Widodo to presidency in 2014, hope arose that justice may prevail, but until today the promises that he had made have not been kept.

“A big number of victims and their family have not received compensation, no recovery and access to justice. Indonesia’s impunity still persists, too, and the wound would never heal,” said Salil.

To build an onward agenda that rooted in justice, according to Salil, the points to consider is to stop impunity of past abuses and ensure accountability, opening truth on past abuses to victims and family, ensuring law enactment for perpetrators of human right in the present, and death penalty abolishment.

Protection to human right activists is another point to consider. Intimidation and criminalisation will only create a climate in which people are fearful to speak their voice. He hope the formation of Amnesty International Indonesia can be part of efforts of Indonesia’s struggle for change.

“Above all, hope comes from the Indonesians with the existence of many organisations and courageous people to defend the right of people in the country, including the most ignored regions. It’s a privilege for Amnesty International to join you closer to reach justice,” Salil concludes.

Salil’s visit to UGM was appreciated by Rector of UGM, Prof. Ir. Dwikorita Karnawati, M.Sc., Ph.D. The presence of Amnesty International in Indonesia, in her opinion, was a fresh wind for the collaboration to realise a future that is fair to Indonesia. She hoped the young generation can grasp the message and vision and participate in the campaign for peace.

“We’re thankful we can connect and disseminate our research with Amnesty International to do co-creation for the benefit of the people. I remind the young generation to be able to make campaigns that are useful to us,” she said.

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