

# KPU Commissioner: The Regional Election is Possible to be Postponed

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I Dewa Kade Wiarsa Raka Sandi as the Indonesian KPU commissioner, said that it was possible to postpone the 2020 regional head elections if the constitutional mechanism and decision-making process officially managed. He also explained that the elections continuity clarifications have become a collective decision between the KPU, the government, and the DPR.

"Of course, it would be KPU's duty as long as there is no new decision regarding this matter. It has been the KPU's obligation as the election organizer to carry out the activity. The previous case was also postponed when it should have been in September. It shifted to December 9, 2020," he said on Tuesday (13/10) during a webinar on Monitoring the Continuation of Simultaneous Regional Elections in the Middle of a Pandemic.

Dewa Raka Sandi said certain situations could delay the implementation of the regional elections. Similar to the normal situation, the regional elections' budget had not been delivered.

"In fact, at that time, we had arrived at the recruitment stage, but there was no budget so it could not be implemented, that was an example case. For 2020, the budget is already available in general,



according to the legal aspects, although there are things that need to be improved. So, to postpone the elections, we must look at a broader aspect instead of just one aspect," Mada said.

In his remarks, procrastination is not a new thing, but there must be justified and comprehensively seen instead of just delaying the execution. In Law No.10 / 2016, the principle of regional elections is carried out concurrently, which means the implementation is carried out on the same date and day.

It's just that the election in the middle of the pandemic should be a concern for the current conditions. The current situation is offbeat from a catastrophic event whose territory can be localized. The pandemic is very dynamic, not only on a local and national scale but globally.

Therefore, the approach is our vigilance. Keep encouraging health protocols nationally and tightening local elections that have complexities regarding the Covid-19 pandemic aspects.

"It is dynamic, indeed. In fact, it could be that some areas are currently green zones, but does anyone know who can guarantee that these zones will remain green? It could also be that areas with red zone alerts could be better due to day to day, week to week, or month efforts. Accordingly, the zone is very conditional," he explained.

Concerning the matter about the level of participation in the regional elections in December 2020, Dewa revealed two approaches proposed to the participants during the Covid-19 pandemic. Legally, he said, no rules are regulating the validity of a regional election with certain percentage requirements.

"Whatever level of participation, rightfully, the elections are still valid because there is no regulation number of limits. However, we must not think that way, because according to the regional election's substance, the implementation of people's sovereignty is rightfully through the election mechanism. Participation can be seen from various perspectives, not only being present at the TPS but how the community is also actively involved in several stages of the implementation," he said.

Because the regional election was in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, the KPU as the election organizer, encouraged information technology use. Among them is optimizing the use of information technology for campaigns and program debate programs.

The KPU hopes that the candidate pair and the winning team can have a social media campaign in the network for 71 days. Accordingly, the social media accounts provided are quite large, for

governor and deputy governor candidates 30 accounts and the regent/deputy regent or mayor/deputy mayor level 20 accounts.

"The use of accounts for social media must be verified by the press council so that the managers can find out who the accounts and platforms are to be used, also for the administrators," he added.

The Poltour webinar "Observing the Continuation of Simultaneous Regional Elections during a Pandemic" was upheld by the Research Center for Politics and Government (PolGov) of the Department of Politics and Government (DPP) UGM through the Big Data Analytics Laboratory. Throughout this activity, an analysis was carried out regarding the 2020 regional election postponement by asking two key questions: how is the discourse on postponing the 2020 elections simultaneously from the perspective of actors and key issues? And how do netizens respond regarding the discourse on postponing simultaneous regional elections?

PolGov Research Team and Big Data Analytics, Dr. Mada Sukmajati, stated that the 2020 regional election confronted new challenges compared to the previous implementation, namely the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic that hit all countries affected the implementation of elections in various countries.

In 2020, 72 countries postpone implementing elections, and 67 countries continue to hold elections amid the Covid-19 pandemic, both national and local elections. Indonesia will continue to hold regional head elections (Pilkada) on December 9, 2020, previously postponed.

"The 2020 elections will be held in 270 regions, and eight regions have Pilgub, 224 regencies, and 37 cities in 32 provinces. This fact certainly created controversy in the community," he said.

Mada stated that the news about postponing the 2020 regional election was mostly related to health issues. Regarding that, it was associated with legal, political, economic, and social issues.

This condition shows that health is the most widely considered issue related to the 2020 elections amid the pandemic. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the considerations used by the government are aspects of health (situation uncertainty) and domestic political stability.

"On several chances, the government has even conveyed economic considerations," he said.



The research conducted stated that there were 3,746 articles from 155 media portals within seven months of data collection and 52,734 tweets discussing "Postponing the 2020 Elections". This information shows the topic of delays in gaining considerable media coverage, both in online media and on Twitter's social media.

Besides, there are two peaks in online media coverage about the postponement of the 2020 elections, namely on March 31, 2020 (during the agreement to postpone the 2020 regional election) and September 21, 2020 (after Muhammadiyah and NU gave official statements not to carry out the elections during the pandemic). Meanwhile, the peak of the conversation on social media twitter occurred on September 21, 2020. This information shows that the public is not yet fully convinced of the government's design. More specifically, the election organizers are holding regional elections during a pandemic.

"These findings show that election organizers need to make constant efforts to convince the public that they have designed each stage of the election properly to minimize the growth rate of Covid-19 cases due to the implementation of the 2020 Elections," he explained.

The study also states that Muhammadiyah and NU are two non-state institutions that significantly influence media coverage of the 2020 regional election postponement amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The recommendations from both have received a large public response on social media. This fact intended that there is public participation in the policy for the 2020 regional election amid a pandemic.

"The government and election organizers need to appreciate this and continue to carry out communication and collaboration with the two organizations to prepare for each stage by prioritizing the implementation of health protocols," he explained.

The results of other studies related to actors show that at least six actors are often reported on the topic of Postponing the 2020 Elections. They are Joko Widodo (Government), Arief Budiman (KPU), Tito Karnavian (Kemendagri), Mahfud MD (Menkopolhukam) on one side and NU. and Muhammadiyah on the other. Government actors tend to encourage the implementation of the 2020 Elections. The KPU tends to follow decisions from the government, and NU-Muhammadiyah, which recommends postponing the 2020 regional election.

Meanwhile, from Twitter social media data, it appears that netizens are worried about the 2020 Elections due to considerations of people's safety, lives, humanity, and the Covid-19 pandemic impact. This fact gives rise to the term: "humanity over politics."



"At the end of the conversation, it was seen that there is an extended topic to other issues, namely the omnibus law and the oligarchy. From the SNA, it can be seen that several dominant actors are quite evenly distributed in the discourse on postponing the 2020 Elections. Thus, this topic is not only centered on one or several parties, but this discourse is spread over various parties who are very likely to have different political, economic, and social interests," he said.

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