

# Middle East Turmoil Spearheaded by the Youth, Not Political Parties

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YOGYAKARTA - The index of human development and income per capita is not the guarantee to prevent political upheavals. Middle Eastern countries, such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iran, are rich countries yet they are volatile to upheavals because there is no freedom and democracy. "The volatility occurs because there really is no sense of justice, coupled with the economic crisis. Freedom is also non-existent. Human rights are also often violated," said Dr. Nasir Tamara DEA, DESS, at a public lecture 'Islam and Democracy: Understanding the Middle East Revolution', at the Graduate School of Gadjah Mada University, Tuesday (1/3).

The Chairman of the International Association of Indonesian Scientists (IA) also revealed that the Revolution in the Middle East was spearheaded by the youth, not at the initiative of a particular political party. In fact, the media, especially social networking media like facebook and twitter, also sped up the revolution.. "But the new media does not eliminate the old print and electronic media. They just complement it," said Nasir who was once a journalists.

So, the revolution in the Middle East may be assumed as a revolution without ideology, without leaders, and organizations. It is purely driven by the youth who are not satisfied with their lives. "In Egypt, for example, the number of unemployed university graduates is greater than that of primary school graduates," he said.

About 30 percent of Egypt's population is of productive age, 15-29 years old. And of that number, 25 percent is jobless. "Later, that condition ignited the revolution there," said Nasir.

In addition, the turmoil in the Middle East is a reaction to the violence for the sake of development conducted by the regime in power in recent decades. During their reign, the regime in several Middle Eastern countries are always conducting some policies on behalf of political stability and at the same time carry out the censorship of information. "For decades, they also monopolized power, limited only to the elite, or the family of these rulers," said Nasir.

Nasir argues, Indonesia has important role to become a model for the Middle Eastern countries as had been done by former president Sukarno, who served as a non-aligned movement figure. "As the largest Muslim country in the world that has the experience to face the political turmoil in 97-98 and managed to maintain the integrity of the State despite a couple of presidential successions,

Indonesia should become the example for Arab countries," he said.

What needs to be done by Indonesia is to translate the ideas of Indonesian thinkers in economic, political, social and cultural aspects into Arabic, not the other way around where currently Indonesia imports plenty of books from the Middle East.

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