

# Jeffrey Winters: Indonesia is a Democracy State Without Law

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Political observer from the University of Northwestern United States, Prof. Jeffrey Winters, assesses that Indonesia is a democratic state without law. The statement is based on his observation that after the fall of the Suharto regime, the democratic system in Indonesia has turned to the system of oligarchy. Consequently, laws which are expected to restrict and guard the government do not function at all.

"The effect of democracy without law is the criminal democracy. The law here actually submits to the authorities," said Jeffrey in Public Discussion of Oligarchy and Corruption: Perspectives of Political-Economy and Law at the UGM Faculty of Law, Friday (15/4).

Jeffrey added, although so far Indonesia has been known as a democratic country, even in some ways are more democratic than the U.S., ironically it also earned the title of one of the most corrupt countries. Proofs of democracy in Indonesia for instance are the direct presidential election system and the numerous political parties which are more in number than the U.S. political parties.

In his opinion, oligarchy is based more on money and wealth owned by a number of elite. While the elite are more widely supported due to their status, official position, the capacity of mobilization, and violence. There are some benign oligarchies, but some are wild. The impact of the oligarchy, in addition to laws that are subject to the ruler, is a figure that is more important than institutions.

"Despite their small number, oligarch controls laws and institutions. Oligarchy is based on money and wealth," said Jeffrey.

With the oligarchy, he admitted there are still many Indonesian people who want to return to the Suharto's New Order. At that time they thought the country's stability and prosperity were more settled.



"Suharto was indeed a dictator, but some people miss the atmosphere back in the New Order which they say was more comfortable and stable," said Jeffery who had once lived in Yogyakarta.

He also pointed out the reign of oligarchs system by the billions dollars of assets owned by Indonesians, even those living outside the country. In fact, some have a fortune reaching 25% of Indonesia's GDP. "The concentration of Indonesia's finance might be many times more compared to that of Thailand, Malaysia, and even Singapore," said Jeffrey.

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