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House revives plan to have more commissions

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- More House commissions may settle legislature's coalition rift
- Red-and-White willing to discuss proposal with Great Indonesia
- Current situation has caused deadlock and prevented House work

Lawmakers have revived a plan to increase the number of commissions at the House of Representatives, a move seen as an option to solve the ongoing conflict over leadership posts within the House's *internal* bodies between the two political coalitions vying for control of the legislative institution.

House Deputy Speaker Fahri Hamzah revealed the plan during a meeting of the House's steering committee (Bamus) on Monday that aimed to detail the working partners of each of the House's 11 existing commissions.

"More commissions can accommodate the demand from [the Great Indonesia Coalition]," Fahri, a politician from the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), told his audience.

If all agree, Fahri explained that the House could add three more commissions at most because of certain technicalities, such as the availability of meeting rooms.

"Nevertheless, we still need to comprehensively discuss the plan and we will definitely involve our friends from the KIH in the discussion," he emphasized.

Lawmakers from the Great Indonesia Coalition (KIH) have been in conflict for weeks with their colleagues from the Red-and-White Coalition, which controls the majority of House seats, preventing the House from being able to work properly since the beginning of the 2014-2019 House term last Oct. 1.

State officials, including President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla, have expressed concerns over the internal conflict in the House, calling on lawmakers from both coalitions to peacefully resolve the dispute in order to allow the executive and legislative bodies to continue work.

On Monday, Law and Human Rights Minister Yasonna Hamonangan Laoly reiterated that call.

"There are policies that need approval from the House. [The internal rift] hampers us from presenting our programs before the House," Yasonna said on the sidelines of a meeting at the Presidential Palace.

Having secured only 247 out of a total of 560 seats, members of the Great Indonesia Coalition — the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), the National Awakening Party (PKB), the NasDem Party and the Hanura Party — had lost all leadership posts within the legislature because of the implementation of a new voting mechanism during the selections.

The Islamic-based United Development Party (PPP), which is concurrently struggling to settle an internal rift over the party's chairmanship, has also officially joined the Great Indonesia Coalition although the rival Red-and-White Coalition has claimed the contrary.

Members from all five political factions within the Great Indonesia Coalition have been refusing to attend all meetings, including the Monday meetings, arranged by the current House's leaders and instead recently set up their own leadership and arranged their own meetings.

Despite a lack of legality to validate its move, the Great Indonesia Coalition insisted on staying out of all meetings but their own, until the Red-and-White Coalition agreed to implement a *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberation for consensus) for all leadership positions within the House's internal bodies, including the 11 existing commissions.

However, PDI-P deputy secretary general Ahmad Basarah applauded the initiative to increase the number of House commissions, although he did not immediately consent to it.

"I don't want to judge the plan in a rush, but I can see that it is a sign [from the Red-and-White Coalition] of a willingness to talk over the rift. We will take time to study it," Basarah said.

Separately, the Great Indonesia Coalition arranged a meeting on the same day to discuss the sharing of leadership posts according to the number of votes each party won during the legislative election last April.

Unlike the process set up by the Red-and-White Coalition last week for establishing leadership positions within the House's 16 internal bodies that left out all members of the Great Indonesia Coalition, the meeting agreed to tap lawmakers from all the 10 political factions for the positions.

According to the meeting, the PDI-P and Golkar will be granted the most posts as winners of the legislative election, with 12 and 11 posts respectively; the Gerindra Party will get eight and the Democratic Party seven.