

Judul : Golkar braces for Setya Novanto's fate in e-ID graft scandal
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Golkar braces for Setya's fate in e-ID graft scandal

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"Bambang, now is the time for you to take over [the leadership of] Golkar," former coordinating maritime affairs minister Rizal Ramli told the Golkar Party's senior member Bambang Soesatyo during the latter's book launch on Sunday.

The remarks made by Rizal, who was part of a panel to discuss the book, triggered laughter and applause from the audience, among whom were members of Golkar's executive board, including the party's secretary-general Idrus Marham and treasurer Robert Jopie Kardinal.

Questions surrounding the fate of Golkar's leadership after its chairman Setya Novanto was named a graft suspect by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), has attracted the attention of both Golkar politicians and outsiders, such as Rizal and political observers.

"Golkar is influential. It would

calls for change in Golkar leadership grow louder

Party's executive board refuses to hold congress to select Setya's successor

shameful if its leadership was too dirty," Rizal added.

In the discussion, both Idrus and Robert appeared unhappy with Rizal's remarks, while Bambang, who is also the chairman of the House of Representatives' law commission, rejected Rizal's idea.

Setya's critics and supporters are now bracing for the outcome of an upcoming pretrial case lodged by Setya to challenge the KPK's decision to name him a suspect in the (e-ID) graft case.

One of Setya's harshest critics and leader of the party's youth wing, the Golkar Youth Movement Group (GMPG), Ahmad Doli Kurnia Tandjung, said that he and GMPG would closely monitor the pretrial process by attending every hearing to ensure

the judges' impartiality.

"We have also met with the Judicial Commission, which has formed a special team to monitor the pretrial [hearings]," Doli said.

The South Jakarta District Court is slated to start hearing Setya's pretrial case on Tuesday, a day after the KPK is set to question Setya for the first time as a suspect.

Setya had twice failed to meet the KPK's summons for questioning as a witness in a graft case that reportedly caused Rp 2.3 trillion (US\$174.8 million) in state losses.

Doli called on the KPK to prove that it is able to maintain professionalism in investigating the e-ID case, including when questioning Setya. He went as far as calling for Setya's arrest.

"It will show that the antigraft body is handling the case seriously," emphasized Doli, who was recently dismissed from Golkar over his criticism against Setya's leadership.

The possibility of Setya's arrest appeared to spark concerns among Golkar's elite, with Idrus signaling that the party is bracing

for Setya's absence.

However, Idrus immediately played down speculations about an internal power struggle, saying that Setya's case would have little impact on Golkar as a party.

"We have a system," Idrus said. "The party will continue running properly despite what happens [to Setya]."

Idrus recalled an incident in 2002 when then chairman Akbar Tandjung was imprisoned for embezzling State Logistics Agency (Bulog) funds.

"No one replaced [Akbar] although he was in jail," Idrus said.

He reiterated the stance of Golkar's executive board in refusing to hold an extraordinary congress to select Setya's successor, saying: "The executive chairman [Nurdin Halid] and secretary-general would still be in charge of day-to-day operations."

However, calls for a congress have grown louder, with senior members such as Akbar and Agung Laksono campaigning for a change in Golkar's leadership.