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KPK braces for fiercer attacks

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The beleaguered Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has upped the ante against seasoned politician Setya Novanto, as he in turn launched legal maneuvers aimed at sending the antigraft body's leaders to jail.

The KPK announced on Friday it had, for the second time, named House of Representatives Speaker Setya, who is also Golkar Party chairman, a suspect in the high-profile graft case surrounding the national electronic ID program, which it is estimated to have caused state losses of Rp 2.3 trillion (US\$170 million).

"After conducting an examination, finding sufficient preliminary evidence and holding a case screening, the KPK has decided to issue a *sprindik* [a letter ordering an investigation] on Oct. 31 on the suspect SN," KPK deputy chairman Saut Situmorang told a press conference at the KPK headquarters in South Jakarta on Friday, referring to Setya.

Hours earlier, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, who has previously avoided commenting on the case, made a rare move by warning the National Police not to prosecute KPK leaders if there was not sufficient evidence to jus-

Jokowi warns police not to probe KPK leaders without evidence

KPK names Setya suspect in e-ID graft case for second time

tify such a move.

Jokowi's statement was viewed as a morale boost for the KPK, which could see chairman Agus Raharjo and his deputy Saut suspended following a police investigation into a report by one of Setya's lawyers.

The police are investigating allegations that Agus and Saut falsified documents surrounding a travel ban request the KPK sent to the immigration office against Setya in the latter's capacity as a witness in the e-ID graft case.

"We cannot afford to have [prosecutions] without evidence and facts," Jokowi told reporters at Halim Perdikusuma Air Force Base in East Jakarta shortly before flying to Vietnam, commenting on the police's investigation.

The statement came one day after the National Police chief Gen. Tito Karnavian confirmed that the police had begun to probe Agus and Saut, but claimed that the two had not been named suspects yet.

According to the 2002 KPK

Law, any KPK leader who is named a suspect shall be suspended from his or her position.

Setya's lawyer has also reported the KPK's director of investigation Brig. Gen. Aris Budiman and 24 investigators to the police, but it is not known whether the police are also probing them.

When asked about Jokowi's warning against the criminalization of KPK leaders, the National Police's Insp. Gen. Setyo Wasisto said the police would comply. "We will follow [the instruction] because the President is the highest leader [of the country]," Setyo told *The Jakarta Post*.

Separately, Saut said the President's signal of support for the KPK was in line with the Jokowi administration's anticorruption agenda.

According to Saut, the letter to request a travel ban against Setya was signed by five leaders of the antigraft body. The issuance was also in line with the 2002 KPK Law.

Saut added that he would accept it if he was named a suspect. "It's okay. It's part of the anticorruption struggle [...] If the evidence can prove that we should be named suspects, then simply prove it," Saut said.

In response to the KPK's latest move, Setya's lawyer Fredrich Yuniadi went to the National Police's Criminal Investigation Depart-

ment in Jakarta to make a report against Saut.

"The KPK is in contempt of court," Fredrich told the *Post*, adding that he accused the KPK of having violated Article 414 of the Criminal Code on defying court rulings.

Fredrich said he would also file another pretrial motion against the KPK's decision to rename Setya a suspect in the e-ID case.

On Sept. 29, the South Jakarta District Court approved Setya's pretrial motion and annulled his suspect status in the case.

KPK spokesperson Febri Dian-syah said the antigraft body would stand ready to face a further legal battle should Setya launch another pretrial motion.

"The KPK will continue investigating the alleged roles of [Setya] and other parties [...] We plan to summon witnesses," Febri said on Friday.

Transparency International Indonesia secretary-general Dadang Trisasongko urged the KPK to accelerate the investigation into Setya in a bid to prevent Setya from dodging prosecution again. The KPK should learn from the first pretrial ruling that, he alleged, let Setya off the hook.

"This a crucial opportunity for the KPK to prove its credibility and performance," he said.