

**Judul** : New House May Push through Controversial Bills  
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## New House may push through controversial bills

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The newly inaugurated House of Representatives members are planning to continue deliberation of the revision of laws left unfinished during the 2019-2024 term. This includes the controversial revision of regulations governing the National Police and the Indonesian Military (TNI), much to the concern of civil groups.

On Tuesday, 580 House lawmakers, more than half of whom were incumbent members, were inaugurated in Jakarta, marking the start of their tenure for the 2024-2029 period.

While claiming it was still too early to discuss the legislative body's plan for the next five years, lawmaker Ahmad Doli Kurnia of the Golkar Party said that the revision process of the National Police and TNI laws would continue.

"I believe the law revisions that were not finished in the previous period will be continued in this term," said Doli, who chaired House Commission II overseeing home affairs in the previous term.

The government gave a green-light in June for the House to start formal deliberations to revise the TNI and National Police laws. But both bills drew strong

opposition from critics who claimed that the proposed revisions would enable both forces to abuse their authority and facilitate the military's return to civilian affairs.

The House Legislation Body (Baleg) eventually postponed the process for both revisions in late August, stopping short of explaining the reason. The body chair Wihadi Wiyanto of the Gerindra Party later said in late August that the House was still weighing the urgency of revising the two laws and waiting for the problem inventory list (DIM) from the government.

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### **Troubling laws**

Usman Hamid of human rights group Amnesty International Indonesia said that revisions of the TNI and Police laws "could harm human rights".

"If the House really plans to continue the bills' deliberation under the next government, there needs to be a total overhaul of the provisions in those bills," Usman said on Tuesday.

Among the articles slammed by critics are those which would raise police officers' retirement age from 58 to "between 60 and 65" and extending the National Police chief's tenure indefinitely. The TNI Law revision also proposed a similar change on the retirement of personnel.

Civil groups also criticized new provisions which would allow the TNI greater involvement in government agencies, as well as giving the police wider au-

thority to conduct surveillance and intelligence work.

Moeldoko, the presidential chief of staff of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's administration, dismissed such concerns, noting that the public could always report cases of abuse found in both forces.

The two law revisions were among many controversial bills being pushed in the legislature before the previous lawmakers' tenure ended on Monday and president-elect Prabowo Subianto succeeds Jokowi on Oct. 20.

Should the new lawmakers decide to move forward with the revisions, the House may also see an amendment to the 2002 Broadcasting Law passed in the future. The plan to revise the law was criticized by those who claim the amendment may curb freedom of the press.

"Among the many contentious articles, the House would have to revise a provision banning ex-

clusive broadcasting of investigative journalism content," said Bayu Wardhana, secretary-general of the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI).

The article providing the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) overlapping authority with the Press Council would also require further discussion, he added.

### **Checks and balances**

Usman also warned the House to prioritize meaningful public participation in deliberations of the controversial bills. Without such participation, the bills could "weaken the House's function" as a legislative body.

Lawmakers in the 2019-2024 term garnered criticism for providing weak checks and balances to the executive power, particularly by passing bills benefiting Jokowi's current administration and Prabowo's incoming one without considering the public's concerns.

Before their inauguration, the newly elected House members already raised civil groups' concerns about being unable to provide opposition to Prabowo's presidency, with all but one party at the House having declared their support for the administration of the incoming president.

Doli of Golkar dismissed such concerns.

"Prabowo and political party elites are committed to building the nation together, and the [checks and balances] will be evident in their dialogue and debates," he said.

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), which holds the most House seats with 110 lawmakers, is the only party that has declared its opposition to Prabowo's government.

Its politician Puan Maharani, who is also the daughter of party matron Megawati Soekarnoputri, was reelected House speaker on Tuesday.