



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Indonesia

April 2026

Context

Period covered by this report: November 2025 – April 2026

Indonesia's civic space remains under pressure following the political transition after the 2024 presidential election and the nationwide protests that erupted in August 2025. The demonstrations were triggered by economic grievances and public dissatisfaction with government policies. The situation escalated after the death of a motorcycle taxi driver during clashes between protesters and police, [sparking unrest across several major cities](#).

Authorities responded with a large-scale security response to the protest, while public debates on governance, economic inequality, and democratic accountability continued to shape Indonesia's socio-political environment. At the same time, Aceh and several other regions in Sumatra were [severely affected by floods and landslides linked to deforestation and environmental degradation](#) in upstream watershed areas, causing significant humanitarian impacts and displacement. [Civil society organisations played an important role](#) in emergency response, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy related to disaster mitigation and environmental protection, as well as [ongoing logistical and resource challenges](#).

Indonesia's civic space continues to be rated as "[obstructed](#)," reflecting persistent restrictions on freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, as well as harassment and intimidation of activists and journalists.

At the same time, civil society organisations remain active in advocating for human rights, environmental protection, gender equality, and governance reforms. However, tensions between state authorities and civic actors continue to shape the enabling environment for civil society.

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

Fundamental freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly are guaranteed under [Indonesia's Constitution](#). However, their implementation remains inconsistent, particularly in the context of public protests and political dissent.

Concerns over the safety of human rights defenders have increased. In March 2026, human rights activist Andrie Yunus from the organisation KontraS was severely injured in an acid attack following criticism of the expanding role of the military in civilian affairs. The [attack](#) has been widely condemned as an attempt to intimidate civil society actors and silence dissent.

The implementation of the new Criminal Code (KUHP) in January 2026 has generated significant concern among legal experts and civil society groups. [Critics argue that provisions criminalising insults against the president and government](#) institutions could be used to limit freedom of expression and prosecute activists or journalists.

Legal provisions related to public order and incitement have also been used to charge individuals involved in protests. [Amnesty International has documented](#) cases in which activists were prosecuted for participating in peaceful demonstrations or for expressing online support for protest movements.

Civil society organisations also point to ongoing gaps in the legal protection of [human rights defenders, including women's rights defenders](#). Activists frequently report harassment, intimidation, and legal threats linked to their advocacy work.

These developments contribute to a growing chilling effect on civic participation and public dissent.

2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework

Indonesia's legal framework generally [allows individuals and groups to establish civil society organisations \(CSOs\)](#), both as foundations and associations. Government data [from November 2025](#) recorded more than 636,000 registered mass organisations (ormas), with approximately 40,000 new organisations registered within the previous six months. However, the 2017 Perppu on Mass Organisations and provisions under the Ormas Law continue to blur the distinction between foundations, associations, and broader societal organisations ("ormas"), [creating legal ambiguity and potentially treating all civil society organisations](#) under a single regulatory framework.

In practice, administrative and structural barriers continue to affect the registration process. Administrative procedures and legal requirements often pose challenges, particularly for small and community-based organisations with limited resources. As a result, many organisations choose not to formally register unless legal status is required for cooperation with government institutions or donors.

There are also indications of discriminatory barriers affecting certain groups. Organisations working on sensitive issues, [including LGBTIQ+ rights](#), have reportedly faced difficulties obtaining legal recognition, including obstacles during notarial registration processes.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

Funding accessibility for Indonesian civil society remains a persistent challenge. While larger organisations with established donor relationships continue to access international funding, grassroots organisations and advocacy groups face increasing financial constraints.

Over the past several years, the availability of international funding for civil society organisations in Indonesia has declined as development assistance shifts toward lower-income countries. This trend has significantly affected local advocacy organisations, particularly [women-led groups and grassroots movements that depend heavily on donor support for human rights, gender equality, and community organising initiatives](#).

Civil society actors increasingly emphasise the need to diversify funding sources, including domestic philanthropy, collaborative funding mechanisms, and innovative financing approaches to sustain long-term advocacy work. However, such alternatives remain limited and unevenly distributed across organisations.

4. Open and responsive state

Relations between civil society and government institutions in Indonesia remain complex and often inconsistent.

Civil society organisations continue to participate in consultations and multi-stakeholder initiatives on issues such as development planning, environmental governance, and human rights protection. However, many organisations report that [engagement often occurs late in the policymaking process](#), limiting meaningful influence over final decisions.

Concerns regarding transparency and meaningful public participation increased following [government decisions related to the reallocation of village funds and political appointments linked to the village governance sector](#). Civil society groups criticised the process for lacking transparency and meaningful consultation with affected stakeholders, raising broader concerns regarding accountability and inclusive policymaking.

[Government responses to protests and public criticism](#) have reinforced perceptions of a hostile stance towards civil society. International monitoring organisations have expressed concern that security-oriented responses to protests may undermine democratic participation and accountability.

Despite these challenges, some opportunities for dialogue remain through partnerships between civil society networks, academic institutions, and government agencies.

5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

Civil society organisations continue to play an important role in shaping public discourse on democracy, social justice, environmental protection, and governance reforms in Indonesia. However, public narratives surrounding civil society have become increasingly polarised, particularly toward organisations working on politically sensitive issues.

Civil society organisations critical of the Prabowo Subianto administration have increasingly been targeted by online campaigns portraying them as [agents of foreign interests](#). Narratives linking [civil society groups to figures such as George Soros](#) have been widely circulated in digital spaces, particularly following [President Prabowo's February 2026 statement](#) warning of foreign actors seeking to divide the nation and undermine his policies. These narratives have contributed to the stigmatisation of activists and government critics, who are increasingly framed as threats to national unity and stability, narrowing space for open and constructive public discourse.

Public discussions surrounding floods and landslides affecting [Aceh and several regions in Sumatra](#) also reflected tensions in civic space and public perceptions of civil society organisations. While [CSOs played an important role in humanitarian response](#) and community assistance, [some volunteers and advocacy groups reportedly faced intimidation and delegitimisation efforts](#) during relief activities in Aceh. These incidents reflected broader patterns of delegitimisation toward civil society actors engaged in humanitarian and advocacy work, contributing to increased pressure on community-based organisations and activists.

Concerns regarding equality and inclusive participation also persisted, particularly for LGBTIQ+ communities. [Civil society organisations warned](#) that provisions under the new Criminal Code (KUHP), including regulations related to morality and cohabitation, could disproportionately affect LGBTIQ+ individuals and contribute to increasing stigmatisation. [Online hate campaigns and discriminatory narratives](#) targeting LGBTIQ+ communities also functioned not only as expressions of hate speech but also as tools for organising public intimidation and social exclusion.

6. Access to a secure digital environment

Digital space remains a critical arena for civic engagement in Indonesia, but it is increasingly contested. [Civil society organisations rely heavily on digital platforms](#) to coordinate activities, mobilise supporters, and disseminate information. [However, the online environment is characterised by surveillance, online harassment, and regulatory pressures.](#)

Human rights defenders also [report increased digital attacks](#), including doxing, hacking attempts, and online harassment campaigns. These attacks often target activists working on politically sensitive issues such as corruption, environmental protection, and human rights accountability.

Legal frameworks governing digital expression also contribute to an insecure online environment. [The Electronic Information and Transactions \(ITE\) Law](#) continues to be used in defamation cases against activists and critics, while new provisions under the Criminal Code may further expand restrictions on online speech. In April 2026, [SAFEnet reported](#) a significant increase in digital rights violations, warning that the new Criminal Code and the growing use of artificial intelligence technologies could pose serious threats to freedom of expression, privacy, and digital civic space in Indonesia.

Although Indonesia has adopted a [personal data protection law](#), enforcement remains limited, and civil society organisations continue to express concerns about digital surveillance and the protection of sensitive information.

Challenges and opportunities

In the coming months, Indonesian civil society is likely to face continued challenges related to legal restrictions, security risks, and financial sustainability.

The enforcement of the new Criminal Code may increase legal risks for activists and organisations engaged in advocacy and public criticism of government policies. Combined with ongoing surveillance and intimidation, these developments may discourage civic participation and limit public debate.

Violence against human rights defenders and the rise of digital attacks also remain pressing concerns for the safety and resilience of civil society actors.

However, opportunities remain for strengthening the enabling environment. Civil society coalitions continue to mobilise around key issues such as environmental protection, democratic accountability, and the protection of human rights defenders. Multi-stakeholder

initiatives and open government platforms also provide limited but important spaces for engagement.

Strengthening international solidarity, expanding domestic funding mechanisms, and improving digital security capacities will be crucial for enabling civil society organisations to address emerging challenges and sustain their work in the coming months.



EU SEE

SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



Funded by
the European Union

