

International Commission of Jurists Victoria

Victorian Bar Association

Media Release

Australia's association with the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (**YLBHI**) and the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (**LBH**) dates back to the mid-1960s when the founder of those organisations, Adnan Buyung Nasution, worked in the Victorian court system before returning to Indonesia to become a leading human rights and pro-democracy campaigner. Since then, under the auspices of the Victorian Bar and the International Commission of Jurists Victoria (**ICJV**), five other LBH-YLBHI human rights lawyers have participated in an educational exchange program designed to enhance an understanding of the Rule of Law and provide advocacy training.

LBH-YLBHI are highly respected organisations, well known in Australia for pioneering the provision of legal aid and the promotion of democracy and human rights in Indonesia.

On 16th September 2017, a peaceful public forum organised by LBH to discuss well-documented human rights abuses under the Suharto regime was forcibly broken up by police, and the headquarters of YLBHI was subjected to a police raid. On 17th September 2017, the headquarters of YLBHI were attacked by protestors during an evening musical performance and peaceful protest against the previous day's police raid. Attendees were subject to violence and death

threats until 5:00 am on 18th September 2017. Since then, LBH-YLBHI has been forced to temporarily close its Jakarta office.

It is of great concern to ICJV and the Victorian Bar to learn that LBH-YLBHI have been subjected to a raid by police and mob violence in the course of carrying out legitimate and lawful activities in the service of human rights.

Freedom of association and freedom of speech are protected by international law including under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art 19 and 20) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art 19 and 22). Those fundamental human rights are also protected by Art 28 of the Indonesian Constitution. The capacity of Indonesians to exercise those rights is vital to Indonesia's democracy.

ICJV and the Victorian Bar support a vibrant democracy for Indonesia and wish to continue our cooperative and fraternal relations with like-minded Indonesian organisations such as LBH-YLBHI. We respectfully call upon President Widodo and the Indonesian authorities to fulfil their legal obligations under the Constitution and the ICCPR and protect the fundamental civil rights of LBH-YLBHI, its staff and supporters, and ensure that their voice may be heard free of intimidation and violent reprisal.



**The Hon Justice Mordecai Bromberg
President,
International Commission of Jurists**



**Jennifer Batrouney QC
President,
Victorian Bar Association**