

3.8. Indonesia

At the time of writing, Indonesia had entered a new phase of its still young democracy. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (popularly known as SBY) was to be inaugurated on 20 October 2004 as the first directly elected president since Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945. The country successfully held its first direct presidential election following a more complex parliamentary election earlier in the same year. Indonesia, with a population of more than 220 million, is now the third largest democratic nation after India and the United States.

The 2004 presidential election was the continuation of Indonesia's long reform process, which started in 1998 after the fall of the 32-year New Order regime under President Soeharto. The severe economic and financial crisis that hit the country in 1997 was the catalyst for these changes. The reforms have included a more decentralised government system, a more democratic electoral system, improved treatment of minorities, an increasing awareness of civil rights, a decreasing role for the military in civil life, and last but not least increasing freedom of expression as well as freedom of the press.

As a result of the reform process, freedom of the press has become a more important component of Indonesia's democratisation process. By and large, the media is able to report freely without the blatant censorship and repression that occurred during the New Order period. The media also has greater access to many news resources and there is no longer a single, co-opted journalists' organisation.

I. General Conditions

In general, the Indonesian media well understands the role it should play, although further improvement will depend on the continuing increase in literacy that Indonesia has experienced over the last ten years. Statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics, or Biro Pusat Statistik (BPS), for the year 2000 indicate 89.92 per cent literacy among those aged 10 years or older. There has been a consistent increase in literacy rates rising from 87.26 per cent in 1994 to 89.07 per cent in 1997.¹ Such high levels of literacy make it easier for more Indonesians to follow the news, including the news

Illiteracy
and education

¹ BPS: *Social Welfare Statistics*. www.bps.go.id.

about democratisation. This contrasts sharply with the situation at the onset of the New Order of Soeharto in 1966 when most Indonesians were living in rural areas with accompanying lower levels of literacy. At that time, there were similarly high public expectations of more democracy under Soeharto after the Guided Democracy years of his predecessor, Soekarno. Those expectations were ultimately dashed.

- Local media After the fall of Soeharto, the third Indonesian President B.J. Habibie did away with the requirement for all publications to have a SIUPP or a publishing licence. This marked the introduction of freedom of the press in Indonesia. Since then, there has been a proliferation of media, mostly newspapers, tabloids and magazines.
- Radio The number of radio and TV stations has increased. Until 2002, there were 873 radio stations. This figure includes the 50 state-owned stations of RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia), 682 commercial radio stations, 8 non-commercial radio stations, and 133 radio stations owned by local governments.²
- TV New TV stations have also emerged. In 2003, 11 TV stations broadcast nationally – 10 private television channels and one state-owned, TVRI. The ten private television channels were ANTV, Global TV, Indosiar, RCTI, SCTV, Lativi, TPI, Trans TV, Metro TV and TV7. In addition, since new broadcasting regulations allowed for locally based TV stations, many have begun to operate, including JTV (Surabaya), Riau TV, Bali TV, Makassar TV, Manado TV, Pacific TV (Manado), Bunaken TV (Manado), Aceh TV, Borobudur TV (Central Java) and Eskape TV (Banyuwangi), among others.
- Print Until 2003, there were 186 daily newspapers including first tier newspapers³ such as *Kompas*, *Koran Tempo*, *Media Indonesia*, *Republika* and *Suara Pembaruan*. There were also 245 weekly newspapers, 279 tabloids, 242 magazines, and 5 bulletins.⁴
- Media ownership Despite the establishment of new media companies, however, there have been no significant changes in the concentration of ownership in the industry. Big media

² *Media Scene 2002 – 2003. The official Guide to Advertising Media in Indonesia*, p. 86.

³ An Indonesian term that refers to quality or national newspapers.

⁴ SPS (Serikat Penerbit Surat Kabar) or the Newspaper Publisher Association.

groups such as the Tempo Group (*Tempo* magazine and *Koran Tempo*), Gramedia (*Kompas*, *The Jakarta Post*, and TV7), and the Media Group (*Media Indonesia*, Metro TV) continue to play significant roles. The same groups, which have close relations with Soeharto's family, also own the big TV stations like RCTI and Global TV. The high investment and operational costs are two reasons why only a few business groups can establish and sustain a strong media presence.

Owners of some forms of media have close relations with political parties. Surya Paloh, the owner of the Media Group that operates the *Media Indonesia* newspaper and Metro TV, is a prominent member of the Golkar party. He was one of a number of failed candidates running in Golkar's 2004 convention for the party's presidential candidate, which was eventually won by former army chief General (ret.) Wiranto. During the days of the convention, Paloh frequently appeared on Metro TV, both in commercials and in the news. Aburizal Bakrie, the owner of the Bakrie Group, which owns ANTV, was also a Golkar party member who ran to be the party's presidential candidate. Unlike Paloh, Bakrie rarely appeared on his TV station. The deputy chairman of the Golkar Party, Agung Laksono, also owned shares in ANTV, which meant that the majority of the TV station's shares were held by Golkar members.⁵

RCTI similarly has close relations with Golkar, as the TV station is owned by Bimantara, a conglomerate group founded by Soeharto's son Bambang Trihatmodjo. Nevertheless, RCTI and ANTV do not necessarily represent the owner's view or the party's interest. Indeed, it was often those TV stations that criticised the policies of Golkar and the New Order regime.

Among the printed media, the Golkar party also owned the newspaper *Suara Karya*, which, during the Soeharto years, had prospered. While it is still published daily, its popularity has faded. In recent years since the fall of Soeharto, the National Mandate Party (PAN) has published the tabloid *Amanat*, dedicated to promoting the views of Amien Rais, the party's chairman who was a presidential candidate in the 2004 presidential election. The tabloid has since stopped operating.

⁵ Aburizal Bakrie has recently been appointed Coordinating Minister for the Economy under SBY's administration, while Agung Laksono has become Speaker of the Parliament.

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| Internet media | While the number of Indonesians using the Internet is presently only about 8 million people, the Internet has nevertheless become a growing alternative for finding information. As a censor-free and non-regulated information source, the Internet plays an important role in freedom of expression. Prior to the fall of Soeharto, pro-democratic activists used the Internet for exchanging and disseminating information. Some popular TV and radio programmes that were banned by the Soeharto regime because of their criticism of the regime, like 'Perspektif', which was broadcasted on SCTV, also turned to the Internet to continue their criticism after the ban. ⁶ Today, some Internet newspapers like detik.com, Kompas Cyber Media (KCM), and Tempo Interactive are updated daily. Detik.com is recognised as a first-tier publication thanks to its accuracy, the speed of updating, and the variety of coverage. Many radio stations or even first-tier newspapers like <i>Kompas</i> occasionally make use of its coverage. |
| Media access Radio, Print, TV, Internet | Despite the crucial role of the printed media, Indonesian audiences prefer to watch television. Based on BPS statistics, more than 87.97 per cent of the Indonesian population aged 10 years and older have access to television. This percentage is far higher than those who have access to radio, which is only 43.72 per cent, and to newspapers and magazines, which is only 17.47 per cent. Meanwhile, those who have access to the Internet make up only 5 per cent of the total Indonesian population. |
| Media consumption Radio, Print, TV, Internet | Television [<u>very often</u> : 4] is becoming the most frequently used source of information for Indonesians. Behind television come both radio [<u>often</u> : 3] and newspapers [<u>often</u> : 3] as the most utilised sources of information. Verbal information is also <u>often</u> [3] used as a source of information, including information from traditional leaders or religious leaders, especially during religious occasions or ceremonies. The government often uses such occasions to pass information to the public. In general though, the Internet is <u>almost never</u> [1] used as a source of information except among those living in large cities such as Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya. |
| Media influence on political opinion | The more often people use the media to acquire information, the more powerful the media is in forming political opinion. Television is <u>highly significant</u> [4] in the formation of |

⁶ Article 19: *Muted Voices: censorship and the broadcast media in Indonesia*, London 1996.

political opinion, as can be seen in the case of the rise of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and his party, Partai Demokrat. He became widely known by the general public in the space of a few months as a result of being publicly insulted by President Megawati's husband Taufik Kiemas.⁷ The slur was televised on a daily basis, creating public sympathy for Yudhoyono. Such a quick public impression can only be created by television, as people can see the expressions of the people involved in the incident. His party, Partai Demokrat, despite being less than two years old, managed to win 56 parliamentary seats in the legislative election.

After television, radio and newspapers share secondary importance in the formation of political opinion. Both radio and newspapers have significant influence [3] and are relatively equal in their effectiveness, with the Internet having rather little influence [2] compared to the other sources. Verbal information also carries rather little sway [2] over the formation of public opinion, although people often use it as a source of information. Oral political campaigns [rather little influence: 2] using religious leaders or traditional leaders are considered ineffective, because people now have direct access to the modern media such as television, radio and newspapers.

The credibility of certain informal leaders has also decreased, particularly when they become active in the political arena. Indonesians view the media as more objective than their informal leaders whom they perceive as having special interests connected to certain political parties or candidates. During the 2004 presidential election, President Megawati tried to benefit from Indonesia's biggest Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) by appointing the organisation's chairman as her vice-presidential candidate. She hoped that the internal communication process within the NU could help her win the potential 20 million votes represented by NU. Her tactics were proven wrong as most of the NU votes went to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono due to his widely favourable media coverage.⁸

⁷ Mr Taufik said Yudhoyono should stop behaving like a child after Yudhoyono complained that the announcement of his presidential aspirations had resulted in his exclusion from cabinet meetings. Gobel, Ruddy: 'SBY: Indon's next president?', *Today Singapore*, 8 April 2004.

⁸ *The Jakarta Post*: 'Media boosts Susilo's win: Experts', 23 September 2004.

State-owned media
Contrary to what might be expected, the editorial news from TVRI (the state television) and RRI (the state radio) does not necessarily represent the government view, even though both TVRI and RRI provide generous coverage of government activities. The relatively independent policy of TVRI and RRI is supported by the newly implemented broadcasting law that states that both TVRI and RRI should be transformed from state-owned media into public media. The broadcasting law also allows TVRI to seek alternative funds from advertisements, which also makes it more financially independent.

While the government still has the authority to appoint the management of both TVRI and RRI, the new broadcasting law forbids government intervention. The state-owned news agency Antara is also relatively independent in reporting news. In the case of reporting conflicts in Aceh, however, TVRI and RRI often reported news slanted in favour of the Indonesian military or government policy in Aceh. But it is difficult to say whether both networks were representing the government's views, as it is hard to work without military cooperation and the embedded journalist method as utilised by the US military during the war in Iraq.

A report from the European Union election monitoring mission indicated that during the legislative election and the first round of the 2004 presidential election, TVRI and RRI broadcast news and images of the ruling party PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) and incumbent candidate (President Megawati Soekarnoputri) twice as often as other parties or candidates. The same was true of other TV and radio stations, though, because the ruling party PDIP and the incumbent candidate spent more money on advertising and organised more media and public events.⁹ We can conclude both that the state-owned media is close to the government as well as that there is also almost no difference in the way RRI and TVRI report their news including the events they cover, the people they interview and the angle of their reports.

State-owned media and published opinion
However, even if the state-owned media were still representing the government's view [close to government: +1], the effectiveness of these sectors of the media in determining published and broadcast opinion is now very limited. The private media are more powerful in influencing

⁹ European Union Election Monitoring Mission: *Monitoring report*, Jakarta 2004. www.id.eueom.org/media_result_press_id.html.

public opinion [hegemony of private media]. Private TV stations like Metro TV, SCTV and Trans TV are leading the way in reporting and broadcasting opinion. There are many private radio stations which now have their own national networks such as Trijaya FM, Delta FM, or KBR 68H, which are at the top in radio broadcasting. TVRI and RRI have been losing their audiences since the introduction of private TV stations and radio stations and their more attractive programming.

During the Soeharto years, it was enough for the government to use TVRI and RRI as its medium of communication. But since the introduction of freedom of the press and the increasing role of the private media, the government needs to use all sectors of the media effectively. The government should optimise the use of press conferences, press briefings, release distributions and other modern public relations approaches. Some government departments have regular media events to keep journalists up to date with information. The foreign affairs ministry, for example, has its 'weekly morning coffee meeting' series where the minister and his spokesperson disseminate information to the media and as well as maintain relations with them. TV and radio stations also often do live broadcasting at important events dedicated to the media.

Government
press
conferences

II. Legal Environment

Although freedom of the press has greatly improved in the newly democratic Indonesia, the fear of legal action is still present. There have been, for example, a number of legal cases against several members of the Indonesian media. The most current cases are those against the *Rakyat Merdeka* newspaper and *Tempo* magazine. Two editors of *Rakyat Merdeka* were brought to court for allegedly insulting then Parliamentary Speaker Akbar Tandjung and President Megawati Soekarnoputri. The Chief Editor of *Tempo* magazine together with several journalists of *Tempo* also appeared in court on charges of libel brought by businessman Tomy Winata after they reported that the businessman was involved in a fire that had razed the giant textile market of Tanah Abang.¹⁰

Freedom of
expression

¹⁰ Amnesty International (AI): *Indonesia Press Freedom Under Threat*, London 2003.

Media coverage Prior to the 1998 reform, members of the Indonesian media were constantly in danger of being closed down by the government. In the Soeharto years, the government shut down a number of publications including *Tempo* magazine, *Sinar Harapan* (a daily newspaper), *Tabloid Detak*, and the *Editor* magazine. The first two began republishing after the reform. Journalists were also often accused of subversion or insulting the president.

Regulation of media coverage The constitution states that Indonesian citizens are guaranteed freedom of expression. However, it also says that the freedom to express an opinion, either verbally, written or in any form is regulated by the law.¹¹ For example, a journalist can be put in jail because of ‘insulting’ the president or vice president based on the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) as in the *Rakyat Merdeka* case. Another example is the charge of vilification in the *Tempo* case where the district court central in Jakarta gave a one-year sentence to the chief editor of the magazine based on the Criminal Code.

The Criminal Code itself, including the articles that criminalise ‘insulting the president or vice president’, does not conform to international human rights standard according to Amnesty International. In practice, however, the use of the Criminal Code in Indonesian law supersedes the use of the Press Law No. 40/1999. In total, there are 37 articles in the Criminal Code which cover crimes that could potentially send journalists to jail including, insulting behaviour and vilification.

According to some legal experts, the press law should be used against journalists or other sectors of the media, rather than other laws in the Criminal Code. The press law stands alone and is meant for cases where the press is involved. However, the law has not been implemented well because of a lack of understanding of the function of press freedom, and a lack of knowledge among Indonesian law enforcers (police, lawyers and judges), who are ill informed about the press law.

Press Law No. 40/1999 not only regulates the practice of journalism, but also protects Indonesian journalists while carrying out their work. The law confirms, in Article 2, that freedom of the press is an embodiment of the sovereignty of the people, based upon principles of democracy, justice, and

¹¹ Indonesian Constitution: Articles 28(1) and 28(2).

legal supremacy. Article 4 also states that freedom of the press is guaranteed as a human right of all citizens. Under their human rights, journalists have a legal right to challenge state repression and the court has the potential to stop it. This, however, has yet to be tested.

In protecting a journalist's work, the law also affirms that in carrying out their profession, journalists are protected by the law and have the right to seek, acquire and disseminate ideas and information. The law states that journalists have to adhere to a code of ethics that is overseen by an independent Press Council.

No state permit or licences of any kind are required to practise journalism. In order to work, journalists only need to have an identity card (ID) from their branch of the media. Journalists who regularly work in areas such as the parliament building and the state palace are asked to register in order to obtain a specific identity card. Registered journalists receive regular invitations, press releases and other notifications of events. Nonetheless, those who have not been registered can still carry out their tasks in those areas. In short, journalists have the equal right to access and participate in all public meetings held by the government and Parliament, and they can freely report on or broadcast these events.

The press law allows the press to work independently, with the ethical code forming the boundaries of what they can do. There is also no restriction in accessing information except in the area of banking and finance, where the Central Bank law restricts access to a bank account. The press law even encourages the media to perform investigative journalism, as anyone who violates the law by deliberately hindering or preventing the journalists from doing their job may face imprisonment for up to two years or a fine of up to 500 million rupiahs (about US\$53,000). There are no bodies or commissions that 'regulate' media coverage at a national level or on the local level, as happened in the past when the communications ministry or DEPPEN played a significant role in censoring and regulating the coverage of the media.¹² Press Law No. 40/1999 not only explicitly states the 'no

¹² DEPPEN stands for Departemen Penerangan. When President Soeharto was in power, DEPPEN was a ministry that had the power to regulate media coverage and issue publishing licences, and even the authority to close down a media outlet. DEPPEN was dissolved when Indonesia's fourth president Abdurrahman Wahid took power in 1999.

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| | <p>ensorship' principle for the Indonesian media, but also protects the media from being closed down by the government.</p> |
| Changes in the past five years | <p>With the existence of the press law, we can say that there has been a <u>strong improvement</u> [+2] in the legal environment of the media over the past five years. The problem in Indonesia, however, is not about having a good or bad press law; rather, the problem lies in the overall legal system, which includes weak law enforcement, incapable law enforcers (especially in understanding the substance of the law), and even buying favourable verdicts. In Indonesian legal practices, those who have more power and money can influence the trial process. This applies not only to press laws but also to many other laws. The ineffective implementation of the press law is also due to a lack of understanding among Indonesians of the role and function of the media, which, in turn, contributes to the lack of public support for the media.</p> |
| Censorship under the law | <p>There is no censorship under the law. Press Law No. 40/1999 states explicitly that there will be no censorship by any institutions.</p> |
| Media licences | <p>Just as journalist do not need a licence, the print media do not need a publishing licence. In the case of broadcasting (TV and radio), however, a broadcasting licence is still required. The licence is mostly for regulating broadcasting frequencies, and to ensure technical feasibility. The licence also aims to encourage the establishment of local TV stations to broaden the public's access to TV.</p> |
| Journalists' status | <p>Although there are many journalists who work on a freelance basis, most journalists are employees of the publications they work for. Some of the freelance journalists work for two or more publications at the same time. Some publications have two employment categories: permanent, which provides a more secure working relationship, and contract. As employees, journalists have to comply with their company's policy and regulations, which differ from one publication to the next, including whether or not a journalist has to be associated with a specific journalist organisation.</p> <p>During the Soeharto years, it was obligatory to be a member of the Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (PWI), the only journalist organisation. This was to allow Soeharto's administration to control journalists' work. Today,</p> |

journalists have several options since a number of journalist organisations have emerged including the well known Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (AJI), and PWI Reformasi. Another big difference is the range of salary and working facilities. First-tier publications like *Kompas*, offer a better remuneration package than do second tier ones, or even below that, publication companies. Levels of pay, however, definitely affect the quality of the journalists' work.

The high investment and operational costs are the main reason for the concentrated ownership in the Indonesian media industry. It might be connected to the fact that there is no specific regulation that prohibits cartel and monopoly practices in the media industry. However, there is an anti-monopoly and unfair practices law applicable to all kinds of industry.

Monopolies
and cartels

III. Political Conditions

The post-reform political changes have encouraged the development of democracy in Indonesia. Before 1998, ethnic minorities, especially the Chinese-Indonesians, did not receive much media coverage. This has changed, as many forms of ethnic Chinese cultural activity are now part of the public sphere. Several publications using Chinese characters are published, many TV and radio stations feature Chinese programmes, and there is extensive coverage of Chinese New Year celebrations. Metro TV is leading the way in broadcasting a news programme in Chinese, entitled Metro Xin Wen. The programme is broadcast daily and is increasingly popular among the Chinese-Indonesian community. Various ethnic, religious, and other social groups now receive media coverage. There is no particular sector of the population deliberately restricted by the state in their right to freedom of information.

Coverage of
marginal
groups

Since all social groups in Indonesia are well represented, the media reports and broadcasts on a wide variety of issues and themes. Political and economic issues are broadcast together with programmes on crime, violence, and entertainment. Coverage of crimes and violence, often including bloodshed, has relatively high ratings on some TV stations. In addition, sensationalism is common in the printed media. It seems that the Indonesian media, both printed and electronic, will cover anything commercially acceptable. This has now caused a backlash, with criticisms of reporting and broadcasting news. Ati Nurbaiti, a senior journalist from *The*

Jakarta Post, who was the head of the well-known Independent Journalists Associations or AJI, questioned the attitude of several members of the media in broadcasting the coverage of crimes or publishing sensational headlines, asking whether it was following the journalist code of ethics.¹³

Regular concern is now expressed in public that the media should do their job of educating the people. Hopes are high that the media will develop their own sense of responsibility and use self-censorship to stop reporting sensational headlines as well as reducing their coverage of crimes and violence. This may not happen soon, however, as most sectors of the media have to meet the market demand in order to pay for their high operational costs.

Self-censorship Although the press law protects the Indonesian media from censorship by the government or others, the media sometimes employ self-censorship, for example during the month of Ramadan when Indonesian Muslims are fasting. During that month, programmes with any sexual contents are not broadcast but are replaced with programmes on religious matters.

Illegal state repression Political changes have diluted the impact of the state on the media. Before the reform took place in 1998, state repression could be found in forms ranging from telephone calls to various members of the media for not publishing certain news stories, to closing down media companies and even kidnapping journalists. Despite the fact that many ex-New Order individuals are in strategic positions, the political change in favour of freedom of the press is difficult to challenge. Repression now happens only rarely.

Obstacles to Internet access There are no major legal or political obstacles to Internet access. Internet service provider (ISP) companies are growing significantly, and cheaper internet cafés or kiosks are easy to find in major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Medan, Makassar, and Yogyakarta. In addition, most of Indonesian media have their own daily-updated websites with online versions of their publication. Some of

¹³ Perspektif Baru interview with Ati Nurbaiti, edition 388, entitled 'Belum Semua Pihak Memahami Fungsi Pers.' Perspektif Baru is a radio show dedicated to public education. This programme is sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in collaboration with the Perspektif Baru Foundation.

them are very popular, such as Kompas Cyber Media (KCM) and Tempo Interactive

However, the main obstacles to Internet access are infrastructural and economic. Small cities, rural areas, and villages – the places where most Indonesian live – lack Internet access facilities. Because of the economies of scale, most Internet providers only cover the major cities. Those in the low-income bracket, that is the majority of Indonesians, cannot afford the Internet service payment or the expensive computer equipment. This means that most Indonesian people, except those living in the main cities, almost never use the Internet as their primary source of information.

Politically, we can conclude that today there is a strong improvement [+2] in the role of the state in freedom of the press. It is now difficult to find examples of outright state repression although isolated cases occur as in Aceh where a group of journalists of *Serambi Indonesia* newspaper were beaten by several soldiers in July 2003 over an allegation of misreporting.

Changes in
the past five
years

The media now experience almost no state repression and there is no monitoring of the distribution of papers or surveillance of distribution systems.

Government
control over
print media

IV. Economic Pressures

With the ending of the SIUPP entry barrier in 1998, there have been many newcomers to the media industry. In the past, the media industry was relatively profitable. Income from advertising was huge as Indonesia recorded an impressive economic growth rate of an average of 7 per cent during the years 1990 to 1996 (the highest economic growth rate was 8.2 per cent in 1995). Foreign investors, new infrastructure and the growth of the consumer market created significant profits, allowing companies to spend more money on advertising. The media industry was perceived as a good cash cow.

State
subsidies

Unfortunately, most of the new players in the media industry did not realise that a huge investment, especially in the building up of a strong media system and capable media personnel, was required. At the same time, Indonesia was experiencing an economic crisis that was making operational costs much higher than in the past. The poor quality of reporting, untrained journalists, inexperienced management,

and lack of distribution facilities were common problems for the newly established media companies as well as the decrease in their purchasing power. Not surprisingly, most of the newcomers survived only one or two years before shutting down.

In Indonesia, the media does not receive any subsidies, or any related kinds of support including government advertising, from the state. Government spending on media advertising is very small compared to the spending of private companies. Although the reform process has been going for the past six years, the manner in which the government communicates has not significantly changed. They are still not familiar enough with modern communications approaches including advertising.

However, a relatively large sum of money of around 52.5 billion rupiahs was devoted to advertising by the government during the civic education programme in the run up to the 2004 general election. The national election committee (KPU) spent 28.8 billion rupiahs in the month of March 2004 (a month before the 2004 legislative election).¹⁴ Other government agencies that also allocated relatively great amounts of money for civic education through advertising campaigns were the State Ministry of Communications and Information, which spent 15.8 billion rupiahs; the Coordinating Ministry for Politics and Security affairs (7.5 billion rupiahs); and the State Ministry for Woman's Empowerment (455 million rupiahs). The figures are small compared to the amount that major political parties have forked out. The ruling party PDIP spent 39.3 billion rupiahs and the Golkar Party spent 21.72 billion rupiahs. The total amount that political parties spent on advertising during their political campaigns in 2004 is more than 112 billion rupiahs, with 75.4 billion rupiahs on TV, 35.28 billion rupiahs on the printed press and 2.16 billion rupiahs on radio.¹⁵

Further aspects As in many other countries, the Indonesian media tend to follow the perceived market demand, to which the media's job or providing public education is occasionally sacrificed. Members of the media, especially TV stations, will prioritise

¹⁴ However, the sums of money spent by KPU were provide by international donors such as UNDP, and were not part of the election budget provided by the government.

¹⁵ Tempo Interaktif: 'Dana Iklan KPU dan PDIP di Media Paling Besar.' 9 May 2004.

broadcasting high-rating programmes over programmes with an educational content. The steep operational costs and their attempts to attain huge profits have made many TV stations more of a business entity than a public educator.

Another concern is the concentration of ownership within the media industry. It is true that this monopolistic tendency has not yet made the media into a propaganda tool for the owner's interests, but it still must be watched carefully. The independent press council under the press law together with the Indonesian broadcasting commission (KPI) under the broadcasting law will have to function effectively as watchdogs.

V. Non-state Repression

As mentioned above, over the past five years, the role of government in the media has improved. Journalists and their media networks do not worry as much about state repression as in the past. Non-state repression, however, does exist and is seemingly increasing. Beatings, terror, intimidation and harassment have often been used against journalists. Physical damage has also occurred to the offices and property of the media.

Repression
by non-state
groups

The paramilitary organs of political parties known as *satgas*, gangsters known as *preman*, and youth organisations are often the perpetrators of the violence. Those behind the repression can range from members of the political elite, individual government officials, business cronies or military elements. Most of them are unhappy about news items which place them in an unfavourable light or report on their violation of a law, such as corruption. The media is sometimes accused of violating privacy or obstructing the work of police, military or other government officers on duty.

One example of non-state repression is the case of the *Sinar Indonesia Baru (SIB)* newspaper in Medan, North Sumatra in April 2004. The newspaper published an article about the involvement of a local businessman in a gambling case. A few days after the publication of the article, an unidentified group of people attacked and damaged the newspaper office in Medan. Later, the police identified a local businessman as being responsible for inciting the attackers.

A more publicised case of non-state repression was the demonstration against *Tempo* magazine in March 2003 by a group of thugs. The demonstration was to protest the publication of an allegation over the involvement of businessman Tomy Winata in the fire that razed the Tanah Abang textile market.¹⁶ During the demonstration, three journalists of *Tempo* including the chief editor Bambang Harymurti were beaten. Four people who carried out the beating were then arrested by the police. Tomy Winata himself denied he was behind the demonstration.

Non-state repression was also carried out by separatist rebels of the free Aceh Movement or GAM. *Serambi Indonesia* newspaper was not able to publish after being threatened by GAM. GAM accused the newspaper of being unfair and not objective in publishing articles about the conflict in Aceh, as several articles still sided with the Indonesian military, although GAM had sent press releases for clarification. Because of the threat, the newspaper was closed for 13 days from 11 to 23 August 2001.

Changes in
the past five
years

Within the past five years, there has often been non-state repression. A NGO reported that in Sumatra alone, there was an increase of 27.03 per cent in non-state repression between the years 2000 and 2001. The three most frequent kinds of repression took the form of intimidation (31.91 per cent), physical repression (27.66 per cent) and harassment (12.77 per cent).¹⁷ In the case of physical repression, most of the attackers were caught and tried in court, but those behind the non-state repression have not been prosecuted.

That being said, slight improvement [+1] can be seen when compared to the years of Soeharto, during which time physical repression included kidnapping and murder. Repression now often takes the form of accusing the media of not being sufficiently nationalist (as in the conflict in Aceh where most members of the media try to be objective), violating public ethics, and contributing to national instability.¹⁸ This means that a tendency to take legal action against the media is replacing the use of physical repression. It is more effective, providing the media critics a greater

¹⁶ The article entitled 'Ada Tomy di Tenabang?' was published in the 3 March 2003 edition. Also read AI 2003.

¹⁷ Kippas: 'Potret Jurnalis(me) Sumatera 2001: Masih Rawan Tindak Kekerasan', *KUPAS* Vol. 3 No. 4/2002.

¹⁸ Sudibyo, Agus: 'Pergeseran Ancaman-Ancaman Kebebasan Pers', *Kompas*, 4 May 2004.

opportunity to win and, most importantly, the chance of retaining their credibility before the public.

VI. Conclusions

Despite the many problems still prevailing in the Indonesian media, there has been strong improvement [+2] thanks to the political reform and the introduction of freedom of the press.

Evaluation
of media
coverage

In order to strengthen the implementation of freedom of the press, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Jakarta is carrying out some important programmes. One programme, in cooperation with the Perspektif Baru Foundation, helps produce radio show programmes aimed at educating the public about important issues, including freedom of the press. Notable figures who have been invited onto the show include the former chairman of the Independent Journalist Association (AJI), Ati Nurbaiti; the winner of the ethnic tolerance award (an award given by the International Federation of Journalists), Nezar Patria; the chief editor of *Manado Post* and a member of the local election committee (KPUD) in North Sulawesi, Suhendro Boroma; and a member of the broadcasting commission, Bimo Nugroho. KAF has also sponsored a series of journalist workshops in Manado, Makassar and Balikpapan, intended to educate journalists on the new system of the 2004 general election, the role the media could play in the civic education programme in the lead-up to the election as well as the strategic role of the media in monitoring the election process. The workshops were part of the civic education programme of the 2004 general election.

KAF
support

There is no entry barrier to establishing a new network in the media. There is no restriction on becoming a journalist or doing journalistic work, no censorship or other obstacles as during the Soeharto years. The introduction of Press Law No. 40/1999 has also created a strong foundation for freedom of the press in Indonesia. However, there is still a paradox. On the one hand, Indonesia has a law that protects the freedom of the press, but, on the other, there are some laws, especially in the Criminal Code, that restrict the activities of the press [freedom of the media with minor restrictions]. However, this is a problem that can be overcome with the political will.

Freedom of
the media:
general
situation

One suggestion would be to provide public education about the benefits of a free press as a pillar of democracy. The education would include helping the Indonesian public to understand how to treat the media, how to utilise them, how to criticise them, how to use the press council, and how to deal with them if they violate the press code. In addition, the recommendations that Amnesty International urges on the Indonesian government are also important, including the comprehensive training for all members of the police, prosecution service and judiciary in the practical implementation of Press Law No. 40/1999, as well as ensuring that the press law is invoked in cases where there are complaints relating to the function of the media. Most important, though, is the repealing of all articles of the Criminal Code that do not conform to international human rights standards.¹⁹

Major
obstacles

With regards to journalists, the most important priority is to increase their standard of living, as most Indonesian journalists and other media workers are still underpaid. This can be a very serious problem in implementing freedom of the press since it encourages the phenomena of 'trading news', bribery, as well as *budaya amplop* (the envelope culture). Journalists also ask that the government has the political will to enforce the implementation of freedom of the press in all areas of democratic life, including a guaranteed use of the press law and an effort to increase the public's understanding of the function of a free press.

Another important need is to raise the professionalism of journalists. This not only includes the upgrading of technical skills, but also improving the knowledge of journalists about the issues of the day and the journalist code of ethics, and an understanding of security and stability matters. For the wider public, they must be encouraged to participate as watchdogs over the media.

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¹⁹ AI 2003.

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