

Indonesian Tsunami — Thievery, Ineptness and Presidential Elections

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Global Research, January 03, 2019

Region: [Asia](#)
Theme: [History](#)

How low can a country governed by an unbridled greed, a notorious lack of morals and ubiquitous servility to its neo-colonialist masters, really sink?

And how can people tolerate lies, the naked cynicism and fanatical incompetence of the rulers? Can the regime in Indonesia, which was created in 1965, and then nurtured by the West, really get away with absolutely everything, even, literally, murder?

As I write this report, it has been confirmed that the tsunami which struck West Java on the 22nd of December, 2018, killed hundreds of people. It is almost certain that the death toll will soon climb to thousands.

Yesterday, I drove to West coast of Java. I witnessed devastation, but I also observed, as on so many previous occasions, absolute collapse of the state functions, its phlegmatic unwillingness to mobilize, as well as absolutely shocking helplessness of the victims.

During an entire day, along the entire coast, I did not encounter one single foreign journalist, while the local press, corrupt and unprofessional, kept reporting only what it was paid and ordered to report, even arranging 'positive' shots, instead of exposing harsh reality.

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I gave myself 3 hours to write this report; only 3 hours, and not a minute more. That is how long my late evening flight from Jakarta to Bangkok will last. There is no time to delay what has to be urgently said. No time for 'flowery reporting'. People are dying. Now it is December 25. The day before yesterday it was announced that at least 222 human lives were terminated. Yesterday the count stood at 370. Now, before my plane takes off, it is close to 500. What should we expect tomorrow; a thousand? Are we going to be informed in one week that several thousand men, women and children were swept away, crashed, torn apart, drowned, and starved to death?



Miserable structures could not withstand tidal wave

As in 2004 when a quarter of million people, mostly in Aceh, vanished after a devastating tidal wave, I have to repeat now what I declared then: in Indonesia, it is not a tsunami that murders; it is not at all. The regime imposed on this miserably poor country by the West, in 1965, reduced the entire archipelago to a monolithic, unproductive, resigned, awfully religious cluster of islands stripped off almost all of its natural resources as well as original fauna and flora; islands polluted, inhabited by uneducated and increasingly aggressive and intolerant people; both victimizers and victims at the same time.

These people cannot fight or resist, anymore. They only brutalize each other, never their immoral rulers.

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Mrs. Rani from Cinangka, Anyer, used to be the owner of a tiny restaurant selling fresh fish from the nearby sea. Now she is standing next to her destroyed hut. First, she appears to be angry, but then she breaks down, begins hugging us desperately as if we were her last hope, crying bitterly:

“The government does nothing, absolutely nothing for us. President Jokowi passed by here, in his motorcade, but he did not even slow down, at least to ask and see how we are doing. Nobody cares about us!”

“When the tsunami hit, we were sleeping. And my husband and I went out of the house and ran to that coconut tree across the road; you see, over there... In my mind, I still see my grilled fish tiny restaurant (warung) as if it was standing and safe. People shouted at us to go further up the hill, towards a safer place. But when we returned in the morning, to search for our house and restaurant, we were shocked - it was totally looted out by thugs!”

“Now, not only don't I have a place to live, anymore, my only source of income is also gone.”

As always when natural or man-made disasters strike in Indonesia, the only things one can hear are the sobs of the victims and the ridiculous honking of the sirens and horns, most of them belonging to private cars that are pretending to be on an important 'mission'.



Coming from Jakarta - hanging around, doing nothing

But almost nothing moves. Heavy equipment like bulldozers and excavators, are there, but standing still, drivers and operators are either smoking or just staring in the distance. The sky is empty - no helicopters, no amphibious planes have been visible for the entire day that I worked in the area (later I was confidentially told that Indonesia doesn't really have enough choppers, and hardly any pilots trained to fly them).

The entire coast is covered by *Poskos*(posts) that are, at least in theory, erected there, in order to provide relief to the victims. But most of them belong to political parties, or to religious organizations, interested only in showing off and in promoting their own agenda. There are extreme-right-wing groups like *Pemuda Pancasila*, with members snapping selfies of each other: or having leisure lunches and dinners at what had still survived of the local restaurants.



Extreme right-wing groups at tsunami area

Islamists in white robes are pointing their thumbs towards the sky, laughing loudly and ridiculously, and shouting “Prabowo - Sandi” referring to the presidential and vice-presidential candidate. Prabowo, a former army general, is a brutal military man, known to have committed countless crimes against humanity while serving in the plundered West Papua, and during the anti-government demonstration that rocked the capital many years ago. His posters are visible everywhere along the coast, and his people pose for cameras and for mobile phones, promoting their movement all along the ruined beaches.

Poskos are always full of people, those individuals who are constantly pushing their idiotic speeches, shouting slogans, but above all, taking photos of each other. I saw something similar in 2004 in Aceh. While the Japanese, Singaporeans and other foreigners were working, desperately trying to save the lives of the victims, the Indonesian NGO’s and ‘volunteers’ were laughing, taking photos of each other, and promoting their religious and political agendas.



Religious cadres laughing while promoting their own agenda

Disaster or no disaster, almost every man here is puffing on his cigarette. There is always plenty of time for religion, for taking selfies, for a little cyber chat, and of course, for a smoke. And while everyone is busy banging into their phones and exhaling smoke, almost no one is working.

This is a perfect warning to the world: what happens to a country fully abandoned to Western neo-colonialism, to religion, consumerism, corruption, as well as intellectual and moral void.

We are passing *Posko PKS Peduli* (Post of the 'PKS Care'). PKS party belongs to Prabowo's coalition. The post is well-visible, noticeable, full of slogans. It is there solely to attract voters, not to save victims.

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After progressing further south, we exit the main road at Sukarame Village, drive again, then walk up to a hill, towards a 'camp', where the people displaced by the nearby coastal disaster area are supposed to be taken care of by the authorities.

What we encounter there is self-explanatory, and I make sure to record the situation visually.

As elsewhere in Indonesia, the area is overtaken by thugs who are 'regulating traffic' and arranging parking spaces, for a fee. For them, as for almost everyone else with the exception of the victims, all of this is a great business opportunity. They are bossing drivers around, maximizing both space and the profits. At one point it begins to rain.



At night in a village destroyed by tsunami

We are following displaced people. Soon, a 'tent city' appears.

It consists of three tents at the lower part of the hill, and of few more a bit higher up. The tents are blue, and they are not yet assembled.

"Is that all?" I ask a man who is smoking even in the rain, periodically snapping his own selfie.

"Yes, it is," he answers, phlegmatically.

Mr. Karid from Cibenda village recalls:

"My son who is the caretaker of a villa on the coast, suffers from a broken leg and he lost one of his children. This grandson of mine was only 6 years old. I had to go back and forth between taking care of my son and also taking care of the funeral of my grandchild."

No one seems to be paying attention to the victims. They were told that the second wave may hit at any moment, and they are moving up, towards the highest ground, spontaneously.

"Do they help you?" We ask.

"Not really," comes the reply, immediately. By now, it is a quite standard answer. "They don't even give us real food".

Then it happens: some 20 police officers on expensive motorcycles, wearing yellow vests, arrive on the scene.



Police posing, doing nothing

They walk slowly towards those parts of the tents lying on the grass and begin... Not working, no: they begin posing!

I film.

There are two men, one photographing for social media, the other in police uniform, giving precise instruction to the police officers, how to stand and how to pretend that they are actually working.

I keep filming.

Slowly, extremely slowly, those 20 well-fed men began putting together the frame of one tent. Others watched smoking and photographing.

After one part of the tent was assembled, police officers gathered in a circle and began chatting.

It was now raining, heavily. Victims were slowly walking by: no one pays any attention to them.

Down at the side of the road, I saw something that may resemble a local TV crew, dragging the operator of a huge excavator, to his cabin. A man climbed up, put his hands on the control, and... nothing. No roar of the engine, no movement. He was being photographed from below. When he climbed down, he is interviewed, his idle heavy equipment clearly visible behind his back.

Not far from the scene, people are searching through the rubble, for their belongings, for their ID papers and who knows, perhaps even for their loved ones.

While the Indonesian public and the world is shown what they are supposed to see: a natural disaster and the nation mobilizing to help its fellow citizens.

But nothing moves. Only those countless vehicles belonging to the NGOs and the right-wing political parties (there are no left-wing parties in this country), are blocking the streets, creating traffic jams. People on board are honking, blasting sirens, trying to look macho and determined, while doing nothing substantial, except what they do all their lives: smoking, sitting in endless traffic jams, and listening to junk music.

And the people, hundreds or perhaps thousands of them, are dying just few meters away.

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And the sky is still clear: there are no helicopters or airplanes, even when it begins to rain, or when it stops raining.

And there are no battleships visible near the coast.

The Indonesian army has been well known for fighting, killing and raping its women and children, after the 1965 military coup, or in East Timor or now, in West Papua. It is also very good at protecting Western mining companies against the people, local victims. It is not here to defend its citizens: on the contrary. It commonly commits treason, but instead of being court-martialed and facing a firing squad, it is being praised and continuously rewarded with cash, training and equipment from the West.

The same can be said about the Indonesian academia and media. They are not here to tell the truth and defend the nation. They are paid to be quiet and to say what is ordered 'from above' and from abroad.

And no foreign media would go where I am routinely working. I am always alone here, no matter what horrors are occurring around me. The fascist, pro-Western, religious regime here reduced the Indonesian people into submissive, self-centered cowards. I don't care. They are willing to betray, even to kill, for their own privileges. So I am trying to perform their duties, instead.

It is their problem what they do. While it is my obligation to document. Alone or not alone.

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Some 60 kilometers further south, everything stops. By the time we arrive, it is late at night. The road is heavily damaged. This is 'the border'. No private vehicles can pass.

Behind this point, the destruction is, most likely, even more horrid.

Were this to be a 'normal', read 'not collapsed country', there would be countless military heavy vehicles repairing the road. There would be provisory lights, thousands of experts and military men building the bridges, filling deep ditches. Helicopters would be flying, and big NAVY ships would be providing support from the sea. There would be a constant, determined fight to save human lives.

I saw it in Japan and in Chile. In Chile, after a terrible tsunami, the entire nation mobilized. The motorway was clogged with constant streams of vehicles, bringing to the devastated

areas pre-fabricated wooden houses of high quality, bringing water, gas, food, medical supplies. To witness such mobilization performed by the then, still, socialist government, made one feel proud to be a human being. As a result, very few people died. Everyone got taken care of, re-housed and compensated by the government.

Here, in Indonesia, at the ghostly, destroyed village of Cikujang, we only encountered two men sitting among the rubble of destroyed house. They reluctantly explained:

“Our car got stuck in a deep ditch. Engine died. Now we are just waiting that someone will rescue us”.

All around - darkness and destruction. Carcasses of cars and motorcycles, collapsed houses, personal belongings of people scattered all around. I am trying to film and photograph, using the high beam of the car. What I see is not for the faint-hearted.

As I am working, I am aware of the warnings: the second tsunami wave can strike at any moment. If it does, my tiny crew and I will get fucked. But we have to work, because behind our backs, somewhere in the total darkness, there are tens of thousands of people, cut off from any help, abandoned by this monstrous nightmarish system.

Up the hill, we find an old scout center. There, many victims are gathered.

Mr. Iwan, the leader of this provisory camp of displaced people, readily explains:

“We have five people who lost their lives, 4 are already buried but we are still missing 1 person. “

People are praying. No one dares to blame the government or the system. To them, it is all normal.

We are told, again and again, that there is absolutely no way to go any further. We try, but confronted with flooded road, finally turn back.

There is no activity. No action. Behind this line, most likely thousands of people are dying.

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It is now clear that the early warning system failed the people of West Java.

It was reported that it was ‘vandalized’. In fact, it was stolen. Supplied by Malaysia, Germany and UK, it was looted by local folks. And the government knew it, and did nothing at all to replace it.

In Vietnam or China, officials who allow such a disaster to take place, would be facing a firing squad, for treason.

In Indonesia, the entire system is mobilized to cover up what has taken place, and what is still taking place while this report goes to print: the ineptness of the government, of the armed forces, the tremendous greed of the NGO’s and private individuals of the country.

In Indonesia, human lives are worth absolutely nothing. Public welfare means nothing as well. The only thing that matters is profit, plus religious rituals. And the big natural disasters like this one are truly great opportunities to enrich even further those corrupt gurus of

turbo-capitalism.

While thousands of families have irreversibly lost their homes and small businesses, the entire nation is mourning a pop band from Jakarta, called 'Seventeen,' which was performing for the elites in an exclusive beach resort, when tsunami hit the area. All band members died except their lead vocalist.

I have worked in 160 countries of the world; I have seen a lot, really a lot, but nothing so morally collapsed and corrupt as the Indonesian regime. And I have never encountered any establishment so capable of covering-up its own crimes.

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Now most of the reports are repeating 'how and why this tsunami occurred'. People who know nothing about science, are repeating like idiots about some underwater plates moving, about an explosion of a volcano, and other 'technical' issues.

But what really happened here, as has already happened so many times this year, and every other single year, is that people died for absolutely ridiculous and preventable reasons: the unwillingness of the regime to spend money on anything that does not generate 'profit' (like an early tsunami warning system), pathetic, laughable 'city planning' as well as the lack of enforceable regulations for both urban and rural areas located in danger zones, plus the endemic corruption, terrible education and therefore lack of any vision or enthusiasm, as well as many other factors along these lines.

The victims in West Java are, as it always happens here, resigned – they are as locals *saypasrah*. Poor people, the great majority of Indonesian citizens, are submissive. They repeat what the 'elites', the West and religious 'leaders' want them to repeat: that they are 'grateful to God' even for being alive. I hear it in the slums, and in devastated areas. By now, people here have nothing against their tormentors; against capitalism or imperialism (they don't even know what these terms really symbolize). They steal from each other, but do not dare to fight those who are robbing them on a greater scale.

By not providing basic services, the state is murdering thousands, more precisely millions, annually. Now it has done it again. The definition of a 'failed state' is precisely that: the 'inability to provide basic services to its citizens'. Full stop.

And my 3 hours are now up. The plane is descending.

I have just witnessed mass murder, in Java, Indonesia. Not a 'natural disaster', but mass murder. There is no time for elegant reporting. This is what I saw, and therefore, this is what I write. Tens of thousands are still left behind on the coast, with almost no help. The Indonesian 'elites' are now making profits from their suffering. It is already dark in Bangkok, where I am landing.

It must be horribly dark 'back there', in Banten: dark and frightening.

I am writing this in order to warn the world: let us all unite against the regimes that have been implanted by the West in the colonies. Let us not allow such genocides to happen again and again!

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This article was originally published on New Eastern Outlook

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