

# **THE WEST KALIMANTAN ELECTION AND THE IMPACT OF THE ANTI-AHOK CAMPAIGN**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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Jakarta officials have identified West Kalimantan as a potential trouble spot for the June 2018 local elections. Their concern is rooted in the history of ethnic violence; recent tensions between Dayak and Malay ethnic groups stemming from the fallout nationally of a bitter campaign for Jakarta governor in late 2016-2017; and the possibility in the case of a close election of the loser's supporters being unwilling to accept the results.

Local sources in Kalimantan say the potential for violence has been overblown. The troublemakers are concentrated in a few locations; the ethnic and religious divides are more fluid than often depicted; and both candidates have an interest in keeping hardliners at bay and winning support from communities outside their own strongholds.

Much will depend on how the campaign is managed in a province where ethnicity and religion are critical factors in mobilising electoral support. There are two strong candidates for governor and one potential spoiler. The slates are as follows:

- **Karolin Margret Natasa** and Suryadman Gidot – Karolin, a Catholic Dayak backed by Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDIP) and Partai Demokrat, is the daughter of Cornelis, the current governor who after two terms must step down. She is also the district head (*bupati*) of Landak, her father's stronghold, just to the northeast of Pontianak, to which she was elected without opposition in 2017. Her father controls the main Dayak cultural organisations, one of which, the Dayak Customary Council (Dewan Adat Dayak, DAD) is politically important because of its overlap with PDIP – of which Cornelis is provincial chairman. The strength of the ticket lies in Karolin's vote-getting ability tied to her father's wealth and political connections. Its weakness lies in its all-Christian make-up in a province that is 59 per cent Muslim, though many Muslim Dayaks will support it. Some in the local political elite are also unhappy at what they see as Cornelis's attempt to build a political dynasty.
- **Sutarmidji** and Ria Norsan – Sutarmidji, the popular two-term mayor of Pontianak, is running both on his achievements as mayor but also as the only Muslim candidate for governor, backed by Golkar, Hanura and several Islamic parties. Of mixed Tamil-Chinese descent, he is running with a Malay Muslim who is the two-term *bupati* of Mempawah; the ticket is thus likely to attract most coastal Muslims, both indigenous Malay and migrants, including hardliners who took part in the campaign in 2016-17 to imprison the governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known as Ahok, for blasphemy. The slate's weakness is lack of support in the interior where the Dayak vote will be crucial.
- **Milton Crosby** and Boyman Harun – This slate, supported by the National Mandate Party (PAN) and Gerindra, pairs Milton, a popular two-term *bupati* from Sintang and champion of the upriver Dayaks, with a Malay Muslim who is also the provincial PAN chairman. The two parties' decision to back Milton is seen as their strategy to split the Dayak vote and give the edge in a tight race to Sutarmidji, although Gerindra was negotiating with Cornelis up until the last minute about supporting Karolin. Without significant outside financial support, however, Crosby will be severely handicapped. His own financial position is weak as he has not held any political or governmental position since 2015.

One wild card is the role of Islamist activists from the so-called "212 Movement" that brought down Ahok, referring to the huge demonstration they mounted in Jakarta on 2 December 2016. They might try to influence the West Kalimantan election by arguing as they did in the Jakarta governor's race that Muslims can only vote for Muslim candidates. Most local political observers

interviewed, however, were not overly worried and said the 212 support was limited to a corner of east Pontianak. A bigger problem might arise if Sutarmidji lost narrowly to Karolin and his supporters alleged fraud, just as Karolin's supporters in the DAD could mobilise quickly if Sutarmidji won by a narrow margin. The Constitutional Court is supposed to adjudicate such disputes but its decisions are not always based on a close reading of the evidence.

This report looks more closely at some of the dynamics involved in what could be a litmus test of how far the impact of the anti-Ahok campaign has spread.

## II. THE DIFFICULTY OF DENOTING ETHNICITY

Dayaks and Malays (called *Melayu* in Indonesian) constitute the largest ethnic groups in West Kalimantan, but the labels hide a much more complex reality. "Dayak" is a collective term for hundreds of indigenous groups from the interior of Kalimantan that speak related dialects and have similar cultural traditions. They are predominantly Christian or followers of indigenous beliefs. "Malay" refers to a specific ethnic group that is Melayu-speaking, overwhelmingly Muslim and concentrated along the coast. But it was often used in the past to refer to all indigenous Muslims, Dayak as well as Malay, making for some skewed population statistics.

The 2000 census showed Dayaks and Malays almost even, at 33.1 and 32.4 per cent of the population respectively. A later re-analysis of the raw data gave the Malays the edge with 34.7 as opposed to 30 per cent for the Dayaks.<sup>1</sup> The local Chinese made up 10 per cent and migrants from elsewhere in Indonesia, mostly Javanese, Madurese and Bugis, constituted over 20 per cent.

The 2010 census, however, showed 48.2 per cent of the population identifying as Dayak and only 18 per cent as Malay, while the population grew steadily, and religious identification showed little change.<sup>2</sup> In 2000, Muslims in West Kalimantan were estimated to be 56.5 per cent of population, followed by Christian Protestants and Catholics with 32.4 per cent, and Buddhist with 7.7 per cent. Ten years later, Muslims accounted for 59.2 per cent, Protestants and Catholics for 34.4 per cent and Buddhist for 54 per cent. The drastic drop in "Malays" between 2000 and 2010 was therefore not due to any mass exodus or conversion but to the fact that Muslim Dayaks were increasingly willing to be identified as Dayak.<sup>3</sup>

### West Kalimantan Ethnic Groups

Year	Dayak	Melayu	Javanese	Chinese	Madurese	Bugis	Sundanese	Total
2000	1,116,651 (30%)	1,291,593 (34.7%)	387,105 (10.4%)	353,606 (9.5%)	205,091 (5.51%)	119,0109 (3.2%)	45,038 (1.21%)	3,722,172
2010	2,194,009 (48.2%)	814,550 (18.5%)	427,333 (7.8%)	358,451 (9.4%)	274,869 (6%)	137,239 (3.1%)	49,504 (1.1%)	4,395,635

Source: Data collected from Indonesia Statistic Agency (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, BPS) year 2000, and 2010.

Many indigenous Malays are also in fact ethnically mixed. The old sultanates that Malay activists see as embodying Malay Muslim identity, including the Kadriyah sultanate in Pontianak,

1 Taufiq Tanasaldy, "Ethnic Geography in Conflicts: The Case of West Kalimantan, Indonesia", *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, Volume 43, No. 2, 2009.

2 See Badan Pusat Statistik, *Kewarganegaraan, Suku Bangsa, Agama, Dan Bahasa Sehari-Hari Penduduk Indonesia: Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2010*, Jakarta, 2010.

3 IPAC interview with the head of Dayak Muslim Family Association (*Ikatan Keluarga Dayak Islam*, IKDI), Prof. Alamsyah, Jakarta, 18 December 2017. See also Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, *Mencari Indonesia: Demografi Politik Pasca Soeharto*, Jakarta, 2007.

were founded by traders from the Hadramaut in Yemen.<sup>4</sup> One prominent Dayak politician dismissed the Alkadrie family in Pontianak, whose old palace has become the “Malay” cultural center, as outsiders: ‘They’re not Malay, they’re Arab!’<sup>5</sup>

Several Dayaks active in Pontianak politics expressed concern that in the aftermath of the anti-Ahok campaign, “Malays” were now identifying more with national Muslim organisations like FPI and finding allies among non-Dayak Muslim migrants. As evidence, they noted that one of FPI local leaders, Ustad Athaillah was Madurese, and the head of the Malay People’s Union (Persatuan Orang Melayu, POM), a hardline Malay organisation, was Bugis, though political attitudes of Bugis and Javanese are no more definable by ethnicity than are those of Dayak Muslims, one of whose leaders claims that they are the peace-makers who can mediate among local groups whenever religious tensions reach danger levels.<sup>6</sup>

That said, religion and ethnicity remain a volatile mix in West Kalimantan and the way candidate slates have been drawn up will not help. In the following sections, we look at each slate and some of the political history they will bring with them to the election.

### III. KAROLIN, SURYADMAN AND THE DAYAKS

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The Karolin-Suryadman ticket represents the Dayak customary establishment represented by DAD; it also represents continuity, since it will try to build on the power structure that Gov. Cornelis established during his ten years as governor (and before that as bupati). It is more obviously an ethnic Dayak ticket than a Christian one, though Karolin is Catholic and Suryadman is head of the Baptist church in West Kalimantan. But just as her father reached out to Dayaks across religious lines as well as to the province’s substantial Chinese community, she will try and do the same. The ticket also builds on a coalition between PDIP and Partai Demokrat, since Cornelis remains provincial chairman of the first and Suryadman is provincial head of the latter.

PDIP backing came at the last minute, however, after Gerindra had already announced a formal decision to support Karolin in late 2017 and PDIP seemed to be moving toward support for Lasarus, a popular Dayak member of the national parliament. Then Cornelis went to Jakarta on 6 January 2018 to visit Megawati and persuaded her to support his daughter. Gerindra’s leader Prabowo Subianto was reportedly furious and decided to try and defeat the Cornelis family by backing Milton, the Dayak spoiler, to try and ensure a Sutarmidji win.<sup>7</sup>

#### A. Cornelis and Dayak Consolidation

Dayak unity, which is now showing signs of cracks, is an important part of the Cornelis mystique. His rise to power was a part of a Dayak revitalisation movement that aimed to redress the marginalisation of Dayaks during Soeharto’s New Order government. When Dayak militias attacked Madurese migrants in Sanggau Ledo, Sambas in 1996-1997, killing at least 600, one of their demands was greater political representation to address what they saw as economic, social, cultural and political discrimination.<sup>8</sup> The causes of the violence are complex, but one

4 IPAC, “Anatomy of an Indonesian Oil Palm Conflict,” Report No.31, 31 August 2016, pp.2-3.

5 IPAC interview with Pontianak politician, 28 January 2018.

6 IPAC interview with the head of IKDI, Prof. Alamsyah, Jakarta, 18 December 2017.

7 IPAC Interview with community leader, Pontianak, 30 January 2018.

8 Until 1994 there were no Dayak *bupatis*; the first to be appointed was LH. Kadir from Sintang. See John Bamba, “Reformasi and Local Responses in West Kalimantan”, paper, International Conference of the Indonesian Transition to Democracy, Jakarta, 2002.

consequence was the strengthening of ethnic identities and institutions that represented them.<sup>9</sup> Another round of anti-Madurese violence erupted in Sambas in 1999, this time with both Malays and Dayaks involved in the attacks. By the time it was over, hundreds of Madurese had been killed (some estimates put the death toll in the thousands) and tens of thousands were displaced, many of them forced to seek refuge in and around Pontianak.<sup>10</sup> The violence led to a carving up of the province along ethnic lines in the belief that this would help prevent conflict.<sup>11</sup> In April 1999, for example, Sambas was split in two. The new district, Bengkayang, was 52.4 per cent Dayak and 18.7 per cent Malay, while the rump district of Sambas became 79.9 per cent Malay and 3.4 per cent Dayak.<sup>12</sup> In October 1999, Landak, Cornelis's stronghold, was carved out of Pontianak district (renamed as Mempawah), creating a population that was 79 per cent Dayak. The instrument for this ethnic gerrymandering was a provision of the decentralisation law that allows for administrative division, called *pemekaran*, of provinces and districts.

Cornelis's political career, which had stagnated up till this point, took off in 2001 when he was elected *bupati* of Landak. Two years later, he became the provincial head of PDIP, the first time that a Christian Dayak had headed a national political party at that level.<sup>13</sup> In 2005, the national parliament passed a law mandating direct elections for local officials. Backed by PDIP, Cornelis stood the following year for a second term as Landak *bupati* and received 46.5 per cent of votes, enough to ensure his victory. No sooner had he won than he was persuaded by his supporters to stand for governor in the first election under the new law, scheduled for November 2007.<sup>14</sup> The Muslim-Malay vote was split between three candidates for governor, leaving Cornelis with an opening if he could pull the Dayaks together. He had a clear strategy: unify non-Muslim voters, particularly Dayak and Chinese. He chose Christiandy Sanjaya, an ethnic Chinese education activist in Pontianak, to bring in the Chinese vote and it worked – he won convincingly with 43.67 per cent of the vote, almost exactly reflecting the percentage of Dayak and Chinese in the province according to the year 2000 census. He thus became the first Dayak governor of West Kalimantan in four decades.<sup>15</sup>

### B. The role of DAD

Cornelis built PDIP into a powerful personal political machine, made stronger by his securing the chairmanship of DAD. During his first term as PDIP chairman, five Dayak *bupatis* and one vice-mayor crossed over to PDIP from other parties.<sup>16</sup> His political power made him the strongest candidate to lead DAD, and in November 2010, he was elected by acclamation, thus asserting a claim to leadership of an organisation that claimed to provide both cultural guidance and communal security for more than 150 subgroups of Dayak. Its members were overwhelmingly Christian but it included prominent Dayak Muslims on its board, underscoring its ethnic, not religious identity.

9 Human Rights Watch/Asia, "Indonesia: Communal Violence in West Kalimantan", Volume 9, No. 10, December 1997.; Nancy Lee Peluso, "Passing the Red Bowl: Creating Community Identity Through Violence in West Kalimantan, 1967-1997", in *Violent Conflict in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution*, ed. Charles A. Coppel, New York, 2006. One group to emerge was the Malay Cultural Council (Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu, MABM) in 1997. See *Regime Change and Ethnic Politics in Indonesia: Dayak Politics of West Kalimantan*, op.cit., p. 303.

10 Tanasaldy, op. cit., p. 290.

11 See Aju and Zainudin Isman, *L.H. Kadir: Peletak Dasar Penataan Wilayah Kalimantan Barat*, Pontianak, 2013.

12 Tanasaldy, op. cit., 278.

13 The previous PDIP chairman Rudi Alamsyahrum was actually a Dayak Muslim, but identified as Malay by his Dayak counterparts.

14 Aju and Zainudin Isman, op. cit.

15 Two of the Dayak deputy candidates, LH Kadir and AR Mercer, had substantially larger personal assets than Cornelis, and one of the Malay candidates, Oesman Sapta Odang, was far richer than either. See KPU Kalbar, "Oesman Sapta Kandidat Gubernur Kalbar," [kalbarkpu.blogspot.co.id](http://kalbarkpu.blogspot.co.id), 10 October 2007.

16 Tanasaldy, op. cit., p. 290.

As the 2012 election for governor approached, the Malays were once again divided while Cornelis and his deputy could make a plausible case for deserving a second term. He had prevented any serious conflict, despite several near clashes and the provocative appearance in the province for the first time of Front Pembela Islam (FPI).<sup>17</sup> Local Dayak rejection of FPI continued to spark near-clashes, including just a few months before the start of the campaign, when an ethnic riot almost erupted.<sup>18</sup>

Cornelis won the election with 52.1 per cent of votes, indicating substantial numbers of Muslim voters. He even managed to secure support from the Association of Madurese Extended Families (Ikatan Keluarga Besar Madura, IKBM).<sup>19</sup> In 2015, Cornelis was elected to the Presidium of the National Dayak Customary Assembly (MADN). He also gradually merged DAD and PDIP, so that all district-level DAD branches were headed either by PDIP politicians in the district council or by *bupatis* supported by the party. There was grumbling in the ranks that Cornelis favoured his ethnic subgroup, Dayak Kanayatn, for top positions.<sup>20</sup> By 2016 he had removed most of those who had tried to challenge him – including Milton Crosby, now running for governor against his daughter.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, Cornelis continued to groom Karolin Natasa as his successor. He put her up in 2009 to run for the national parliament, and his zealous support base in Landak made her the third biggest legislative vote-getter in the election, after former president Megawati's daughter Puan and President Yudhoyono's son, Edhie Baskoro, known as Ibas. At the time she was a fresh graduate of medical school, working full-time at a local clinic, with no political experience. Then in 2012, a sex video was widely circulated online that appeared to show Karolin with another PDIP legislator, though both strongly denied their involvement. The incident did not hurt Karolin's political career. In the 2014 elections she became the No.1 vote-getter in the country, eclipsing both Puan and Ibas. In January 2017, she was elected unopposed as Landak bupati, winning 96.62 per cent of vote. Shortly after her inauguration, she declared – to no one's surprise – that she would run for governor in 2018 with PDIP support.

### C. *Manoeuvring for Political Party Support*

By mid-2017, political parties had begun to scramble to decide whom to support for the 2018 gubernatorial election. Each slate had to secure support from at least 20 per cent of elected legislators or a minimum 13 seats from the provincial legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD).<sup>22</sup> In the case of Karolin's candidacy, Partai Demokrat and PDIP had already been in coalition in several past local elections.<sup>23</sup> In 2015, Cornelis had tried to expand his political base to Kapuas Hulu district, which had been controlled by a Muslim Dayak machine

17 See below, section III.A.

18 The tension started with the rejection of Habib Rizieq who was attending a religious rally (*tabligh akbar*) held by FPI's local branch in Pontianak on 11 March. Rizieq agreed to leave the province on the same day as ordered by the police, but violent conflict erupted three days later when several FPI sympathisers tried to remove an anti-FPI banner from a Dayak dormitory. "Kronologi Ricuh Spanduk Anti-FPI di Pontianak", *Tempo.co*, 16 March 2012.

19 IPAC interview with MADN secretary general Yakobus Kumis, Pontianak, 31 January 2018.

20 Yakobus Kumis was promoted as the secretary general for provincial DAD from the head of Pontianak city DAD. The caretaker *bupati* for Landak district in 2016, Jakius Sinyor, was elected as the chairman for provincial Dayak Councils Assembly (*Majelis Adat Dayak*, MAD) in June 2017. In Bengkayang district the DAD chapter is led by PDIP district council chairman, Martinus Kajot, while the Dayak bupati Suryadman Gidot stepped down after he became the chairman for Partai Demokrat.

21 See below, section V.

22 PDIP has 15 seats, Partai Demokrat 9 seats, Golkar 9 seats, Gerindra 7 seats, Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) 6 seats, Partai Nasional Demokrat (Nasdem) 5 seats, PPP 5 seats, Hanura 3 seats, PKPI 3 seats, PKS 2 seats and PKB 2 seats.

23 The vice-governor Christiandy Sanjaya is head of advisory committee for Partai Demokrat (Ketua Badan Pembina DPD Partai Demokrat) in West Kalimantan. PDIP worked with Partai Demokrat, among other parties, in 5 district elections in 2015; they won in Sekadau district whilst lost in Sambas, Kapuas Hulu, Sintang, and Ketapang.

for fifteen years.<sup>24</sup> He paired his son-in-law, Fransiskus Diaan, Karolin's sister's husband, with Partai Demokrat legislator Andi Aswad, challenging the incumbent. Fransiskus lost by only 1.45 per cent, but it was still a defeat.

Karolin's candidacy, however, made many PDIP stalwarts unhappy. For months, there was no certainty whether the party's central leadership would support her.<sup>25</sup> Her detractors painted her as underqualified, hot-headed and compromised by the video scandal. PDIP's waffling made Cornelis turn to Gerindra, and he lobbied hard for its support. On 24 October 2017, the party announced its support to Karolin on the base of her financial capacity, networks, legislative achievements and popularity, not mentioning any financial negotiations that may have taken place.<sup>26</sup> This decision sparked negative reactions from Malay and Islamist activists who had been involved in anti-Ahok rally and did not want to see a non-Muslim leading the party slate.<sup>27</sup>

There were also rumours that PDIP would ally with Hanura chairman Oesman Saptia Odang (OSO) to promote OSO's cousin Hildi Hamid, the *bupati* of Kayong Utara, as the candidate. Factions within PDIP and some Dayak constituencies supported the idea, provided that Lasarus, the PDIP member of parliament, would run as Hamid's vice-governor. This slate had the advantage of being mixed Christian-Muslim, but the plan did not materialise. On 12 December 2017, Cornelis suddenly announced that PDIP would support Karolin. On 29 December, Gerindra revoked its letter of support for Karolin and produced another declaring its support Milton Crosby, with Boyman Harun, an ethnic Malay from PAN, as his running mate.

PDIP leader Megawati Soekarnoputri finally gave in. On 10 January 2018 the party announced its endorsement of Karolin and Suryadman, while Lasarus made a public statement supporting the ticket and effectively withdrawing from the race.<sup>28</sup>

#### IV SUTARMIDJI AND THE MUSLIM VOTE

Karolin is the Dayak candidate more than she is the "Christian" one, but Sutarmidji is more the Muslim than the "Malay" candidate. His challenge will be to win over Christian Dayaks, but he has a headstart from an effective tenure as Pontianak mayor, where even his opponents acknowledge that he performed well.<sup>29</sup> Within three years as mayor, he almost quadrupled the city income; after his second term, Pontianak was among fourteen local administrations with an above-average gross regional domestic product (PDRB).<sup>30</sup> He was also seen as clean. Now the question is whether he has been pushed to the right by the 212 movement.

Sutarmidji is the most experienced candidate in the race. Born in 1962 into a family of mixed Indian Tamil and Chinese-Javanese descent, he was first elected to the Pontianak city council in 1999 as a member of the United Development Party (PPP, an Islamic party); his father had been a member of the Masjumi, the Muslim modernist party banned by Soekarno. He became the city's vice-mayor in 2003 and was elected mayor in 2008, getting 34.5 per cent of the vote with a Madurese politician as for vice-mayor in a six-candidate race, backed only by PPP and the small PKIP party. When he stood again in 2013, running with a Malay for vice-governor, he

24 Abang Tambul Husin is the provincial chairman for Gerindra party and former Kapuas Hulu bupati for two-terms (2000-2010). His younger brother, AM Nasir continued the legacy by winning bupati elections twice as well (2010-2015, and 2015-2020).

25 IPAC interview with Dayak DPR-RI member from West Kalimantan, Jakarta, 28 November 2017.

26 "Ini Pertimbangan Partai Gerindra Usung Karolin Jadi Calon Gubernur Kalbar", *Tribun Pontianak*, 24 October 2017.

27 Lutfi Fathullah from Majelis Pelayan Indonesia (MPI) of 212 Alumni declared that MPI would cut its ties with Prabowo if Gerindra supports Karolin. Note that the Islamists had supported Gerindra candidates in the Jakarta election.

28 "Hadiri Deklarasi Karol-Gidot, Lasarus: Sangat Legowo Saya", *Tribun Pontianak*, 10 January 2018.

29 IPAC interview with West Kalimantan legislator, Jakarta, 28 November 2017.

30 "PAD Kota Pontianak dari Rp 60 Miliar Menjadi Rp 206 Miliar", *kompas.com*, 4 February 2012.

had the support of PDIP as well as four Islamic parties and got 52.7 per cent, defeating five other candidates.

From the outset of his political career, Sutarmidji has identified himself as a Malay politician. He claims to speak Malay in 70 percent of his meetings to promote the importance of Melayu culture.<sup>31</sup> He has no history of backing ultraconservative groups; his record is more that of a very competent technocrat. Bachtiar Nasir, one of the main organisers of the anti-Ahok campaign in Jakarta, told a visitor that he would have preferred the Muslim candidate in West Kalimantan to be the very conservative bupati of Sambas, Atbah Romin Suhaili, an alumnus of the university of Madinah.<sup>32</sup>

In supporting the anti-Ahok campaign, Sutarmidji may have been reflecting broad support for it within the Muslim mainstream. That said, several sources in Pontianak portrayed him as moving closer to hardline groups as he aligns himself with the Kadriyah family and POM.<sup>33</sup> The question is whether he will continue to support the broader “212 Movement” that has emerged from the anti-Ahok rallies. It has evolved into a campaign that simultaneously seeks to ensure the supremacy of indigeous Muslims (*pribumi*) in political and economic affairs; aim for a larger role for the state in setting moral standards and defining orthodoxy; and defeat President Jokowi in 2019.

#### A. *The Anti-Ahok Movement*

The growing religious polarisation in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from the role of FPI, one of the organisers of the Jakarta rallies. FPI has had a presence in West Kalimantan since national FPI leader Habib Rizieq came to visit in early 2000. He found fertile ground among the descendants of the Hadrami sultans; there were also many clerics who shared “Habib” status with Rizieq, an honorific denoting closeness to the Prophet.<sup>34</sup> The Kadriyah sultanate in East Pontianak became the FPI support base and many in the Kadriyah family served in leadership positions, including the current FPI head Habib Syarif Iskandar Alkadrie.<sup>35</sup> The local FPI quickly

31 Nur Iskandar, *Walikota Sutarmidji: Bukan Pemimpin Biasa*, Pontianak, 2013, p 2.

32 IPAC interview with Malay 212 activist, Pontianak, 31 January 2018.

33 On 26 January 2018, for example, Sutarmidji personally inducted new members of POM in a ceremony called ‘The Induction of 1000 POM Members and Affiliated Groups’ at Rumah Adat Melayu. In February, he and Ria Norsan attended several events facilitated by FPI, MABM and several other Islamist organisations, including one on 4 February, in Singkawang with the theme *Kalbar Baru, Rakyat Bersatu* (New West Kalimantan People Unite), and another in Sambas with Syekh Ali Jaber, Medina-born and educated cleric, in Jawai, Sambas district. IPAC interview with the head of Malay Cultural Assembly (Majelis Adat Bangsa Melayu, MABM), Pontianak, 2 February 2018.

34 Habib is commonly (albeit incorrectly) used as an honorary title for individuals that claim to be descended from Prophet Muhammad’s immediate family. But according to Rabithah Alawiyah, an organisation that focuses on tracing and verifying the Prophet’s descents in Indonesia, the more accurate title for such individuals is sayyid/sayyidah (for women) or syarif/syarifah. Whereas habib should be reserved for sayyids/sharifs whose religious credentials, intellectualism and leadership have been acknowledged by their communities. See “Salah Kaprah Sebutan Habib di Masyarakat,” *republika.co.id*, 14 October 2014.

35 IPAC Interview with members of Kadriyah Sultanate, Pontianak, 31 January 2017. Even before FPI’s arrival in the province, the sultanate had become identified with a hardline Malay-Muslim stance with its own militia, the Melayu Brotherhood Customary Council (Lembaga Adat Kekerabatan Melayu, Lembayu).

acquired a reputation for vigilantism, anti-vice raids and anti-Chinese activities.<sup>36</sup>

FPI members from West Kalimantan were drawn in to the campaign in late 2016-17 to unseat and prosecute Ahok on blasphemy charges because of a reference to the Qur'an in an off-the-cuff speech that hardliners found insulting.<sup>37</sup> In October, the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) issued a fatwa saying that Muslims could only be ruled by a Muslim leader; under this interpretation, it was unlawful for Muslims to vote for Ahok. By extension, it would be unlawful for Muslims in West Kalimantan to vote for a Christian Dayak.

Two massive protests in Jakarta, called "Action to Defend Islam" (Aksi Bela Islam), were organised on 4 November and 2 December 2016 that brought hundreds of thousands of Muslims from across the country onto the streets.<sup>38</sup> The pressure of sheer numbers led the government to conclude that arresting Ahok was the only way to defuse a potential political crisis. The governor was eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to two years in prison, but Aksi Bela Islam rallies continued.

West Kalimantan police estimated that between 80 and 150 participants from the province went to Jakarta for each of the protests.<sup>39</sup> The FPI branch in Mempawah, a district linking Pontianak, Sambas and Singakawang, reported that 68 of its members participated in the 4 November protest.

One member of the Kadriyah sultanate who had gone to Jakarta for the 212 rally said how excited he was when his host asked him to go to Pulau Tidung, Kep. Seribu to mobilise support among the descendants of Habib Ali bin Ahmad bin Zen Al-Aidid, an 18<sup>th</sup> century member of the Banten royal family who actually came from Tidung Sultanate, Kalimantan. He said he felt a moral obligation to assist FPI leader Habib Rizieq, a fellow Hadrami. But he was always more interested in looking for ways to boost the sultanate's claim to rule in West Kalimantan than in backing hardline groups per se.<sup>40</sup>

A group called West Kalimantan Movement for Jakarta (*Gerakan Masyarakat Kalbar Untuk Jakarta*, GMK-UJ), was established by Gerindra politician Bambang Widiyanto to facilitate Muslims who wanted to take part in the rallies. (Gerindra was supporting Ahok's rivals in the Jakarta election.) The head of Ikatan Keluarga Dayak Islam (IKDI) the association of Muslim Dayaks, seeing the popularity of the campaign, tried to ingratiate himself with the organisers in

36 In early November 2007, the newly-established Singkawang branch gave an ultimatum to the newly-elected mayor, an ethnic Chinese, to stop the construction of a large golden dragon statue in the center of this strongly Chinese city. According to 2011 census, of 246,306 Singkawang residents, 42 per cent were Chinese. On 6 December 2007 a low-level riot took place in "Gang 17", a Chinese neighborhood in central Pontianak. Some members of Kadriyah clan led hundreds Malay militants from Persatuan Masyarakat Melayu Kalbar (Permak) in a rampage against Chinese-owned property, and a nearby temple was vandalised. They demanded that Mayor Sutarmidji permanently ban Chinese new-year celebrations from being openly celebrated in Pontianak. The mayor sought a way out by agreeing to ban celebrations in 2008 though they resumed in following years. See "Empat Mobil Rusak, Puluhan Kaca Rumah Pecah", *Pontianak Post*, 8 December 2007. In May 2010, FPI, together with several Malay militant groups, accused the mayor of Singkawang of insulting Malays because of a reference in his university thesis to a scholarly work suggesting a historical link between Malays and piracy. To show their anger, FPI members tried to throw Molotov bombs at the dragon statue. See Zeng Wei Jian, "Dari Tugu Naga Menjadi Impeachment," 15 June 2009; "Makalah Hasan Karman Menuai Kritik", *Pontianak Post*, 29 May 2010; "Pelaku Teror Molotov Terungkap", *Pontianak Post*, 17 July 2010. In March 2012, thousands of FPI supporters nearly clashed in Pontianak with Dayak students who had hung banners rejecting Habieq Rizieq and the FPI presence in West Kalimantan.

37 Aksi Bela Islam I, the first in the series of protests, had taken place without much notice in September. Aksi Bela Islam II and III were the November and December rallies. For a short background on the lead-up to the rallies see Sidney Jones, "Why Indonesian extremists are gaining ground," Lowy Institute, 1 November 2016.

38 The actions, known as "411", "212" and "313" after their respective dates, were organised by a coalition calling itself National Movement to Defend the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), after the MUI issued a ruling that the governor's remarks indeed had been blasphemous.

39 IPAC interview with West Kalimantan police intelligence officer, Pontianak, 2 June 2017.

40 IPAC interview with members of Kadriyah Sultanate, Pontianak, 30 January 2018.

Jakarta, hoping in vain that by doing so he could wrest control of the local movement from FPI.<sup>41</sup>

The rallies further polarised provincial politics. Sutarmidji planted himself firmly on the side of the anti-Ahok demonstrators, saying he was willing to lead rallies himself if Ahok was not prosecuted for blasphemy.<sup>42</sup> Cornelis for his part led Dayak resistance to any presence of hardline ulama from outside the province.

On 12 January 2017, a group of conservative clerics, led by Tengku Zulkarnain, the deputy secretary-general of the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) was prevented from getting off the plane at Sintang airport because of protests by DAD members waiting on the tarmac in traditional warrior dress. They held up a banner calling for the dissolution of FPI on the grounds that it was dividing the nation. The following day, the Kadriyah Sultanate's crown prince, Sultan Melvin Alkadrie, led a demonstration of 27 Islamist organisations in Pontianak demanding that police prosecute those responsible for the Sintang action. They called their protest "Action to Defend the Ulama" or "Aksi Bela Ulama", deliberately echoing the Jakarta rallies.

On 8 March, in the midst of the heated political atmosphere, Sutarmidji announced his readiness to run for governor in 2018.<sup>43</sup>

On 26 April, Cornelis spoke at a Dayak cultural ceremony in Landak urging the expulsion of FPI and any other radical ulama that tried to set foot in the province. A video of the speech was uploaded on social media by Gerindra leader Bambang Widianto and went viral.<sup>44</sup> Hardliners used it as confirmation that Islam was indeed under attack from non-Muslims, and Islamist groups at the national level saw the speech as an opportunity to repeat their successful toppling of Ahok. On 5 May, FPI Secretary General Ustadz Shobri Lubis and Bachtiar Nasir and their entourage were not permitted to disembark at Supadio airport in Pontianak because police feared Dayaks would riot.

Hardliners used social media to call for a protest in Pontianak on 20 May in the name of Aksi Bela Ulama. On 17 May, Oesman Sapta Odang, the chairman of the Regional Representative Council, (DPD RI), the second house of the Indonesian parliament, flew to Pontianak to try and defuse the situation by holding a meeting with representatives of ethnic and religious groups. Oesman, a Malay from West Kalimantan and a childhood friend of Cornelis, helped broker a "peace declaration" witnessed by the provincial police and military commanders. Agus Setiadi, head of POM, later claimed that the declaration was one-sided and the result of pressure from Oesman and Cornelis.<sup>45</sup>

The day before the rally, FPI Jakarta sent another radical cleric, Habib Bahar bin Smith to boost the morale of activists in Pontianak. Habib Smith gave a speech at Kadriyah palace (*keraton*) and left on the same day.<sup>46</sup>

The organisers of the "Defend the Ulama" rally on 20 May planned it to coincide with the Dayak annual harvest festival – not just on the same date but in the same place, at the same time. The potential for a violent clash was high, but police and military worked out a security plan and designated different routes and different times for the two events; they also conducted raids to

41 IPAC interview with Prof. Alamsyah, Pontianak, 31 January 2018.

42 "Sutarmidji Siap Pimpin Demo Ahok Jika Konteksnya Seperti ini", *Tribun Pontianak*, 6 November 2016.

43 "Sutarmidji Menyatakan Siap Maju Pilgub Kalbar 2018", *ANTARANEWS.COM*, 8 March 2017.

44 "Aksi Massa 20 Mei di Kalbar yang Jadi Perhatian Nasional", *Kumparan News*, 12 Mei 2017. See also a video that captured the tension in Pontianak city on 20 May: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wS2Zq9dkHms>

45 IPAC interview with the head of Malay People's Union (POM), Agus Setiadi, Pontianak, 2 June 2017.

46 Habib Bahar bin Smith is the founder Majelis Pembela Rasulullah (MPR), Jakarta-based Islamist hardliner group that often worked together with FPI. His wife is from Pontianak. Smith has been arrested several times for illegal 'sweeping' of night clubs, and attacking Ahmadiyah members in 2010.

confiscate sharp weapons. As a result, the only incident was an attack by a Malay mob on a bus with 60 Dayak passengers around 3 a.m. on 21 May, but police rescued the passengers and the situation was quickly brought under control. By mutual agreement among Pontianak leaders, the incident was kept out of the local media to avoid inflaming the situation further.<sup>47</sup>

A few days later, the Muslim fasting month of Ramadhan began, tensions subsided, and attention turned to the election. The only real alternative to Sutarmidji as a Muslim candidate was Ria Norsan, who was Golkar chairman and much richer than Sutarmidji; he was also the local chairman for Melayu Cultural Council (MABM). But the mayor was the far stronger candidate in terms of recognition and popular support, and in the end, there was no contest. Instead the question was whether Sutarmidji would go with a Muslim or a Dayak running mate. With the first, he could try and consolidate the Muslim vote, as Cornelis had done successfully with Dayaks and Chinese. With the second, as one PDIP member argued, he could mitigate identity politics and reduce the possibility of ethno-religious clashes.<sup>48</sup> On 24 September 2017 Sutarmidji chose Ria Norsan, ensuring that the two strongest slates represented distinct ethnic and religious communities.

## V. MILTON CROSBY AS SPOILER

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Milton Crosby has little chance of winning the election for governor, but he could split the Dayak vote and strengthen the possibility of a Sutarmidji victory. As noted, he is supported by Gerindra and PAN with the PAN provincial chairman Boyman Harun, a Malay, as his running mate. Milton, who served as the bupati of Sintang for ten years (2005-2015), is the leader of a campaign to create the new province of Kapuas Raya with Sintang as its capital. His candidacy is thus seen by some as a deliberate attempt of Gerindra to divide the Dayaks between those of the interior, who back Milton, and those from Cornelis's support base closer to the capital, who will support Karolin. Milton can also count on the support of DAD and PDIP officials who have been victims of Cornelis's ruthless tactics of quashing any opposition. On the other hand, since Milton has held no governmental or political position for more than two years, he has far fewer resources than either Sutarmidji or Karolin.

### A. Campaign for Kapuas Raya Province

Milton, who tried unsuccessfully to run against Cornelis in 2012 but fell afoul of party politics, is best known for the Kapuas Raya campaign.<sup>49</sup> The plan to establish it has been under discussion since the time of then-governor Usman Jafar in mid-2000s.<sup>50</sup> Kapuas Raya would be comprised of five interior districts with predominantly Dayak populations, including Sekadau, Sanggau, Kapuas Hulu, Melawi and Sintang, with the town of Sintang as the new capital. The Dayaks from these districts, known as *orang hulu* (upriver people) or *ulu* for short want less isolation, better infrastructure and government services, and believe a new province would aid these goals.<sup>51</sup> These districts are also home to extensive mining, logging or palm oil interests whose interests in a new province may not be entirely altruistic. The campaign runs hot and cold, usually coming to life around election time; it has no chance of producing a new province anytime soon,

47 IPAC interview with a Dayak political activist via Skype, 13 August 2017.

48 IPAC interview with Dayak DPR-RI member from West Kalimantan, Jakarta, 28 November 2017.

49 Milton was elected as Sintang bupati in 2005 with the support from PDIP. In his second term he became a member of Partai Demokrat. However, the party refused to endorse him in 2012 election it supported the vice-governor Christiandy Sanjaya, also a party member.

50 IPAC interview with Dayak DPR-RI member from West Kalimantan, Jakarta, 28 November 2017.

51 Cornelis strongholds, Landak and Bengkayang districts are closer to the coastal districts and Pontianak city.

because the Jokowi government has had a moratorium on the creation of local government units since July 2017.<sup>52</sup> If the division were eventually to take place, it would drastically change West Kalimantan's political demographics. The rump province of West Kalimantan would be two to one non-Dayak, with Landak and Bengkayang as the only major areas of Dayak concentration; any Dayak would have an uphill struggle to become the governor.<sup>53</sup> Kapuas Raya, which contains much of the current province's wealth, by contrast would be overwhelmingly Dayak.

Cornelis has opposed Milton at every turn. When Milton was appointed head of Sintang chapter of DAD on 28 July 2012, Cornelis, then the DAD provincial chairman, refused to acknowledge the decision. Instead he appointed Mikael Abeng from PDIP, the head of local district council, as chairman, resulting in two competing DAD leaders. Cornelis also tried to replace Milton with Mikael as coordinator of the Kapuas Raya campaign.<sup>54</sup> The move backfired however. On 13 March 2015, Mikael was arrested for misappropriating Rp. 2.3 billion [US\$161,000] from a regional autonomy fund (Dana Otonomi Daerah, OTDA) more than a decade earlier, in 2003. Milton thus remained as the campaign coordinator and has solid support from the Dayaks of the interior.

Milton may also benefit marginally from unhappiness with Cornelis from within PDIP and DAD ranks. A new organisation called Central Borneo was established in early 2018 as a platform for several prominent Muslim and Protesant Dayaks, including former Kapuas Hulu bupati Abang Tambul Husin, the head of IKDI Prof. Alamsyah and former secretary general of DAD Ibrahim Banson. They accuse him of violating the DAD constitution, but they are hardly a threat to the governor or Karolin.<sup>55</sup> When the group in January 2018 tried to hold its first meeting at a hotel in Pontianak, they could not find any sponsors willing to pay the bill.<sup>56</sup>

## VI. RISKS OF VIOLENCE

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The 2018 election in West Kalimantan pits Dayaks against a single Muslim slate. Even as local politicians dismiss concerns in Jakarta that this can produce conflict, several possible scenarios could heighten the risk.

- Supporters of Sutarmidji and Karolin could clash in the three districts collectively known as the "Near Hinterland" (*kabupaten jauh dekat*): Landak, Kubu Raya and Mempawah. The first is Cornelis's stronghold, the latter two are predominantly Malay and all three are easily accessible from the capital. If Sutarmidji's militant Malay supporters try to enter Landak, or DAD militants try to campaign for Karolin in Malay strongholds, there could be trouble. The election supervision board, Bawaslu, is very much aware of the danger, and it will be up to community leaders and police to take preventive measures to keep temperatures down.
- The risk could be exacerbated if hardliners argue that Muslims must only vote for a Muslim candidate. In Jakarta in 2017, many Muslims who preferred Ahok voted for his opponent because they were told in their mosques that it would be a violation of Islamic

52 "Pemerintah Putuskan Masih Moratorium Pemekaran Daerah", *Kementerian Dalam Negeri*, 18 July 2017.

53 Karolina Prasad, *Identity Politics and Elections in Malaysia and Indonesia: Ethnic Engineering in Borneo*. Routledge, 2015, p. 161.

54 'Penunjukan Abeng Sebagai Koordinator PKR,' *KALIMANTAN-News.com*, 21 June 2012.

55 In a document presented by 'Bagian Masyarakat Dayak' signed by Ibrahim Banson on 27 June 2017, stated that the current structural members of DAD have illegally held the fifth provincial cultural assembly (MUSDAD V) from 22–24 June 2017. The reasoning was that the structural members five years term, including the national presidium Cornelis, have already expired in 2015. That said, Cornelis should have stepped down already and his letter of decree appointing organisers for MUSDAD V was thereby illegitimate.

56 IPAC interview with the head of MABM Chairil Effendi, Pontianak, 2 February 2018.

law to do otherwise.<sup>57</sup> The danger is that hardliners from outside West Kalimantan take this issue up in a way that incites Dayak anger. Bawaslu officials said they had invited Christian and Muslim leaders to a closed door discussion during Ramadhan (June) 2017 to head off possible conflict but the result was depressing as both groups seemed to have hardened their positions.<sup>58</sup>

- If election authorities allow proxy voting in very remote interior areas, as some have suggested may take place, the difficulty of verifying results could potentially benefit Karolin and produce accusations of fraud in the Sutarmidji camp. In Papua, the so-called *noken* system, whereby a clan leader votes on behalf the community, has produced electoral fraud on a massive scale. Anything that gives the loser grounds for believing he or she has been cheated of victory will be a potential cause of conflict, especially in a close race.
- Fake news and abuse of social media can incite violence in an election with as many ethnic and religious overtones as this one. The problem is particularly acute if provocative texts cause mobilisation in remote areas that would be hard for local police to address. One DAD leader said, for example, that if an upriver Dayak was rumoured to have been killed in Pontianak by a Malay militant, there would be nothing DAD could do to prevent retaliatory attacks.<sup>59</sup>

All this said, there are mitigating factors as well. Most agree that Cornelis's ten years in office saw an improvement in ethnic relations; he will want to protect that legacy by keeping the DAD under control. The history of ethnic violence in the late 1990s is still so seared into the memories of older politicians from different parties that they have acted collectively ever since to head off violence when tensions threatened to boil over. Police and military will be on the alert, with additional funding at their disposal for safeguarding elections.

Ultimately, however, it will be up to the candidates to ensure that the polarisation left over from the anti-Ahok campaign does not produce communal clashes.

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57 Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Ahok's Satisfied Non-Voters: An Anatomy", *New Mandala*, 5 May 2017.

58 IPAC interview with Bawaslu official, Pontianak, 31 January 2017.

59 IPAC interview with DAD member, Pontianak, 31 January 2018.

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