

**MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA;  
THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN NORTH SUMATRA,  
INDONESIA<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstrak**

Kemerdekaan pers adalah salah satu wujud kedaulatan rakyat yang berasaskan prinsip-prinsip demokrasi, keadilan, dan supremasi hukum, demikian dimaktubkan Pasal 2 Undang-Undang No. 40 Tahun 1999 tentang Pers. Kemerdekaan pers meniscayakan hadirnya kemerdekaan berita, baik bagi insan pers maupun masyarakat. Hal ini dikarenakan akses informasi adalah kunci bagi sehatnya demokrasi. Demokrasi tidak berjalan baik tanpa kemerdekaan pers. Tulisan ini secara khusus membahas dinamika kemerdekaan pers di Indonesia dan implementasinya dalam lingkup fungsionalisasi organisasi profesi pers di Indonesia. Bagaimana peran organisasi pers dalam hal ini PWI dan AJI dalam pendidikan HAM di Sumatera Utara, merupakan kajian utama dalam artikel ini.

Kata Kunci: kemerdekaan pers, PWI, AJI

**Introduction**

Several things are worth noting about the 64<sup>th</sup> National Press Day (*Hari Pers Nasional/HPN*) on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010, in Palembang, South Sumatra. *First*, the promotion of the new enthusiasm and awareness to bring about the national press policy, which accommodates the local content in equipping the work of journalism. This is characterized by the

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launch of the ratification<sup>3</sup> of several sets of materials on Indonesian national press. *Second*, the establishment of the School of Journalism Indonesia (SJI) with 30 participants of the first batch. A new era for the emergence of academic institutions in journalism that focus on Indonesian journalistic professionalism.<sup>4</sup>

Within this setting, the press freedom in Indonesia, which has been promoted nearly two decades since the Reform Era reaps many expectations as well as challenges. Could the national press as the "fourth estate" contributes to raise intelligence of Indonesians? Moreover, how to encourage and strengthen the national press which genuinely plays a significant role in creating a conducive environment to the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights in Indonesia? That is the challenge and hope for Indonesian national press.

Equipped with the support of the constitutionality of the rights of expression, receive and impart information, the national press stands strong. Of course, it must be accompanied by a human rights-based approach to journalism, which is capable of positioning the strategic role of national press to achieve of Indonesian democracy of quality, one which prospers its people and respects human rights.

Freedom of the press<sup>5</sup> is one manifestation of people sovereignty which is based on the principles of democracy, justice, and rule of law, as set out in Article 2 of Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press (hereinafter the

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<sup>3</sup>Ratification refers to adoption or enactment; confirmation and acceptance of a previous act, thereby making the act valid from the moment it was done. See Bryan A. Garner (ed.), *Black's Law Dictionary* (USA: Thompson Business), page 1289. HPN 2010 gave birth to "Palembang Declaration" which contains the agreement and commitment on press companies on four matters, that is, Standard of Competency of Journalists, Standard of Press Company Organization, Standard of Press Profession Protection, Standard of Ethic Code of Journalists and Standard of Journalists Organization. 19 press companies signed the "Palembang Declaration."

<sup>4</sup>SJI is a program of collaboration between PWI and Ministry of Education and Culture-Provincial Government (South Sumatera Provincial Government). For more details see Marah Sakti Siregar, et.a.;, *Tiga Tahun Sekolah Jurnalisme Indonesia* (Jakarta RIMBOOKS, 2013). See also [www.sji-pwi.org](http://www.sji-pwi.org)

<sup>5</sup>For further information, Wolfgang Benedek, *Understanding Human Rights; Manual on Human Rights Education* (Austria: Austrian Development Cooperation and the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, 2006), page 301.

Press Law).<sup>6</sup> Freedom of the press requires the presence of news, both for the press and the public. This is due to the fact that the access to information is key to consolidated democracy.

Democracy could not work without the freedom of the press. Whereas, the freedom of the press could not work when journalists are in a state of corruption, poverty and fear. Freedom of the press and freedom of information are an essential part of freedom of expression. According Rorie R. Fajardo, Project Coordinator, Philippine Human Rights Reporting Project, *Press freedom is needed to ensure all other rights in society are respected and protected*. Press freedom is a human right. Article 19 of the UDHR states as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

This is also affirmed through the provision of Article 19 of the ICCPR which asserts as follows:

(1) Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference; (2) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice; (3) The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

In upholding the press freedom with dignity, there needs to be a conducive environment for democracy in Indonesia. The means of democracy, is at least seen from the level of intelligence and maturity of the elite and the public in making decisions and regulating their conflict of interests. Therefore, the press does not exist in a vacuum space. The influx of information where it finds itself in is imbued in intrigues, assumptions, logic and common perception as well as the tendency of

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<sup>6</sup>Press Law consists of 10 chapters and 21 articles. The Law approved by President of the Republic of Indonesia, B.J. Habibie, in Jakarta, 23 September 1999 (State Gazette Year 1999 No. 166, Additional State Gazette No 3887).

human behavior. As such, this is often the ebb and flow of journalism, and even victimization which tend to be the justification of boycott, limitation, or even the murder of press members.

Development of the press in Indonesia is a very significant. Based on the data of Press Council (*Dewan Pers*) in 2014 launched by the Press Council includes four types of media, i.e. print, television, radio and cyber. The recorded number was 567 of print media, 1,166 of radio stations, 394 of television stations and 211 of cyber media.<sup>7</sup>

For print media, the following are the details, 312 daily, 173 weekly and 82 monthly. This number increased by 158 compared to the number of print media in 2013 (where the total was 409). The increase was also seen in the daily newspapers, from 215 to 311 at present. There was also an increase in the number of press companies, notably in the broadcast, radio and television, as well as cyber media. In 2013, based on data from the Ministry of Communications and Information, the Press Council reported that there were 991 radio stations and 340 television stations. While in 2014, the number increased to 1,166 radio stations and 394 television stations. Whereas the number of previously existing cyber media was 134 which now reached 211. It is worth noting that the data collection of the cyber media is done by the Press Council last two years.<sup>8</sup>

### Journalists For Human Rights Defenders

Human rights defenders are an integral part of human rights. Coinciding with the Fiftieth (50<sup>th</sup>) Anniversary of the UDHR of 1948, the UN General Assembly passed the Resolution 53/144 on 9 December 1998 on a very important declaration for human rights defenders: *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Tim Dewan Pers, *Data Pers Nasional 2014 (National Press Data 2014)* (Jakarta: Dewan Pers, 2014). See also at [www.dewanpers.or.id](http://www.dewanpers.or.id).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>See United Nations, *Human Rights; A Compilation of International Instruments*, Vol. I (Second Part) (New York: United Nations, 2002), page 473. The term Declaration on Human Rights Defenders is a global recognition on the importance of the human rights works that are not only carried out by States, but also by persons in any professions. "It tells us that we all have a role to fulfill as human rights defenders and emphasizes that there is a global human rights movement that involves us all." See *Fact Sheet* No. 29, "Human Rights Defenders; Protecting the Right to Defend Human Rights," page 19.

The prevalence of the violence suffered by human rights defenders is the reason for existence (*raison d'etre*) of the world's concern of their fate and their future.<sup>10</sup> Frequently, human rights defenders carry with them high risks in work, that is, abusive treatment, or even violence and death. McClintock asserted, *human rights defenders who are attacked for fighting discrimination may themselves become victims of hate crimes.*<sup>11</sup> The struggle of human rights defenders in essence is the struggle of humanity efforts.<sup>12</sup>

The human rights defenders situation in the Middle East and North Africa has also been deteriorating. The OHCHR Annual Report 2006 described it as follows:

The continued absence of democratic structures and effective national human rights protection systems has hindered the enjoyment of human rights across the region. Other obstacles include the denial of the right to self-determination, discrimination against women, migrants and minorities, restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and association, the imposition of emergency laws, and harassment and, in some instances, persecution of human rights defenders.<sup>13</sup>

Similar fate was bestowed upon Uzbekistan under Karimov administration. The conflict in May 13, 2005 remains a serious concern for the fate of human rights defenders.<sup>14</sup> The defenders voiced the aspirations of the public, especially those of the victims of human rights

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<sup>10</sup>See A/HRC/28/63/Add.1 "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. Add. Observations on communications transmitted to Governments and replies received," on 4 March 2015.

<sup>11</sup>See Michael McClintock, "Everyday Fears; A Survey of Violent Hate Crimes in Europe and North America," (New York: Human Rights First Report), page 22.

<sup>12</sup>Louise Arbour stated, "At the same time, we have established a Civil Society Unit, which will allow us to interact in a more concerted way with a wide variety of rights holders and human rights defenders and workers." See OHCHR, *Annual Report 2006* (Geneva: United Nations Human Rights), page 5.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, page 72.

<sup>14</sup>See Archana Pyati, *Karimov's War; Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism in Uzbekistan* (New York: Human Rights First, Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism Series No. 3, 2005).

violations (called the Voice of the Voiceless).<sup>15</sup> In fact, they fought in a variety of professions to encourage the creation of an environment conducive to the fulfillment of universal human rights.

The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders is an encouraging starting point. Throughout the history of the nations of the world, the fate and future of human rights defenders was barely of concern. Human rights defenders are on the front liner of the promotion of human rights. Ironically, their tasks and work, render them them to be head-on with the political power that does not take sides. Criticism, intimidation, violence and even murder is a bad vibe that revolves permanently around their lives.

The Fact Sheet No. 29 confirms the possibility of "bad luck" endured by the defenders, which asserted as follows:

A great many human rights defenders, in every region of the world, have been subject to violations of their human rights. They have been the target of executions, torture, beatings, arbitrary arrest and detention, death threats, harassment and defamation, as well as restrictions on their freedoms of movement, expression, association and assembly. Defenders have been the victims of false accusations and unfair trial and conviction.

Then, what about the journalists? Fact Sheet No. 29 affirmed as follows:

In the same way, journalists have a broad mandate to gather information and disseminate it to a public audience through print, radio or television media. In their general role, journalists are not human rights defenders. However, many journalists do act as defenders, for example when they report on human rights abuses and bear witness to acts that they have seen.<sup>16</sup>

It bears repeating that the declaration set a broad definition of human rights defenders. It is intended to bring together at the same time reach out to all levels of people and all forms of human rights activities undertaken. The concept of human rights defenders is defined as an act in the respect of human rights, not of the position of their professionalism. In other words, as explained by the Fact Sheet No. 29 as follows:

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<sup>15</sup>See Al Araf, et.al, *Protection of Human Rights Defenders* (Jakarta: Imparsial, 2005), page 4.

<sup>16</sup>Fact Sheet No. 29 page 7.

However, what is most important in characterizing a person as a human rights defender is not the person's title or the name of the organization he or she works for, but rather the human rights character of the work undertaken. It is not essential for a person to be known as a "human rights activist" or to work for an organization that includes "human rights" in its name in order to be a human rights defender.<sup>17</sup>

With the determination and truth, they express high concern for the protection and promotion of human rights. In the power spectrum, these works are what often badly perceived. They are often dubbed as the group going "against the current." Their helplessness is often caused by the impeccable way power hegemonizes the humanity's work. On the pretext of political stability for example, violence and power is directed to marginalize, alienate, and even eliminate them.

The security and safety of human rights defenders are often of concern. They and their families often experience violent behavior, either by threats or other violent treatments. This continues to occur in many countries, not least in Indonesia. In the Seventh Report as delivered by Hina Jilani<sup>18</sup> on January 24, 2007, states as follows:

Defenders and their families have been threatened verbally, in writing and through the use of symbolic acts, such as deliveries of funeral wreaths to their families. Defenders have been attacked in demonstrations, meetings, and other kinds of assemblies. Both defenders and members of their families have been physically attacked, kidnapped, tortured and even killed. These violations have allegedly been perpetrated both by the State or its agencies, and non-State entities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Hina Jilani (Pakistan), a *Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders* since 2000-2008. According to the UN General Assembly Resolution E/CN.4/RES/2000/61 on 26 April 2000, Hina Jilani has three main tasks, "(1) to seek, receive, examine and respond to information on the situation and the rights of anyone, acting individually or in association with others, to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; (2) to establish cooperation and conduct dialogue with governments and other interested actors on the promotion and effective implementation of the Declaration; and (3) to recommend effective strategies better to protect human rights defenders and follow up on these recommendations."

<sup>19</sup>See "Report submitted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani," See, Human Rights Council,

Relevant to Hina Jilani's report, the report of Michel Forst<sup>20</sup> in 2015, "bad vibes" occur to the defenders. In fact, according to Forst, journalists as human rights defenders often find barriers in their profession, especially in the coverage of human rights violations. Forst in his report stated as follows:

They also complain of the perverse effects of enforcing laws against defamation or blasphemy or for protecting national security which lead to censorship or even self-censorship by numerous journalists investigating human rights violations. Finally, journalist defenders have found it increasingly difficult to move around freely, obtain visas, or work in areas of armed conflicts, where they are targeted by the various parties to the conflict.<sup>21</sup>

Along with the recent development of the profession of journalism and the attitude toward the international community, the strengthening, promotion and protection of human rights journalist become an important part in the development of human rights in the world. State and all elements of society should respect and protect the commendable work of journalists.

Indeed, the world should be proud of the Indonesian press. Since 1999 up to present, there has been a significant advancement for the press. Reporters without Borders in 2008 stated that according to their data, none of the Indonesian journalists have been arrested, imprisoned or killed.<sup>22</sup>

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A/HRC/4/37 on 24 January 2007), page 11-12. Compare with A/HRC/28/63/Add.1 "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. Add. Observations on communications transmitted to Governments and replies received," on 4 March 2015.

<sup>20</sup>Michel Forst (French), a Special Rapporteur since 2014-now. He replaced Margaret Sekagya from Uganda (2008-2014).

<sup>21</sup>See Michel Forst, "Situation of Human Rights Defenders; Note by the Secretary General," A/70/217, on 30 July 2015, page 15.

<sup>22</sup>To mention an important case that has not been solved, was the death of Yogyakarta journalist, Fuad Muhammad Syafruddin also known as Udin, on 16 August 1996. Similarly, *Kupang Pos* journalist, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Yacobus Lewanmeru, also known as Obby, on Februari 2009. On the development of media in New Order, see further Jose Manuel Tesoro, *the Invisible Palace; the True Story of a Journalist's Murder in Java* (Jakarta: PT. Equinox Publishing (Asia) Pte. Ltd, 2004); Janet Steele, *Wars Within; the Story of Tempo, an*



Even so, this does not imply that the journalists have no challenges in Indonesia. Reportedly, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) reported that in 2006 (54 cases); 2007 (75 cases); 2008 (58 cases); 2009 (38 cases); 2010 (51 cases); 2011 (45 cases); 2012 (56 cases); 2013 (40 cases); 2014 (41 cases); and 2015 (42 cases). Herlambang A. Wiratraman, head of Indonesia human rights lecturers association (SEPAHAM), says that historically press freedom in Indonesia has been the exception rather than the rule is therefore telling, but even today, when Indonesia's democracy seems to have become relatively stable, press freedom is constantly under threat.<sup>23</sup>

Ironically, Indonesia has undergone nearly two decades of Reform Era, the world press freedom index (World Press Freedom Index) Indonesia continues to decline. According to the annual report of *Reporters Sans Frontieres* (RSF),<sup>24</sup> the Indonesian press freedom index can be seen in the following table:

YEAR	RANKING	TOTAL COUNTRIES	SCORE
2002	57	139	20,00
2003	111	166	34,25
2004	117	167	37,75
2005	103	167	26,00
2006	103	168	26,00
2007	100	169	30,50
2008	111	173	27,00
2009	101	175	28,50
2010	117	178	35,83

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*Independent Magazine in Soeharto's Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT. Equinox Publishing (Asia) Pte. Ltd, 2005). David T. Hill, *the Press in New Order Indonesia*, edition Indonesia Gita Widya LaksmiSoerjoatmodjo, *Pers di Mata Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011).

<sup>23</sup>See and read further Herlambang A. Wiratraman, *Press Freedom, Law and Politics in Indonesia; A Socio-Legal Study* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2014), page. 1. See also Dewan Pers, *Kebebasan Pers & Ancaman Hukum* (Jakarta: Dewan Pers, 2005).

<sup>24</sup>RSF was established in Mounpeller, France, in 1985 by four journalists, i.e. Robert Menard, Remy Loury, Jacques Molenat and Emilien Jubineau. Six indicators are used in assessing the press freedom index, that is:(1) *pluralism*; (2) *media independence*; (3) *environment and self-censorship*; (4) *legislative framework*; (5) *transparency*; (6) *infrastructure*

2011-2012	146	179	68,00
2013	139	179	41,05
2014	132	180	38,15
2015	138	180	40,75

The Freedom House,<sup>25</sup>an independent monitoring organization, committed for the expansion of freedom and democracy in the world, also ranked Indonesian press freedom as follows:

YEAR	RANKING	TOTAL COUNTRIES	SCORE
2003	Partly Free		51-60
2004	117	193	55
2005	120	167	58
2006	123	194	58
2007	114	195	54
2008	115	195	54
2009	113	195	54
2010	107	196	52
2011	108	196	53
2012	97	197	49
2013	98	197	49
2014	98	197	49
2015	99	199	49

Leo Batubara, Vice-Chairman of the Press Council 2007-2010, stated, "So long as the law enforcement agencies still let acts of violence against journalists and the press, and provide protection against the 'problematic' press official, the social control function of the press remains ineffective. The people will continue to be the victims of abuse of power by state officials."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Established since October 1941 and was the first American organization striving on the global freedom through research and advocacy on democracy, political independence and human rights. Indicators used are: *legal environment*, *political environment*, and *economic environment*. See further at [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)

<sup>26</sup>See Leo Batubara, "Kekerasan terhadap Fungsi Pers," at [andreanthoni.blogspot.co.id/2008/08/kekerasan-terhadap-fungsi-pers](http://andreanthoni.blogspot.co.id/2008/08/kekerasan-terhadap-fungsi-pers). See also

Human rights defenders are those working within the framework of the promotion and protection of human rights, including lawyers, teachers, victims of human rights violations, farmers' groups, women's organizations and **journalists** as well as other human rights activists. When they perform their professional tasks to the best of their ability and strive to promote and protect human rights, they are human rights defenders. So, the term human rights defenders does not refer to a mechanical and systematic work, only recognized by a single profession. Human rights defenders reflect concrete and commendable activities. They are constantly striving to raise awareness for the promotion and protection of human rights.

### **Freedom of the Press in Indonesia**

Article 1 point 1 of the Press Law gives the sense of the press as: *Lembaga sosial dan wahana komunikasi massa yang melaksanakan kegiatan jurnalistik meliputi mencari, memperoleh, memiliki, menyimpan, mengolah, dan menyampaikan informasi baik dalam bentuk tulisan, suara, gambar, suara dan gambar, serta data dan grafik maupun dalam bentuk lainnya dengan menggunakan media cetak, media elektronik, dan segala jenis saluran yang tersedia.* (Social institution and a means for mass communication which conduct journalistic activities involving the action to seek, obtain, possess, store, process and convey information in the form of text, sound, images, sounds and images, data and graphs as well as in other forms using print media, electronic media, and all available channels).

The freedom of press, although the crucial as democratic empowerment, it should be understood as a means, not an end. The freedom of press is not absolute independence.<sup>27</sup> Freedom of the press is

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[http://andreanthoni.blogspot.co.id/2008/08/kekerasan-terhadap-fungsipers\\_3944.html](http://andreanthoni.blogspot.co.id/2008/08/kekerasan-terhadap-fungsipers_3944.html).

<sup>27</sup>“... So, according to systematical interpretation (*sistematische interpretatie*), human rights are regulated in Article 28A until Article 28I Indonesian Constitution 1945 abiding by the limitation on human rights that are regulated in Article 28J Indonesian Constitution 1945,” as decided by Indonesian Constitutional Court No. 2-3/PUU/V/2007 dated 30 October 2007. Even though in the context of human rights studies, the rationale of the decision of the Constitutional Court is questionable, as the limitation of human rights are not as simple as referring to Article 29 UDHR 1948 and the *Limburg Principles on the*

a basic strength with which the press could work to the maximum to achieve national goals. On this side of the discourse, that the freedom of the press is often reduced as a dogma and eternal justification to merely serve media business' interests.<sup>28</sup>

In the development of a long history, there were episodes of the Indonesian government that reflected freedom of the press. In fact in the history of Indonesia, the press gives vital elan to efforts to achieve Indonesian independence. Indonesian freedom fighters realized the importance of the strategic role of the press in strengthening Indonesia's independence struggle.

Likewise, in the history of Indonesia, the press was used as a tool of struggle for certain political interests. The episodes of Indonesian history described the ebb and flow of the press freedom in Indonesia.<sup>29</sup>

1. Early Era of Independence (1945)

Jamaladin Adinegoro (1904-1967), the leader of *Pewartu Deli* in Medan in one editorial stated the following:

*Pers di waktu ini tidak banyak kemerdekaannya dan orang yang menulis pasal staatkundige vraagstukken itu adalah ibarat orang yang menyeberang sungai, melalui titian selisih papan. Ia harus sangat hati-hati sekali melangkah agar supaya ia jangan jatuh masuk sungai.* (Press at this time lacks independence and any person who wrote the article *staatkundige vraagstukken* is like a man who crossed the

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*Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights which must be referred to strictly, as it contains far more narrative explanations than Article 28J of Indonesian Constitution 1945.*

<sup>28</sup>Edmund Burke referred media as "the fourth estate" has come to be associated with the idea that the press plays a crucial role in enabling citizens to exercise control over political process. See Susan Marks and Andrew Clapham, *International Human Rights Lexicon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), page 237.

<sup>29</sup>These episodes divided into four phases of Indonesian government in order to seek the relation as well as press contribution in such phase. Adinegoro said "pers suatu negara adalah gambaran dari bangsa yang memilikinya." (the press in a state is a picture of the nation that has it." See Soebagijo I.N., *Adinegoro; Pelopor Jurnalistik Indonesia* (Jakarta: C.V. Haji Masagung, 1987), page 44.

river, through a makeshift bridge. He must be very careful in placing his steps to avoid falling into the river.<sup>30</sup>

In the fight for independence from the colonialists, of course, in addition to determination and confrontation to fight against the invaders, the struggle through media was also conducted, either overtly, or covertly. Press surely were at many political odds with the colonialists (the Dutch as well as Japanese occupation). In this era, it was recognized that the historical facts demonstrate that the heroes of Indonesia utilized the press as a medium for the struggle for Indonesian independence.

## 2. "Orde Lama" (Old Order) (1945-1966)

The term of President Sukarno (18 August 1945-12 March 1967) is known as a new episode of Indonesian government. Sukarno (1901-1970) was the first President. The spirit of revolution for independence was still very prevalent in Soekarno Administration. In the early days of the existence of independent Indonesia, of course, the turmoil and the dynamics of government administration is still faced with the struggle of consolidating the government.

David T. Hill stated, from the beginning of the independence of Indonesia until the period of the 1950s, the newspaper has been growing like mushrooms in the rainy season. Media thrived and became an important part as a funnel of information for the views of political parties. Indonesia with a population of 85.5 million, during the administration of Indonesia's first election in 1955, the number of publications increased six-fold to 457 thousand by the circulation figures reached 3.5 million.<sup>31</sup>

Freedom of the press in this era experienced significant events since the publication of Presidential Decree of 5 July 1959. This decree became the turning point of the limitation of freedom of the press in Indonesia. The essence of this Decree modified democracy of Pancasila into quasi-democratic practices, which is under the control of guided democracy of Sukarno.

Consecutive regulations were passed under the pretext of guidance of the press in Indonesia, namely Presidential Regulation No. 6

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<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, page 52.

<sup>31</sup>See David. T. Hill, *the Press in New Order Indonesia*, Indonesia edition by Gita Widya Laksmini Soerjoatmodjo, *Pers di Masa Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Obor, 2011), page 24. See David T. Hill, *Journalism and Politics in Indonesia; A Critical Biography of Mochtar Lubis (1922-2004)*, Indonesia edition by Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia (Jakarta: Obor, 2011).

of 1963 on the Guidance of the Press<sup>32</sup> and Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) Decree No. XXXII/MPRS/1966 on Press Guidance as enacted in Jakarta, July 5, 1966. The function of the press was distorted and limited as the mass mobilization for the purposes of Indonesian revolution.

In December 1966, the President established Law 11 of 1966 on Basic Provisions of Press.<sup>33</sup> This provision confirmed that the press was guided by the government, and therefore the provisions of Article 7 paragraph (1) strengthened the guidance of the press, and that the chairman of press council was the minister of information.

3. "Orde Baru" (New Order) (1966-1998)

Sukarno administration was replaced by General Soeharto through the Order of Eleven March 1966 (*Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret*). As the Second President of the Republic of Indonesia, Suharto (1921-2008) was successfully elected in seven elections, and proved no better than Sukarno, particularly in creating a climate of press freedom in Indonesia. The term 'New Order' was a political attempt to separate between the period of Suharto administration from Sukarno administration which upheld the implementation of Pancasila Democracy.

The presence of the Ministry of Information became an important agent of the government in restricting freedom of the press. National development, unity and political stability were the main jargons that had been put forward and the press was obliged to support it. Free and "responsible" press (*pers yang bebas dan bertanggung jawab*) become important concept in the spectrum of press freedom in the New Order Era. Such policy was obvious through the issuance of Law No. 4 of 1967 on the Amendment of Law No. 11 Year 1967 on Basic Provisions of Press.

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The concept of Suharto's policy in the field of the press could easily be read through the Guidelines of State Policy set every five years since 1973. People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Decree No.

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<sup>32</sup>This stipulation consists of 6 chapters and 14 articles. Enacted in Jakarta, 15 Mei 1963.

<sup>33</sup>This stipulation consists of 10 chapters and 21 articles. Enacted di Jakarta, 12 December 1966.

<sup>34</sup>This stipulation consists of 2 chapters. Enacted in Jakarta, 6 Mei 1967.

IV/MPR/1973 on the Guidelines of State Policy (*Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara*) stated the following:<sup>35</sup>

*Pembinaan pers yang sehat yaitu pers yang bebas dan bertanggung jawab yang memungkinkan Pers disatu pihak memberikan penerangan kepada masyarakat seluas mungkin dan seobyektif mungkin, dilain pihak merupakan saluran pendapat Rakyat yang konstruktif.* (Fostering healthy press refers to press that is free and responsible, which on one hand enables providing information to the public as widely as possible and as objectively as possible, on the other hand, is the channel of people's constructive opinions).

The role of the press became increasingly assertive and detailed as an agent of national development as outlined in the People's Consultative Assembly Decree No. IV/MPR/1987 on the Guidelines of State Policy, which reads as follows:<sup>36</sup>

*Dalam rangka meningkatkan peranan pers dalam pembangunan perlu ditingkatkan usaha pengembangan pers yang sehat, pers yang bebas dan bertanggung jawab, yaitu pers yang dapat menjalankan fungsinya sebagai penyebar informasi yang obyektif melakukan kontrol sosial yang konstruktif, menyalurkan aspirasi rakyat dan meluaskan komunikasi dan partisipasi masyarakat. Dalam hal ini maka perlu dikembangkan interaksi positif antara pers, pemerintah dan masyarakat.* (In order to increase the role of the press in development, there needs to be improved effort to develop free and responsible press, namely the press to perform its function as a disseminator of objective information that conducts constructive social control, a channel of people's aspirations and expansion of communication and community participation. It is necessary to develop a positive interaction between the press, the government and society).

In this provision, an important recommendation is the policy of information and press on the letter f (of the Decree mentioned above) which states as follows:

*Untuk menjamin pertumbuhan pers yang sehat, pers yang bebas dan bertanggung jawab maka Undang-undang tentang Ketentuan-ketentuan Pokok Pers perlu ditinjau kembali. Sejalan dengan hal itu maka perlu dipersiapkan perangkat peraturan di bidang pers yang dapat*

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<sup>35</sup>See political policy on article 3 letter d. Enacted in Jakarta, 22 March 1973.

<sup>36</sup>See policy on information and press part d. Enacted in Jakarta, 22 March 1978.

*lebih menjamin pertumbuhan pers yang sehat dalam rangka pelaksanaan Demokrasi Pancasila. (To ensure the healthy growth of free and responsible press, the Law on Basic Provisions of Press needs to be revisited. Along with it, sets of rules need to be prepared in the field of press that can better ensure the healthy growth of the press in order to implement Pancasila Democracy).*

Then, Law No. 21 of 1982 on the Amendment of the Law No. 11 Year 1966 on Basic Provisions Releases as Amended by Law No. 4, 1967 was enacted.<sup>37</sup> The assertion for press publishing license/*Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers* (SIUPP) is considered reasonable, states in the provisions of Article 13:

*Setiap penerbitan pers yang diselenggarakan oleh perusahaan pers memerlukan Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers selanjutnya disingkat SIUPP yang dikeluarkan oleh Pemerintah. Ketentuan-ketentuan tentang SIUPP akan diatur oleh Pemerintah setelah mendengar pertimbangan Dewan Pers. (Each press publications conducted by the press company requires a Press Publishing license, hereinafter abbreviated as SIUPP, is issued by the Government. The provisions of this license shall be governed by the Government after consultation with the Press Council).*

In the implementation, this license was a nightmare for Indonesian press. The information department was authorized to provide even revoke this license under the pretext which is contrary to the democratic values of Pancasila. This unilateral policy eventually become a "snowball" that resulted in huge protests of the journalists and the public when the magazine *Tempo*, *Gatra* and *Tiras* were banned in June 1994. Atmakusumah Astraatmadja, the winner of the 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts, called it "Longest Anti-banning Demonstration in the History of the Press" (*Demonstrasi Terpanjang Antibredel dalam Sejarah Pers*).<sup>38</sup>

Demonstrations and extensive criticism from various circles of society, both within and outside the country, became the crucial beginning of the major changes in the history of Indonesia. The new press organization, AJI was established in 1994. Until now, AJI has firmly

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<sup>37</sup>This stipulation consists of 19 articles. Enacted in Jakarta, 20 September 1982.

<sup>38</sup>Atmakusumah Astraatmadja, "kata Pengantar," in David T. Hill, *the Press in New Order Indonesia ... loc.cit.*



and boldly voiced the anti-banning policy and the limitation of freedom of the press in Indonesia.

4. "Era Reformasi" (Reform Era) (1999-now)

Reform era was marked by demands of fundamental change in Indonesia. Press freedom limited by Suharto administration become an important modality for the fall of Suharto in May 1998. The Reform mandated the amendment of Indonesia's constitution, respect, protection and resolution of human rights violations cases, combating corruption and upholding freedom of the press.

Early in the Reform Era in Indonesia, the government of President B.J. Habibie (21 May 1998-20 October 1999) laid the foundation for the new Indonesian government. The first election in the Reform Era was held on June 7, 1999. Related to freedom of the press, B.J. Habibie (1936- ) together with the parliament passed the Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights<sup>39</sup> and Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press.<sup>40</sup> Both of these provisions marked a new phase in the press freedom in Indonesia. A news organization that was initially under the auspices of the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) changed drastically with the presence of dozens of news organizations, among which the most important is the AJI.

In general, the development of press freedom in the Reform Era brought great changes. The provision of Article 7 of the Press Law confirms that *wartawan bebas memilih organisasi wartawan* (journalists are free to choose the organization of journalists). On this basis, the Minister of Information, Yunus Yosfiah, revoked the Decree of the Minister of Information No. 47 of 1975 which established the PWI as the only organization for journalists in Indonesia which was recognized by the government.

In fact, no less important was the position of the Press Council, as stated in the provisions of Article 15, which became an independent institution. Likewise with SIUPP, Information Minister Regulation No. 01/Per/Menpen/1998 repealed the Regulation of the Minister of Information No. 01/Per/Menpen/1984 on the Provisions of the Press Publishing License (SIUPP) and the Decree of the Minister of Information

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<sup>39</sup>This stipulation consists of 11 chapters and 106 articles. Enacted in Jakarta, 23 September 1999.

<sup>40</sup>This stipulation consists of 10 chapters and 21 articles. Enacted in Jakarta, 23 September 1999.

No. 214A/Kep/Menpen/1984 on Procedures and Requirements for Obtaining SIUPP.

Another major change was the policy of President Abdurrahman Wahid (20 October 1999-23 July 2001). Abdurrahman Wahid, known as Gus Dur (1940-2009) was the President who took over office after the 1999 election. President Gus Dur dissolved the Ministry of Information through Presidential Decree No. 136 of 1999 on the Status, Tasks, Functions, Organizational Structure and Work Procedure of the Department.<sup>41</sup> And, Yunus Yosfiah was the last *Menteri Penerangan* (Information Minister) who headed the *Departemen Penerangan* (Department of Information of Indonesia).

Even though the emergence of freedom of the press since the Reform Era, it has still led to problems. Among the most significant was still the wide range of abuses against journalists on the acquisition of information and coverage of news, the reporting of news, and the politicization and criminalization of media. Moreover, freedom of the press did not follow the achievement of the quality journalistic works.

Warief Djajanto Basorie, who teaches journalism and has conducted workshops on development reporting at the Dr. Soetomo Press Institute (LPDS) in Jakarta, says, one troubling concern after the Indonesian media gained press freedom with the end of Soeharto's New Order in 1998 was the emergence of press freedom "stowaways," They are press outlets that use press freedom for their self-interest rather than for the public interest. Under the guise of press freedom, they extort, deceive or intimidate.<sup>42</sup>

This was perceived by the Press Council, who received complaints from the public due to unprofessional journalists and news media. The chairman of the Press Council, Bagir Manan, confirmed this as follows:

*Dewan Pers mengharapakan perusahaan pers yang belum memenuhi ketentuan di atas untuk segera melakukan perbaikan atau pembenahan hingga batas waktu tanggal 1 Juli 2014. Jika di kemudian hari timbul permasalahan atau pengaduan dari masyarakat terhadap perusahaan pers yang tidak memenuhi ketentuan di atas hingga batas waktu 1 Juli*

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<sup>41</sup>Enacted in Jakarta, 10 November 1999.

<sup>42</sup>Warief Djajanto Basorie, "How to Be A Competent Journalist," in *the Jakarta Post*, 12 March 2010. See more at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/03/12/how-be-a-competent-journalist.html#sthash.A5d7U5uo.dpuf>.

2014, Dewan Pers mempertimbangkan untuk merekomendasikan penanganannya kepada aparat penegak hukum<sup>43</sup> (The Press Council expects the press company which has yet to comply with the above regulations to conduct immediate correction up to the deadline of July 1, 2014. If in the future the problems arise or complaints arise from the public against the press company that does not comply with the above until the deadline of July 1, 2014, the Press Council will consider recommending the treatment of this case to law enforcement officials).

Throughout the years 2000-2011, the Press Council received as many complaint as 3,225, the complaint either directly or indirectly. In 2014 in general, complaints concerned unbalanced news, defamation, inaccuracy, violence against journalists and the behavior of journalists.

Major changes in freedom of the press are expected to support the independence and dignity of the national press. Actually, freedom of the press should be based on three key elements, *first* adherence to ethical norms, *second* compliance and enforcement of legal norms and *third* increase journalistic skills. The ability to synergize the three is a "gigantic" asset for the national press to support the promotion and protection of human rights in Indonesia.

Accordingly, the explanation of Article 4 of the Press Law confirms, press freedom is freedom which comes with the awareness of upholding the rule of law implemented by the courts, and professional responsibility as outlined in the Code of Ethics of Journalism and in accordance with the conscience of press members. (*kemerdekaan pers adalah kemerdekaan yang disertai kesadaran akan pentingnya penegakan supremasi hukum yang dilaksanakan oleh pengadilan, dan tanggung jawab profesi yang dijabarkan dalam Kode Etik Jurnalistik serta sesuai dengan hati nurani insan pers*). Freedom of the press is not free press. An independent press is a press that is able to liberate itself from arrogance and impunity.<sup>44</sup>

With the establishment of freedom of the press, the national press, as defined by Article 6 of the Press Law, is expected to *first* meet the public's right to know; *second*, uphold the basic values of democracy, promote the establishment of rule of law and human rights, as well as upholding diversity; *third*, develop public opinion based on information

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<sup>43</sup>See Dewan Pers, *op.cit.*, page XXVI.

<sup>44</sup>*Impunity is an exemption or protection from punishment.* See Bryan A. Garner (ed.), *op.cit.*, page 774.

that is precise, accurate and true; fourth conducting surveillance, criticism, corrections, and suggestions on matters relating to the public interest; and the fifth, fight for justice and truth.

The subordination and participation of the national press in supporting the rule of law and respect for human rights illustrates the existence and the strategic role of the press for strengthening democracy in Indonesia. This is the space which should be filled to the maximum. Informing and mobilization proved to be of slight difference. Being informed through the information media, the public is becoming increasingly intelligent. However, some perceived the national press to have conducted sedition and defamation. The assessment of the incitement and defamation, strangely, still used the force of law that is inconsistent with the spirit of empowering national press.

### **Strengthening the National Press**

The national press is a press organized by the Indonesian press company.<sup>45</sup> It is worth noting that freedom of the press, although crucial to empower democracy, it could still be understood as a means, not an end. Freedom of the press is not absolute independence. Freedom of the press is a basic strength with which the press members work with the maximum in order to achieve national goals. On this side of the discourse, freedom of the press is often reduced and deviated as a dogma and the justification of the mere interests of the media business.

The application of the Criminal Code in various forms of victimization of the press is a step backwards. Indeed the criminal provisions of the press, as stipulated in the Press Law, is applied law that allows the achievement of fair and dignified press. Otherwise, the media crackdown resulted from unjust application of law, is a bad precedent for the direction of legal certainty in Indonesia. This is not intended to dichotomize the application of public law for members of the press, but rather, this is the effort of learning and testing of the spectrum of press freedom that have been adopted in the Press Law.

In order to support the independence and freedom of dignified press, the stipulation of press offenses should be included intact in the Press Law. This fundamental weakness must be addressed wisely by members of the press. The Press Law needs to be immediately amended. If the offenses are only based on the criminal provisions in the Press Law, this is of course, still very vague. Press criminal offenses are only listed in Chapter VIII of Article 18. Giving the right of reply (*hak jawab*) and the

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<sup>45</sup>Article 1 point 6 of the Press Law.

complaint to press institutions does not mean eliminating the right for others to sue them legally.

The Press Law brought great changes to the spirit of democracy in Indonesia. As a noble profession with a very commendable task, journalists need a strong legal protection. With robust journalist profession supported by a strong legal umbrella, then the national press would be robust in its empowered and dignified role.

A strong national press is collective hope and strength. In my opinion the national press should contribute in the efforts of human rights education. While the dark and scary side of the national press still remains, among is the significant problem of the protection and application of ambiguous law on the press. This portrait still perfectly illustrates the gaps in the knowledge and attitude of the society, and not the exception elite members of the press itself about the existence and the strategic role of the national press. The national press is allegedly not able to liberate itself from acute dependence due to poverty and ignorance.

### **Organization of Professional Journalists in North Sumatra**

PWI<sup>46</sup> was established in Surakarta on 9 February 1946, approximately one year after Indonesia's independence, 17 August 1945. The momentum of PWI establishment has become the basis for determining the implementation of National Press Day (*Hari Pers Nasional/HPN*). PWI is the oldest press organization in Indonesia.

In addition to PWI, Newspaper Publishers Association (*Serikat Penerbitan Surat kabar/SPS*) was also established on 8 June 1946. Both organizations was a forum for journalists and newspapers which greatly contributed to the efforts of Indonesia's independence struggle.

Under the provisions of Article 1 paragraph (3) PWI's Statutes (*Peraturan Dasar & Rumah Tangga PWI*) passed at its congress,<sup>47</sup> affirmed that PWI is an independent organization of Indonesian journalists and professional good regardless of race, religion, and class as well as membership of political organizations and community organizations. (*organisasi wartawan Indonesia independen dan profesional tanpa memandang baik suku, agama, dan golongan maupun keanggotaan organisasi politik dan organisasi kemasyarakatan*).

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<sup>46</sup>See more at [www.pwi.or.id](http://www.pwi.or.id)

<sup>47</sup>This regulation was enacted on the XXIII<sup>th</sup> PWI Congress in Banjarmasin, September 2013.

PWI is based on Pancasila. PWI currently has the membership of over 15 thousand journalists in Indonesia. According to the Press Council Regulation No. 1 of 2000 on Competency Standards Journalist, PWI is the authoritative institution which organizes Competency Test of Journalist (*Uji Kompetensi Wartawan/UKW*). Based on UKW, journalists are classified into three levels, namely the advanced journalists (*wartawan utama*), intermediate journalists (*wartawan madya*) and junior journalists (*wartawan muda*). It is important to note that no more than 25 percent of journalists gathered in PWI have been certified. It is crucial to boost the quality of Indonesian journalists.

Structurally, under the provisions of Article 2 paragraph (1) PWI Statutes, PWI consists of (1) PWI Center (*pusat*) located in the capital city of the Republic of Indonesia; (2) PWI Province (*propinsi*) located in the capital of province; (3) PWI Regency/City (*kabupaten/kota*) located in the capital district/city; and (4) special PWI Solo domiciled in Surakarta.

In North Sumatra, PWI members amounted to 567 people with the qualifications 30 advanced journalists, 90 intermediate journalists and 120 junior journalists. PWI has established 15 PWI districts/cities. In their works for human rights education in North Sumatra, I am very appreciative to the PWI North Sumatra, particularly the Chairman of the Honorary Board of Regional PWI North Sumatra who persevered to build communication, socialization and dissemination provisions of normative journalistic profession to the press and the societies of North Sumatra.

From 2006-2015, Mr. War Djamil, Senior Editor of *Analisa* Daily, former Honorary Secretary of the Board of North Sumatra PWI and former Director of Training Institute of North Sumatra of PWI has been intensively striving for the professionalism of press in North Sumatra. As the iconic figure of the main reporter, War Djamil, very actively campaigning for the importance of subordination to Journalist's Code of Ethics (*Kode Etik Jurnalis/KEJ*) and rights-based journalism through training of the press, seminars and public discussions. This is not only done in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra Province, but also in various areas in districts/cities in North Sumatra.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>See War Djamil, "Jurnalisme Berbasis HAM dalam Pemberitaan," *makalah* delivered by Training Institute of PWI North Sumatera, Medan, 21 November 2015. See also War Djamil, "Sekilas tentang Etika Pers dalam Media Massa," *paper* was delivered on Journalistic Training PWI Kabupaten Asahan, Kisaran, 11 November 2014. See War Djamil, "Delik Pers dan Nota

What War Djamil did was actually more to his initiative and independent struggle. Unfortunately, North Sumatra PWI has not set it as the official program agenda. In the latest development, the significance of human rights education for journalists has been perceived in the PWI, however, activities conducted to this effect were still sporadic, of 15 PWI regencies/cities in North Sumatra, only several PWI Districts have organized human rights-based of journalism training, such as PWI Labuhanbatu District, PWI Asahan and PWI Deli Serdang.

Meanwhile, AJI<sup>49</sup> was established in Megamendung, Bogor, West Java (Sirnagalih Declaration), on August 7, 1994. Departing from 4 founding cities in 1994 with a few dozen members, it currently has 37 cities, from Papua to Aceh with nearly two thousand members in 2015.

Since its founding in August 1994, AJI has been committed to strive for freedom of the press, as well as providing quality information to the public. After freedom of the press was won from the authoritarian regime, AJI ensures members must understand the professional ethics of journalists. To improve the welfare of journalists, the founders decided that AJI join the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), based in Brussels, Belgium. This was part of the organization's strategy for dealing with "pro-government" journalists that controls the national press at the time.<sup>50</sup>

The results of the X AJI Congress in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, held on 27-29 November 2014 endorsed and set the AJI Statutes. In principle, AJI has the principles of freedom, democracy, equality and diversity.<sup>51</sup> AJI is known as a journalist organization that cares and is involved actively in striving for and defending press freedom in Indonesia and in the world.

Actions of AJI throughout Indonesia were conducted towards the respect and protection of human rights and democracy which emphasize the importance of professionalism and welfare of journalists, in accordance with the vision of AJI, as affirmed in the provisions of Article 9 of the AJI Statutes, namely the establishment of a free, professional, and

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Kesepahaman Dewan Pers-Polri," *makalah delivered* on Press education, in collaboration with PWI North Sumatera, USU and Asian Agri, Medan, 12 December 2013.

<sup>49</sup>See more at [www.aji.or.id](http://www.aji.or.id)

<sup>50</sup>AJI, *Semangat Sirnagalih; 20 Tahun Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (Jakarta, AJI, 2014), page 13.

<sup>51</sup>See Article 5 of AJI Statutes.

prosperous press, that upholds the values of democracy (*terwujudnya pers bebas, profesional, dan sejahtera, yang menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai demokrasi*).

AJI organizational structure is made up of AJI National (*nasional*) and AJI City (*kota*). AJI has also been established by the Press Council as the authoritative institutions in organizing UKW, although AJI Medan UKW has not been capable to organize UKW on its own due to limited resources. AJI Medan was established in 1999<sup>52</sup> and has a membership of 85 people with 3 advanced journalists, and 1 intermediate journalist level.

In addition to running the programs together with AJI National, AJI Medan is active, either through its own institutions or in partnership/alliance with other civil societies in North Sumatra, to voice the importance of freedom of the press. Issues and discourses of human rights are brought intensively in various forums and studies, though still seem sporadic. The fundamental question of organizational consolidation AJI Medan still recurs, even though to date the commitment to change and strengthen the organization is run by AJI Medan.

AJI Medan is worked by many young journalists who are very open to civil societies, so many successful partnerships are resulted in order to campaign and strive for the rule of law, democracy, press freedom and human rights. In many instances, AJI Medan is actively involved in the Civil Society Alliance on Anti-torture (SIKAP), Civil Society Alliance on Information (MASIF) and others. AJI Medan is currently the only AJI organization in the province of North Sumatra. In AJI Medan Board's work program, it was planned to establish AJI Siantar in 2016.<sup>53</sup>

### **Epilogue**

Freedom of the press in Indonesia has had its ebb and flow. In a very long time, freedom of the press was limited and subordinated to political hegemony of government, both in the Old Order and New Order. Freedom of the press in Reform Era was strongly established. The constitutionality of human rights which became more firmly entrenched by various national human rights instruments, the policy space that is democratic, participatory and upholds freedom of the press further strengthen the freedom of press.

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<sup>52</sup>Interview with Darma Lubis, former Chief of AJI Medan.

<sup>53</sup>For further information of AJI Medan see at <http://medan.aji.or.id>



However, freedom of the press is not everything. The phenomenon of "stowaways" and often referred to as "unscrupulous" journalists is a portrait of poor usage of the press freedom. The freedom of the press is a means to educate and support the welfare of society. Freedom of the press requires robust press members and organizations to be professional. They must comply with the enforcement of professional code of ethics of journalists.

Media and human rights have a strong mutual relationship. With increasingly strategic role of the media, professional journalist organizations contribute significantly in strengthening democratic values and human rights. Human rights education conducted by PWI and AJI in North Sumatra still tend to be sporadic, probably have not been able to make an impact in instilling the democratic values. Looking ahead, PWI and AJI in North Sumatra should synergize and reinforce a sustainable framework in implementing human rights education, so that human rights-based journalism can actually happen in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra.

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