

Talangsari Riots 1989: Authoritarian Regime, Human Rights, and the Dynamics of Political Islam in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The 1989 Talangsari riots are one of the key events in the history of state violence against religious groups during the New Order era. The incident not only reflected the authoritarianism of the Soeharto regime, but also became a crucial point in the relationship between the state and political Islam in Indonesia. The background of this incident shows the state's suspicion of Islamic movements that are considered potentially threatening national stability, in the context of the security and anti-radicalism narratives built by the state. This paper aims to examine the Talangsari incident as a manifestation of conflict between the authoritarian state and Islamic political expression, as well as its implications for human rights discourse in Indonesia. This study uses a historical method with a qualitative approach, based on a literature study of media archives, human rights reports, article internet, and academic works related to political Islam and New Order power. The expected result of this research is the development of a critical historical understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between the state and Islamic groups in the context of authoritarian regimes, as well as the contribution of this understanding to history learning. The findings are expected to enrich pedagogical approaches in history education, especially in raising issues of human rights, religious tolerance, and identity politics contextually and reflectively in the classroom.

Keywords: Talangsari riots; political Islam; New Order; human rights; history education; authoritarian regime

INTRODUCTION

Since the issuance of the March 11 Order (Supersemar) in 1966, Indonesia experienced significant changes, particularly in its system of government. The appointment of Soeharto as president by Soekarno was a consequence of Indonesian society's disappointment with Soekarno, whose position was contrary to the people's struggle expressed through the Three People's Demands, namely the dissolution of the

Indonesian Communist Party, the reduction of prices, and the reshuffling of the Dwikora Cabinet. Soekarno's position caused the Indonesian people to lose confidence in him. Eventually, Soeharto became president due to the demands of the situation, the chaotic conditions, the personality cult surrounding President Soekarno, and the existence of authoritarian power (Soeparno, 2017).

He emerged with a doctrine of change in all fields to overcome problems in Indonesia's governmental system. The emergence of Soeharto's leadership after the events of the September 30 Movement in 1965 can be described as that of a hero; he was praised in demonstrations through the chant "Long Live Pak Harto!" which represented communication that offered praise and recognition to him (Soeparno, 2017). His emergence as a figure regarded as a hero was related to his paradigm of eliminating the Indonesian Communist Party. This was pursued by indoctrinating society to adopt one main ideology, namely Pancasila. He had several programs to indoctrinate the Indonesian people, including the implementation of P4, which covered the implementation, guidance, internalization, and practice of Pancasila, followed by restrictions on citizens who wished to criticize the government and requirements for citizens who wished to establish religious groups or organizations to use Pancasila as their ideological basis. Under the justification of "maintaining state stability," the government sought to ensure that all religious groups and organizations operated within rules determined by the state. The government considered that religious groups or organizations possessed a spirit of struggle that was incompatible with government regulations. Consequently, the government frequently referred to religious groups or organizations as "radical." When such groups were considered to have an ideology other than Pancasila, the government was inclined to act firmly.

One event targeted by government policy during the New Order because it was suspected of being a religious group that endangered the state was the 1989 Talangsari Tragedy. The incident occurred on February 7, 1989, in Talangsari Hamlet, Rajabasa Lama Village, Way Jepara, East Lampung. The cause of the tragedy was the government's implementation of Pancasila as the sole principle and the Eka Prasetya Panca Karsa program containing P4, namely the implementation, guidance, internalization, and practice of Pancasila. Through these rules, the government required

all religious organizations or groups to adopt them. These government programs and regulations were directed toward religious groups that were critical of the government.

The incident involved a religious group led by Warsidi. The attack, under the command of Korem Garuda Hitam 043, was directed at Warsidi's congregation at the Islamic boarding school, where the congregation intended to hold a large religious gathering in the morning. The troops attacked and burned the raised-floor boarding-house buildings, causing many casualties. Hundreds of members of the congregation, including babies, children, pregnant women, adolescents, and elderly people, were allegedly victims. A total of 246 members of the congregation were declared missing, while many others were tortured, arrested, and tried arbitrarily. Data from KontraS stated that the findings of the pro justitia investigation by Komnas HAM (2006) indicated alleged gross human rights violations in the Talangsari incident, including the killing of 130 people, forced displacement of 77 people, deprivation of liberty of 53 people, torture of 46 people, and ill-treatment of 229 people (KontraS, 2017). The incident is one of many human rights violation cases in Indonesia that have not been fully resolved by the government, either legally or morally.

The Talangsari incident is important to revisit today as a reminder that justice is one of the most important matters and must be upheld in a democratic Indonesia. This research is a form of empathy toward the victims of the Talangsari tragedy. In addition, writing this research can serve as an effort to demand justice and encourage the resolution of human rights violations that occurred in the past.

Research on the 1989 Talangsari riots has previously been conducted by Akmaliah and Wahyudi (2014), entitled "Islah as a Pretext: A Case Study of the 'Conflict Resolution' of the Tanjung Priok (1984) and Talangsari (1989) Events after the New Order Regime." This research focuses on efforts to resolve the Tanjung Priok (1984) and Talangsari (1989) conflicts through the practice of islah. The study explains that the Talangsari tragedy was a concrete form of repressive government action intended to eradicate the Warsidi group because it was considered a threat to state stability. However, this research will discuss in detail the resolution of the Talangsari tragedy through islah, which is expected to actively reveal the truth in the context of protecting human rights cases that occurred during the 1989 Talangsari tragedy.

Another study on the Recovery of the Economic and Social Rights of Victims of Gross Human Rights Violations in the 1989 Talangsari Incident conducted by Utami (2017) focuses on efforts to restore the economic and social rights of Talangsari victims and the impact of gross human rights violations experienced by the victims. However, this research will discuss in detail the state's efforts to restore the economic and social rights that should have been enjoyed by the victims through the rights to a decent livelihood, employment, social security, property ownership, education, and health, so that they can regain their position as victims who deserve freedom.

Another study conducted by Amran and Runturambi focuses on Fulfilling Reparations Rights for Victims of the 1989 Talangsari Incident to Strengthen National Resilience. This study focuses on efforts to fulfill reparations rights for victims affected by the incident in order to strengthen national resilience. The discussion explains that victims have still not been given social freedom because of the strong stigma imposed on them by society, and therefore they have not obtained the rights enjoyed by human beings in general. Accordingly, the government has attempted to improve conditions and provide reparative assistance so that victims feel worthy of living and being respected as social beings. However, these efforts still face challenges and cannot be implemented fully because of certain limitations.

Therefore, according to previous researchers, the reparations rights of victims of the 1989 Talangsari riots have not been fully fulfilled, causing long-term trauma in physical, material, and social aspects. The government has attempted to address the problems arising from the riots, but the negative stigma attached to victims remains present today, resulting in an insignificant recovery process. Although the 1989 Talangsari riots have become the subject of studies on human rights violations and state violence, most existing studies remain focused on physical violence and human rights violations as historical events separated from the broader political context. Previous studies tend to isolate the Talangsari incident from the political dynamics of New Order authoritarianism and the development of political Islam in Indonesia at that time. In addition, studies integrating historical, political, and human rights approaches in an interdisciplinary manner remain very limited. In other words, there remains a research gap concerning the deep relationship between the strategies of an authoritarian regime in managing religious expression, the use of state violence, and the representation and

construction of political Islam in state narratives. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap by analyzing the 1989 Talangsari riots as an intersection between authoritarian repression, human rights issues, and religious identity politics in Indonesia toward the end of the 1980s.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is a literature study or library research. A literature study is a series of activities related to collecting library data, reading and taking notes, and processing research materials (Zed, 2003). Research using a literature-study method has at least four main characteristics that influence its nature and mode of operation. First, researchers deal directly with texts or numerical data rather than direct knowledge from the field or eyewitnesses. Second, library data are “ready to use,” meaning that researchers do not have to travel but only deal with or use source materials available in libraries. Third, library data are secondary sources, meaning that researchers obtain sources from a second hand or sources that are not original field data. Fourth, library data are not limited by space and time, meaning that the data do not change because they are already “dead” data stored in libraries.

Based on the research method using a literature study, the researchers used a primary source in the form of a KontraS report, an organization monitoring human rights, and a book entitled “Tragedi Lampung Peperangan yang Direncanakan” written by Riyanto, a former Commander of the Special Forces of the Warsidi GPK, as well as secondary sources in the form of articles and journals discussing the 1989 Talangsari tragedy. The researchers collected data by reading information from various documents and references. In addition, they analyzed the data by examining the contents of journals, articles, and other references discussing this tragedy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Conditions of the New Order Government and the Dynamics of Political Islam

The New Order government began in 1966 and lasted until 1998, marking the era of President Soeharto's government and the end of President Soekarno's era. The

implementation of the New Order was driven by the failure of the Indonesian governmental system to exercise its authority in state life. This failure had begun with the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, which marked the return of the 1945 Constitution and the end of parliamentary democracy. The implementation of the 1945 Constitution during the New Order did not proceed as it should; rather, its implementation did not conform to its established provisions, so Indonesia's constitutional condition demonstrated that newly emerging institutions and figures did not comply with the principles and provisions of the 1945 Constitution. In addition, the positions of these new institutions still lacked strong foundational legitimacy within Indonesia's governmental structure.

Before the realization of the New Order, Indonesia experienced a constitutional and governmental crisis because Indonesian society at that time was in turmoil caused by the dominance of several parties. This situation led Indonesian society to carry out the Three People's Demands, known as Tritura. Tritura was an expression of public dissatisfaction with the government that created instability in the economic, social, and cultural fields. These conditions caused Indonesia to experience increasing turmoil in relations between society and the state. The government attempted to overcome these problems through various means, one of which was the issuance of the March 11 Order of 1966 by President Soekarno.

The March 11 Order of 1966, or Supersemar, represented the beginning of the New Order government led directly by Soeharto from 1966 to 1998. Under President Soeharto, the Indonesian state took measures to eradicate elements or ideas associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), supported by Decision No. 1/2/1966 on the complete dissolution of the PKI and its mass organizations. Soeharto's main source of power was military support and popular anger toward the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) (Said, 2016, pp. 2–3). This was encouraged by Soeharto's sharp instinct for power, although he lacked political experience, requiring him to maintain power in the military sphere. Soeharto maintained his power through three methods:

1. Removing all officers oriented toward the left and Sukarnoism.
2. Appointing generals to top positions who were not expected to endanger his power.

3. Gradually removing groups of people who were influential in the political field.

Soeharto gradually employed various methods to remove the positions of groups of officers identified as potentially threatening the continuity of his government. His efforts to maintain his position and power were increasingly directed toward military strength by making the military an instrument of power. Therefore, the New Order can be understood as an authoritarian era in Indonesian government that represented a threat to state stability because it emphasized military dominance in political practice and became a starting point for repressive exercises of power over society.

In this context, developing Indonesian politics attempted to adjust its position amid repressive governmental conditions. The position of political Islam in Indonesia during the New Order can be seen in the allocation of political-party authority, which was dominated by only three parties: PPP, Golkar, and PDI (Syamsuddin, 2010). On the other hand, the enforcement of Islamic law or Islam as the basis of the state was not properly acknowledged or positively responded to by the government. This lack of response showed that the state dominated Indonesian society to an excessive degree, which could gradually lead to dangerous conditions in state life in the long term.

This dominance was directly supported by a policy issued by President Soeharto in 1985, namely Pancasila as the sole principle. Pancasila as the sole principle was a new policy implemented in state life that actively emphasized the implicit values of Pancasila, so that individuals or groups whose positions were inconsistent with Pancasila were considered contrary to the state governmental system. Such inconsistency could make groups within society feel discriminated against, marginalized, or excluded from the process of developing the state system. This marginalization could create social segregation by limiting social processes within the state environment and thereby making them no longer balanced with national interests.

Therefore, political Islam within the context of Pancasila as the sole principle required every group to align Islamic values with Pancasila principles in an inclusive and pluralist manner. Political Islam during the New Order had to comply with all policies implemented by the government through the development of Pancasila ideology. However, if political Islam failed to comply and did not implement Pancasila as the sole principle, it could cause public perceptions of political groups to deteriorate

because of various stigmas that had developed within the social environment. Consequently, these negative perceptions led to prejudices directly associated with views of radicalism toward political Islam in Indonesia.

The view of radicalism that developed in society became a key factor in the emergence of political-Islam dynamics in Indonesia. Social and political dynamics in Indonesia directly driven by ideas of radicalism constituted a concrete indication of the dominance of a group concerning certain interests. The relationship between political Islam during the New Order and the 1989 Talangsari riots can be described as the result of the government's negative stigma toward the development of political Islam because it was considered a threat to state stability. This stigma was directly influenced by the implementation of Pancasila as the sole principle. Therefore, the government increasingly adopted suspicion and militarization toward political-Islam groups because of differences in ways of thinking within Indonesia's governmental system. These two measures directed at political-Islam groups created repressive conditions influenced by negative assumptions.

The 1989 Talangsari Incident

The 1989 Talangsari tragedy was one of the cases of gross human rights violations in Indonesia. The tragedy occurred on February 7, 1989, in Talangsari Hamlet, Rajabasa Lama Village, East Lampung. The tragedy involved a religious group led by a person named Warsidi, so the religious group became commonly known as the Warsidi Group, and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI). This religious group was frequently suspected by the government under the rule of Soeharto. During his administration, Soeharto issued new policies that all Indonesian citizens were required to obey and implement. Among them was the implementation of P4 (Guidance, Internalization, and Practice of Pancasila), established on March 22, 1978 (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

The implementation of this policy was intended as a government effort to increase public awareness and understanding of Pancasila. In addition, the Soeharto government issued a policy allowing all Indonesian citizens to form religious groups provided that they adopted Pancasila as their principle. Several policies issued during Soeharto's government came into conflict with the Warsidi Group. The authors will describe the

1989 Talangsari Tragedy through two different versions: first, the version of Riyanto, a former Commander of the Warsidi GPK Special Forces, in his book “Tragedi Lampung Peperangan Yang Direncanakan”; and second, the version of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS).

In his book “Tragedi Lampung Peperangan Yang Direncanakan,” Riyanto states that “the 1989 Lampung Case was a full-hearted war (qital) between armed civilians, the ‘Primitive’ Forces, and modern armed forces supported by local residents who were unsympathetic to the Warsidi community.” The war occurred after a member of the authorities, Captain Inf. Soetiman (Danramil Way Jepara), became a casualty the previous day after being attacked by Mbah Marsudi, Warsidi's biological elder brother. It was an absurd war. Like a bus packed with passengers being driven into a moving train traveling rapidly on its tracks, the collision certainly caused considerable casualties on both sides. Riyanto also describes the roles of several influential figures in the Talangsari incident, one of whom was Nurhidayat.

Nurhidayat had previously joined the DI-TII movement, but defected and formed his own group in Jakarta. He was not alone; he had several “activist” friends, including Sudarsono, Fauzi, and others. He and his friends had planned the resistance well in advance, several months before February. Riyanto (2005) states that Nurhidayat, Sudarsono, and Fauzi did not properly understand the meaning of the struggle and that their radical actions were driven only by ambition, which they easily transferred to their followers. However, they did not carefully consider their plan and could not calculate the situation accurately. The group had fewer than 40 male members equipped with “primitive” weapons, while they had to confront hundreds of soldiers with more modern weaponry. This was not considered by Nur Hidayat and his friends, although strategic calculation is fundamental for a movement commander.

He and his friends then created a kind of “state” within the state, but their activities made the local government suspicious. Therefore, the local military district command sought information from Warsidi and his followers. Instead of obtaining information, Captain Inf. Soetiman was attacked with arrows and machetes by the Warsidi group. According to Riyanto, Captain Inf. Soetiman died and was buried in the Talangsari area.

“In any country, if one of its officials is killed by a group of people that has no potential to separate itself from the legitimate state, or that has just attempted to separate itself from the legitimate state, the government in power in that country will certainly take firm action.” This was Riyanto's statement in his book. Security forces subsequently attacked Talangsari, while local authorities also received assistance from residents of Talangsari village who secretly harbored hatred toward the Warsidi group. Riyanto (2005) states that the attack carried out by state security forces, which resulted in many casualties among the Warsidi group, was a consequence that the group and its followers had to accept.

The term “massacre,” which was frequently discussed by the wider public, was rejected by Riyanto because, before this “massacre,” the “activists” from Jakarta (Nurhidayat, Sudarsono, Fauzi, and others) had planned an armed rebellion to form a kind of “state” disguised as a religious group within Indonesia. Following the rebellion, Riyanto described two different responses. First, people involved in the tragedy who sincerely carried out the struggle did not demand anything because they regretted their defeat. A person who understands the purpose of the struggle from the beginning will always determine and calculate every action. Second, people involved in the tragedy who were not sincere in carrying out the struggle would attempt to make demands against the government (Riyanto, 2005).

According to the second version, namely the KontraS Position Paper on the Talangsari case, issued by the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS), the 1989 Talangsari tragedy cannot be viewed as an ordinary case; rather, the tragedy constituted a gross human rights violation (CNN Indonesia, 2021). The tragedy occurred because of the government's suspicion toward an Islamic religious group, as well as strong criticism and public rejection of government policies concerning Pancasila as the sole principle, which had to be implemented by all levels of society.

According to KontraS, before the peak of the tragedy, on January 27, 1989, Zulkifli Maliki, the Way Jepara subdistrict head, sent a letter to Captain Inf. Soetiman informing him that suspicious activities disguised as religious study sessions were taking place in Cihideung Hamlet. Then, on February 5, 1989, two days before the

attack on the Wahidin group, personnel from the Metro Military District Command raided six members of the congregation while they were conducting neighborhood patrols. On February 6, 1989, troops from the Way Jepara Military District Command led by Major E. O. Sinaga visited the Talangsari village area, but instead of arriving peacefully, they deliberately humiliated local residents. It was therefore unsurprising that disputes occurred between the two sides, followed by violence that resulted in the death of Captain Inf. Soetiman.

The peak of the Talangsari incident occurred on February 7, 1989, at 4:00 a.m. The death of Captain Inf. Soetiman led the security forces to take action against the Warsidi group and local residents. Security forces attacked under the leadership of Danrem Garuda Hitam 043. KontraS stated that Colonel Hendropriyono was responsible for an attack in which approximately 246 members of the Warsidi group were declared missing and residents' houses were burned and closed to the public (KontraS, 2006).

The KontraS Position Paper on the Talangsari Case also discusses efforts and obstacles in pursuing justice regarding human rights violations in the tragedy. Several efforts were made by KontraS and PK2PTL (Association of Families of Victims of the Talangsari Lampung Massacre), including efforts through the Indonesian House of Representatives. On May 7, 2001, KontraS together with PK2PTL and a group of students from Kompak, Gemma PTDI, and Hamas proposed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Human Rights Court for the Talangsari Lampung case to the Reformasi faction of the Indonesian House of Representatives through Suminto Martono, who expressed direct support for resolving one of the crimes against humanity committed during the New Order.

They also pursued efforts through Komnas HAM. On May 25, 2001, KontraS and PK2PTL visited Komnas HAM to request an investigation into the gross human rights violations that occurred in the 1989 Talangsari Tragedy. The meeting between KontraS and PK2PTL and Komnas HAM, led by Asmara Nababan, Secretary General of Komnas HAM, resulted in a promise that Komnas HAM would bring the proposal to a plenary meeting on June 5, 2001. On June 5, 2001, KontraS and PK2PTL returned to demand fulfillment of the promise to establish the Talangsari Lampung Human Rights

Investigation Commission. Under strong pressure from advocates of justice, the Komnas HAM plenary meeting eventually established an investigative commission for two cases of gross human rights violations: the Talangsari and Trisakti tragedies.

However, the actions taken by Komnas HAM did not meet the expectations of KontraS and PK2PTL. Until February 2004, KontraS submitted a request for a meeting with Komnas HAM to question the performance of the team that had been established and requested an investigation team from Komnas HAM. Instead of receiving an answer to its expectations, Komnas HAM did not respond to KontraS's request. According to the Talangsari Position Paper, the establishment of the Talangsari Lampung Human Rights Investigation Commission was not legally valid, resulting in a re-examination of its existence, partly because of divisions among victims who participated in *islah*, based on a letter from Komnas HAM signed by the Monitoring Sub-Commission of Komnas HAM, BN Marbun.

Following the efforts made by KontraS, PK2PTL, and several students, a plenary meeting was held on February 23, and an investigation team was finally established legally under Law No. 39 of 1999. The Investigation Team had several divisions: the violence division was chaired by Enny Suprpto, the right-to-life division by Samsudin, the women's division by Ruswiyati Suryasaputra, and the children's division by Muhammad Farid. The team began working on March 2, 2005, from the end of March until early April 2005.

The efforts undertaken by KontraS, the Association of Victims of Violence in the Talangsari Lampung Massacre, and student activists eventually produced results. On April 1, 2005, Komnas HAM conducted field investigations to uncover the human rights violations in Talangsari. The violence-investigation team of Komnas HAM, chaired by Enny Suprpto, began interviewing several witnesses and victims of the tragedy, asking about their involvement in the tragedy and the violations experienced by several victims.

After the investigation conducted by Enny Soeprpto, Komnas HAM stated that the 1989 Talangsari tragedy constituted a human rights violation. Following the interviews, M. Farid stated that Komnas HAM had sent letters to the Commander of the Sriwijaya Military Command and Korem Garuda Hitam, but received no response from

the security authorities, so no plenary session had yet been held to pursue the Talangsari tragedy case. By February 2006, Zoemrotin explained that the team had not completed its report because it was still waiting for a response from the security authorities. Victims of the Talangsari case demanded that the plenary session be held immediately, and Komnas HAM promised to complete its report in March and discuss the Talangsari case at a Komnas HAM plenary session in April 2006.

The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS) and the Association of Victims of Violence in the Talangsari Lampung Incident also received support from several religious institutions in Indonesia, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI). Nahdlatul Ulama supported the victims of the Talangsari incident by sending a letter to Komnas HAM on February 7 requesting the immediate establishment of a pro justitia investigation team to address cases of human rights violations in Indonesia. In addition, Muhammadiyah also supported the Talangsari victims. Muhammadiyah's effort to assist the victims was similar to that of Nahdlatul Ulama, namely sending a letter to Komnas HAM requesting the immediate establishment of a pro justitia investigation team. Likewise, the Indonesian Bishops' Conference also assisted the Talangsari victims by sending a letter to Komnas HAM requesting the establishment of a pro justitia investigation team.

However, the efforts made by the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS) and the Association of Families of Victims of the Talangsari Lampung Massacre (PK2PTL) to pursue justice after the human rights violations committed by security forces also faced obstacles. Among them was the emergence of a group opposing prosecution of the Talangsari case, which repeatedly carried out covert actions to cancel the resolution and investigation of the Talangsari tragedy. This group emerged during *islah*. *Islah* was conducted by Lieutenant General (Ret.) Hendropriyono with the victims and had been conducted four times since 1999.

There were also several criminal incidents used as a *modus operandi*, including the imprisonment of Fauzi Isman at Cirebon Prison. He was a figure belonging to the group opposing prosecution of the 1989 Talangsari Tragedy during the *islah* activity conducted by Lieutenant General (Ret.) Hendropriyono since 1999. In addition, there was an act of defamation against KontraS staff concerning the Talangsari incident. The

defamation was reported by Sudarsono to the Jakarta Metropolitan Police. There were also acts of intimidation beginning in 2000 experienced by several Talangsari victims, including Fauzi Isman in August–September. The intimidation occurred after Fauzi filed a complaint with KontraS.

The perpetrators of the terror drove a vehicle into the gate of Fauzi's house at night in the Cibubur area of Jakarta. In May 2003, a victim of *islah*, Darsono, filed a complaint against two other victims, Azwar Kayli and Suroso, with the Jakarta Metropolitan Police, alleging defamation. However, the police did not follow up on the complaint because the evidence submitted was considered insufficient.

The Reformasi Government's Response to the Human Rights Violation Case

The 1989 Talangsari incident was one of the gross human rights violation tragedies that occurred during the New Order, in which security forces attacked an Islamic religious-study community accused of being radical in East Lampung. The Reformasi-era government, through Komnas HAM, classified the incident as a gross human rights violation, but the legal resolution process stagnated because the Attorney General's Office repeatedly returned the investigation files on the grounds that there was insufficient new formal and material evidence (Amnesty International Indonesia, 2025). In 2019, the government, through the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, organized a Peace Declaration without involving the victims or their families, which was widely criticized as a form of impunity and historical whitewashing. Amnesty International described the action as a setback for human rights enforcement and a disregard for victims' justice. The declaration was also considered to deprive victims of their right to justice through the courts and to weaken state institutions that should have been responsible, such as Komnas HAM and the Attorney General's Office. This shows that although the authoritarian regime has formally ended, the legacy of impunity and repression toward political-Islam groups continues to influence the dynamics of handling human rights violation cases in Indonesia.

The government closed the case because it considered that Talangsari victims had been given compensation through the construction of public facilities such as roads and other infrastructure in Talangsari, East Lampung, as part of a non-judicial settlement effort for the gross human rights violations that occurred in 1989. This measure was

associated with the Peace Declaration held on February 20, 2019, by the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenko Polhukam). The declaration stated that the Talangsari case was considered resolved through compensation in the form of road and public-facility construction in Lampung.

However, this approach drew criticism and rejection from victims and civil society groups. They considered that the infrastructure development was not an appropriate form of compensation because public facilities are basic rights of all citizens, not a form of specific reparation for victims of gross human rights violations. In addition, the peace declaration was conducted without involving the victims or their families, further strengthening the impression that the state ignored victims' rights to justice and recognition of the suffering they had experienced.

In response to the declaration, the Association of Families of Victims of the Talangsari Lampung Massacre (PK2PTL), together with KontraS and Amnesty International Indonesia, reported the matter to the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia. On December 13, 2019, the Ombudsman stated that the Talangsari Peace Declaration constituted maladministration because it did not meet the principles of justice and restoration of victims' rights.

Thus, although the government has built public facilities in the Talangsari area, this measure cannot be considered adequate compensation for the victims of the 1989 incident. Victims and civil society groups continue to demand a fair resolution through transparent and accountable legal mechanisms, as well as comprehensive restoration of their rights.

CONCLUSION

For victims and their families, this incident is not merely a tragedy of the past but a wound that remains felt today. Many victims live with trauma and social stigma that has become embedded in their lives. They lost relatives, property, and a hopeful future. Children who became orphans at the time have now grown into adults carrying heavy psychological burdens. Some of them still feel alienated and suspected by surrounding

communities because of past government propaganda that accused them of being “rebels against the state” for not adhering to Pancasila as the sole principle.

A number of victims' families have also experienced social discrimination and difficulty accessing basic services such as education and employment. What they experience can create a deep sense of turmoil, making them feel less worthy of living in the world and unsafe within their social environment.

The state has never provided adequate recovery, whether in the form of compensation, restitution, or psychological rehabilitation. The fact that no recovery has been fully implemented for the victims is a concrete indication that the government has only been able to close its ears and eyes to the 1989 Talangsari riots. This governmental attitude has been considered ineffective in addressing and resolving problems that have persisted for decades, resulting in negative prejudice toward groups of Muslim victims because negative ideas have become deeply disseminated within the social environment.

The 1989 Talangsari case is a reminder that democracy does not automatically erase the dark traces of the past, nor does it eliminate the historical record concerning the conditions of victims or perpetrators. Although the New Order has collapsed, practices of impunity and repressive approaches toward political-Islam groups continue to cast a shadow. The 2019 Peace Declaration reflects the state's failure to provide substantive justice and recognition for victims. Instead, it reinforces the fact that in Indonesia, justice for victims of gross human rights violations remains a dream for which they continue to struggle.

The resolution of the Talangsari case must become a priority, not merely a discourse. The state must not continue to hide behind claims of “insufficient new evidence” or “national security” to avoid responsibility. The enforcement of justice is an absolute prerequisite for genuine reconciliation and the development of a dignified democracy. Indonesia must truly make peace with its past, not by concealing it, but by revealing the truth and enforcing justice for all victims. Therefore, the peace efforts that must be undertaken by the Indonesian government must be implemented immediately in order to create a new chapter of life for the victims of the 1989 Talangsari riots.

The 1989 Talangsari riots are closely related to the dynamics of political Islam in Indonesia because the governmental system implemented at that time, referring to the

New Order period, remained authoritarian under President Soeharto. Political-Islam practices carried out by various groups were responded to incorrectly by the government because it tended to treat political-Islam groups differently, demonstrating a condition of clear injustice in Indonesia. The Indonesian government based this way of thinking on the strong negative stigma created in assessing political-Islam groups as a threat to state stability because they were considered inconsistent with the sole principle of Pancasila.

The development of Pancasila as the sole principle required all Indonesian people to integrate Pancasila ideology into everyday life, including politics. However, in practice, political Islam could not be integrated with Pancasila as the sole principle, influenced by the assumption that the state sought to weaken and eliminate the role of religion in the public sphere. Therefore, the 1989 Talangsari riots illustrate a state experiencing critical tension between an authoritarian government and political-Islam groups seeking to maintain their respective ideological identities, thereby demonstrating the complex relationship between religion and the state during the New Order.

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