

# The Police commitment and graft eradication

**Muradi**  
BANDUNG

**D**ozens of police officers attempted to storm into the headquarters of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) on Friday night to arrest one of the KPK's investigators, Comr. Novel Baswedan, who is also an active police officer.

Novel is implicated in the death of a thief while he was assigned to Bengkulu Police in 2004. It was a strange move, as the police deployed two companies of officers for the arrest at a time when the National Police is coming under scrutiny for alleged graft in the procurement of driving simulators, a case implicating former National Police Traffic Corps chief, Insp. Gen. Djoko Susilo.

In my opinion, there are at least three reasons why the National Police are angry with the KPK in connection to the way it deals with corruption cases. First, the KPK has exploited the driving simulators case for its own image building by pitting the police against the people. In fact, the police force has come under mounting criticism from the public as evinced in the media re-

ports relating to the graft case.

Second, the KPK's decision to use a military detention facility to hold corruption suspects, including police officers, is feared to set the police against the Indonesian Military (TNI), exacerbating the disharmony between the two institutions. The National Police considers the decision a fait accompli.

Third, the National Police deems the KPK as lacking in ethics related to organizational relations and co-operation. The National Police has supported the KPK by assigning their best investigators to help the commission investigate corruption cases, but the probe into the driving simulators case has disappointed the police. The National Police then decided to withdraw their investigators seconded to the KPK.

The National Police's commitment to corruption eradication is beyond doubt given the fact that it has supplied its best investigators to the KPK ever since it was established to strengthen the fight against entrenched graft in Indonesia.

The police force demonstrated its support for indiscriminate law enforcement in the war on corruption when former National Police

chief Gen. Da'I Bachtiar ordered an investigation into National Police detective chief, Comr. Gen. Suyitno Landung, in connection with fraud involving state-owned Bank BNI. Suyitno was convicted and sentenced to 1.5 years in jail.

Previously, the National Police under Gen. Awaludin Djamin approved a probe into Comr. Gen. Siswadi and other police officers suspected of graft surrounding the procurement of police equipment.

On the other hand, the National Police did nothing to support the investigation into its former chief, Gen. (ret) Rusdihardjo, when as Indonesian ambassador to Malaysia he was involved in the illegal collection of visa fees charged to Indonesian migrant workers. The police force certainly breached its commitment to corruption eradication for providing legal advice to the former police chief.

In my opinion, the police's commitment to the fight against corruption reflects the reputation of the force's leadership. It is difficult for the current chief, Gen. Timur Pradopo, to clean up corrupt practices plaguing the National Police when he is held hostage by his position.

We should not expect to see the

KPK easily arrest Djoko Susilo or other police officers for corruption, primarily because those cases may reveal the force's poor management under Timur.

The National Police's programs and agendas must follow the interests of the ruling government. Therefore, the ongoing standoff between the police and the KPK only serves to demonstrate the split within the police between their commitment to protect and serving the community and their interests in serving the leader.

The police force's disappointment with the KPK does not justify its resistance to the country's fight against corruption. Eradicating graft is just one step toward building a better Indonesia.

The police can make a small but important move by allowing the KPK to investigate any officers implicated in corruption cases. At least people would then see that the police's pledge to combat graft remained intact.

*The writer is a lecturer in the department of governance studies at Padjadjaran University, Bandung.*