

## Country Update

# Indonesia

(March 22, 2021)

### Context and government response:

As of March 2, 2021 Indonesia registered 1,460,184 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 39,550 deaths. The capital region and neighboring provinces begun easing restrictions after three months. Citizen-led volunteer networks have reported the official numbers of deaths is an underrepresentation, and estimate the death is up to 3 times higher than official numbers. More than 4,000 deaths among suspected COVID-19 patients since early March have not been included in the official numbers according to two open-source data platforms created by health workers. Additionally, government efforts to increase testing have seen continued delays and Indonesia has one of the world's lowest testing rates.

The Indonesian government has set up a task-force on COVID-19 consisting of representatives of 19 ministerial offices, but a representative from the Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection is not among them and it includes very few women.

### Summary of impact:

In Indonesia, 2 out of 3 companies have ceased work due to COVID-19. This includes over 2.5 million garment industry workers, a majority of whom are women. Economic instability due to job losses and excessive time under lockdown are major contributors to this trend; however, women in Indonesia were facing difficulties even prior to COVID-19. According to the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), there were 421 discriminatory regional bylaws targeting women introduced from 2009 to 2018. These bylaws consist of dress codes, curfews, and other restrictions that focus on women. Additionally, women migrant workers are highly impacted by travel restrictions and lockdown measures. In 2018, Indonesia sent 283,640 to work abroad, more than half as migrant domestic workers and two-thirds of them being women. Aside from the psychological impact

of being apart from families and loved ones for an indeterminate period of time, the pandemic threatens their job security, making them more susceptible to exploitation.

Women are also facing increases in domestic violence due to the quarantine. The Legal Aid Foundation of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice ([LBH APIK](#)) has experienced a significant increase in reports of violence against women during the pandemic. According to an online survey conducted by the National Commission for Violence against Women (NCVAW), gender-based violence (GBV) cases have increased by 12%. The survey also points out that GBV cases under COVID-19 situation are vastly underreported, mainly due to lack of access to services as they are confined with the perpetrators at homes.

UN Women warns that in countries like Indonesia, where women and girls are at the frontline in combating violent extremism and promoting social cohesion, "COVID-19 risks fracturing newly formed social bonds."

**Responses led by women peacebuilders:**

Women's rights organizations have been actively addressing COVID-19 in many ways, such as providing masks for women in prisons in Jakarta, providing meals for women traders in traditional markets who cannot work due to government lockdowns and collecting donations to support members of the transgender community in West Nusa Tenggara.

