

# Women marginalized in conflict resolution: Study

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Conflict resolution in the post-Reform Era fails to address women, who often bear the brunt of large-scale violence, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) has revealed.

In its report assessing conflict resolution in the country since 1998, when authoritarian president Soeharto stepped down, the commission found that women who fell victim to large-scale violence continued to suffer from its impact even two decades after it ended. The review covered resolutions of communal or civil-versus-military conflicts, such as the May 1998 riots, 1998 Poso communal violence and the 1999 East Timor crisis, as well as land conflicts.

The commission recorded over 1,000 cases of violence and discrimination against women in various large-scale conflicts since 1998, but none of them have been appropriately addressed. In time of conflict, women suffer from various forms of violence, with various forms of sexual violence being the most common case in

Women suffer from post-conflict impact, trauma

Initiatives proposed by women often go unheard

all conflicts monitored.

Komnas Perempuan commissioner Yuniyanti Chuzaifah said the healing process for women victims mostly stopped at charity, whereas many of the victims continued to suffer from long-term damage, such as trauma. Many of those who managed to recover mostly relied on self-healing.

"Many women became single parents because their husbands left them or died in the conflict. Some other women survivors resorted to activism while at the same time suffering from the guilt of surviving or failing to protect their loved ones," she said after the launch of Komnas Perempuan's annual policy review in Jakarta on Wednesday.

The report points out the vulnerability of women during conflict because of their weak position in a patriarchal society.

The state's less-than thorough approach coupled with a lack of support for women's participa-

tion in the decision-making process also contributed to the marginalization of women in conflict resolution.

In several cases monitored by the commission, many women took the initiative to propose win-win solutions to resolve conflicts, but most of the time the proposals had gone unheard.

Komnas Perempuan chairwoman Azriana Manalu said the policy review offered a basis for evaluation for the government, pointing out that it was better late than never to improve the way authorities dealt with conflicts at all.

"A 2013 research conducted by the Asian Foundation stated that most Asian countries needed 45 years to resolve conflicts. [Thus] the two decades ahead are a very important period [for Indonesia]," she said.

She also hoped that the report would raise the government and public's awareness of the gender element in every conflict, because "the government has yet to give its maximum effort to fulfill women's rights".

The policy review launch was also attended by representatives of the Home Ministry, the Women's Empowerment and Child

Protection Ministry, the Environment and Forestry Ministry, the National Police, and the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas).

Responding to the policy review, Widodo Sigit Pudjianto, the Home Ministry's legal bureau chief, said that his ministry had made its utmost effort to fulfill women's rights in conflict resolution, claiming that the government had designed strategies, programs and regulations to protect women during conflict.

Widodo also encouraged the commission to share the government's success stories in protecting women during conflict in the policy review.

"The policy review says that the government hasn't given its maximum effort. What does maximum [effort] look like, exactly?" he said.

Meanwhile, the Environment and Forestry Ministry's human resource division head, Helmi Basalamah, said he appreciated the commission's insight for the government.

"As a start, we have included gender analysis when we formulate environmental impact analyses," he said.