

# New Terrorism Law good news for victims

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After 15 years waiting for better attention from the government, survivors of terrorist attacks and the families of victims finally see a glimmer of hope in the new Terrorism Law.

The law, passed last Friday to replace the outdated 2003 law, mandates that the government guarantee that victims or families of victims of terrorism receive compensation and restitution, in addition to medical and psychological rehabilitation.

But one of the most lauded breakthroughs in the law is a provision that states that if a suspect is dead or cannot be identified, the victims will still receive compensation through a court order.

The new law is also applicable retroactively for victims suffering from any terrorist attacks since the 2002 Bali bombings.

"I have been waiting for 15

years for [the government] to pay attention to victims' issues," said Tony Soemarno, 63, who suffered serious burns on his hand when a car bomb exploded in front of the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in 2003.

"This is good news for us. Our years of waiting have paid off. The victims deserve this help," he said on Sunday.

Tony is only one of hundreds of victims of terrorist attacks, most of which have been suicide bombings, whose lives have never been the same again after the attacks.

The country has long fought against terrorism, but bombings and deadly attacks have continued to occur in recent years, with many people losing family members as a result. Some survivors now live with permanent disabilities and scars from the blasts, as well as emotional trauma.

"Physical injuries can be healed, but mental trauma can be everlasting," Tony said.

Law and Human Rights Minister Yasonna Laoly has said that foreign nationals would also receive compensation.

The 2002 Bali bombings and the 2009 JW Marriott Hotel bombing, for example, killed and injured not only Indonesians but also a number of foreigners.

The Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia (AIDA), an organization that empowers victims and former terrorists, welcomed the new law, although it also said the government should have done better by introducing a comprehensive solution for the lengthy judicial processing of terror suspects.

As in the previous law, the amendment requires prosecutors to include a request for state compensation in their indictments in order for the judges to include compensation in their verdicts, if the culprits are brought to court.

"Victims still need to wait for a court order [to receive compensation]. But we understand that the

government and lawmakers had to compete against time in deliberating the law. So far, this is the best they can do," AIDA director Hasibullah Satrawi said.

Under the new law, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), with help from the Finance Ministry, is in charge of handling compensation, restitution and rehabilitation for the victims.

"The law not only focuses on perpetrators, but also the victims," LPSK chairman Abdul Harris Semendawai said.

Details of the rehabilitation and compensation for both Indonesians and foreigners, the calculation of the losses and the payment mechanism will be further regulated under a government regulation.

"Now the new law has been passed, it depends on how the government implements it. Poor implementation will make the law meaningless," Tony said.