

Research Article

# Government Awareness Review: The Form of Parliament's Accountability for the 17+8 Demands as a Form of Accelerating Public Solidarity

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**Abstract.** The 17+8 demands voiced by the public reflect the accumulation of disillusionment with various government policies and violations committed, especially by the House of Representatives (DPR). Policies that are considered unfair and detrimental to the public trigger a strong push to carry out reforms that are more democratic and oriented towards the interests of the people. Various factors such as human rights violations, lack of transparency and accountability, economic inequality, and polemics related to official allowances are the main triggers for the birth of these demands. The demands of 17+8 not only contain burdens or criticisms, but also contain short-term and long-term goals that can be the basis for improving governance. This momentum should be seen as a strategic opportunity to strengthen democracy, improve state-citizen relations, and restore public trust. If these demands are taken seriously, the government has the potential to reduce the legitimacy crisis and improve the quality of public services. On the contrary, ignoring such demands can deepen public distrust and worsen political stability. Thus, the demands of 17+8 are an important signal for the need for structural change and a real commitment to realizing a fairer, more transparent, and responsive government.

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## 1. Introduction

Public demands have become a serious response from students and activists. This polemic emerged in layers. When an online motorcycle taxi driver was killed, run over by a law enforcement officer with a tactical Brimob vehicle, the public became increasingly outraged that a government practitioner, touted for their intellectual awareness, had so easily tarnished the people's trust. Before the death of Afan Kurniawan, the online motorcycle taxi driver, the most crucial issue was when several parliament members deliberately made statements attacking the public about the high allowances of DPR members. The public's response was immediately chaotic. The decision set by DPR Chair Puan Maharani, accompanied by the president and vice president, actually ignited public anger and became a boomerang for the governance system itself.



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This response is not without reason; amidst the economic crisis of life, parliament members comfortably and casually flaunted policies deemed unwise by the public. In reality, the policy regarding various allowances, when totaled, reaches 100 million rupiah—far different from the public's hopes for living standards. The open session of DPR members with the president and vice president went viral. Within less than half a month, this policy was implemented. (Anggono & Damaitu, 2021) The public responded first, with anger and concern exploding, shown in demonstrations in various cities across Indonesia. In this situation, the 17+8 demands emerged as the initial milestone for breakthrough change. It didn't take long for this polemic to appear on social media platforms, triggering responses from artists, activists, and influencers. They have submitted these demands to the DPR in Jakarta.

The activists' breakthrough is none other than to ensure that the DPR can provide full and clear transparency regarding the budget being promoted. These demands are quite complex, as some of them concern the dissolution of parliament and the arrest of the Minister of Culture. Student press statements demand nine demands, namely: allowance programs that must be eliminated, housing allowances, ratification of the Asset Forfeiture Bill, and halting the historical revision project. (Andari Rizky Aria Putra et al., 2025) Public outrage doesn't stop there; there are extreme demands such as public requests for the total dissolution of the DPR. This triggers general doubt and public reaction, and if this demand is granted, the resulting impact would be institutional disruption. However, ironically, parliament member Ahmad Sahroni responded to the demand for DPR dissolution. Sahroni told the press that people who support and voice this demand are "the stupidest people in the world." The outline of the 17+8 demands includes: a description of aspirations submitted by the people. These demands consist of long-term and short-term demands. Short-term demands relate to the revocation of the controversial Law revision, the release of detained protesters, and the cancellation of unjust policies. Meanwhile, long-term demands focus on overhauling DPR audits and reforms, revising taxation and anti-corruption laws, decentralizing police duties and functions, and eliminating military roles in civilian functions. The description of the complexity of this polemic of demands to state officials can be divided into long-term and short-term demands. The study has focus points for discussion, namely:

- A. What is the form of government accountability for long-term and short-term demands?
- B. What is the urgency of justice for long-term and short-term demands regarding the 17+8?

## **2. Proposed Method**

The research method used is normative juridical. This method focuses on the study of written legal norms contained in legislation and other legal literature relevant to the issue. The data analyzed is secondary data obtained through the study of legal documents without conducting direct research, such as interviews or surveys. Analysis is conducted qualitatively and uses a deductive approach, starting from general legal rules to how those rules are applied. (Agustina, 2019) This research uses several normative approach methods, including the statute approach, case approach, and conceptual approach.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **The Form of Government Accountability for Short-Term and Long-Term Demands**

Research results show that the 17+8 demands are a manifestation of the accumulation of public disappointment toward various government policies deemed not pro-people. This

phenomenon reflects a widening gap between people's expectations for democratic governance and the reality of state administration practices that tend to be elitist and less participatory. The short-term demands submitted by the public focus on resolving urgent problems that require quick responses from the government. These demands include revoking controversial Law revisions, releasing protesters detained unjustly, and canceling policies deemed detrimental to the public. (Salsabila et al., 2025)

In historical context, such demands are not new in Indonesian political dynamics. The 1998 reform movement also began from a similar accumulation of dissatisfaction that ultimately triggered major changes in the national political order. However, what distinguishes the 17+8 demand wave from previous movements is the utilization of technology and social media that enables faster and more organized mass mobilization. Digital platforms have become new public spaces where political discourse takes place with high intensity, allowing various elements of society from various backgrounds to unite in one voice demanding change. (Anggara & Ummah, 2019)

Government accountability for these short-term demands should be realized through direct dialogue mechanisms between the DPR and civil society representatives, the formation of independent investigation teams to review the problematic policies, and full transparency in the political decision-making process. The intended dialogue is not merely formal meetings that are ceremonial in nature but substantive deliberative forums where public aspirations are truly heard and used as considerations in policy revision. (Collins et al., 2021) The independent investigation team formed must consist of parties with high credibility and integrity, including academics, legal practitioners, and representatives from civil society, to ensure that the policy evaluation process runs objectively and is not influenced by narrow political interests. Transparency in decision-making must also include openness of data and information related to budgets, the legislative process, and the considerations underlying each policy issued. (Fathia, 2025)

However, the reality shows that the government's response tends to be defensive and does not substantially consider public aspirations. This defensive attitude is reflected in various public officials' statements that tend to blame demonstrators or consider public demands as something irrational or even subversive. Ahmad Sahroni's statement calling supporters of the DPR dissolution demand "the stupidest people in the world" is a concrete example of arrogance that actually worsens the relationship between people's representatives and their constituents. Such attitudes not only show a lack of understanding of the essence of democracy that places sovereignty in the people but also reflect a crisis of representation where people's representatives no longer feel the need to listen to and respond to the aspirations they represent.

The form of accountability that the government should implement in facing these short-term demands is by acknowledging policy mistakes that have been made, particularly regarding the increase in DPR member allowances reaching 100 million rupiah. Acknowledging mistakes is an important first step in rebuilding public trust. In public accountability theory, acknowledgment of mistakes and willingness to make corrections are indicators of responsive and responsible governance. (Tovalini, 2011) This acknowledgment is not merely a lip service public statement but must be followed by concrete actions in the form of fairer and more proportional policy revisions. Policy revisions not only include reducing excessive allowances but also

reviewing the entire remuneration structure of public officials to be more appropriate to the community's economic conditions and principles of distributive justice.

The government also needs to provide compensation or restoration of civil rights for protesters who experienced criminalization in voicing their aspirations. Criminalization of activists and demonstrators who voice criticism of government policies is a form of violation of freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed by the constitution. In the context of a democratic state, the right to peaceful protest and convey aspirations is a fundamental right that cannot be reduced or restricted arbitrarily. The restoration of these civil rights can be done through unconditional release of those detained, removal of unfounded criminal records, and provision of rehabilitation for those who experienced trauma or loss due to repressive actions by authorities. This accountability mechanism should involve independent state institutions such as Komnas HAM and the Ombudsman to ensure that the accountability process runs objectively and is not influenced by certain political interests. (Caroline Paskarina, Mariatul asiah, 2016)

Meanwhile, long-term demands have more structural and fundamental characteristics, including overhauling the DPR audit and reform system, revising taxation and anti-corruption laws, decentralizing police duties and functions, and eliminating military roles in civilian functions. (Tim Peneliti Pusat Studi Hukum dan Kebijakan Indonesia, 2019) These demands show that the public not only wants repairs that are patchwork or cosmetic in nature but fundamental transformation in how the state is managed. DPR audit system overhaul is needed to ensure that the use of state budgets can be transparently accounted for to the public. The current audit system is considered still weak and unable to prevent deviations or budget waste that harm public interests.

Government accountability for these long-term demands requires strong and sustained political commitment and cannot be resolved through partial or temporary policies. This political commitment must come not only from the executive government but also from legislative and judicial institutions as part of a healthy checks and balances system. Research results show that these demands reflect the fundamental need for reform of a more democratic, transparent, and accountable governance system. (Fahira et al., 2025) Democracy is not only about routinely held elections but also about how accountability mechanisms run effectively in the day-to-day administration of the state. Transparency in state financial management, public information openness, and public participation in the policy-making process are important pillars of good governance that must be realized.

The government should respond to these demands by forming a clear reform roadmap, with measurable targets and involving public participation in every implementation stage. This roadmap must include a realistic timeline, measurable success indicators, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms involving independent parties. Public participation in the reform process is very important to ensure that the direction of reform truly matches the needs and aspirations of the people, not just meeting the interests of the political elite. This participation mechanism can be done through various forums such as public consultations, hearings with civil society organizations, and utilizing digital platforms to gather aspirations and input from the wider community. (Fukuyama, 2022)

This long-term accountability must also be realized through a paradigm shift in the checks and balances system among state institutions. A healthy checks and balances system

requires the independence of each state institution and effective control mechanisms to prevent abuse of power. The DPR as a representative institution must show integrity and commitment to conducting internal reforms, including transparent financial audits, reducing disproportionate allowances, and improving the quality of legislation that is more sided with people's interests. DPR internal reform must include a review of recruitment and selection mechanisms for legislative members, strengthening oversight functions, and improving capacity and professionalism in the legislative process. (Urbinati dan Warren dalam, 2017)

Research findings show that the DPR's failure to meet public expectations has triggered a loss of public trust in the legislative institution, reflected in the emergence of extreme demands such as the total dissolution of the DPR. This loss of public trust is a serious indicator of the legitimacy crisis being experienced by the legislative institution. In political theory, legitimacy is an important foundation for the stability and effectiveness of a political system. When an institution loses legitimacy in the public's eyes, its ability to carry out its basic functions will be severely disrupted. The demand for DPR dissolution, although sounding extreme, must be read as an expression of deep frustration toward the DPR's inability or unwillingness to change and respond to people's aspirations.

Although the demand for DPR dissolution is constitutionally problematic and can disrupt institutional stability, the emergence of this demand must be read as a danger signal that DPR legitimacy has reached a critical point. From a constitutional perspective, the dissolution of the DPR without a clear mechanism for its replacement can create a dangerous power vacuum for political stability and national security. However, this demand should not be ignored as something unrealistic or radical. Instead, this demand must be a wake-up call for the DPR and government to immediately conduct substantive reforms before this legitimacy crisis develops into a larger political crisis. A more constructive alternative is to strengthen the recall mechanism for underperforming legislative members, increase transparency and accountability in budget management, and open wider space for public participation and control over legislative performance.

In addition, the revision of taxation and anti-corruption laws, which is part of long-term demands, also requires serious attention. The current taxation system is considered to still have many loopholes that allow large corporations and wealthy individuals to avoid taxes through various legal and illegal schemes. Meanwhile, taxes imposed on small communities such as value-added tax (VAT) continue to increase and burden people's purchasing power. This injustice in the taxation system reflects an economic system that benefits those who are already rich and increasingly impoverishes those who are already poor.

Decentralization of police duties and functions is also needed to prevent abuse of power and increase the accountability of security forces to the local communities they serve. An overly centralized police system tends to be less responsive to local security needs and more vulnerable to politicization. The intended decentralization does not mean separation or fragmentation of the police institution but rather delegation of greater authority and responsibility to the local level while maintaining national coordination and standards. This will increase police accountability to the communities they serve and allow security approaches that are more appropriate to local contexts and needs. The tragedy of Afan Kurniawan's death, run over by a Brimob tactical vehicle, is a concrete example of how an overly militaristic and disproportionate security approach can endanger civilians.

The elimination of military roles in civilian functions is also an important agenda for strengthening civilian democracy and preventing the return of militarism in national political life. Indonesian history shows that military involvement in politics and civilian government has caused various negative consequences, from systematic human rights violations, obstacles to the democratization process, to corruption involving military institutions. Although the 1998 reforms brought significant changes in this regard, there are still remnants of the ABRI dual function doctrine that need to be thoroughly cleaned up. The elimination of military roles in civilian functions must be accompanied by strengthening military professionalism and refocusing on state defense duties as mandated in the constitution.

### **The Urgency of Justice in Long-Term and Short-Term Demands for the 17+8**

The urgency of justice in the 17+8 demands can be understood through the perspective of distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice relates to how resources and opportunities are fairly distributed within society, while procedural justice concerns fairness in the decision-making process. Research results show that distributive injustice was the main trigger for the emergence of mass protest waves, where there is a very large disparity between the welfare of DPR members and the economic conditions of the general public. When the people's economy is experiencing a crisis, with high unemployment rates, increasing inflation, and declining purchasing power, the decision to raise DPR member allowances to a total of 100 million rupiah per month reflects the political elite's insensitivity to people's suffering. (Margaretha & Santosa, 2012)

This disparity concerns not only material aspects but also reflects inequality in access to state resources and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect people's livelihoods. In the Indonesian context, the already high economic inequality is further exacerbated by policies that tend to benefit a handful of political and economic elites. Data shows that Indonesia's Gini ratio continues to increase, indicating that the gap between the rich and poor is widening. In such a situation, policies that provide additional privileges to DPR members who are already in a financially stable position are highly inappropriate and tarnish the sense of justice in society.

Procedural justice is also a central issue in the 17+8 demands. The decision-making process regarding the DPR allowance increase was conducted without involving meaningful public participation, even tending to be done in a closed and hasty manner. In deliberative democracy theory, a democratic decision-making process must involve open public discussion, where various arguments and perspectives can be presented and considered before a final decision is made. However, in the case of the DPR allowance increase, this deliberation process did not occur at all. The decision was made in a very quick session, without giving the public the opportunity to understand the implications of the policy, let alone to provide input or criticism.

The open session that went viral on social media shows how important decisions concerning the state budget can be made in less than half a month without going through a mature and participatory deliberation process. The speed of this decision-making raises suspicions that there are hidden agendas or certain interests that want to be quickly realized without receiving excessive public scrutiny. This procedural injustice is further exacerbated by the arrogance of

some DPR members who issued statements that belittle the public criticizing the policy. Ahmad Sahroni's statement calling supporters of the DPR dissolution demand "the stupidest people in the world" shows how far the psychological distance is between people's representatives and the people they represent. Such attitudes not only violate ethics as public officials but also show low commitment to democratic principles that place sovereignty in the people.

The urgency of justice in short-term demands lies in the need to quickly restore public trust in state institutions. Public trust is very important social capital for governance effectiveness. When public trust is low, government legitimacy will be eroded, and the government's ability to implement policies will be hindered due to resistance from society. The case of Afan Kurniawan's death, an online motorcycle taxi driver run over by a Brimob tactical vehicle, became a symbol of the state's failure to protect its citizens and uphold the rule of law. This tragedy shows how state apparatus that should maintain security actually becomes a threat to the safety of civilians

Afan Kurniawan's death is not only an individual tragedy but also a representation of systemic failure in supervision and accountability of security forces. The disproportionate use of tactical vehicles in situations that do not threaten public security shows serious problems in standard operating procedures and apparatus training. Restorative justice must be immediately upheld in this case, not only through fair legal processes against perpetrators but also through appropriate compensation for the victim's family and reform of police standard operating procedures to prevent similar tragedies from recurring. (Rianto et al., 2022) The intended compensation is not only material but also official recognition from the state of the mistakes that have occurred and commitment to conduct structural reforms so that similar incidents do not recur in the future.

Delays in upholding justice will only further erode state legitimacy and trigger escalation of larger social conflicts. In restorative justice theory, handling violation cases quickly, transparently, and fairly is very important to restore relations between the state and society and prevent vigilantism or mob justice by communities who feel the legal system is not functioning properly. (Syah Awaluddin, 2024) A fair legal process must include thorough and independent investigations, firm prosecution of perpetrators without discrimination, and proportional and fair court decisions.

Meanwhile, the urgency of justice in long-term demands relates to the need to build a fairer and more sustainable governance system. Justice in this context is not only about law enforcement against violations that have occurred but also about building structures and systems that prevent injustice in the future. DPR reform demanded by the public is not merely cosmetic change but fundamental transformation in legislative working methods that are more transparent, accountable, and responsive to people's aspirations. This transformation must include changes in recruitment and selection mechanisms for legislative members, a fairer and more proportional remuneration system, stricter performance oversight mechanisms, and strengthening legislative capacity so that legal products produced are truly quality and sided with people's interests.

The revision of taxation and anti-corruption laws becomes urgent given the still weak law enforcement against high-level corruptors, while ordinary people must bear disproportionate tax burdens. The current taxation system still has many loopholes that allow large busi-

nesses and wealthy individuals to avoid taxes through various legal and illegal schemes. Meanwhile, taxes imposed on small communities such as value-added tax (VAT) continue to increase and burden people's purchasing power. This injustice in the taxation system reflects an economic system that benefits those who are already rich and increasingly impoverishes those who are already poor.

Decentralization of police duties and functions is needed to prevent abuse of power and increase the accountability of security forces to the local communities they serve. An overly centralized police system tends to be less responsive to local security needs and more vulnerable to politicization. (Anwar, 2021) Decentralization will bring police closer to the communities they serve so they can better understand local dynamics and security needs. Additionally, with decentralization, local communities will have greater leverage in supervising and demanding police accountability, thereby increasing accountability.

The elimination of military roles in civilian functions is also an important agenda for strengthening civilian democracy and preventing the return of militarism in national political life. Indonesian post-independence history shows that military involvement in politics and civilian government has caused various negative consequences, from systematic human rights violations, obstacles to the democratization process, to corruption involving military institutions. Although the 1998 reforms brought significant changes in this regard, there are still remnants of the ABRI dual function doctrine that need to be thoroughly cleaned up. The elimination of military roles in civilian functions must be accompanied by strengthening military professionalism and refocusing on state defense duties as mandated in the constitution.

Transformative justice that is the goal of these long-term demands requires long-term commitment from all elements of the nation, not only the government and DPR but also civil society, academics, and mass media. Transformative justice differs from retributive justice that only focuses on punishing wrongdoers or restorative justice that focuses on restoring relationships. (Hulu, 2024) Transformative justice aims to change systemic injustice structures and create a more fundamentally just social order. This requires not only changes in laws and policies but also changes in political culture, social values, and state administration practices.

Research results show that the public solidarity built through the 17+8 movement has transcended geographical, ideological, and social strata boundaries. This cross-sectoral solidarity is very valuable social capital that can be utilized to push for more comprehensive reforms. Social media platforms have played an important role in accelerating this solidarity, enabling rapid mass mobilization and effective action coordination in various cities in Indonesia. Social media not only functions as a communication tool but also as a new public space where political discourse takes place, alternative narratives are constructed, and collective action is organized.

The participation of artists, activists, and influencers in supporting these demands shows that this issue has become a shared concern across sectors of society. The involvement of public figures and influencers is very important in expanding the movement's reach and increasing public awareness of the issues being fought for. They have wide platforms and audiences that can be utilized to educate the public and mobilize support. However, this involvement also needs to be maintained to remain authentic and not just follow trends or seek popularity.

However, achieving long-term justice also requires vigilance against risks that can threaten democratic stability. The demand for total DPR dissolution, although reflecting deep frustration with legislative performance, needs to be carefully examined considering its implications for institutional continuity and political stability. The dissolution of the DPR without a clear mechanism to replace it can create a dangerous power vacuum and open opportunities for anti-democratic forces to take over. History shows that poorly managed political transition periods can lead to chaos, anarchy, even military coups or new authoritarianism.

Therefore, a more constructive approach is to strengthen DPR accountability mechanisms through effective recall mechanisms, full transparency in budget management, and strengthening the role of civil society in supervising legislative performance. The recall mechanism allows constituents to withdraw legislative members who do not carry out their mandate properly, thereby providing strong incentives for DPR members to work seriously and not ignore their constituents' aspirations. Transparency in budget management must include detailed publication of the use of every rupiah of the DPR budget, including allowances, operational costs, and various facilities received by DPR members. (Iswatul Hasanah, Dr. Jazim Hamidi, 2014)

#### **4. Conclusions**

The 17+8 demands that emerged as a response to various controversial policies and injustices reflect the disappointment and anger of people who have long felt they have not received attention and justice from the government and legislative institutions. These demands are not only limited to short-term demands regarding the resolution of urgent problems such as revoking controversial Law revisions and releasing protesters detained unjustly but also concern long-term structural reforms in governance and the legislative system. Therefore, the government's response must be able to demonstrate real commitment in fulfilling people's aspirations through constructive dialogue, full transparency, and concrete and measurable reformative actions. In the context of justice, the emergence of distributive injustice seen from the large disparity between the welfare of DPR members and the economic conditions of people experiencing crisis became the main trigger for large-scale protest waves. This inequality shows that the political and legislative elite are less sensitive to the suffering of the wider community, thereby creating a deep sense of distrust toward state institutions. Procedural justice, which demands an inclusive, transparent, and fair decision-making process, also becomes very important, considering important decisions regarding budgets and policies were made in a closed and hasty manner, accompanied by arrogant attitudes from some DPR members. Besides material aspects, restorative justice becomes important, especially in addressing the tragedy of Afan Kurniawan's death. Fair law enforcement, security force accountability, and efforts to fulfill the rights of victims' families become part of the justice response that must be prioritized. In the long-term context, institutional reform becomes imperative, including overhauling the DPR audit system, revising taxation and anti-corruption laws, and strengthening the decentralization of police duties and functions. The elimination of military roles in civilian affairs is also part of efforts to strengthen democracy and prevent the re-emergence of authoritarian power practices.

The urgency of justice in the context of these demands is closely related to the nation's need to build a more transparent, accountable, and responsive governance system. The reforms carried out must be able to address structural inequalities and strengthen the principles of checks and balances as well as people's participation in the policy-making process. Public solidarity that transcends geographical and social boundaries, facilitated by social media and the active roles of social actors such as activists and influencers, shows that this movement is an important momentum for major changes that are more democratic and just. Although public aspirations are very strong and reflect the desire for total reform, extreme solutions such as total dissolution of the DPR must be avoided because they have the potential to create a power vacuum and disrupt national stability. A more realistic and constructive approach is to strengthen the DPR's internal accountability mechanisms, increase accountability, and strengthen participation and control from civil society. This is needed as a way to maintain the continuity of democracy and ensure that reforms run sustainably and touch fundamental aspects of governance. In addition, justice must be pursued constitutionally and in accordance with the principles of rule of law. People's aspirations must be responded to seriously but also through deliberation processes that weigh various legal, political, and economic aspects. Constructive and inclusive dialogue is key to finding solutions that consider all interests while maintaining state stability and sustainability. The government must also build an early warning system to detect public dissatisfaction early so that it does not create larger social crises.

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