



TALITHA KOUMI

TO LOVE. TO LIBERATE. TO RESTORE

In Indonesia, corruption is endemic and systemic. From army generals to ministers and politicians (national or local) to teachers and school administrators, all will ask for bribes in order to provide the services for which they are nevertheless agents.

One of our sources told us that to become a policeman, for example, you had to pay a bribe of 250 million rupees (approximately \$21,000 CAD) for the application to be accepted.

According to TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, Indonesia ranks among the very corrupt countries with a score of 38% out of the 180 countries assessed (https://transparency-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/CPI2021_Report_FR-web.pdf)

As part of the investigation conducted by Daniel Jean on behalf of the organization fighting against the sex trafficking of minors, Talitha Koumi, he was able to speak with Mr. MP Dalam.

Q1. Can you tell me more about yourself and your role as an MP?

My name is Mr. Dalam and our political party is one of the main parties in the country. At Indramayu, our role is to make laws and regulations. In 2005, we passed a law to punish the sex trafficking of minors.

We try to prevent sex trafficking in the district because we have a lot of problems.

Q2. Can you give concrete examples of measures that have been taken?

First, we voted regulations, then we did promotional campaigns to publicize them. As we cannot fight this problem alone, we work together with foundations like Yayasan Kusuma Bongas.

Q3. Do you plan to financially support foundations and organizations fighting against human trafficking on the ground?

Yes, we have a budget for these foundations but the sums are very small. (My source at one of these foundations was unable to confirm the veracity of this answer...)

Q4. Does the central government help you financially for this component? *No.*



Q5. Even though the school is "free", they still charge high fees for stationery, uniforms, etc. This has a prohibitive effect preventing poor families from sending their children to school. Do you intend to take action to stop this?

We have no plans at this time. Families can receive help from the family ministry.

(In the first article, we interviewed an official from this ministry. She told us that she had 2 employees to cover a district 4 times the area of the island of Montreal.)

Q6. Yet these fees are a major barrier to schooling. Do you think it would be good to have regulations preventing this kind of practice?

It's a good idea but the problem is that we have many other concerns such as road construction, hospital maintenance, etc.

Q7. Given the seriousness of this problem, however, it seems to me that it would be quite easy and quick to solve this problem in your district by simply passing a regulation prohibiting schools from imposing this kind of fee, right?

Thank you for the suggestion, I will discuss it with my team and I will propose this to the central government. We currently have funds to help families with school fees but they are very limited.

Q8. How much of a priority is the fight against underage sex trafficking for the local government? Can you give me concrete examples of what is done?

Our priority is economic growth because that is, in my opinion, the main reason pushing girls and women into prostitution. Together with the central government we provide loans so that people can start their own business.

Q9. Apart from growing rice, what kind of business can people here start?

Small businesses in their house, for example, like small street restaurants.

Q10. Is it true that the majority of rice fields are owned by interests not inhabiting the district or even the country?

Yes, they are mostly owned by people who don't live in the district, but they are Indonesians.

Q11. Has the local (or national) government ever considered the nationalization of the rice fields in order to redistribute them to the farmers of the region?

We have regulations stating that it should be people from the district who own the rice fields but in reality this is not the case.

Q12. Would it be possible to buy back these rice fields and entrust them to the local farmers who work very hard for a miserable wage on these same rice fields?

This is impossible because rice farms are too expensive to buy.

Q13. Do you have regulations that govern salary scales for agricultural workers because the current salary (\$8 CAD/day) seems very low to me, considering that they do not work in the fields on a regular basis?

No, there are no regulations defining wage scales for agricultural workers but there are for factory workers.

Q14. Do you intend to better regulate the wages of agricultural workers?

We have regulations surrounding the use of the rice fields but not for the workers working there. It is forbidden to do anything other than rice cultivation. For example, an owner could not turn a rice field into a factory.

Moreover, market rules dictate wages. These are negotiated directly between the owners of the rice fields and the agricultural workers.

Q15. In your opinion, is poverty a sufficient reason for a woman to come to prostitution?

No.

Q16. What do you have to offer, as a politician, to a woman whose level of poverty would lead her to consider prostitution as the only valid alternative?

This woman could submit her problem to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, going through the authorities of her village to receive help.

Q17. Since you consider that a woman should not prostitute herself even if she is very poor, do you think that prostitution is work or a form of abuse?

It is abuse and a prostitute is a victim. She is also a victim of the system because victims are often undereducated. This is why the government can provide training to integrate the labor market.



Q18. Some countries have criminalized paying for sexual services, significantly improving the fight against prostitution. Does your country plan to do the same?

Personally, I cannot do anything at my level but I can submit the idea to the head of the central government house of commons in Jakarta.

Q19. I have read the 3 articles of law targeting traffickers, pimps and customers. They are very little deterrent if you consider that a pimp incurs US\$7 or 3 months in prison. Do you think these laws are dissuasive enough?

No, it's too light. But once again, it is the central government that can legislate in this direction to increase the penalties and make them more dissuasive.

Q20. In your opinion, has the sex trafficking situation in Indramayu district improved, stayed the same or deteriorated?

The number of cases is down but there are still some. I believe the situation is improving.

Q21. Can you provide me with the data on which you rely to assert this?

I do not have these data, it is Mrs. Susi Ianti who has them.

Q22. And according to his ministry, things are improving?

Yes, and I think the population thinks so too. We have put in place 5 rules, one of which stipulates that you must register your child at birth because often, traffickers take advantage of the fact that the child does not have a legal existence.

This regulation has existed since 2019.

However, it is the responsibility of the family to register the child (many women give birth at home, in their village).

Q23. How can you, as a legislator, ensure that children are registered with the government in the future?

By law, parents have 60 days to register the baby. It is the village chiefs who are responsible for making these regulations known.

Q24. My last question is: Do you know how many traffickers and/or pimps have had to face the law in Indramayu last year?

To my knowledge, none. However, to have the right time, I recommend that you contact the city center police. They are the ones who have these kinds of statistics.

NB: As with every article, we let you know if we had to pay a "fee" for the interview. To our surprise, Mr. Dalam declined our offer, which pleasantly surprised us.

As I was sharing my surprise at having dealt with an honest politician to one of my anti-trafficking sources in Jakarta, she laughed and finally told me that this It was not out of honesty that the deputy had refused my envelope but because his own boss is himself in prison for corruption.

Mr. Dalam was just protecting himself.

Next article : M. Suliman, the pimp whos wasn't one ...