



## SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE QUALITY OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN INDONESIA EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

Usman Hamid, Founder of the Indonesian branch of Change.org



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12:10 PM TO 1:10 PM  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
KENT 624

Since the fall of President Suharto in 1998, scholars have debated the nature and quality of democracy that followed his regime. One of the lenses through which researchers assess the nature of a democracy is by looking at the quality of freedom of expression. Much of the existing literature on new social media in Indonesia has focused on its positive impact on citizens voicing opinions in terms of civil society activism and political participation. Usman Hamid will explore the impact of social media on freedom of expression in Indonesia with particular attention to whether the emergence of new social media has increased or undermined those freedoms.

Usman Hamid is a MPhil candidate at Department of Political and Social Change at the Australian National University. In 1998, Usman was a student activist from Trisakti University where four students were shot dead – this incident triggered a nationwide protest that toppled the Suharto regime. He subsequently became the coordinator of KontraS, the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence. In 2004, Usman was appointed a member of the Presidential Fact-Finding Team that investigated the 2004 murder of prominent human rights defender Munir Said Thalib. He also served as an expert adviser to the International Center for Transitional Justice, Jakarta office, from 2010 until 2012. In 2011 Usman was appointed to the Presidential Working Unit for the Supervision and Management of Development, where he reviewed the policy on Indonesia's Human Rights Nation Plan of Action

of 2011–2014. In 2012, Usman co-founded the Public Virtue Institute and the Indonesian Branch of Change.org, the world's largest online petition platform. He participated in the 2003 Human Rights Advocates Program at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University and held a fellowship at Nottingham University (2009).

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