SAFEnet CLARITI

SHUTDOWNS AND TAKEDOWNS:

Civil Society-led Concised HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia

SHUTDOWN AND TAKEDOWN

Civil Society-led Concised HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia

Published by:

SAFEnet

Powered by:

CLARITI

Shutdowns And Takedowns:

Civil Society-led Concised HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia

Authors

Abbas Abdullah
Tessa Ardhia M
Shinta Ressmy

Editor-in-Chief

Nenden Sekar Arum

Editor

Ramzy Muliawan

Layout Designer

Rama Sejati

Publisher

Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet)
Jalan Gita Sura III Nomor 55 Peguyangan Kaja
Denpasar, Bali 80115

September 2026

Download these publication only on safenet.or.id

CC BY SA

Contact us

safenet.or.id
@safenetvoice
info@safenet.or.id

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE **01**

GLOSSARY **02**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **03**

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION **05**

1. Introduction 06

2. Objective 09

3. Methodology 10

4. Prioritised Human Rights 12

5. Disclaimer 13

CHAPTER II - STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT **14**

CHAPTER III - CONTEXT ANALYSIS **19**

1. Country Context 20

2. Industry Context 25

3. Company Context 26

CHAPTER IV - IMPACT ANALYSIS **33**

1. Power & Policy: How Policy Shapes the Users' Experience 34

2. Grey Box: Analysing Platform Accountability Under Pressure 42

3. Scoring 51

CHAPTER V - RECOMMENDATION **56**

1. Guidance 57

2. Improving the Protection of Human Rights by the Government 57

3. Improving the Respect and Remedy of Human Rights within TikTok 60

CHAPTER VI - COMPANY ENGAGEMENT **63**

BIBLIOGRAPHY 66

PREFACE

The nationwide protests in Indonesia in August 2025 highlighted the important role of digital platforms in enabling people to access information, express views, and participate in public discourse. During the protests, TikTok became a key channel for sharing real-time information. However, TikTok also faced content involving potential violence, misinformation, and other harmful activity, leading TikTok to temporarily restrict its features across Indonesia.

This suspension demonstrated how decisions made by digital platforms during periods of social and political unrest can have significant consequences for the exercise of human rights. The dilemma is apparent. Digital platforms were not only a means of expressing opinions, but also a way to monitor developments, assess safety conditions, and stay connected with loved ones. However, the platform operator was also confronted with content involving potential violence, misinformation, and other forms of harmful activity.

It raised an important question about the responsibility of digital platforms to protect users and address harmful content while ensuring that measures taken in response to exceptional circumstances do not unnecessarily restrict users' human rights. It also raised a broader question about the relationship between platform decisions and government regulation, particularly in a environment where the government has significant authority to request information, restrict content, and impose sanctions on digital platforms.

This publication, "Shutdowns and Takedowns: Civil Society-led Concised HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia," uses the CLARITI framework to assess TikTok's decision-making, transparency, and human rights impacts, alongside the influence of Indonesia's broad regulatory environment during the August 2025 protests.

We recognise that maintaining a safe digital environment is complex, particularly during heightened tension. However, measures to address risks should be proportionate, transparent, without unnecessarily depriving users of their ability to access information, express themselves, or earn a livelihood. Thus, we encourage TikTok to strengthen transparency around decisions affecting service access, provide accessible appeal mechanisms, and conduct meaningful human rights due diligence.

We also encourage the Indonesian government to review and clarify regulatory provisions that give authorities overly broad discretion. Government regulation should provide clear and predictable standards rather than creating uncertainty that may encourage platforms to take overly broad or precautionary measures.

Denpasar, September 2026
Nenden Sekar Arum
Executive Director

GLOSSARY

ACRA	: Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority
CLARITI	: Community-led Assessment of Rights Impacts in the Technology Industry
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
CRC	: Convention on the Rights of the Child.
CRPD	: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Consumer Protection Law	: Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection
DGIP	: Directorate General of Intellectual Property of Ministry of Law of Republic of Indonesia
ELSAM	: Lembaga Studi Advokasi Masyarakat
EU	: European Union.
Freedom to Express Opinions in Public Law	: Law Number 9 of 1998 on Freedom to Express Opinions in Public
GMV	: Gross Merchandise Value
GR 71/2019	: Government Regulation Number 71 of 2019 on the Implementation of Electronic Systems and Transactions
GR 80/2019	: Government Regulation Number 80 of 2019 on Trading Through Electronic Systems
HRIA	: Human Rights Impact Analysis
Human Rights Law	: Law Number 39 of 1999 on Human Rights
ICESCR	: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ITDN	: Indeks Transformasi Digital Nasional
ITE Law	: Law Number 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions (as amended)
Law No. 11/2005	: Law Number 11 of 2005 on the Ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Law No. 12/2005	: Law Number 12 of 2005 on the Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
LBH	: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum
MOCD	: Minister of Communication and Digital of the Republic of Indonesia
MOHR	: Ministry of Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia
MR 5/2020	: Minister of Communication and Informatics Regulation Number 5 of 2020 regarding Private Electronic System Operators
MSMEs	: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
National Development System Law	: Law Number 25 of 2004 concerning the National Development Planning System
OSS	: Online Single Submission
PDP Law	: Law Number 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection
PRISMA	: Penilaian Risiko Bisnis dan HAM / Business and Human Rights Risk Assessment
PSHK	: Pusat Studi Hukum dan Kebijakan Indonesia
PSE	: Penyelenggara Sistem Elektronik / Electronic System Operator
RPJPN	: Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional
RPJMN	: Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional
SAFEnet	: Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network
TAP-MPR No. XVII/MPR/1998	: People's Consultative Assembly Decree Number XVII/MPR/1998 of 1998 on Human Rights
UDHR	: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNGP	: United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2025, the biggest protests since the 1998 Asian Financial Crisis broke out across Indonesia. People were angry that members of parliament were getting a pay raise while everyday life was getting harder due to rising living costs. During the protests, Affan Kurniawan, a motorbike-taxi driver, was hit and killed by a police barracuda near Pejompongan, one of the protest hotspots in Jakarta. The killing was captured by thousands of phone cameras and uploaded to social media, including TikTok. In other parts of Jakarta, crowd gather at the harborside area of Tanjung Priok, Jakarta and used TikTok LIVE to stream themselves breaking into and stealing from the house of Ahmad Sahroni, a member of parliament which had bragged earlier that those urging or calling for the dissolution of the parliament as "the world's biggest idiots".

This alarmed TikTok. Later that week, TikTok announced that they were temporarily suspending TikTok LIVE due to escalating violence from the protests. TikTok also stated that they will continue to remove content that “violates our Community Guidelines, including hate speech, misinformation, and gambling”. TikTok emphasised that their actions are voluntary; this was echoed by the MOCD, which later that year went on to suspend TikTok's license as an electronic system provider in Indonesia because of the alleged failure to comply with the MOCD’s requests related to sharing data on live streaming activities and alleged monetisation of gambling content during the protests. TikTok’s decisions during the August 2025 protests significantly impacted its users through several ways:

1. **Users lost a way to know what was happening.** Many said they used TikTok LIVE streams to check if the streets near them were safe, or to see if friends or families who joined the protest were safe. When TiKTok LIVE was turned off, they were unable to do that.

2. **Users lost a channel to speak up.** Some felt they could no longer share what they saw or thought, and were scared that their accounts might get banned just for posting about the protests at all.

3. **Users lost a way to make a living.** Many small business owners and content creators earn a living through TikTok LIVE, selling things or receiving gifts from viewers. When it was turned off, that revenue stream stopped completely, some for as long as several days.

Both TikTok as a platform and the Indonesian government have a duty here. The government is responsible to protect the people's freedom of speech and expression, and to know what's happening as guaranteed by Indonesia's constitution. TikTok are obliged to respect those same rights, no matter what the government does or doesn't do based on various sources including, among others, United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

W

This impact assessment looked at what happened during the protests on August 2025 using CLARITI, a toolkit built to check whether tech companies are living up to their duty to respect and comply with human rights obligations. This assessment found that TikTok turned off several of its features in Indonesia without any clear explanation and a clear way for its users to appeal. In the other hand, Indonesia's own regulations on online content prescribe a wide-ranging power to the government to pressure companies like TikTok using vague pretexts such as “disturbing public order”.

This assessment recommends TikTok to be clearer about their decision-making mechanisms and provide its users a fair, fast way to appeal when their account, content, or stream is taken down or turned off. Further, the Indonesian government should amend its regulations so that platform companies aren't pressured into shutting their services down “just in case”, as it was evidently the case during the August 2025 protests. This assessment should be read as a starting point for a more comprehensive rethinking of the existing platform governance framework in Indonesia, based on human rights perspectives.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian social media went crazy that night: users were taken aback in horror when they saw a video circulating online of an Indonesian police armored tactical vehicle hitting and running over an online ride-hailing motorcycle taxi driver, in the streets of Pejompongan, Central Jakarta, near the Indonesian parliament's complex, on Thursday, 28 August 2025. That taxibike driver was fortunately safe. However, it was later confirmed that the barracuda also hit and killed Affan Kurniawan (21), another taxibike driver, not far from where the video was taken.[1]

The killing of Affan angers the nation.

The killing of Affan angers the nation. What was a peaceful protests, aimed to oppose the increase of the members of parliament's allowances turned into a violent riot targeting police offices, government buildings, and even public officials' houses. The worst occurred north of where Affan had died, at the North Jakarta residence of Ahmad Sahroni (48), a member of parliament from Nasdem Party, on Saturday, 30 August 2025. Multiple accounts using TikTok LIVE broadcasted in real time how hundreds of people ransacked Sahroni's house, disfigured cars, stole goods worth billions in Rupiah, and swam in his pool.[2]

The use of its streaming platform to broadcast the protests and its spillover alarmed TikTok. Soon after the incident at Sahroni's residence, TikTok announced a "temporary suspension" of TikTok LIVE services due to violence escalation during the protests; it also stated that the platform will continue to remove content that "violates our Community Guidelines, including hate speech, misinformation, and gambling".[3] TikTok emphasised that their actions are voluntary, which was later echoed by the MOCD.[4]

1 Viriya Singgih, "Pembunuhan Affan Kurniawan: Sebuah Kegilaan di Jalan Penjernihan," Project Multatuli, September 1, 2025, https://projectmultatuli.org/pembunuhan-affan-kurniawan-sebuah-kegilaan-di-jalan-penjernihan/.

2 Desy Setyowati, "Ketika Live TikTok Jadi Ajang Cari Cuan saat Penjarahan Rumah Sahroni," Katadata, September 13, 2025, https://katadata.co.id/digital/teknologi/68bfb6d03ce98/ketika-live-tiktok-jadi-ajang-cari-cuan-saat-penjarahan-rumah-sahroni.

3 Ibid

4 "Pemerintah Bekukan Sementara Izin TikTok," Kompas.com, October 3, 2025, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/10/03/11520301/pemerintah-bekukan-sementara-izin-tiktok..

This assessment aims to analyse the August 2025 suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of content from the perspective of human rights, with particular focus to analyze its impact on the protection and fulfilment of basic human rights. As a corporation, TikTok has a duty to respect and protect human rights, including in times of public disorder and riots. In this regard, our assessment suggests that the suspension of TikTok LIVE and the removal of content as this assessment will show may be considered a restriction to freedom of expression, as it was carried out not in compliance with human rights principles under, among others, the Indonesian Constitution, UNGPs, and other applicable laws and regulations.

In line with Principle 11 of the UNGPs, this assessment argues that TikTok as a corporation has a duty to respect human rights, avoid infringing on the human rights of others, and address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved.[5] Further, Principle 12 of the UNGPs states that "*The responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights refers to internationally recognized human rights – understood, at a minimum, as those expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights…*".[6] It is also worth noting that Principle 13 of the UNGPs stipulates that corporations must prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts, whether caused directly by their own operations or through their business relationships (such as pressure from governments or local partners).[7]

One of the avenues for TikTok is to conduct a human rights impact assessment to assess actual or potential human rights impacts, including the risk of violations of the right to freedom of expression and access to information resulting from its content moderation policies during times of protests.[8] This is important because millions of individuals rely on TikTok as a primary search engine and civic forum, and the platform's arbitrary restriction of these features contributes directly to the suppression of real-time public information and paralyzation of the digital micro-economic activities.

Without limiting the above, it is also important to underline that the duties to protect, respect, and remedy human rights and fundamental freedoms are the primary responsibilities of the state. In this regard, Principle 1 of the UNGPs states that, "*States must protect against human rights abuse within their territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including business enterprises. This requires taking appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication,*" *and Article 2, "States should set out clearly the expectation that all business enterprises domiciled in their territory and/or jurisdiction respect human rights throughout their operations*".[9]

5 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2011), 13, Principle 11, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf.
6 Ibid., 14, Principle 12.
7 Ibid., 14, Principle 13.
8 Ibid., 14, Principle 18.
9 Ibid., 14, Principle 1 and Principle 2.

In the context of Indonesia, Article 28E (3) of the Indonesian Constitution stated that "*Every person shall have the right to the freedom of association, assembly, and expression of opinion,". Article 28F affirms that "Every person shall have the right to communicate and to obtain information…*".[10] Based on these constitutional guarantees, Article 23 (2) of the Human Rights Law stipulates that: "*Every person shall be free to have, express, and disseminate their opinion in accordance with their conscience, either orally and/or in writing, through printed or electronic media, with due regard to religious values, morality, public order, public interest, and the integrity of the nation".*[11]

Based on the above, SAFEnet published "Shutdowns and Takedowns: HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia". This assessment is intended to demand TikTok to establish more transparent and inclusive moderation policies and guidelines that include human rights perspectives and the incorporation of human rights impact analysis as a tool to measure the impacts of the rights-based moderation policies. The products, services, and decisions of TikTok are used by millions of people in Indonesia and impacted the daily lives and human rights of its users. In this regard, this assessment aim to explain how both individual users and the general public were impacted by TikTok's suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of content, namely the loss of access to information, freedom of speech, and economic values.

This assessment also serves as an evaluation of the Indonesian government's actions (or lack of actions) in protecting, respecting, and remedying human rights that were disrupted and/or violated during the August 2025 protests. In this regard, this assessment underlines how the Indonesian government's legal instruments and actions (beschikking) influence how TikTok as a platform makes decisions during and after the protests. It is important to delineate the government's roles as similar occurrences may happen again in the future.

Picture 1: Online Motorcycle Taxi Drivers Also Express Their Condolences over the Passing of Affan Kurniawan (Source: BBC News Indonesia)

10 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945, Art. 28E, para. 3 and Art. 28F.
11 Law Number 39 of 1999 on Human Rights (Undang-Undang Nomor 39 Tahun 1999 tentang Hak Asasi Manusia), Art. 23, para. 2.

2. OBJECTIVES

General Outcome

A. The Indonesian government and TikTok understand what they must do to protect, respect, and remedy the human rights of the Indonesian citizens in relation to the assessment object.

B. TikTok understand how its products, services, and decisions impact daily lives and human rights of individual citizens in relation to the assessment project and offer viable solutions to minimize such impacts.

C. The general public understands that they are rights holders and that they have the right over the protection, respect, and if necessary, remedial of their human rights in respect to the assessment object.

Specific Outcome

A. Government:

(i) Assess whether Indonesian laws and regulations on content moderation during protests are aligned with international human rights standards.

(ii) Identify any overbroad, vague, and/or unlawful positions that may enable arbitrary enforcement of TikTok's moderation practices during the protest.

(iii) Implement a state-facilitated human rights violation remedy mechanisms for users impacted by TikTok's content moderation practices.

B. TikTok:

(i) Ensure its internal moderation practices and emergency measures during the protests were based on international human rights norms and other values such as transparency, proportionality, and accountability.

(ii) Evaluate whether a nationwide temporary suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of contents was the least intrusive option, targeted and necessary, and based on credible, localised risk analysis.

(iii) Offer a more transparent mechanism for users to appeal decisions of content moderation and provide remedies for such decisions when it is identified to be negatively impacting or violating the basic human rights.

C. Rightholders:

(i) Assess any impacts on any feature restrictions on TikTok to their daily lives.

(ii) Assess whether they are clearly informed about any feature restrictions (e.g. TikTok LIVE ban), are provided with reasons in the language that they understand, and are provided a mechanism to appeal content moderation decisions through tools available within the application.

3. METHODOLOGY

This assessment was made possible using CLARITI, a community-led human rights impact assessment methodology that allows communities, their representatives, and others to identify and assess existing or potential adverse human rights impacts by the digital platforms and telecommunications companies, and recommend mitigating actions and remedies to address them. CLARITI was developed by Ranking Digital Rights in 2023, with support from ARTICLE 19, to foster constructive and collaborative engagement between telecommunications companies and digital platforms with large user bases and the communities these companies serve.[12]

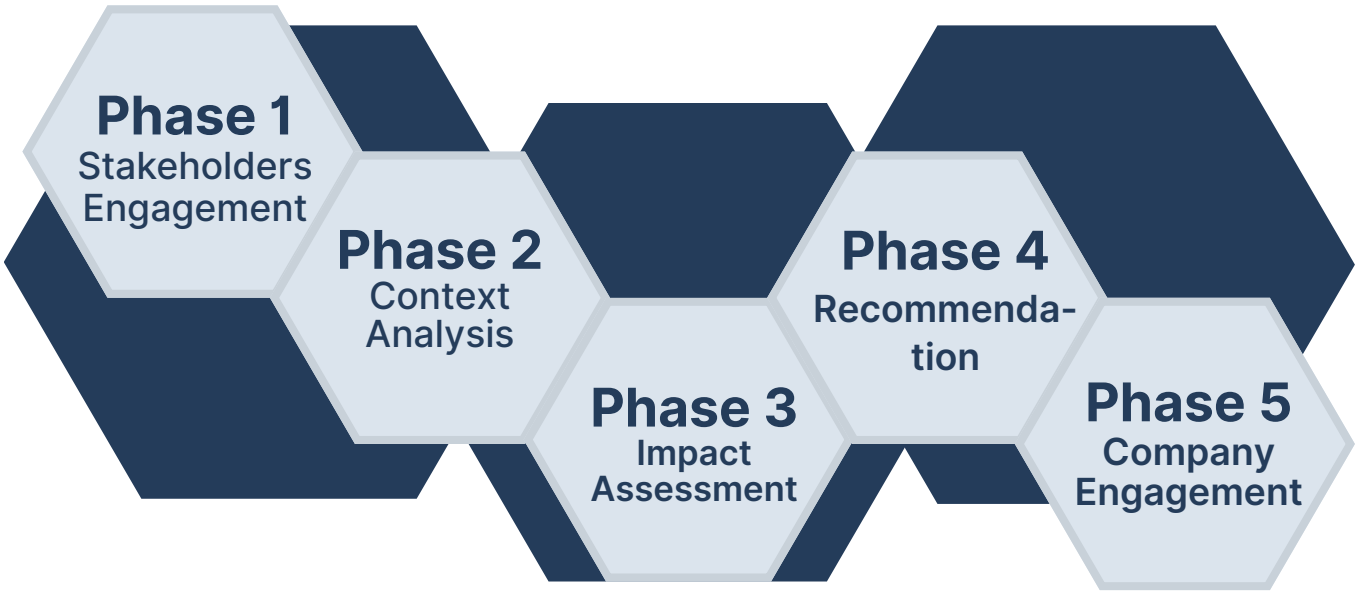
This methodology uses the IBHR as a baseline to define human rights norms and values while adopting business and human rights guidelines, principles, and best practices including among others the UNGPs, the GNI Principles, and the Santa Clara Principles. In particular, the methodology was guided by the UNGPs, literature on company-led and community-led human rights due diligence and impact assessment methodologies and extensive stakeholder consultations to help provide corporations with a complementary, community-based perspective on their human rights impacts. It was designed to assess the extent to which corporations are following the UNGPs while simultaneously embedding its requirements within the assessment itself.

SAFEnet conducted a concise HRIA on TikTok, a popular social media platform used by more than 150 million users in Indonesia. The focus of this assessment is to analyse the suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of contents during the August 2025 protests in Indonesia using HRIA methods as deployed by CLARITI. In this regard, SAFEnet examined how TikTok and the Indonesian government make decisions and influence each other during the protests and how such decisions impact both individual users and the general public.

It is important to note that the scope of analysis conducted in this assessment is narrower than the process provided by CLARITI. We used the primary outline provided by CLARITI from the introduction to the engagement, but we purposefully deviated from the details and adjusted certain criteria as reasonably required to conform with our expertise, obstacles we face during the assessment process, and the local Indonesian context. For example, we limited our analysis of local laws only to the laws and regulations of Indonesia due to the limitation of our knowledge of laws of other jurisdictions, although various references, including the UNGPs, suggested basic assessments on laws of jurisdictions where the companies operate or originate.

12 RDR Staff, "Introducing CLARITI: A New Tool for Community-Driven Accountability of the Tech Industry," Ranking Digital Rights, August 25, 2025, https://rankingdigitalrights.org/2025/08/25/introducing-clariti-a-new-tool-for-community-driven-accountability-of-the-tech-industry/.

This assessment was conducted between 1 September 2025 until 1 September 2026 through 5 (five) phases:



Phase 1: Stakeholders Engagement. This phase collected the result of our engagement with the relevant stakeholders in relation to this assessment namely TikTok officials, TikTok users, civil society organizations, and Indonesian government officials. This is in line with the requirements of Principle 18 of the UNGPs, which required a human rights impact assessment to be conducted through meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Phase 2: Context Analysis. This phase described understanding of the country, industry, and company context pertaining to this assessment. In this regard, we analyzed the legal, social, and economic context in which TikTok operates, as well as how the Indonesian government, TikTok, and the general public influence each other and how TikTok presents their products to its users in Indonesia.

Phase 3: Impact Assessment. This phase assessed the impacts of the suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of content during the August 2025 protests in Indonesia. In this regard, we used CLARITI to score the right impacts based on scope, scale, remediability, likelihood, connection, mitigation, and leverage in line with Principle 13, Principle 14, and Principle 19 of the UNGPs and other best practices on human rights impact assessment.

Phase 4: Recommendation. This phase recommends the Indonesian government to enhance the protection of basic human rights of its citizens and recommends that TikTok mitigate and address the adverse impacts of its operations, in line with Principle 23 and Principle 24 of the UNGPs.

Phase 5: Company Engagement. This phase highlighted efforts we have made to engage with TikTok's representatives for the purposes of this assessment.

4. PRIORITISED HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSES

CLARITI divided basic human rights norms and causes into 3 (three) principles and 11 (eleven) potential violations. For the purposes of this assessment, SAFEnet prioritised 2 (two) basic human rights norms that were directly impacted by the suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of contents during the protests in Indonesia on August 2025, with their accompanying causes, namely:

Principles	Potential Violation	Assessment
Freedom of Expression: Freedom of expression encompassing the ability to find, receive, or deliver information or opinions. It is a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 19 of UDHR and Article 19 ICCPR.	**Government Censorship:** Assess how a corporation may be involved in potential violations of the freedom of expression through orders of content removal, blocking of websites and services, and/or restriction of restricting user accounts.	**Yes**
	Government Information Dissemination: Assess how a corporation comply with the government's use of telcos and/or platforms to distribute information that directly or indirectly violates basic human rights.	**No**
	Content Moderation Policy (platforms only): Assess how a corporation's content moderation policies may limit users' access, ability to share information, and/or facilitates a harmful online environment.	**Yes**
	Content & Advertising Promotion Algorithm (platforms only): Assess how a corporation's content and advertising policies allow users to access engaging and positive information and offer and/or expose users to biased content or otherwise harmful content.	**No**
	Selective Zero Rating (telcos only): Assess how offering certain internet services with no data charges by a corporation may limit users' access to information and services that are not zero-rated, resulting in a lack of access to information.	**No**
	Government-ordered Network Disruption (telcos only): Assess how a corporation may be involved in complying with government's order to remove content or block entire websites and services.	**No**

Principles	Potential Violation	Assessment
Rights to Privacy Rights to privacy protects individuals from unwarranted interference and arbitrary and unjustified use of power by limiting who has access to their personal information. It is recognised under Article 12 of the UDHR and Article 17 the ICCPR.	**Government Surveillance:** Assess how a corporation may be involved in complying with the government's order to provide user data, usually for "law enforcement" or "national security" purposes.	**No**
	Privacy Protection Practices: Assess how a corporation follows best practices on data privacy management to protects its users' right.	**No**
	Data Breaches & Security: Assess whether a corporation follows globally-accepted best practices on data security to prevent breaches.	**No**
	Sharing of Customer Data: Assess whether a corporation protects the privacy of users when sharing their data with third parties.	**No**
Rights to Non-discrimination Rights to non-discrimination guarantees that everyone is treated equally regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, or other status. It is recognised under various instruments such as UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, and CRPD.	**Algorithmic Decision-making:** Assess how a corporation safeguard the right to non-discrimination by developing responsible algorithms, by being transparent when certain algorithms are used in decision-making, conducting regular reviews, remedy measures, and collaborating with rights-respecting stakeholders.	**No**

5. DISCLAIMERS

This assessment was prepared by based on all available primary and secondary information. SAFEnet assumes no responsibility or liability for errors or omissions of the information provided by the individual rightsholders, stakeholders, or contained in the publicly available sources. SAFEnet welcomes constructive engagement through provision of additional information that may augment and enhance the assessment under this assessment. If you have any questions/clarifications pertaining to this assessment, please do not hesitate to contact SAFEnet through info@safenet.or.id

CHAPTER II
STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT

Principle 18 of the UNGPs requires a human rights impact assessment to be conducted through meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders. For the purposes of this assessment, we have accordingly identified and consulted various stakeholders throughout the process, starting with the individual rightsholders whose concerns and interests we represent.[13]

The CLARITI methodology emphasised the concerns and perspectives of individual rightsholders potentially impacted by TikTok's operations, specifically the users of TikTok and generally Indonesian citizens, from human rights perspectives. The individual rightsholders should be the primary subject in any steps TikTok needs to take in adhering to the basic human rights principles, either as part of its commitment in upholding human rights or in response to external reports.

We conducted surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with and/or engaged with various stakeholders to formulate an comprehensive overview on the impacts of suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of contents during the August 2025 protests in Indonesia from the perspective of human rights, namely:

1. **TikTok**

   We have notified TikTok of this assessment on 13 October 2025 and performed a number of follow ups via e-mail, telephone, and other channels asking for an interview and audience lastly on 26 August 2026. Detailed engagement with TikTok is set out in Phase 5 of this assessment.

2. **Government Officials**

   We have contacted the MOCD as well as the MOHR asking for an interview and audience on a few occasions during our assessment period. **In this regard, none of the government entities above replied to our inquiry for an interview or issued any statements pertaining to this assessment.** Several members of the Ministry of Communication and Digital of the Republic of Indonesia did attend our online focus discussion group on 5 December 2025, however, they were only present in the meeting room for around 10 (ten) minutes and left before offering any thought on the topic of the discussion.

13 OHCHR, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 14, Principle 18.

3. Academics & Civil Society Organisations

We conducted interviews with various academics and civil society organizations pertaining to our assessment namely SAFEnet, LBH Bandung, CfDS, ELSAM, and PSHK. The interviews were conducted through online interviews, online focus discussion groups, and written interviews. The detailed results of this engagement are set out in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of this assessment.

4. Users & General Public

We carried out an online survey to grasp the level of users and general public's responses to the TikTok's suspension of TikTok LIVE as well as the removal of contents during August 2025 protests, particularly to examine how they are affected by the loss of access to information, infringement on freedom of speech, and negative economic consequences. The survey was intended to fulfil one of the requirements set out by CLARITI, namely to engage, meet, and interview a minimum of 100 individual rightholders to capture their views comprehensively in the assessment.

Our survey was conducted between 1 October 2025 to 30 June 2026 and was amplified by SAFEnet's social media accounts. In this regard, 112 (one hundred and twelve) respondents filled out the survey and 5 (five) of the respondents were interviewed. It is important to note that the respondents were recruited through SAFEnet's own social media accounts, which likely resulted in over-representation of users already engaged with digital rights issues. We also did not collect demographic data, so we were unable to assess the unequal impact across groups.

Nevertheless, our engagement with the users and general public collected a substantive feedback on how they see the suspension of TikTok LIVE as well as the removal of contents and how they are affected by such actions, namely:

a. **Loss of Revenue for Small Businesses and Creators:** There were at least 20 (twenty) respondents who reported that the suspension affected their revenue as TikTok affiliates and independent sellers. For example, one respondent mentioned that: "I feel like I lost income as a TikTok user, because my daily income comes from TikTok Live. And I also lost the enthusiasm to create content due to the feature restrictions." Another stated that: "*The restriction of TikTok features during the August protests had quite an impact on me as a make-up artist content creator. Content reach decreased so that my service promotions and makeup results could not reach potential clients optimally. In addition, I also had difficulty interacting with the audience through certain features, which resulted in reduced engagement, number of orders, and opportunities to get new clients.*"

b. **Infringement of Freedom of Speech and Expression:** Several users expressed frustration over the removal of content about the August 2025 protests. One respondent mentioned that: "*Honestly, the restriction of TikTok features yesterday really impacted me. Because TikTok LIVE was turned off and a lot of content was deleted, the space for expression felt very narrow. For content creators, this is detrimental. Direct interaction with the audience, which usually really affects engagement, was completely cut off.*" Another noted that overly sensitive automated filters and unwarranted warnings had restricted normal personal content sharing, stating that: "*...always got a warning that I would be banned just because the video I uploaded was considered 'naked/harassment?!' ... I hope in the future TikTok can filter bad things without reducing the freedom of expression...*"

c. **Restriction on Access to Crucial, Real-Time Information:** There were at least 50 respondents that highlighted that the TikTok LIVE suspension hindered their ability to access critical, on-the-ground updates during the August 2025 protests. One respondent said that: *"I felt it was difficult because of the hard-to-get information when the protest was taking place, because as an ordinary person I could only monitor through live streaming.*" Another respondent added that: *"And the worst part was when the protest was at its peak, I lost my fastest source of information. Usually we can monitor the field situation in real-time from people's live streams, but because it was turned off, access to know the actual conditions on the street became very difficult.*"

d. **The "Chilling Effect" and Forced Self-Censorship:** Half of the respondents also noted that aggressive content moderation practices created a growing fear, particularly on the possibility of permanent account bans and shadow banning. One respondent said that: *"Could not go live and several videos or important information about the protest did not enter FYP because many were banned.*" Another simply highlighted the direct punitive outcome felt by users: *"Account banned.*"

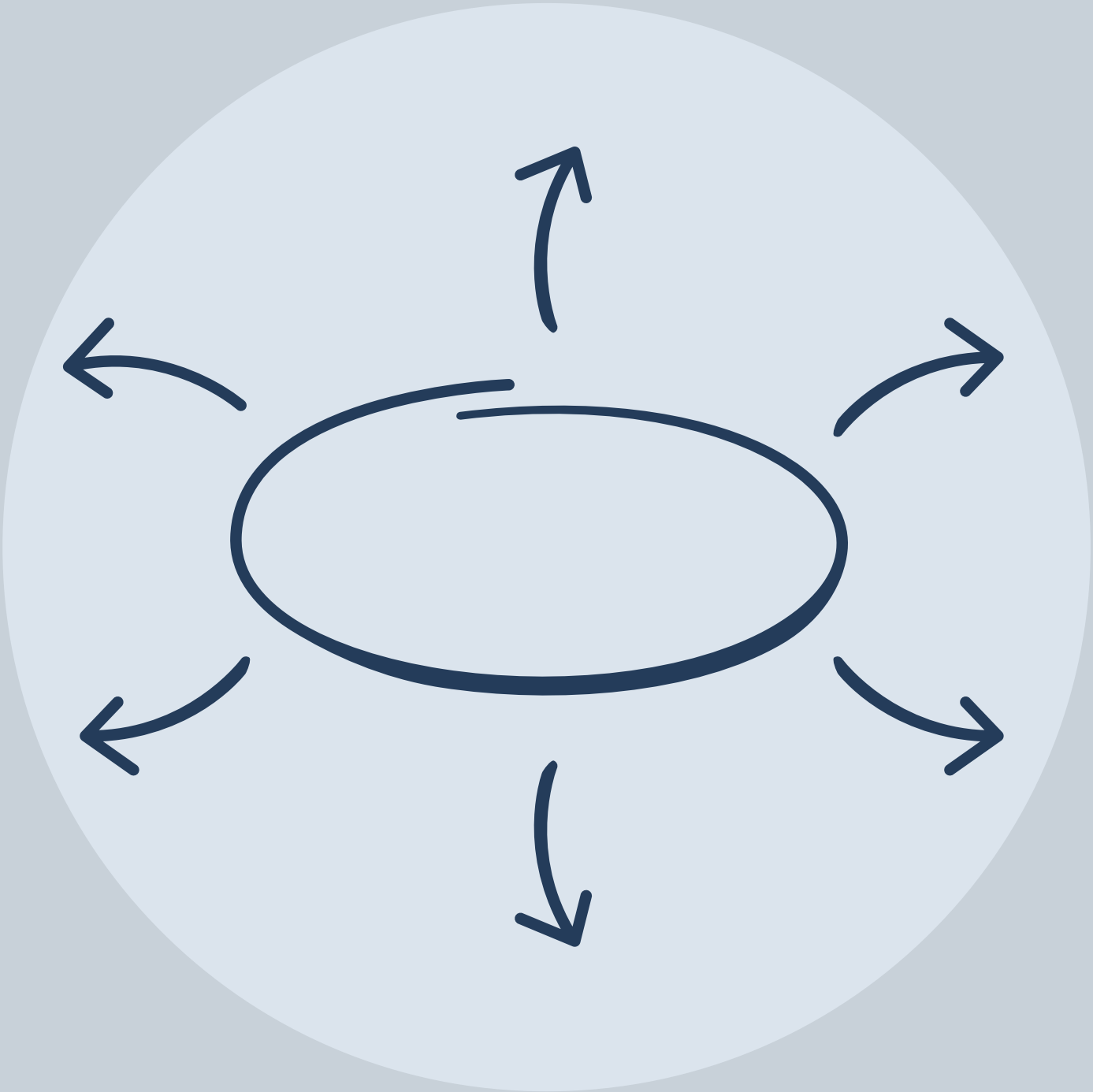
e. **Disruption of Community Engagement and Digital Presence:** Content creators emphasized the difficulty of maintaining visibility and connection with their usual audience during the suspension. A respondent stated that: *"The restriction of TikTok features made the process of spreading tourism content that I created less effective. Content that usually reaches many users experienced a decrease in visibility, making information about tourist destinations harder for the public to recognize. As a result, the number of interactions on the content decreased and the opportunity to promote tourism to potential visitors became more limited.*"

We noted a critical limitation of this assessment, namely that the scope of engagement and first-hand data collected is considerably narrower than what is mandated by exhaustive human rights impact assessment standards, such as those established by the Danish Institute for Human Rights.[14] Surveying 112 individuals is nowhere near enough to represent the social and economic diversity of TikTok's user base which already exceeds 150 million.[15] The absence of response from the Indonesian government also becomes another limitation of this assessment. However, in the absence of the Indonesian government and/or TikTok's own assessment, the voices of the users and civil society are one of the avenues to demonstrate whether a nationwide suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of content was the least restrictive means available.

In addition to the survey results, we have compiled users and general public's experience on the assessment subject from various sources including, but not limited to, news outlets, policy papers, independent reports, as well as other resources publicly available. All written sources pertaining to this assessment are listed in the Bibliography.

14 Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), Human Rights Impact Assessment: Guidance and Toolbox (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020), 6, https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/hria_toolbox_2020/eng/dihr_hria_guidance_and_toolbox_2020_eng.pdf.

15 Nouvan, "Indonesia Jadi Negara Pengguna TikTok Terbanyak di Dunia 2025," Dataloka.id, February 15, 2026, https://dataloka.id/humaniora/4424/indonesia-jadi-negara-pengguna-tiktok-terbanyak-di-dunia-2025/.



CHAPTER III

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

1. Country Context

As of 2025, Indonesia is home to around 230 million Internet users, with the rate of 80.66% of online penetration level. In October 2025, it is estimated that there are 180 million social media users (62.9% of the total population).[16] The internet was brought into Indonesia by practitioners and academics for assessment purposes in 1990, during the repressive Soeharto's regime.[17] The internet was brought into Indonesia by professional practitioners and academics in 1990, during the heydays of Soeharto's New Order regime.[18] In 2025, the Internet-enabled digital economy is projected to be valued of more than around Rp1.672 trillion (an equivalent of US$100 billion), making Indonesia the largest digital market in Southeast Asia.[19]

This growth was heavily driven by a massive e-commerce sector, ride-hailing and food delivery apps, and digital financial services, including digital lending and e-wallets. Furthermore, Indonesia is currently experiencing a massive wave of "social commerce" and video shopping; platforms like TikTok Shop and Shopee Live have seamlessly blended entertainment with purchasing, and Indonesia now leads Southeast Asia in video commerce transactions. Artificial intelligence (AI) adoption is also accelerating rapidly, with local businesses and consumers integrating AI tools at a faster rate than neighbouring markets.[20]

In 2008, Indonesia enacted the ITE Law to facilitate the development of the cyber ecosystem in Indonesia which at that time grew over 1,000% (one thousand) over the last previous 10 (ten) years.[21] The ITE Law governs wide-range of objects and activities through electronic systems including, but not limited to, electronic transactions, electronic business, and other types of electronic activities.[22]

One year after the enactment of the ITE Law, Prita Mulyasari, a mother of two, was misdiagnosed by physicians at Omni International Hospital in Tangerang. Frustrated, she wrote a private email to a small group of friends titled "Penipuan Omni International Hospital". Upon becoming aware of them, the hospital management then pressed an ITE Law to Prita,

17 Simon Kemp, "Digital 2026: Indonesia," DataReportal, October 2025 (published for 2026), https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-indonesia.

18 Data Lake Indonesia, "Sejarah Perkembangan Internet di Indonesia," Data Lake Indonesia, October 3, 2025, https://datalake.id/sejarah-internet-di-indonesia/.

19 "Mencermati Landskap Ekonomi Digital Indonesia 2025 dan Prospeknya pada 2026." Kompas.id, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/mencermati-landskap-ekonomi-digital-indonesia-2025-dan-prospeknya-pada-2026.

20 Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company, e-Conomy SEA 2025: Indonesia Country Report (2025), https://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/indonesia_e_conomy_sea_2025_report.pdf.

21 "Pengguna Internet Indonesia Tumbuh 1.000 Persen," Kompas.com, March 31, 2009, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2009/03/31/18205037/NaN.

22 Indonesia, Undang-Undang tentang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik, UU No. 11 Tahun 2008, LN No. 58 Tahun 2008, TLN No. 4843

alleging her to have defamed the hospital. Subsequent prosecution resulted a verdict of a massive fine that she could not afford. The case sparked a nationwide "Coins for Prita" initiative, where Indonesians collected sacks of small changes to pay for her legal costs and the criminal fines, ultimately, the Supreme Court overturned the criminal conviction in 2012.[23]

Prita was the first. In the coming year after the enactment of the ITE Law, hundreds of criminal prosecutions based on the law's criminal provisions are processed every year.[24] Between 2018 and 2025, 634 individuals were prosecuted and sentenced using the law's criminal defamation provision.[25] The law, which had been originally intended to regulate e-commerce and cybercrime, has evolved into a tool to repress individual citizens exercising their right to free speech using its defamation and hate speech provisions.[26]

The abuse of ITE Law provisions directly affected the state of human rights in Indonesia. CATO's Human Rights Index 2025 ranked Indonesia 92 out of 162 countries, which was a worse result from 2024's position at 87 of 165 countries.[27] 2025 Freedom House's index ranked Indonesia as partly free. Key trends include shrinking space for dissent, politicized use of defamation/blasphemy criminal provisions of law, endemic corruption, and, recently, concerns over political dynasty building.[28] The criminalisation of hundreds of protestors during the August 2025 protests extended into activists such as Delpedro Marhaen, Muzaffar Salim, Syahdan Husein, and Khariq Anhar, which speaks on the quality of the freedom of expression in Indonesia.[29]

On paper, Indonesia is adequate if not excellent in protecting the human rights of its citizens including the right to freedom of expression. The relevant Indonesian regulations includes:

a. **Indonesian Constitution:** Article 28E (3) of the Indonesian constitution stipulates that *"Everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly, and expression."* This constitutional guarantee is reinforced by Article 28F, which protects the right to communicate and obtain information to develop one's personal and social environment.[30]

---

23 Andi Saputra, "Ini Dia Kronologi Prita Mencari Keadilan," detikNews, September 18, 2012, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-2023887/ini-dia-kronologi-prita-mencari-keadilan.

24 Direktorat Jenderal Badan Peradilan Umum (Badilum), Infografis Undang-Undang ITE (Jakarta: Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia), https://badilum.mahkamahagung.go.id/attachments/article/4904/Rev-Infografis%20ITE[ok].pdf.

25 O. S. IFani, "Amnesty International Indonesia: 758 Orang Dikriminalisasi dengan UU ITE Sepanjang 2018-2025," Tempo, August 2025, https://www.tempo.co/hukum/amnesty-international-indonesia-758-orang-dikriminalisasi-dengan-uu-ite-sepanjang-2018-2025-2059298.

26 SAFEnet, "SAFEnet Ungkap Mutasi Otoritarianisme Digital di Indonesia," SAFEnet, February 2026, https://safenet.or.id/id/2026/02/safenet-ungkap-mutasi-otoritarianisme-digital-di-indonesia/.

27 Ian Vásquez, Matthew D. Mitchell, Ryan Murphy, and Guillermina Sutter Schneider, Human Freedom Index: 2025 (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2025), https://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index/2025.

28 Freedom House, "Indonesia: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report," Freedom House, 2025, https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2025.

29 "Kasus Demo Agustus 2025: Delpedro Dkk Dituntut 2 Tahun Penjara," Kompas.id, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/kasus-demo-agustus-2025-delpedro-dkk-dituntut-2-tahun-penjara.

30 Indonesia Constitution, art. 28E, para. 3 and art. 28F.

b. **Human Rights Law:** Article 23 and Article 25 of the Human Rights Law explicitly state that every citizen has the freedom to hold, express, and disseminate opinions in accordance with their conscience through oral, written, electronic, or any other media, ensuring that civil liberties are legally recognized on a statutory level.[31]

c. **Freedom to Express Opinions in Public Law:** This law serves as the specific implementing framework for public protest and assemblies. Article 5 guarantees that citizens expressing opinions in public have the right to legal protection, placing an explicit obligation on state to facilitate and protect peaceful dissent rather than criminalise it.[32]

Nevertheless, the implementation is far from perfect. We can see how this is implemented in the technology and digital sector, particularly on social media. In addition to the ITE Law, Indonesia also has enacted several regulations governing the internet, namely:

a. **GR 71/2019:** This implementing regulation of the ITE Law mandates that PSEs ensure their platforms do not contain "prohibited content" and grants the government authority to supervise and access electronic systems. There is no clear definition of prohibited content although the elucidation states that “It’s clear”.[33]

b. **MR 5/2020:** This regulation further extends GR 71/2019 obligations for PSEs to prevent their electronic system from violating the law, disturbing public order, or enabling access to illegal electronic content. In absence of clear definition of the above, MR 5/2020 requires all private ESOs to register with the government and, more critically, to take down "prohibited content" within 24 hours (or 4 hours in urgent cases) upon government request.[34]

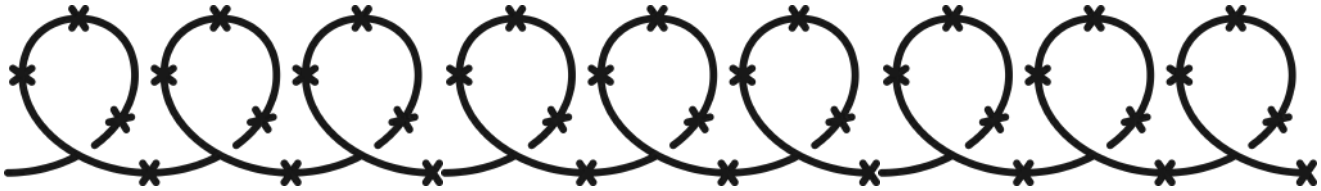
c. **GR 80/2019:** This regulation governs trade through electronic systems, impacting how social media platforms operating as "Social Commerce" (like TikTok Shop) must manage data and user interactions.[35]

As seen above. while the Constitution offers a broad shield, the ITE Law and its implementing regulations often use elastic terms like "disturbing public order" or "causing public anxiety" to justify content removal, even serving as a reason for criminal prosecutions. For example, the ITE Law has been highly controversial due to its highly elastic criminal provisions, dubbed as "rubber articles" (pasal karet).

---

31 Indonesia, Law No. 39 of 1999, arts. 23 and 25.
32 Indonesia, Law on Freedom of Expression in Public, UU No. 9 Tahun 1998, art. 5, LN No. 181 Tahun 1998, TLN No. 3789,
33 Indonesia, Government Regulation on the Implementation of Electronic Systems and Transactions, PP No. 71 Tahun 2019, LN No. 185 Tahun 2019, TLN No. 6400,
34 Indonesia, the Minister of Communication and Informatics Regulations Number 5 of 2020 on Private Electronic Systems Operators (MR 5/2020)
35 Indonesia, Government Regulation on Trading Through Electronic Systems, PP No. 80 Tahun 2019, LN No. 220 Tahun 2019, TLN No. 6420, https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt5de6396abe483/peraturan-pemerintah-nomor-80-tahun-2019/.

The ITE Laws articles regulating defamation (Article 27) and the spread of false information or hate speech (Article 28) have frequently been weaponised to criminalize Indonesian journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens expressing dissent online.[36] While the 2024 revision to the law attempted to tighten these definitions—aligning defamation more closely with the penal code and requiring it to be a specific complaint (delik aduan)—civil society groups have argued that the law still leaves too much room for subjective interpretation and state overreach, effectively chilling freedom of speech.[37]



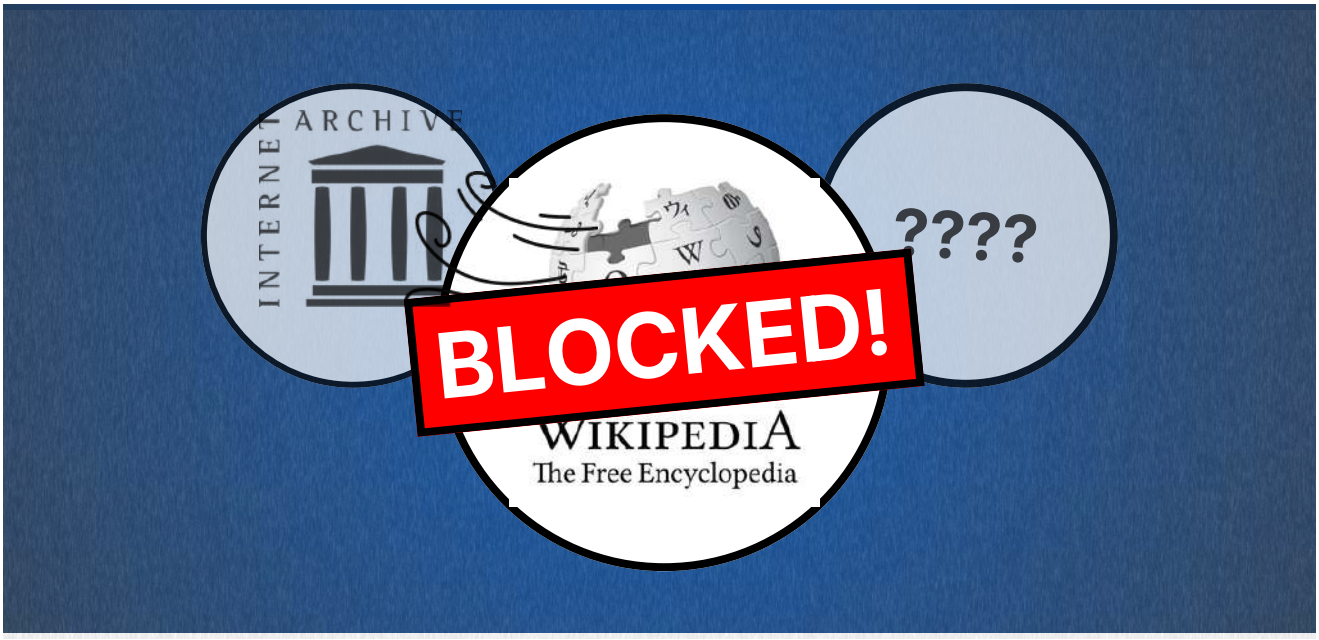
Article 28 (1) and (2) of the ITE Law are often combined with the criminal provisions in Articles 45, 45A, and 45B to silence criticism. Furthermore, the legislature, along with the government, has also added new provisions, such as Article 27A, which addresses attacks on a person's honour or reputation. Article 27B concerning the threat of pollution which also has great potential to be used as a tool to criminalize citizens.[38]

Article 28 (3) and Article 45A (3) of the ITE Law concerning false information (hoax) already have equivalents in the new Indonesian Criminal Code. This article has been identified as a potential weapon for multiple interpretations because there is no further explanation of what is meant by false information in this article. Article 28 (3) of the ITE Law states, "Any person who intentionally disseminates electronic information and/or electronic documents that he or she knows contain false information that causes unrest in society." In addition to the criminal provisions, the ITE Law still retains Article 40, which gives the government excessive authority to terminate access to information or content deemed unlawful or disruptive to public order, and that such assessment is made unilaterally.[39]

---

36 Indonesia, Law Number 11 of 2008 (as amended), arts. 27 and 28.
37 "Sejumlah Pasal Karet di UU ITE Akan Dicabut Jika KUHP Baru Berlaku," Kompas.id, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/en-sejumlah-pasal-karet-di-uu-ite-akan-dicabut-jika-kuhp-baru-berlaku.
38 Indonesia, Law Number 11 of 2008 (as amended), arts. 27A, 27B, 28, 45, 45A, and 45B.
39 Ibid, arts. 28, 40, 45

Major points of contention regarding digital rights violations stems from MR 5/2020 and its subsequent amendments. This regulation requires all PSEs—encompassing local startups to global tech giants like Google, Meta, and X—to register with the government in order to operate in Indonesia. MR 5/2020 grants the government sweeping authority to order the takedown of "prohibited content" within strict timeframes (as short as four hours for “urgent matters”). More alarmingly, the regulation requires platforms to provide law enforcement with direct access to its electronic systems and user data for criminal investigation purposes. Critics have argued that this creates a backdoor for state surveillance, severely undermines user privacy, and allows the government to bypass traditional judicial due process for data requests.[40]



A recent example of the implementation of MR 5/2020 happened to Wikimedia projects. MOCD restricted access to Wikimedia’s authentication domain (auth.wikimedia.org) in early 2026 for failing to comply with mandatory registration under MR 5/2020. While the public could still read Wikipedia articles normally, the restriction prevented Indonesian editors from logging in—effectively disabling thousands of local volunteers from creating, updating, and curating open-access knowledge across the platform.[41]

40 Indonesia, Permenkominfo No. 5 of 2020.

41 “Indonesia Threatens to Block Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons Access,” Tempo, 2026, https://en.tempo.co/read/2098753/indonesia-threatens-to-block-wikipedia-and-wikimedia-commons-acces.

2. Industry Context

We found no official industry collaboration between social media companies in general nor in specific to address issues on human rights such as forming an industry association or collaborating through a memorandum of understanding in Indonesia. Each of the platforms often respond to regulatory pressures individually rather than through a unified industry front. This can be seen during MOCD's suspension of TikTok license in early October 2025 for failing to provide a complete data related to live streaming during the protests period of 25–30 August, 2025. The data included traffic, live broadcast activity, and monetization practices suspected of being related to online gambling.[42]

TikTok shared the data after initially refusing to hand them over to the government, citing internal policies.[43] While TikTok took the hardest hit, MOCD did instruct representatives from Meta, Google, and other platforms to increase content moderation and remove protest-related content without waiting for formal requests. Despite facing identical demands and pressures, there was no strong, collective industry response observed during that period.[44] We note that this may have to do with the fact that the Indonesian operation of these social media companies is bound by their global operations supervision so actions as significant as industry collaboration in a country must be approved by management of the company at a global level.[45]

It is important to highlight that these companies generally have specific staffers that handle matters related to government and human rights such as legal, government relations, public policy, as well as trust and safety including in their Indonesian operations. Nevertheless, the situation surrounding TikTok during the August–September 2025 protests show that there is meaningful, but largely untapped, scope for industry-wide collaboration on human rights issues in Indonesia. Platforms would ideally further collaborate to advocate for a more proportional content regulations, developing collective standards for how they handle government requests for user data or content removal, and coordinating with civil society organisations to ensure that emergency state measures do not lead to systemic human rights restrictions.

---

42 Indonesia, Ministry of Communication and Digital, "Tidak Penuhi Kewajiban, Komdigi Suspend Tanda Daftar PSE TikTok," Siaran Pers, January 10, 2026, https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/detail/tidak-penuhi-kewajiban-komdigi-suspend-tanda-daftar-pse-tiktok.

43 "Pembekuan Terhadap TikTok Dicabut," Kompas.id, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/pembekuan-terhadap-tiktok-dicabut.

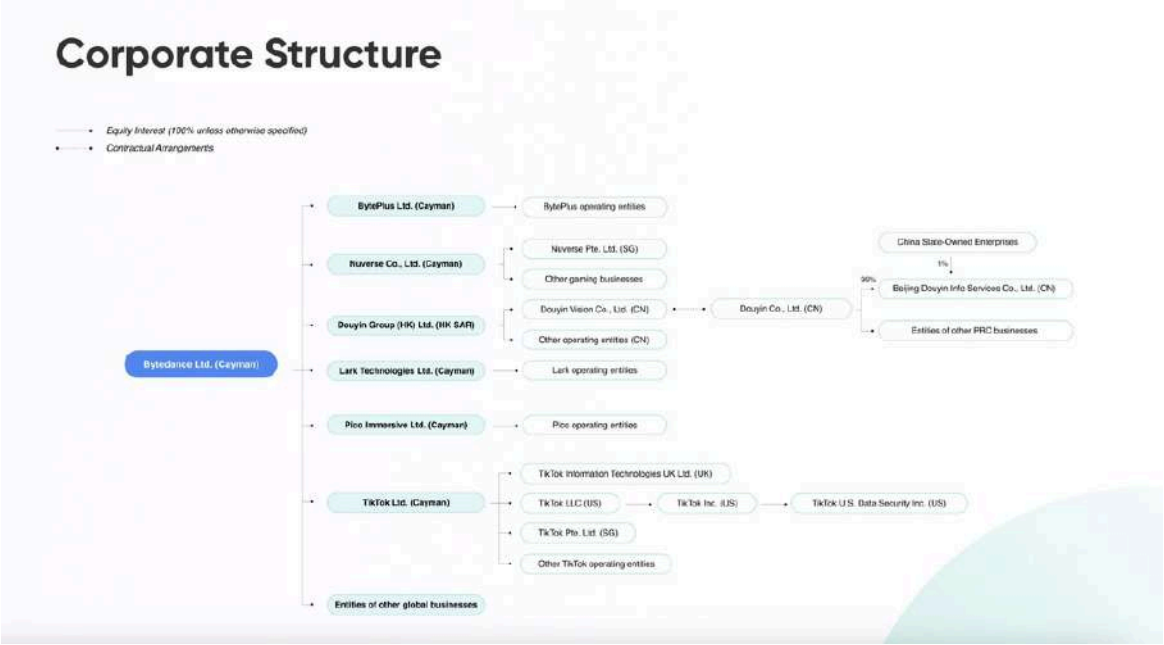
44 "Komdigi Panggil TikTok dan Meta Usai Demo 25 Agustus di DPR Ricuh Akibat Konten Fitnah," Bangbara, https://www.bangbara.com/peristiwa/36915804295/komdigi-panggil-tiktok-dan-meta-usai-demo-25-agustus-di-dpr-ricuh-akibat-konten-fitnah.

45 "Komdigi Panggil TikTok dan Meta Usai Demo 25 Agustus di DPR Ricuh Akibat Konten Fitnah," Bangbara, https://www.bangbara.com/peristiwa/36915804295/komdigi-panggil-tiktok-dan-meta-usai-demo-25-agustus-di-dpr-ricuh-akibat-konten-fitnah.

3. Company Context

TikTok is one of top five social media platforms in Indonesia with nearly 180 million users aged 18 and above in Indonesia in late 2025.[46] Other than their flagship social media, TikTok also has several other products including, among others, TikTok Shop which is integrated with Tokopedia, TikTok Ads, and TikTok for Business.[47] TikTok is known for hosting small and medium e-commerce enterprises via TikTok Shop, which created jobs for creators and advertisers alike. One assessment report estimates that TikTok Shop's gross merchandise value (GMV) in Indonesia was approximately US$13.1 billion in the end of 2025.[48]

TikTok is a subsidiary of ByteDance, a company founded by Yiming Zhang and Rubo Liang in 2012.[49] ByteDance is a privately held company, so ByteDance is generally not subject to transparency principle required under, among others, capital markets laws. The information on corporate and decision-making structure of the group companies is also not available in public records, except in certain cases such as from hearings held by U.S. Congress in 2025 and as voluntarily published by ByteDance itself such as the corporate structure of ByteDance published on its website below:



Picture 2: Bytedance Corporate Structure (Source: Bytedance Website)

46 Kemp, "Digital 2026: Indonesia."
47 Nanda Fahriza Batubara, "Peran RI di Balik Kekayaan Spektakuler Pendiri TikTok," Tirto.id, April 13, 2023, https://tirto.id/peran-ri-di-balik-kekayaan-spektakuler-pendiri-tiktok-gEE5.
48 "Indonesia Menjadi Pasar Terbesar Kedua Bagi TikTok Shop," Kompas.id, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/en-indonesia-menjadi-pasar-terbesar-kedua-bagi-tiktok-shop.
49 ByteDance, "ByteDance," accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.bytedance.com/en/.

TikTok does publish quarterly Transparency Reports detailing content removal, government requests for data, and community guideline violations[50]. However, the Transparency Reports fall short in several areas, as TikTok isn't transparent about how it promotes or demotes content using their algorithmic mechanism; it can appear as if malicious content isn't visible on TikTok.[51]

In the context of Indonesia, information on TikTok's operation in Indonesia is limited. Based on our checking, we understand that the Electronic System Organizer Registration Certificate of TikTok in Indonesia is registered under the name of TikTok Pte. Ltd.[52], a subsidiary of ByteDance registered under Singapore laws having its registered office at 1 Raffles Quay, Level 26, Singapore 048583[53]. On the DGIP website, the trademark of TikTok is registered under TikTok Ltd, which is based in Cayman Island. We did not manage to find any information on ByteDance/corporate structure in Indonesia, but it is understood that ByteDance has an office at Millenium Centennial Centre (MCC) Tower, Lantai 20, Jakarta Selatan and has at least 900 employees in Indonesia.[54]

As a global digital platform serving hundreds of millions of users, TikTok carries significant responsibilities under international human rights standards and domestic laws. These obligations gained particular salience following TikTok's voluntary suspension of the TikTok LIVE feature across Indonesia between 30 August 2025 and early September 2025.[55] The suspension which TikTok stated was undertaken on its own initiative citing safety concerns, raised serious questions about the company's respect for freedom of expression,[56] access to information, and the economic rights of MSMEs who depend on the platform for their livelihoods.[57]

---

50 TikTok, "Transparency Reports," accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/transparency/reports.

51 Center for Humane Technology, "TikTok's Transparency Problem with Marc Faddoul," Your Undivided Attention, podcast audio, March 2, 2023, https://www.humanetech.com/podcast/tiktoks-transparency-problem-with-marc-faddoul.

52 Indonesia, Ministry of Communication and Digital, "Penyelenggara Sistem Elektronik (PSE) Registration Database: TikTok," accessed July 30, 2026, https://pse.komdigi.go.id/pse.

53 Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA), "Entity Details: 201719908M," BizFile+, accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.bizfile.gov.sg/buy-info/entity-details/201719908M.

54 TikTok, "TikTok Company Page: Indonesia (Careers and Corporate Updates)," LinkedIn, accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.linkedin.com/company/tiktok/.

55 Martin Bagya Kertiyasa, "TikTok Faces Temporary Suspension Amid August Protest Probe," Jakarta Globe, October 3, 2025, https://jakartaglobe.id/tech/tiktok-faces-temporary-suspension-amid-august-protest-probe.

56 "TAPHI Nilai Pemblokiran Live Events TikTok dan Instagram Sebagai Bentuk Pengekangan Kebebasan Berekspresi," HukumID, September 1, 2025, https://hukumid.co.id/taphi-nilai-pemblokiran-live-events-tiktok-dan-instagram-sebagai-bentuk-pengekangan-kebebasan-berekspresi/.

57 Riri Rahayu and Eka Yudha Saputra, "Dampak Penonaktifan Fitur Live TikTok Bagi UMKM," Tempo.co, September 2, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/ekonomi/dampak-penonaktifan-fitur-live-tiktok-bagi-umkm-2065870.

The following analysis draws on both international frameworks and national legislation. It considers TikTok's obligations through the lens of the UNGPs, GNI Principles, the Indonesian Constitution, and other applicable laws and regulations:

Principles	Status	Obligation
UDHR	Binding; adopted by TAP-MPR No. XVII/ MPR/1998 and Law No. 39/1999	Article 19 of the UDHR establishes the universal baseline right to freedom of opinion and expression. It guarantees that individuals have the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. When a platform unilaterally shuts down communication features like live broadcasting or engages in sweeping content takedowns, it directly impacts these foundational rights to public expression and access to information.
ICCPR	Binding; ratified by Indonesia through Law No. 12/2005	Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information regardless of frontiers. The ICCPR framework mandates that any restriction on online expression—such as feature suspensions or content takedowns—must strictly meet the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality, and must not be used to suppress political dissent or public debate.
ICESCR	Binding; ratified by Indonesia through Law No. 11/2005	Article 6 of the ICESCR protects the right to work, and Article 11 of the ICESCR protects the right to an adequate standard of living. In the context of digital platforms and social commerce, this framework highlights the responsibility of platforms to ensure that abrupt, unnotified feature suspensions do not arbitrarily sever the economic lifelines, destroy the digital storefronts, or disrupt the revenues of MSMEs, affiliates, and content creators who rely on the platform for their livelihoods.
Indonesian Constitution	Binding	Article 28F of the Indonesian Constitution guarantees every person's right to communicate, obtain, and disseminate information through any available channel. Article 28G protects personal dignity and security. These constitutional rights, which bind both the state and private actors operating within the Indonesian legal order, are directly implicated by TikTok's decision to disable TikTok LIVE during the protests. Disabling TikTok's live feature removes one source of information for the public. This could violate constitutionally protected freedom of expression and access to information, and it is argued that it creates conditions conducive to the spread of disinformation by reducing the availability of eyewitness documentation.

Principles	Status	Obligation
Human Rights Law	Binding	Articles 23 and Article 25 of the Human Rights Law explicitly states that every citizen has the freedom to hold, express, and disseminate opinions in accordance with their conscience through oral, written, electronic, or any other media. TikTok's platform policies and feature suspensions must not arbitrarily infringe upon these statutory rights to civil liberty and public expression.
Freedom to Express Opinions in Public Law	Binding	Article 5 of the Freedom to Express Opinions in Public Law guarantees that citizens expressing opinions in public have the right to legal protection. While focused on physical spaces, the digital documentation and live broadcasting of these assemblies on platforms like TikTok serve as extension of this civic right. Sweeping feature bans can indirectly restrict this protected activity.
Consumer Protection Law	Binding	Consumer Protection Law protects consumers against arbitrary business practices and ensures the right to clear information, safety, and dispute settlement. Although it is worth noting that there are still debates whether electronic activities fall under the Consumer Protection Law, by unilaterally suspending TikTok LIVE without prior notice, TikTok disrupted operations for MSMEs, digital merchants, and content creators relying on the platform for monetary income, potentially violating consumer rights to transparent service provision and fair business practices.
ITE Law	Binding	TikTok must comply with prohibited content categories, and data-access obligations while ensuring over-compliance does not facilitate human rights violations. TikTok must balance regulatory compliance with safeguards for freedom of expression and due process. Article 40 of the ITE Law, particularly paragraphs (2b)-(2d), stipulates that the Government has the authority to terminate access and/or order Electronic System Operators to terminate access to Electronic Information and/or Electronic Documents containing unlawful content. The Government also has the authority to instruct Electronic System Operators to carry out content moderation in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations.

Principles	Status	Obligation
PDP Law	Binding	PDP Law requires electronic system operators to protect user data from unauthorized access or unlawful processing. In the context of government surveillance or mandatory data-access requests during periods of civil unrest, TikTok is obligated to ensure that any sharing of user data complies with strict legal thresholds and due process to protect citizens' privacy rights.
GR 71/2019	Binding	GR 71/2019 mandates that Electronic System Operators (PSEs) ensure their platforms do not contain or facilitate the dissemination of "prohibited content" and grants the government authority to supervise electronic systems. TikTok must navigate this by ensuring its compliance does not lead to over-censorship that unnecessarily harms freedom of expression.
GR 80/2019	Binding	GR 80/2019 regulates Trading Through Electronic Systems (PMSE). This impacts how social media platforms operating as "Social Commerce" (such as TikTok Shop) must manage data and user interactions. The abrupt suspension of LIVE features directly harmed the economic rights of local MSMEs and affiliates, intersecting with TikTok's regulatory obligation to support a stable digital trading environment.
MR 5/2020	Binding	MR 5/2020 requires Electronic System Operators (ESOs), including TikTok, to comply with content moderation, takedown obligations, and government data access requests. Article 13 obliges platforms to remove or disable access to content deemed unlawful within a specified timeframe, with potential administrative sanctions including blocking of services, for non-compliance. In addition, Article 21 requires ESOs to provide access to electronic systems and/or user data to government authorities and law enforcement for supervisory and law enforcement purposes.

Principles	Status	Obligation
UNGPs	Non-Binding	As a technology company operating globally, TikTok is bound by the corporate responsibility to respect human rights under Principle 2 of the UNGPs. This is the reason why we push TikTok to ongoing human rights due diligence, assessing actual and potential impacts of its products and services on users' rights, including freedom of expression and access to information. The suspension of TikTok LIVE during the August–2025 protest in Indonesia must be evaluated against Principles 11–17 of UNGP, which require companies to avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts. The absence of advance notice to affected users and SME's vendors may indicate insufficient human rights due diligence processes.
Santa Clara Principles	Non-Binding	TikTok is not a formal signatory to the Santa Clara Principles; therefore, it is not bound by its framework. However, the Santa Clara Principles serve as a widely accepted global benchmark for ensuring fairness, due process, and transparency when digital platforms moderate content or restrict user services. Under the Santa Clara framework, when a platform unilaterally restricts core features like live streaming across a region—even without an explicit government mandate—it is still expected to provide immediate, transparent explanations and clear avenues for review. TikTok's suspension of TikTok LIVE during the August 2025 protest may be characterized as a unilateral internal decision and warrants scrutiny against these fundamental standards of notice, transparency, and procedural fairness.
GNI Principles	Non-Binding	TikTok's parent company ByteDance is not a member of the Global Network Initiative (GNI); therefore, it is not formally bound by the GNI Principles. However, GNI remains a relevant international benchmark for best practices on freedom of expression and privacy. If TikTok are to align with these standards voluntarily, it would entail increasing transparency on government requests, adopting rights-based content moderation policies, and enhancing due diligence to prevent overreach or censorship. Under the GNI framework, when companies voluntarily restrict platform features, even in the absence of an explicit government order, they are still expected to ensure such decisions are necessary, proportionate, and transparently communicated. TikTok's suspension of TikTok LIVE during the August 2025 protest, characterised as a unilateral internal decision, warrants scrutiny against these principles of necessity and proportionality.

Principles	Status	Obligation
Investment Agreement	**Binding**	We do not have data nor access to the investment agreement entered into by TikTok and its investors. Investors may impose environmental, social, and governance (ESG), transparency, child-safety, and human rights due diligence expectations. TikTok is obligated to maintain responsible practices to meet investor commitments and international norms. Any noncompliance with investors' rules may, depending on its applicability, result in default in parts of Tiktok.
Community Guidelines	**Binding**	TikTok must ensure safety, privacy, non-discrimination, access to remedy, and clear/consistent enforcement of community guidelines. TikTok must ensure users' rights are respected, especially vulnerable groups such as children, women, minorities, and human rights defenders.

CHAPTER IV

IMPACT ANALYSIS

1. Power & Policy: How Policy Shapes the Users' Experience

As the world becomes increasingly digitally connected, tech companies and governments have the power to impact people's lives through collection of users' data and control of users' access to information. Naturally, users have rising concerns over how these companies' products, services, and decisions impact their daily lives and protection of their human rights.[58]

Principle 1 of the UNGPs stipulated that state as the duty bearer must protect against human rights abuse within their territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including business enterprises. This requires taking appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication.[59]

Alviani Sabilah (Fani) from PSHK noted that the policies since the early period of the Prabowo Subianto's presidency—including the free nutritious meals program (MBG)—have likely affected Indonesia's broader economic and investment climate. While the government has pursued efficiency measures in some ministries, high-cost programs funded through the state budget have continued unabated. This absence of sensitivity to public economic hardship may indirectly affect platforms such as TikTok to strengthen content moderation and the restriction of certain content.[60] This is confirmed by our respondents who noted that "it actually shows even more how the state is afraid of the truth being revealed. Why does the state bother doing this when there are more important things to do".[61]

In specifics, freedom of expression and the right to information are recognised under Article 19 of the ICCPR, which guarantees the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds regardless of frontiers. These rights are derogable rights and while restrictions may be imposed, they must meet the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality, and must pursue a legitimate aim such as the protection of the rights of others, national security, public order, public health, or public morals. The UN Human Rights Committee has emphasised that any restriction on online expression should be narrowly defined and should not be used to suppress criticism, dissent, political participation, or public debate. Therefore, states must ensure that laws regulating digital platforms and online content remain consistent with their obligations under human rights principles.[62]

---

58 CLARITI, "Community-led Assessment of Rights in the Tech Industry," accessed July 30, 2026, https://claritihria.net/.
59 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principle 1.
60 Alviani Sabilah (Researcher, Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat / PSHK), interview by the author, online, May 14, 2026.
61 Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet), online surveys conducted from October 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.
62 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, Art. 19; U.N. Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34: Article 19 (Freedoms of opinion and expression), 21–35, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/34 (Sept. 12, 2011).

In addition, the UNGPs further clarified that states have a duty to protect individuals from human rights abuses committed by third parties, including technology companies. Under Principle 1 of the UNGPs, states are expected to establish and enforce an effective legal and regulatory framework that prevents businesses from infringing upon human rights, while also ensuring access to remedy when violations occur. In the digital environment, this responsibility includes adopting rights-respecting regulations governing data protection, content moderation, surveillance practices, and platform accountability. States should also ensure that measures aimed at addressing harmful online content do not result in disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression or access to information, and that any interventions are transparent, accountable, and subject to independent oversight.[63]

Government censorship could take at least three different forms including, among others, laws/ regulations restricting content in a country, usually with penalties for non-compliance. Such measures often require digital platforms, internet service providers, or individual users to comply with government directives regarding content moderation, removal, or blocking, with penalties imposed for non-compliance. While states may regulate certain forms of expression to pursue legitimate aims recognised under international human rights law, overly broad or vaguely defined restrictions can create significant risks for freedom of expression and access to information. In practice, content regulation frameworks may lead to the removal of lawful speech, encourage self-censorship among users and platforms, and reduce transparency and accountability in decisions affecting online expression.[64]

In the case of protecting individual human rights in digital spheres, Indonesia seems to be on the wrong track.

The August 2025 protests can be understood not only as a platform moderation decision, but also as a response to Indonesia's increasingly restrictive digital regulatory environment. Since the enactment of the ITE Law, the Indonesian government, both in executive and legislative aisle, has enacted and continues to maintain regulations that erode not only digital rights of its citizens but also interfering with business actor capabilities in fulfilling, protecting, and respecting the human rights of its users and consumers. This is shown from the score of Indonesia in several freedom indexes which have declined over the last few years.[65]

63 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principle 1.
64 CLARITI, "Phase 5.3."
65 "On the State of Digital Authoritarianism in Indonesia," New Naratif, accessed July 30, 2026, https://newnaratif.com/on-the-state-of-digital-authoritarianism-in-indonesia/

Participants of our focus discussion group emphasise that existing legal frameworks such as the ITE Law, PDP Law, GR 71/2019, and MR 5/2020 provide only broad obligations for platform governance but fail to establish justification on procedural governance that becomes the basis of content moderation, feature restrictions, transparency obligations, or users' rights to appeal. One participant noted that these regulations contain broad and ambiguously defined provisions that are susceptible to multiple interpretations, creating legal uncertainty for both platforms and users. Consequently, platforms retain considerable discretion when implementing content moderation measures without being required to disclose the rationale or proportionality of their actions.[66]

We can see an example of this in MR 5/2020 implementation, which creates strong legal and political pressure on digital platforms to proactively moderate, limit, or remove content that could be interpreted as disturbing public order or violating Indonesian law. One of the most consequential provisions is Article 9 (3) of MR 5/2020, which requires PSEs to ensure that their platforms do not contain or facilitate the dissemination of prohibited electronic information.

Article 9 (4)b of MR 5/2020 further expands this requirement by including content considered "disturbing to the public" ("meresahkan masyarakat") or "disrupting public order" ("mengganggu ketertiban umum") which is too broad and lacks clear legal definitions, creating uncertainty for platforms operating in Indonesia.[67]

This ambiguity matters because TikTok, as a PSE dependent on regulatory approval to operate in Indonesia, may choose to over-comply rather than risk being sanctioned. Under Article 13 of MR 5/2020, platforms are required take down prohibited content, while Article 15 allows the government to order removals within 24 hours or within 4 hours in urgent cases related to public unrest or public order concerns. Failure to comply may result in access blocking or administrative sanctions.[68] This is directly at odds with the provisions of Article 2 of the UNGPs, which require states to clearly set out the expectation that all business enterprises domiciled in their territory and/or jurisdiction respect human rights throughout their operations.[69]

---

66 Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet), "Focus Group Discussion on Suspension of TikTok LIVE and Content Moderations" (FGD, Online, 5 December 2026).
67 MR 5/2020, Arts. 9(3), 9(4)(b).
68 Ibid, Arts. 13, 15.
69 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principle 2.

The failure to enforce existing laws that directly or indirectly regulate business respect for human rights is often a significant legal gap in state practice. In practice, regulations like this can incentivize platforms to adopt preventive moderation strategies during politically sensitive moments, including major protests. Instead of evaluating content individually, platforms may temporarily disable interactive features such as LIVE streaming to minimize regulatory risk. From a platform governance perspective, this is often framed as a "risk mitigation" measure. However, from a digital rights perspective, it raises concerns about disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information.[70]

The impact on users is significant. TikTok LIVE is not only an entertainment feature; during protests, it also functions as a tool for real-time documentation, citizen journalism, public witnessing, and community coordination. Restricting LIVE access during protests can reduce public visibility into events happening on the ground and may disproportionately affect activists, journalists, and ordinary users attempting to share information in real time. This creates an adverse effect, where users become uncertain about what kinds of speech or political expression are considered "safe" online.[71]

Civil society organisations such as SAFEnet, have argued that MR 5/2020 contains provisions that are vulnerable to abuse because of vague terminology and broad takedown powers. Concerns particularly focus on how undefined concepts like "public order" can be interpreted expansively, enabling pressure on platforms to restrict lawful expression. The broader issue here is that platform governance is increasingly shaped by governmental regulation. When laws create heavy penalties and broad compliance obligations, platforms may prioritize their survival over the rights of their users. As a result, policy decisions made at the governmental level can directly shape the digital experiences, speech opportunities, and civic participation of millions of users online.[72]

---

70 Ibid
71 Ibid
72 "SAFEnet Minta Pemerintah Batalkan Permenkominfo PSE Lingkup Privat," Hukumonline, accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/a/safenet-minta-pemerintah-batalkan-permenkominfo-pse-lingkup-privat-lt60acae65177b6/.

Even though the decision to shut down TikTok LIVE and takedown contents made by TikTok, Fani emphasised that the wave of protests that occurred over several days in August 2025 is the culmination of accumulated public anger toward government and parliamentary policy choices.

This anger was rooted in ongoing economic hardship—particularly difficulties faced by young people in accessing employment—compounded by public officials' conspicuous displays of privilege. Fani specifically referenced public statements made by politicians such as Ahmad Sahroni during that period as emblematic of this dynamic. The absence of any serious government or legislative response—or even a basic expression of empathy toward the economic difficulties faced by the public—was identified as a further contributing factor to the escalation.[73]

Further, Fani suggested that the Indonesian government's disregard for public economic struggles indirectly impacts platforms like TikTok, while behind-the-scenes pressure from the MOCD to restrict content raises serious concerns about state censorship. This occurs because there is no framework obligating the government or platforms to explain or justify content restrictions, nor any statute that substantively regulates platforms themselves, leaving any real rules for platforms or protections for users entirely up to weaker, lower-level ministerial regulations.[74]

In other hand, Nurul Izmi (Izmi) from ELSAM viewed the August 2025 protests as a reactive response to lawmaking practices that, in the view of protesters, failed to meaningfully consider their social and economic impacts.

Izmi identified the death of Affan Kurniawan as a turning point that significantly escalated public outrage. During the protests, many Indonesian relied on TikTok LIVE to document events in real time and disseminate information to the broader public. However, as tensions escalated, TikTok suspended its LIVE feature in Indonesia. According to Izmi, this decision followed a meeting between TikTok and MOCD, after which TikTok stated that the suspension was implemented voluntarily to protect users from harmful content.[75]

---

73 Alviani Sabilah, interview.
74 Ibid
75 Nurul Izmi (Researcher, ELSAM), interview by the author, online, April 28, 2026.

Respondents of our surveys felt the same. One respondent said that "...with these restrictions on TikTok, in my opinion, it actually shows even more how the state is afraid of the truth being revealed. Why does the state bother doing this when there are more important things to do!".

Another respondent speaks the truth when she says that "...even though this policy has a good intention, which is to prevent hoaxes from spreading and causing greater chaos, the public will also lack information regarding the actual conditions, and this also impacts the declining sales of MSMEs". Another said that "The government can only close access so the problem doesn't get bigger, rather than actually solving the problem." [76]

Principle 8-10 of UNGP recommends states to ensure policy coherence when pursuing business-related policy so it can meet and promote business actors to comply with its human rights obligations.[77] The MOHR is currently rolling out an initiative to ratify a government regulation on implementation of assessment of business actor compliance on business and human rights. Under the incoming government regulation, the MOHR categorizes the obligations of the companies to fulfil human rights impact analysis from the MOHR into mandatory and non-mandatory. One of the criteria is companies with more than 2,000 employees must carry out the impact analysis.[78] The MOHR has put out several materials regarding the including government regulation including "Penilaian Risiko Bisnis dan HAM" (PRISMA), a self-assessment to help business actors analyse suspected risks of human rights violations caused by business activities.[79]

The incoming government regulation is a step in right direction, but the main challenge lies within the government itself, which continues to pass laws and policies that directly undermine digital and human rights, creating a gap in policy coherence and leaving business actors caught between competing state signals. An assessment from PSHK shows that this issue stems from systemic flaws: central and regional legislative planning is completely disconnected from national development goals, a wave of "hyper-regulation" has emerged as new laws constantly drift from their intended purpose, and weak execution paralyzes these frameworks because the state lacks monitoring procedures and a centralized agency to oversee the legal system.[80]

---

76 SAFEnet, online surveys.

77 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principles 8–10.

78 "Raperpres Bisnis dan HAM Atur Penilaian Kepatuhan Perusahaan Berdasarkan Uji Tuntas HAM," Hukumonline, accessed July 30, 2026, https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/a/rperpres-bisnis-dan-ham-atur-penilaian-kepatuhan-perusahaan-berdasarkan-uji-tuntas-ham-lt6a1f96545ad60/?page=all.

79 Ministry of Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, "Penilaian Risiko Bisnis dan HAM (PRISMA)," accessed July 30, 2026, https://prisma.kemenham.go.id/.

80 Diani Sadiawati et al., Kajian Reformasi Regulasi di Indonesia: Pokok Permasalahan dan Strategi Penanganannya (Jakarta: Pusat Studi Hukum dan Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK) and Bappenas, 2019), 1–10, https://pshk.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PSHK_KAJIAN-REFORMASI-REGULASI-DI-INDONESIA.pdf.

It remains to be seen how the incoming government regulation will factor into government policies. However, without coherent policies, a company could perfectly fulfil its human rights impact analysis under the incoming government regulation, yet still find itself violating human rights enforced by an entirely different branch of government. This lack of legal predictability ultimately defeats the core purpose of a state duty to protect, transforming what should be a robust human rights safeguard into an administrative compliance trap.[81]

Under Principle 2 of the UNGP, TikTok has an independent responsibility to respect human rights regardless of whether states fulfil their own obligations. This responsibility requires TikTok to avoid causing, contributing to, or being directly linked to adverse human rights impacts through its operations, products, services, or business relationships. This means TikTok should conduct ongoing human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how its content moderation policies, algorithmic systems, and responses to government requests may affect users' rights to freedom of expression, access to information, privacy, and participation in public affairs. Compliance with domestic regulations alone is insufficient if such compliance results in foreseeable human rights harms.[82]

From a business perspective, complying with government requests to restrict content or limit LIVE features during politically sensitive events may provide short-term regulatory benefits for TikTok, including maintaining its operating license, avoiding sanctions, and preserving its access to the Indonesian market. However, such actions may also generate significant business risks. Restrictive moderation practices can undermine user trust, damage the platform's reputation as a space for expression and information sharing, reduce user engagement, and expose the company to criticism from civil society, investors, and international human rights bodies. Under the UNGPs, these reputational and operational risks are closely linked to human rights risks, as business sustainability increasingly depends on demonstrating respect for users' fundamental rights and maintaining public confidence in platform governance.[83]

The Indonesian government, as the primary duty bearer under international human rights law, should strengthen policy coherence across ministries and regulatory bodies. This includes revising provisions within MR 5/2020 and related regulations that rely on vague concepts such as "public order" without clear safeguards against arbitrary interpretation. The government should ensure that any content restriction measures meet the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality under the ICCPR; establish independent oversight mechanisms for content-removal and platform-restriction requests; improve transparency regarding government interventions affecting online expression; and incorporate mandatory human rights assessments into the development of digital governance policies.

81 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principle 8.
82 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principles 11–13.
83 Ibid

Rather than incentivizing platforms to over-comply through broad liability and sanction frameworks, regulatory approaches should create an environment where companies can simultaneously comply with national law and uphold their responsibilities to respect human rights.[84]

At the same time, TikTok should adopt a rights-respecting approach that goes beyond minimum legal compliance. First, the company should publish detailed transparency reports regarding government requests to remove content, restrict accounts, or limit platform functionalities, including LIVE streaming. Second, TikTok should conduct and publish human rights impact assessments before implementing large-scale moderation measures that may affect political expression, public-interest reporting, or civic participation. Third, any restrictions should be narrowly tailored, necessary, proportionate, and time-bound, consistent with Article 19 of the ICCPR and other relevant international human rights standards. Fourth, users should receive clear notice when content or features are restricted, accompanied by meaningful explanations and accessible appeal mechanisms. Finally, TikTok should engage regularly with civil society organizations, journalists, digital rights advocates, and affected communities to evaluate the human rights consequences of its policies and moderation practices.[85]

The focus group discussion also highlighted the importance of incorporating internationally recognised human rights principles into Indonesia's digital governance framework. Participants repeatedly referred to transparency, accountability, procedural fairness, due diligence, and effective remedy as fundamental safeguards that should govern platform decision-making. Several participants suggested that Indonesia could draw lessons from international regulatory frameworks, particularly the European Union's Digital Services Act and General Data Protection Regulation. However, participants cautioned that legal reform alone would be insufficient unless accompanied by implementation guidelines, institutional capacity building, and consistent enforcement practices.[86]

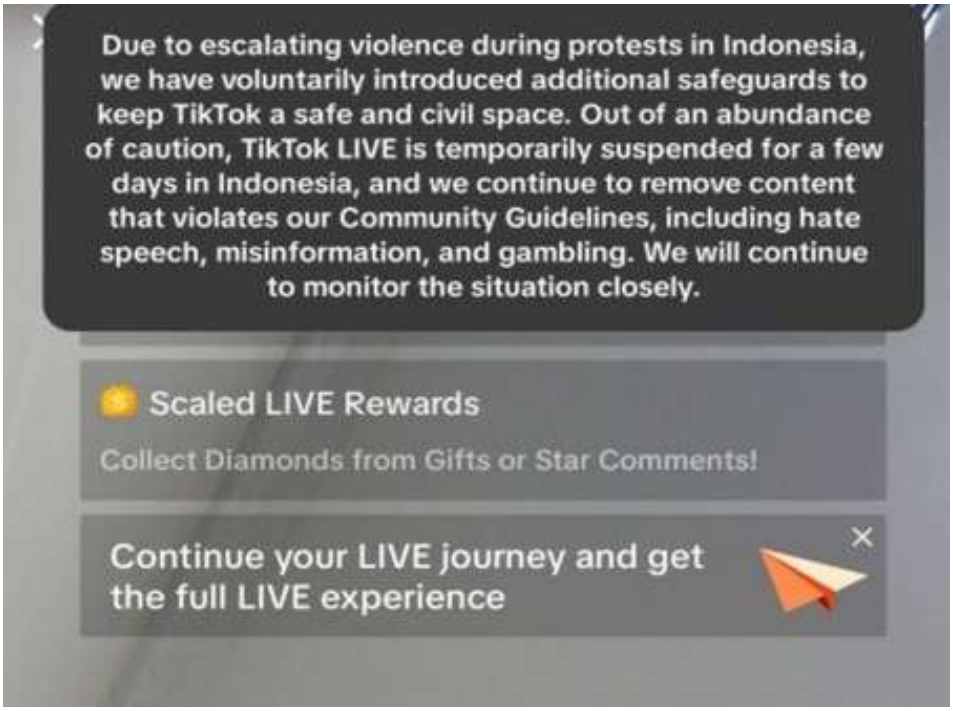
One of the recommendations from our focus discussion group is the adoption of a co-regulatory governance model. The Indonesian government sets the minimum standard while TikTok adopts policies developed through meaningful consultation with civil society, academics, media organisations, and other relevant stakeholders. Participants stressed that TikTok's very own Community Guidelines should continue to play an important operational role but should be aligned with human rights standards and supported by independent oversight mechanisms that ensure accountability without unnecessarily restricting legitimate expression.[87]

84 Ibid
85 Ibid
86 SAFEnet, "Focus Group Discussion."
87 Ibid

Participants stressed that passing new laws is not enough; both the government and tech companies need to genuinely build a culture that respects human rights. In alignment with the UNGPs, platforms must carefully check how their content moderation impacts free speech and access to information. To achieve this, civil society, the media, researchers, and platforms should team up to create fair and transparent rules for Indonesia. Ultimately, the main problem is not that platforms have the power to moderate content, but that they currently do it in the dark—without clear rules, independent oversight, or safeguards to protect users' rights.[88]

2. Grey Box: Analysing Platform Accountability Under Pressure

TikTok announced its suspension of TikTok LIVE and removal of content that violates its Community Guidelines in Indonesia on Saturday, 30 August 2025. The announcement reads as follows:



Picture 3: Notifications from Tiktok that the Live Stream feature has been suspended for a few days

TikTok also issued a statement to the media with the same tone as those shown in the app, but we found no further statements nor any materials from TikTok on the suspension of TikTok LIVE during 30 August 2025 on its website or apps.[89] TikTok's statement to us also has a similar tone as above. Detailed statement from TikTok based on our engagement is set out in Phase 5 of this assessment.

88 Ibid

89 KumparanNEWS, "TikTok Tangguhkan Fitur Live, Agar Ruang Tetap Aman dan Beradab," Kumparan, August 30, 2025, https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/tiktok-tangguhkan-fitur-live-agar-ruang-tetap-aman-dan-beradab-25l52vbcri0/full.

We then refer to TikTok's Community Guidelines to get a better understanding on what's allowed and what's not allowed on TikTok. TikTok divided the Community Guidelines into sections violent and criminal behaviour, hate speech and hateful behaviour, sexual abuse, and others. According to its Community Guidelines, TikTok may take content moderation measures by removing contents, age-restrict contents, "for your feed standards", and safety toolkit users can use independently.[90] TikTok stated that they approach the decision on trusted guidance, including: (i) internationally recognized global human rights standards; (ii) feedback from community and advisory councils; (iii) input from experts in online safety, public health, and related fields.[91]

In this regard, it is difficult to further analyze the provisions of the Community Guidelines because TikTok does not specify what they meant by *"...escalating violence during protest in Indonesia,"*. This is an important point since TikTok's Community Guidelines divide what is allowed and not allowed on TikTok based on the above categories.[92] We have mapped out several incidents that may likely have prompted TikTok to impose a ban on TikTok LIVE, namely:

1. **Affan Kurniawan Incident:** During the height of the protests, an online motorcycle taxi driver named Affan Kurniawan was struck and killed by a police tactical vehicle that fled the scene in Pejompongan, Central Jakarta. The incident caused outrage across Indonesian social media. Real-time footage and highly emotional streams showing his death spread on TikTok, rapidly accelerating public anger.[93]

2. **Looting of Ahmad Sahroni's Residence:** As part of the the protests, a mob targeted and heavily looted the private residence of lawmaker Ahmad Sahroni in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta, causing roughly IDR80 billion in damages. The entire raid—from breaking down the doors to stealing luxury assets—was broadcasted live by rioters and onlookers alike directly onto TikTok LIVE.[94]

3. **Unfiltered Riot Broadcasting and Gift Monetization:** During the height of the protests, many users discovered they could bypass standard algorithmic keyword filters by simply pointing their phone cameras at protests. Furthermore, users began heavily exploiting TikTok's "Virtual Gifting" system, therefore giving them an opportunity to monetize live streams of active violence. Some users actively incited crowds to throw rocks or breach barricades live on camera to entice viewers into giving them digital gifts that could be converted into cash.[95]

---

90 TikTok, "Policies and Engagement: Overview," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/overview.

91 TikTok, "Community Principles," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/community-principles.

92 TikTok, "Policies and Engagement."

93 "Bagaimana Insiden Tewasnya Affan Kurniawan hingga Memicu Amuk Massa di Banyak Daerah," Kompas, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/bagaimana-insiden-tewasnya-affan-kurniawan-hingga-memicu-amuk-massa-di-banyak-daerah.

94 Baban Gandapurnama, "Ringkasan Kejadian Rumah Ahmad Sahroni Dijarah Massa di Tanjung Priok," detikJabar, August 30, 2025, https://www.detik.com/jabar/berita/d-8088276/ringkasan-kejadian-rumah-ahmad-sahroni-dijarah-massa-di-tanjung-priok.

95 Rafiq Rasya Bintaher and Devi Wening Astari, "Polarisasi Politik Gen Z pada Aksi Demonstrasi Agustus 2025 Melalui Sosial Media TikTok," Jurnal ISO: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora 6, no. 2 (2026): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.53697/iso.v6i2.4030.

Based on the above, we note that the TikTok LIVE streaming of the looting of Ahmad Sahroni's residence can be categorized as "Promoting theft or the destruction of property". Regarding the third point, subsequent meetings with TikTok representatives resulted in the restriction of live broadcasts and content related to the protests. This decision was driven by indications that violent content was being disseminated; specifically, material promoting the burning of tyres in public areas and calls for arson.[96]

Our analysis above shows that TikTok did have several arguments to enforce its Community Guidelines. Nevertheless, TikTok actions still have real impacts on its users, especially when we analyse them from the human rights impact analysis method i.e., a process of identifying the actual or potential impact of a company's activities on human rights.[97] Principle 11 of the UNGP requires business enterprises to respect human rights which exists independently of states' abilities and/or willingness to fulfil their own human rights obligations, and does not diminish those obligations, and "it exists over and above compliance with national laws and regulations protecting human rights.[98]

Participants in our focus group discussion agreed that, while TikTok has the right to make and enforce its own rules, including the Community Guidelines, the participants stressed that these decisions must be fair, transparent, and respect international human rights. TikTok consistently maintained that the restriction was implemented voluntarily, yet failed to provide any clear explanation regarding the legal basis, internal decision-making process, risk assessment, or specific Community Guidelines that justified the measure. This generated widespread speculation among civil society organisations, media practitioners, and users regarding whether the restriction was genuinely voluntary or influenced by informal government pressure following public statements and meetings involving Indonesian authorities. In the absence of conclusive evidence, they agreed that the absence of transparency significantly undermined public trust in both the platform and public institutions.[99]

Izmi questioned TikTok's approach to platform liability, noting that an ongoing assessment by ELSAM examines how authoritarian governance influences platform decision-making and shapes corporate accountability for content moderation. In discussing the suspension of TikTok LIVE during the protest, Izmi referred to the distinction between primary liability and secondary liability. Under the primary liability model, a platform bears direct responsibility when it creates, disseminates, or profits from unlawful content. By contrast, secondary liability arises when unlawful or harmful content is generated by users and the platform fails to take appropriate action despite having knowledge of the content. According to the interviewee, most existing platform accountability frameworks, including those applied to TikTok, generally operate under a secondary liability model.[100]

96 TikTok, "Safety and Civility," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/safety-civility.

97 Oxfam International, Oxfam Guide: Human Rights Impact Assessment Framework (Oxford: Oxfam International, May 2023), https://www.oxfam.org.

98 United Nations, Guiding Principles, Principle 11.

99 SAFEnet, "Focus Group Discussion."

100 Nurul Izmi, interview.

We noted that TikTok's statements frame the suspension entirely as a self-initiated decision. Yet, this claim is suspicious because of massive regulatory pressure, including obligations under MR 5/2020, which requires platforms to provide requested data within short statutory windows—as little as four hours in urgent cases, and no more than seven days otherwise.

Fani noted that, without the transparency from TikTok, TikTok's own characterisation of the suspension—as both "voluntary" and grounded in "additional safety measures"—warrants critical examination, and that TikTok should be asked to substantiate both claims. This is important because TikTok's features not only used by citizens reporting on real-time protest conditions, but also by a large number of MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) and businesses that rely on it as a livelihood tool.[101]

61.6% of our respondents said that they were impacted by the suspension of TikTok LIVE and/or the content moderation measures taken by TikTok. More than 50% of our respondents said that TikTok offered no advance notice to users before the feature was disabled on 30 August 2025. In this regard, we note that there are 2 (two) major responses we are getting from our respondents:[102]

a. Loss of Source of Information

50.9% of our respondents said that they lost their sources of information about the August 2025 protests due to TikTok LIVE's shutdown. Some of them have real impacts in real life. One of the respondents said that she was having difficulty monitoring their friends who joined the street protests. The other said that she had difficulty obtaining live and real-time information about the situation on the road around her area. Others were unable to access certain content, had difficulty communicating between users, and experienced loss of information.[103]

Izmi argued that the suspension had implications beyond content moderation. TikTok has become an important channel for real-time communication, documentation, and public access to information. Consequently, restricting the LIVE feature potentially interfered with the exercise of civil and political rights, particularly the rights to freedom of expression and access to information. Izmi further highlighted the potential spillover effect of such platform interventions: when digital platforms unilaterally restrict core functionalities during moments of significant public interest, these decisions may extend beyond limiting a specific service and instead reduce the public's ability to seek, receive, and impart information. This, in turn, can weaken civic participation and diminish the role of digital platforms as spaces for documenting and scrutinizing events of public importance.[104]

101 Alviani Sabilah, interview.
102 SAFEnet, online surveys.
103 Ibid
104 Nurul Izmi, interview.

One respondent explained that "...I lost a source of actual information, especially during the protests yesterday. I often look for information about protest locations in my city so I don't get trapped in the protest when I have to go out". Another noted that "*...made it difficult for me to get information. Even though I wanted to see and make sure my friends who joined the protest were fine or safe, this restriction was very burdensome.*". Respondent also said that "*... hindrance of information that I should have known by watching people's live [streams] showing the conditions during the protest yesterday.*"[105]

We note similar tones from other respondents saying that the content moderation impacts how they get information because of a sudden increase of bizarre direct messages, irrelevant bot comments, and ambiguous advertisements that contaminated the digital landscape and felt like targeted traps, eroding the organic neutrality of their feeds. This is a warning for TikTok. Study finds that Gen Z prefers Instagram and TikTok as search engines for local results and everyday recommendations, and drastic measures as significant as suspension of features and excessive content moderation can be perceived as instability which leads to bad experience for customers.[106]

b. Loss of Source of Income

25.0% of our respondents said that the TikTok actions affect their livelihood. We note that multiple respondents complained that the suspension of TikTok LIVE has significant impact for them as a business owner or content creators including halt in their daily operations, noting that a complete cutoff of live functions for just a few days caused their income to vanish and their sales targets to fail because they rely heavily on the high viewer engagement, real-time algorithms, and shopping promos unique to the platform to market their goods and services, the sudden restriction crushed their visibility and client bookings even after the features was restored.[107]

One respondent noted that "*I work in a company using an affiliate system and use the TikTok platform as our main source for live streaming. During that incident, we lost our income so our usual sales targets were not met. Then, I also had difficulty getting information because I often watch educational content creators on live streaming.*". The other said that "*It was highly impactful for me and my team working as content creators, especially since we use the live feature where our work completely stopped for a few days... We had zero income for 3 days. I can't imagine other creators whose main income is from live [streaming]... our field of work also suffered losses.*"[108]

---

106 Ibid

107 Shep Hyken, "The Shocking Financial Impact of Bad Customer Service: $3 Trillion," Forbes, December 26, 2025, https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2025/12/26/the-shocking-financial-impact-of-bad-customer-service-3-trillion/.

108 SAFEnet, online surveys.

In this regard, Izmi stated that TikTok LIVE serves as a source of income by enabling creators and small businesses to reach consumers and conduct commercial activities. Consequently, restricting access to the feature may reduce users' earnings while simultaneously limiting consumer access to their products or services. This illustrates the interdependence of human rights, as restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information can also produce significant economic consequences. Izmi therefore argued that platform moderation should not rely solely on a risk-based approach focused on preventing harm, but should also adopt a rights-based approach that considers the broader impacts of enforcement decisions on the full range of human rights.[109]

Further, study finds that the most valuable publicly listed companies in the world today share a common trait: they are platform businesses—that is, they bring together different market actors in order to distribute or exchange products, services, or information.[110] TikTok, on one hand, creates massive doors for ordinary people to generate incomes, but also function as hyper-centralized, private governing bodies that have effectively privatized the public sphere and rewritten the rules of social, political, and economic interaction. TikTok business models lock users and businesses into algorithms, especially if they want to access users' attention and the most valuable personal data if users want to make money through TikTok.[111]

If there is anything worth noting from the August 2025 protests, it is that TikTok can kill and switch off people's source of information and source of income in an instant, even though there are external applicable laws and regulations as well as internal policies in place. The process is, of course, more complex than that. Nevertheless, TikTok and other big tech companies do have the power to do that. This is apparent from one of TikTok's community principles, as follows[112]:

> **"In rare and exceptional situations—such as crises or moments of social unrest—we may adjust our usual enforcement or rules to protect our community and address emerging harms, while remaining guided by our principles."**

109 Nurul Izmi, interview.

110 MIT Sloan School of Management, "Bigger, but Some Platforms Get More Money Than They Lose," MIT Sloan Experts, accessed July 31, 2026, https://mitsloan.mit.edu/experts/bigger-some-platforms-get-more-money-they-lose.

111 Margarida Silva, How Tech Billionaires Are Killing Internet for All with Monopoly Power (Amsterdam: Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen [SOMO], January 17, 2024), https://www.somo.nl/how-tech-billionaires-are-killing-internet-for-all/.

112 TikTok, "Community Principles."

This clause negates other guidelines TikTok has when it is imposed. This clause is similar to a "force majeure" which is a condition that prevents one of the parties from fulfilling its performance after the parties make an agreement. The above clause is not as we did not find any explicit clause regulating force majeure in TikTok. However, we note similarity between TikTok actions in the August 2025 protests and the above clause, although we did not find any evidence that TikTok used this clause when carrying out suspension of TikTok LIVE and excessive content moderations.[113]

Nevertheless, the August 2025 protests exposed a structural gap in TikTok's Community Guidelines. The suspension of TikTok LIVE was implemented with no published criteria. TikTok's appeal mechanism is specifically designed for individual content violations — users are notified when their specific video or account is penalised, and can appeal that specific decision. However, the LIVE suspension was a platform-wide restriction affecting all Indonesian users — regardless of individual conduct. TikTok only provides an appeal pathway for individual account bans, content removals, or restrictions — not for feature-wide suspensions affecting entire national user bases.[114]

Taking the example of content moderation: TikTok uses the combination of automation and human review to carry out its algorithm and content moderation. It works well until system errors cause harmful, mistaken suspensions during public crises. For instance, shortly after the August 2025 protest, TikTok's automated sweeps accidentally locked out the accounts of legal aid providers LBH Pekanbaru and LBH Jakarta without warning or a way to appeal. Based on our informal conversation with a TikTok representative in Indonesia, they claimed that the account was flagged by automated process. TikTok restored both accounts within 48 hours, following direct intervention and communication by SAFEnet.[115]

Participants of our focus discussion group identified substantial inconsistencies in the implementation and enforcement of TikTok's Community Guidelines. Among the cases discussed during the focus discussion group demonstrated that different users received markedly different outcomes despite experiencing similar moderation actions. For example, mainstream media outlets were able to restore their accounts after submitting informal appeals through personal contacts within TikTok, while independent media organizations experiencing similar restrictions were unable to obtain any effective remedy. Participants further observed that TikTok frequently provides only generic references to violations of its Community Guidelines without specifying which provisions have allegedly been violated or explaining the reasoning behind moderation decisions. This opacity prevents users from understanding, challenging, or correcting platform decisions and ultimately weakens procedural fairness.[116]

---

113 Adco Law, "Force Majeure: Reason for Non-Performance," Adco Law Insights, accessed July 31, 2026, https://adcolaw.com/blog/force-majeure-reason-for-non-performance/.

114 TikTok, "Enforcement," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/enforcement.

115 "Akun TikTok LBH Jakarta Diblokir," CNN Indonesia, September 4, 2025, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20250904172619-20-1270246/akun-tiktok-lbh-jakarta-diblokir.

116 SAFEnet, "Focus Group Discussion."

The discussion further highlighted concerns regarding the lack of standardised appeal mechanisms. Participants emphasised that users are generally unaware of formal procedures for contesting moderation decisions, applicable timelines for review, or the criteria used in appeal assessments.

Instead, successful appeals appeared to depend largely on informal communication channels or existing institutional relationships with platform representatives. Such practices were considered incompatible with principles of equal treatment and effective remedy, as ordinary users are placed at a structural disadvantage compared to institutional actors with privileged access to platform personnel.[117]

To address this, digital platforms must align their internal processes with established frameworks—including the UNGPs, Santa Clara Principles, and GNI Principles—to weave comprehensive human rights into every stage of product design, feature management, and content moderation. Guided by these principles, platforms can ensure that product changes, algorithmic operations, and content decisions only restrict features, remove content, or freeze accounts when there is high confidence in their necessity and accuracy, completely abandoning flawed, platform-wide sweeps and abrupt feature bans that over-correct during social crises. In this regard, platforms can operationalise established standards for meaningful notice and robust appeal by providing clear, accessible communication channels and maintaining total transparency about their processes, ensuring users can immediately engage a real human reviewer to reverse mistaken penalties or feature restrictions.

Both Fani and Izmi argued that TikTok's response to the protest should be assessed against the principles of necessity and proportionality. Izmi noted that, where specific livestreams contain violent or illegal content, targeted enforcement measures—such as removing the offending content or restricting individual accounts—would be more proportionate. By suspending TikTok LIVE feature, TikTok failed to clearly demonstrate why such a sweeping restriction was necessary to achieve its stated safety objective. Izmi further suggested that not all livestreams during the protests promoted violence; many served legitimate public interest functions, including documenting events and providing real-time information. As a result, broad feature-level restrictions risk creating a spillover effect on civic space by unnecessarily limiting freedom of expression and public access to information beyond the content that may have posed actual harm.[118]

Izmi emphasized that, in principle, TikTok occupies the position of a neutra intermediary that provides digital infrastructure rather than directly creating or contributing to user-generated content.

117 Ibid
118 Nurul Izmi, interview.; Alviani Sabillah, interview.

However, Izmi argued that platform governance cannot be understood in isolation from political dynamics. Direct state intervention occurs when government authorities explicitly request or require platforms to remove content or restrict services. Indirect intervention, by contrast, operates through domestic legal and regulatory frameworks that define prohibited content and create legal incentives for platforms to comply.

In the Indonesian context, Izmi suggested that existing regulations on unlawful content may function as a legal justification for platform enforcement actions, allowing platforms to frame restrictive measures as compliance with domestic law rather than independent corporate decisions.[119]

a. **Tier 1 (Low Severity):** Minor infractions and borderline content must be handled with gentle warnings and design friction rather than penalties. To manage government pressure for over-censorship, TikTok can point to clear rules proving minor content does not break the law;

b. **Tier 2 (Moderate Severity):** Rumours or low-level issues during crises should be managed using targeted removals or informative warning labels instead of broad suppression. To counter state pressure, platforms can offer contextual warnings rather than total bans, ensuring compliance stays limited to lawful, formal requests;

c. **Tier 3 (High Severity):** Serious harms like doxxing or incitement require strict action, such as feature restrictions or account suspensions, backed by fast human reviews. Platforms can push back against political pressure by demanding formal written legal requests and protecting legitimate public activism;

d. **Tier 4 (Systemic Crisis):** Broad emergency shutdowns must be absolute last resorts that are time-bound, transparent, and proven strictly necessary. To resist politically motivated nationwide bans, platforms can rely on independent advisory boards and strict necessity tests to prove actions are driven by safety, not state censorship.

119 Ibid

3. Scoring

This August 2025 protest might not be the last. TikTok must prepare better responses to prevent this from happening again. Principle 13 of the UNGPs stipulates that business actors must avoid causing, contributing to, or being linked to human rights abuses, and actively fix or mitigate any negative impacts that occur. TikTok can learn from this incident. In this regard, we apply the approach outlined in Principle 14 of the UNGPs and best practice human rights due diligence to determine the saliency of specific impacts and TikTok's management of these impacts. To evaluate the relative priority of the human rights impacts, we used four factors to create a **Salience Score** (based on Principle 14 of the UNGPs and additional sources):

a. **Scope:**

   The percentage of the population potentially negatively affected by a given impact on human rights.

b. **Scale:**

   The extent to which human rights are impacted.

c. **Remediability:**

   If an individual's rights are impacted, the ease with which these negative impacts can restore the individual to their prior position.

d. **Likelihood:**

   The likelihood of an impact occurring.

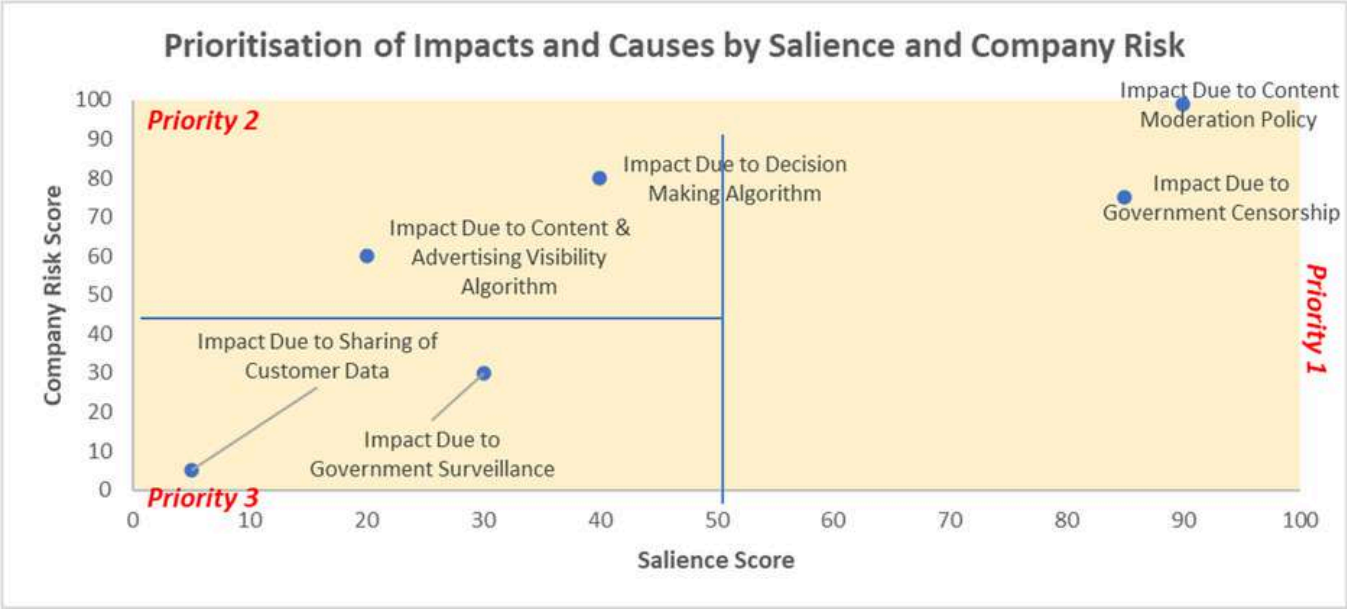
We then evaluate how well TikTok is managing these impacts by combining three factors into a company risk score:

a. **Connection:** TikTok's connection with the rights impact (Principle 13 of the UNGPs).

b. **Mitigation:** How well TikTok is mitigating the human rights impact to date (Principle 19 of the UNGPs).

c. **Leverage:** The extent to which TikTok can mitigate human rights impacts further, based on a best-effort consideration of TikTok's internal and external context (Principle 19 of the UNGPs).

The prioritisation chart below plots the Salience Score against the Company Risk Score for each potential rights impact and cause. The impacts and causes with higher Salience and Company Risk scores are prioritised over those with lower Salience and Company Risk scores, in line with Principle 24 of the UNGPs.



In this regard, we rank impact due to content moderation policy and impact due to government censorship as Priority 1. Impact due to content moderation policy sits as the main priority because the TikTok's shutdowns and takedowns during the August 2025 protests was claimed as a voluntary decision from TikTok.[120] Meanwhile, the impact due to government censorship ranks as a priority because of the increasingly restrictive digital environment in Indonesia due to regulations enacted by the Indonesian government, both in executive and legislative aisle.[121] Thus, addressing how to mitigate and level up these items must be a priority to TikTok, as they touch the fundamentals of how TikTok operates and presents its products to users in Indonesia.

Here's the breakdown on our analysis of the impact due to content moderation policy and impact due to government censorship of this assessment:

a. Scope:

Content Moderation:

We appraise that TikTok shutdowns of TikTok LIVE negatively affect human rights of more than 50% of Indonesians for a simple reason: TikTok's decision suspended the services of TikTok LIVE throughout Indonesian territory without exceptions.[122] The impact might be deeper since TikTok also takedowns users' content during the process. Both decisions affect users that had nothing to do with the reason why TikTok carried out the shutdown and takedowns in the first place.[123]

120 kumparanNEWS, "TikTok Tangguhkan Fitur Live, Agar Ruang Tetap Aman dan Beradab," kumparan, August 30, 2025, https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/tiktok-tangguhkan-fitur-live-agar-ruang-tetap-aman-dan-beradab-25l52vbcri0/full.
121 See page 27
122 kumparanNEWS, "TikTok Tangguhkan Fitur."
123 See page 34

Government Censorship:

We appraise that the Indonesian digital regulatory environment, which is increasingly restrictive, negatively affects the human rights of more than 50% of the Indonesian citizens on this matter. Data analyzed by SAFEnet shows the government expunged over 2.8 million digital posts by September 2025 and blocked 592 social media accounts during the protests of August and September 2025. By enforcing these bans and strict 4-to-24-hour takedown windows without warning, the state has arguably chilled corporations into over-censoring their platforms. This extrajudicial approach creates a severe chilling effect, effectively denying the constitutional guarantees to free expression, digital access, and due process for millions of everyday Indonesians.[124]

b. Scale:

Content Moderation:

TikTok said that it is built to inspire creativity and bring joy, and that its services is where people discover things they love, build communities, and express themselves.[125] Thus, the shutdowns and takedowns at minimum cause inconvenience because users lose access to TikTok's products, which in a sense is a compliment to TikTok. However, as outlined earlier, the decision has caused loss of critical information such as friend updates and local situations as well as loss of income of business owners that use TikTok services. Mental health and safety violations might have occurred, but they are untapped areas that we are unable to confirm through this assessment.[126]

Government Censorship:

The scale of this impact goes far beyond simple user inconvenience, directly threatening fundamental constitutional rights and civic spaces. Government pressure during the protests led to systematic digital repression, including targeted doxxing, cyberattacks on activists, and the forced removal of content documenting law enforcement actions under the guise of "combating disinformation." By weaponizing broad regulations to compel tech platforms to restrict features like live streaming, the state effectively limits access to real-time, verified information for millions of citizens. This creates a pervasive "chilling effect" where ordinary users, journalists, and business owners self-censor out of fear of state surveillance or legal retaliation.[127]

---

124 Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet), Laporan Situasi Hak Digital Indonesia 2025: Orba Datang Lagi, Represi Tak Pernah Pergi (Denpasar: SAFEnet, 2026), page 10.

125 TikTok, "Overview," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/overview.

126 See page 34

127 See page 28

c. Remediability:

Content Moderation:

The impact of the TikTok shutdowns and takedowns can, to some extent, be remedied. TikTok operations in Indonesia have returned to normal since the protests, and while that decision negatively impacts political and economic rights of its users, it is unclear how deep the impact of both areas is to TikTok users, as TikTok have never released any reports on the issue nor promised any remedy.

Government Censorship:

The impact of government censorship is exceptionally difficult to remedy due to the structural nature of state overreach. Unlike a platform's voluntary switch, which can be turned back on overnight, state censorship is baked into national legislation—such as the broad administrative powers under the ITE Law and its implementing regulations. Because the Indonesian government lacks an independent, transparent oversight mechanism or a clear appeals framework for state-directed takedowns, affected users are left with zero avenues for legal remedy. Once content is suppressed or an account is banned by request of state actors, the damage to public discourse and individual digital security is largely permanent.[128]

d. Likelihood:

Content Moderation:

It is very likely that TikTok will face the same condition in the future. Since the August 2025 protests, there have been a number of protests erupted in the country including the latest in June 2026. We noted that Indonesian protesters often utilized TikTok LIVE during the protests. Further, there are countless contents on TikTok about the protests in specific and about the government policies in general.[129]

Government Censorship:

The likelihood of recurring government censorship is extremely high. The Indonesian digital regulatory environment has shown a continuous trajectory toward digital authoritarianism, combined with the militarisation of cyberspace. With recurring public unrest emerging across the country the government's reliance on executive orders and cyber-patrols to control political narratives has become standard operating procedure. As long as vague clauses regarding "public order" and "harmful content" remain active, the government will highly likely continue to pressure platforms like TikTok into compliance during periods of political friction.[130]

---

128 Ibid
129 See page 36
130 See page 26

We also rank impacts due to decision making algorithm, impacts due content advertising visibility algorithm, impacts due government surveillance, and impacts due to sharing of customers data, even though they are outside the scope of this assessment. We are flagging them as a future work and provisional estimates, not full CLARITI-scored rankings.

We rank impacts due to decision making algorithm and impacts due content advertising visibility algorithm as Priority 2 since TikTok uses the combination of automated technology and human review to carry out its algorithm and content moderation.[131] The problem arises when one of two reviewers above erred in their decision making, as exemplified by the temporary suspensions of the accounts of LBH Pekanbaru and LBH Jakarta above. Much bigger problem arises when the decision making is made intentionally and ends up neglecting the human rights of its users like what our respondents have described. Thus, it is paramount for TikTok to make a more transparent algorithm and decision-making process behind it taking into account TikTok's obligations to respect human rights and learn from the 2025 August protests.[132]

As for the impacts due government surveillance and impacts due to sharing of customers data, we rank them as Priority 3 because while government surveillance and data sharing pose critical privacy and human rights risks, their impacts are heavily dictated by external state pressures and overarching legal frameworks rather than TikTok's internal operational mechanics alone. Unlike the algorithmic content moderation system, which is directly controlled and executed by TikTok through its automated tech and human reviewers, data sharing and state surveillance operate largely in the background of compliance. However, because a lack of transparency in these areas can weaponize user data against activists and civil society groups—especially in the wake of the heightened state scrutiny following the August 2025 protests—they remain significant external threats that require rigorous, independent data protection guardrails and clear boundaries against state overreach.[133]

131 TikTok, "Overview," TikTok Safety Center, accessed July 31, 2026, https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/overview.
132 See page 37
133 See Chapter IV

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION

1. Guidance

Based on our assessment above above, we recommend TikTok to maximise its human rights impacts and mitigate the adverse impacts of its products, decisions, and services. Further, we also recommend the Indonesian government to carry out several action items as a duty bearer in relation to human rights for its citizens. These recommendations are classified in line with the UNGP as follows[134]:

a. **Protect:** Improving the protection of human rights in the country by influencing the government, including but not limited to advocating for improvements in laws, improvements in regulations, or enforcement of these laws and regulations (Principle 18 and Principle 23 of the UNGPs).

b. **Respect:** Improving the company's internal policies and guidelines to minimise rights impacts (Principle 11 of the UNGPs).

c. **Remedy:** Attempting to restore the rightsholders to a position to a pre-harm position, or providing compensation or another form of remedy if restoration is not possible (Principle 22, Principle 29, and Principle 31 of the UNGPs).

Principle 24 of the UNGPs requires businesses to prioritise mitigations that are most severe, or where delayed response would make the rights impacts irremediable, while Principle 23 of the UNGPs indicates that businesses should comply with all applicable laws and respect internationally recognised human rights, seeking ways to honour internationally recognised human rights principles when faced with conflicting requirements. In a best-attempt to consider both these principles, we will prioritise recommendations across two dimensions:

a. **Timeline:** A best-effort consideration of the change possible within the short (within 1 year), medium (within 3 years) and long term (within 5 years). The timeline reflects what should be possible within the country's context to maximise respect for international human rights laws and principles, in line with Principle 23 of the UNGPs.

b. **Positive Impact of Recommendation:** Impact of recommendation on mitigating or remedying any negative rights impacts. Our prioritisation considers Principle 24 of the UNGPs, which requires prioritising mitigations based on their severity.

2. Improving the Protection of Human Rights by the Government

In accordance to the Principle 1 of the UNGPs, governments are responsible for protecting against human rights abuses within their jurisdiction by third parties (including companies). However, in an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian context, we understand the role of the government in protecting human rights may be challenging.

---

134 United Nations, Guiding Principles.

In line with Principle 18 and Principle 23 of the UNGPs, we recommend TikTok to explore advocating for positive changes in laws, regulations, government transparency and rights-respecting government requests. We suggest this could be best done together with cooperative competitors or in multi-stakeholder alliances to maximise the chances of success.[135]

CLARITI method categorises the recommendation timeline into one, three, and five years. However, we re-categorized them into one, five, and 20 years in accordance with the timeline under National Development System Law[136]. Our specific recommendations to meet this UNGP requirement are as follows[137]:

1-Year

a. Monitoring (Principle 3):

The Indonesian government must actively monitor its strategy pertaining to government censorship as well as content moderation including to minimise the rights violation request, codify a procedural rule to the platform prior notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard, and establish public registries of all regulatory requests sent to social media platforms to ensure civil society oversight and minimize extrajudicial content suppression.

b. Evaluation (Principle 3):

The Indonesian government must evaluate the existing regulations as well as practice pertaining to government censorship as well as content moderation including to carry out cost benefit analysis on the existing regulations, internal evaluation on the content takedowns and algorithmic enforcement requests sent to TikTok and other social media platforms, and launch community roundtable forums involving academic institutions, platforms companies, and civil society organizations.

5-Year

a. Amendment of Digital Indonesia Vision 2045 (Principle 2):

The Indonesian government must incorporate human rights impact principles into the documents other than emphasizing economic-centric metrics. The amended vision must explicitly introduce human rights protections, digital safe harbors, and verifiable legal safeguards as core performance indicators alongside technological adoption. This structural shift is essential to mitigate the acknowledged risks of systemic tech dependency, data sovereignty friction, and extrajudicial content suppression.[138]

---

135 Ibid, Principles 1, 18, and 23.

136 Indonesia, Undang-Undang tentang Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, UU No. 25 Tahun 2004, LN No. 104 Tahun 2004, TLN No. 4421.,

137 Pusat Studi Hukum Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK), Understanding Policymaking in Indonesia: In Search of a Policy Cycle (Jakarta: PSHK, The Policy Lab University of Melbourne, and Knowledge Sector Initiative, 2017), accessed July 31, 2026, https://pshk.or.id/penelitian/understanding-policymaking-in-indonesia-in-search-of-a-policy-cycle/.

138 Indonesia Digital 2045, "Overview," Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia, accessed July 31, 2026, https://digital2045.id/overview/.

b. Amendment of MR 5/2020 (Principle 3):

The Indonesian government must revise MR 5/2020 to remove or at least limit the prohibited electronic information and/documents as well as remove the excessive 4-to-24-hour expedited takedown windows for non-urgent content and strip administrative bodies of absolute punitive power, ensuring state laws do not force companies to break human rights. The revised regulation must substantially adhere to human rights obligations and procedurally mandate independent judicial warrants for politically sensitive content removal and establish legal safe harbor protection for platforms to prevent preemptive or over-compliant corporate censorship.

c. Operational Safeguards (Principle 4):

The Indonesian government, specifically the MOCD, must integrate specific human rights, due process, and legal predictability into its censorship and content moderation process including by incorporating such metrics into the National Digital Transformation Index (ITDN). By adjusting the operational evaluation criteria of state ministries—specifically changing how digital metrics are officially scored—the government creates a direct bureaucratic incentive to protect rights. To achieve high scores in the national index, executive bodies will be forced to ensure that regulatory requests are legally predictable and processed with clear procedural protections, aligning state behavior with high digital growth goals.

5-Years

a. Ratification of Global Treaties (Principle 1):

The Indonesian government must structurally align its domestic digital, data privacy, and content moderation laws with international standards. Over 5-year, locking in verifiable human rights safeguards within digital infrastructure will protect Indonesia from international economic sanctions, arbitrary digital trade barriers, and exclusion from global supply chains. Transitioning to a rights-respecting digital framework ensures long-term national macroeconomic resilience, attracts foreign investors, permanently safeguarding Indonesia’s access to western consumer markets and high-tech trade corridors.

b. Creative Compliance Incentive (Principle 3, 8):

The Indonesian government must reform the punitive structure of its digital regulations by embedding strict international human rights compliance as a non-negotiable prerequisite within Indonesia's investment frameworks. Under this

model, digital platforms must first prove comprehensive adherence to transparent user-privacy and due-process legal baselines to avoid penalties. Once these baseline human rights obligations are fully secured, platforms that voluntarily implement advanced, standard data-transparency and digital protection infrastructure can unlock specialized fiscal incentives, such as tax allowances or expedited corporate licensing verified via the Online Single Submission (OSS) system. This ensures economic levers serve to reward structural transparency rather than bypass legal accountability.

c. **Operational Safeguards (Principle 4):**

The Indonesian government, specifically the MOCD, must integrate specific human rights, due process, and legal predictability into its censorship and content moderation process including by incorporating such metrics into the National Digital Transformation Index (ITDN). By adjusting the operational evaluation criteria of state ministries—specifically changing how digital metrics are officially scored—the government creates a direct incentive to protect rights. To achieve high scores in the national index, executive bodies will be forced to ensure that regulatory requests are legally predictable and processed with clear procedural protections, aligning state behavior with high digital growth goals.

3. Improving the Respect and Remedy of Human Rights within TikTok

According to the Principle 11 of the UNGPs, companies should respect human rights by not infringing on the human rights of rightsholders and mitigating adverse human rights impacts. Furthermore, Principle 29 of the UNGPs states that companies should establish or participate in grievance mechanisms, while Principle 31 of the UNGPs establishes eight criteria for effective grievance mechanisms.[139] Our specific recommendations to meet this UNGP requirement are as follows:

1-year

a. Monitoring (Principle 11 & 31d):

TikTok must actively monitor its operational content moderation and algorithmic enforcement systems to minimize human rights violations, such as arbitrary shadow banning or the suppression of legitimate political expression. This includes keeping score of real-time internal tracking metrics to monitor grievance resolution SLAs, systematically logging all government takedown directives to prevent over-compliant corporate censorship, and deploying cultural-sensitivity oversight across localized trust and safety squads to ensure automated filters do not disproportionately penalize vulnerable groups.

139 United Nations, *Guiding Principles*, Principles 11, 29, and 31.

b. Monitoring (Principle 11 & 31d):

TikTok must actively monitor its operational content moderation and algorithmic enforcement systems to minimize human rights violations, such as arbitrary shadow banning or the suppression of legitimate political expression. This includes keeping score of real-time internal tracking metrics to monitor grievance resolution SLAs, systematically logging all government takedown directives to prevent over-compliant corporate censorship, and deploying cultural-sensitivity oversight across localized trust and safety squads to ensure automated filters do not disproportionately penalize vulnerable groups.

c. Evaluation (Principle 11 & 31h):

TikTok must evaluate its existing Community Guidelines and local enforcement practices by conducting an internal human rights audit on content moderations. Furthermore, TikTok must benchmark its current in-app reporting and user appeal workflows directly against the eight core criteria of UNGP 31 (specifically focusing on predictability, accessibility, and transparency), and launch structured evaluation roundtables involving local content creators, digital rights civil society organizations, and academic institutions to identify operational gaps in platform remedy.

3-year

a. Revising User Appeals (rinciple 29 & 31c):

Optimize current in-app reporting and appeal flows. Reduce the turnaround time for user appeals regarding content suppression, algorithmic restrictions (such as For You feed eligibility exclusion), or account suspension, providing clear, human-vetted justifications rather than automated boilerplates. Specifically, upgrade local operational channels to provide a fast-tracked, 24-hour remedy mechanism for Indonesian content creators and small businesses (including TikTok Shop partners) experiencing erroneous algorithmic deplatforming, sudden commission freezing, or shadow banning.

b. Risk Mitigation through HRIA (Principle 11 & 18):

TikTok must institutionalize a rolling, mandatory Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) process integrated directly into the deployment lifecycle for all new algorithmic features (such as live-stream commerce tools, virtual affiliate hosts, and AI-driven creator systems) in Indonesia. By proactively identifying and mitigating potential livelihood displacement or algorithmic discrimination before launch, TikTok fulfils the obligation under Principle 11 of the UNGPS to mitigate adverse human rights impacts. This shields the company from sudden politial crackdowns targeting foreign tech dominance and safeguards its lucrative e-commerce engine (TikTok Shop).

5-years

a. Pioneering Decentralized Multi-Stakeholder Redress Networks (UNGP 29, 31a, d):

TikTok should transition its entire regional grievance logging system to an interoperable, public-ledger system where platform enforcement actions, account blocks, and commercial wallet freezes are tracked transparently. Over a 20-year horizon, anchoring redress to an unalterable, publicly auditable ledger completely satisfies the "legitimate" and "transparent" effectiveness criteria of UNGP 31. This open infrastructure shields TikTok from legal liabilities under changing political regimes by proving that its non-judicial remedy systems are universally unbiased and procedurally fair.

b. Decentralized User-Led Moderation Jurisdictions (UNGP 31g, h):

TikTok should evolve its content moderation model from a top-down corporate hierarchy into a decentralized, community-adjudicated model governed directly by regional user councils using localized ethical frameworks. Grounding operational remedy in direct "dialogue and engagement" with rightsholders shields the platform from accusations of arbitrary corporate bias or political capitulation. This structural shift effectively deflects domestic political pressure away from corporate headquarters and places it onto transparent, locally balanced community redress bodies.

CHAPTER VI

COMPANY ENGAGEMENT

The CLARITI methodology suggests enhancing our engagement with TikTok to advocate for greater transparency, accountability, and the protection of digital rights. In this regard, this assessment details how both end users and the general public were profoundly impacted by TikTok's suspension of TikTok LIVE and the removal of specific content—namely, resulting in a severe loss of access to information, violations of freedom of speech, and the disruption of vital monetary income.

In the context of Indonesia, information on TikTok's operation in Indonesia is limited because TikTok nor ByteDance is a publicly listed company. TikTok do publish quarterly Transparency Reports detailing content removal, government requests for data, and community guideline violations, but the Transparency Reports fall short in several areas namely TikTok isn't transparent about how it promotes or demotes content.

For the purpose of this assessment, we have notified TikTok through e-mail pr@tiktok.com, feedback@tiktok.com, **legal@tiktok.com**, and info@tiktok.com on 13 October 2025 and performed a number of follow-ups via e-mail, telephone, and other channels asking for an interview and audience, lastly on 26 August 2026. We have circulate this assessment so TikTok has the full picture before they decided to respond or not respond to our interview and audience on 3 August 2026 by e-mail to one of TikTok officers responsible for community engagement.

TikTok chose to respond to our engagement by providing a statement which we received via e-mail on 28 August 2026, and read as follows:

"*Thank you for inviting TikTok to respond to your research regarding content moderation and digital rights in Indonesia. We appreciate the opportunity to review your findings and value an ongoing, open dialogue on these important issues.*

Protecting the integrity of our platform is fundamental to how we empower our global community to safely discover, connect, and create on TikTok. Respect for human rights is built into our global operations, and our Community Guidelines draw directly from internationally recognized human rights standards and frameworks, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

We have standard operating procedures to monitor and address high-risk events around the world, such as elections, civic unrest, conflicts, and humanitarian crises. Measures include (but are not limited to) enhancing risk monitoring capacity, in-app safety features and notifications, and being transparent about the steps we take during these critical times.

Due to the escalating violence during protests in Indonesia last year, we voluntarily introduced an additional safeguard to keep TikTok a safe and civil space. The decision to temporarily pause TikTok LIVE in Indonesia for a limited time period was a safety-driven decision made by TikTok to ensure we keep our community safe and prevent the escalation of offline harm. Throughout this period, we continued to remove content that violated our Community Guidelines and monitored the situation closely.

We continuously invest in policies, technologies, and partnerships that help safeguard our platform, strengthen trust, and foster a positive environment where creativity and authentic expression can thrive. We always appreciate feedback from independent experts, civil society organizations, and local leaders to ensure our policies reflect a wide range of perspectives and lived experiences. In Indonesia, we work closely with local partners and experts, including TikTok Safety Advisory Council member Anita Wahid. Her experience in human rights and community safety has helped inform our understanding of local risks and strengthen our approach to keeping the TikTok community safe.

We are committed to continuously refining our safety strategies to stay ahead of emerging online trends and look forward to working together toward a safe, open digital ecosystem in Indonesia."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA). "Entity Details: 201719908M." BizFile+. Accessed July 30, 2026. https://www.bizfile.gov.sg/buy-info/entity-details/201719908M.

Adco Law. "Force Majeure: Reason for Non-Performance." Adco Law Insights. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://adcolaw.com/blog/force-majeure-reason-for-non-performance/.

Batu Bara, Nanda Fahriza. "Peran RI di Balik Kekayaan Spektakuler Pendiri TikTok." Tirto.id, April 13, 2023. https://tirto.id/peran-ri-di-balik-kekayaan-spektakuler-pendiri-tiktok-gEE5.

Bintaher, Rafiq Rasya, and Devi Wening Astari. "Polarisasi Politik Gen Z pada Aksi Demonstrasi Agustus 2025 Melalui Sosial Media TikTok." Jurnal ISO: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora 6, no. 2 (2026): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.53697/iso.v6i2.4030.

ByteDance. "ByteDance." Accessed July 30, 2026. https://www.bytedance.com/en/.

Center for Humane Technology. "TikTok's Transparency Problem with Marc Faddoul." Your Undivided Attention. Podcast audio, March 2, 2023. https://www.humanetech.com/podcast/tiktoks-transparency-problem-with-marc-faddoul.

CLARITI. "Community-led Assessment of Rights in the Tech Industry." Accessed July 30, 2026. https://claritihria.net/.

Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945.

Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). Human Rights Impact Assessment: Guidance and Toolbox. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020.https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/hria_toolbox_2020/eng/dihr_hria_guidance_and_toolbox_2020_eng.pdf.

Data Lake Indonesia. "Sejarah Perkembangan Internet di Indonesia." Data Lake Indonesia, October 3, 2025. https://datalake.id/sejarah-internet-di-indonesia/.

Direktorat Jenderal Badan Peradilan Umum (Badilum). Infografis Undang-Undang ITE. Jakarta: Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia. https://badilum.mahkamahagung.go.id/attachments/article/4904/Rev-Infografis%20ITE[ok].pdf.

Freedom House. "Indonesia: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report." Freedom House, 2025. https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2025.

Gandapurnama, Baban. "Ringkasan Kejadian Rumah Ahmad Sahroni Dijarah Massa di Tanjung Priok." detikJabar, August 30, 2025. https://www.detik.com/jabar/berita/d-8088276/ringkasan-kejadian-rumah-ahmad-sahroni-dijarah-massa-di-tanjung-priok.

Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company. e-Conomy SEA 2025: Indonesia Country Report. 2025. https://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/indonesia_e_conomy_sea_2025_report.pdf.

Hukumonline. "Pusat Data: Detail Peraturan No. 19784." Hukumonline. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/19784/.

Hyken, Shep. "The Shocking Financial Impact of Bad Customer Service: $3 Trillion." Forbes, December 26, 2025. https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2025/12/26/the-shocking-financial-impact-of-bad-customer-service-3-trillion/.

Indonesia. Undang-Undang tentang Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional. UU No. 25 Tahun 2004, LN No. 104 Tahun 2004, TLN No. 4421. https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/19784/undangundang-nomor-25-tahun-2004/document/.

Indonesia. Undang-Undang tentang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik. UU No. 11 Tahun 2008, LN No. 58 Tahun 2008, TLN No. 4843.

Indonesia. Undang-Undang tentang Hak Asasi Manusia. Law No. 39 of 1999.

Indonesia. Undang-Undang tentang Kemerdekaan Menyampaikan Pendapat di Muka Umum. UU No. 9 Tahun 1998, LN No. 181 Tahun 1998, TLN No. 3789.

Indonesia. Government Regulation on the Implementation of Electronic Systems and Transactions. PP No. 71 Tahun 2019, LN No. 185 Tahun 2019, TLN No. 6400.

Indonesia. Government Regulation on Trading Through Electronic Systems. PP No. 80 Tahun 2019, LN No. 220 Tahun 2019, TLN No. 6420. https://www.hukumonline.com/pusatdata/detail/lt5de6396abe483/peraturan-pemerintah-nomor-80-tahun-2019/.

Indonesia. Ministry of Communication and Digital. "Penyelenggara Sistem Elektronik (PSE) Registration Database: TikTok." Accessed July 30, 2026. https://pse.MOCD.go.id/pse.

Indonesia. Ministry of Communication and Digital. "Tidak Penuhi Kewajiban, MOCD Suspend Tanda Daftar PSE TikTok." Siaran Pers, January 10, 2026. https://www.MOCD.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/detail/tidak-penuhi-kewajiban-MOCD-suspend-tanda-daftar-pse-tiktok.

Indonesia Digital 2045. "Overview." Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://digital2045.id/overview/.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Dec. 16, 1966. 999 U.N.T.S. 171.

IFani, O. S. "Amnesty International Indonesia: 758 Orang Dikriminalisasi dengan UU ITE Sepanjang 2018-2025." Tempo, August 2025. https://www.tempo.co/hukum/amnesty-international-indonesia-758-orang-dikriminalisasi-dengan-uu-ite-sepanjang-2018-2025-2059298.

Kemp, Simon. "Digital 2026: Indonesia." DataReportal, October 2025 (published for 2026).https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-indonesia.

Kertiyasa, Martin Bagya. "TikTok Faces Temporary Suspension Amid August Protest Probe." Jakarta Globe, October 3, 2025. https://jakartaglobe.id/tech/tiktok-faces-temporary-suspension-amid-august-protest-probe.

KumparanNEWS. "TikTok Tangguhkan Fitur Live, Agar Ruang Tetap Aman dan Beradab." Kumparan, August 30, 2025. https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/tiktok-tangguhkan-fitur-live-agar-ruang-tetap-aman-dan-beradab-25l52vbcri0/full.

MIT Sloan School of Management. "Bigger, but Some Platforms Get More Money Than They Lose." MIT Sloan Experts. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://mitsloan.mit.edu/experts/bigger-some-platforms-get-more-money-they-lose.

Ministry of Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. "Penilaian Risiko Bisnis dan HAM (PRISMA)." Accessed July 30, 2026. https://prisma.kemenham.go.id/.

Nouvan. "Indonesia Jadi Negara Pengguna TikTok Terbanyak di Dunia 2025." Dataloka.id, February 15, 2026. https://dataloka.id/humaniora/4424/indonesia-jadi-negara-pengguna-tiktok-terbanyak-di-dunia-2025/.

Oxfam International. Oxfam Guide: Human Rights Impact Assessment Framework. Oxford: Oxfam International, May 2023. https://www.oxfam.org.

Pusat Studi Hukum Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK). Understanding Policymaking in Indonesia: In Search of a Policy Cycle. Jakarta: PSHK, The Policy Lab University of Melbourne, and Knowledge Sector Initiative, 2017. https://pshk.or.id/penelitian/understanding-policymaking-in-indonesia-in-search-of-a-policy-cycle/.

Rahayu, Riri, and Eka Yudha Saputra. "Dampak Penonaktifan Fitur Live TikTok Bagi UMKM." Tempo.co, September 2, 2025. https://www.tempo.co/ekonomi/dampak-penonaktifan-fitur-live-tiktok-bagi-umkm-2065870.

RDR Staff. "Introducing CLARITI: A New Tool for Community-Driven Accountability of the Tech Industry." Ranking Digital Rights, August 25, 2025. https://rankingdigitalrights.org/2025/08/25/introducing-clariti-a-new-tool-for-community-driven-accountability-of-the-tech-industry/.

Sadiawati, Diani, et al. Kajian Reformasi Regulasi di Indonesia: Pokok Permasalahan dan Strategi Penanganannya. Jakarta: Pusat Studi Hukum dan Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK) and Bappenas, 2019. https://pshk.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PSHK_KAJIAN-REFORMASI-REGULASI-DI-INDONESIA.pdf.

SAFEnet. "SAFEnet Ungkap Mutasi Otoritarianisme Digital di Indonesia." SAFEnet, February 2026.https://safenet.or.id/id/2026/02/safenet-ungkap-mutasi-otoritarianisme-digital-di-indonesia/.

Saputra, Andi. "Ini Dia Kronologi Prita Mencari Keadilan." detikNews, September 18, 2012.https://news.detik.com/berita/d-2023887/ini-dia-kronologi-prita-mencari-keadilan.

Setyowati, Desy. "Ketika Live TikTok Jadi Ajang Cari Cuan saat Penjarahan Rumah Sahroni." Katadata, September 13, 2025. https://katadata.co.id/digital/teknologi/68bfb6d03ce98/ketika-live-tiktok-jadi-ajang-cari-cuan-saat-penjarahan-rumah-sahroni.

Silva, Margarida. How Tech Billionaires Are Killing Internet for All with Monopoly Power. Amsterdam: Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO), January 17, 2024. https://www.somo.nl/how-tech-billionaires-are-killing-internet-for-all/.

Singgih, Viriya. "Pembunuhan Affan Kurniawan: Sebuah Kegilaan di Jalan Penjernihan." Project Multatuli, September 1, 2025. https://projectmultatuli.org/pembunuhan-affan-kurniawan-sebuah-kegilaan-di-jalan-penjernihan/.

Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet). Laporan Situasi Hak Digital Indonesia 2025: Orba Datang Lagi, Represi Tak Pernah Pergi. Denpasar: SAFEnet, 2026.

TikTok. "Community Principles." TikTok Safety Center. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/community-principles.

TikTok. "Enforcement." TikTok Safety Center. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/enforcement.

TikTok. "Overview." TikTok Safety Center. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/overview.

TikTok. "Safety and Civility." TikTok Safety Center. Accessed July 31, 2026. https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/policies-and-engagement/safety-civility.

TikTok. "TikTok Company Page: Indonesia (Careers and Corporate Updates)." LinkedIn. Accessed July 30, 2026. https://www.linkedin.com/company/tiktok/.

TikTok. "Transparency Reports." Accessed July 30, 2026. https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/transparency/reports.

United Nations. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework. New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2011. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf.

Vásquez, Ian, Matthew D. Mitchell, Ryan Murphy, and Guillermina Sutter Schneider. Human Freedom Index: 2025. Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2025. https://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index/2025.

About SAFEnet

The Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet) is a civil society organization advocating for digital rights, including the right to access the internet, the right to freedom of expression, and the right to safety in the digital sphere. Legally registered as an association under the name Perkumpulan Pembela Kebebasan Berekspresi Asia Tenggara, SAFEnet is based in Denpasar, Bali.

SAFEnet's vision is the realization of a digital sphere that upholds human rights values for all. To achieve this vision, SAFEnet runs four main programs: advocating for policies that support the fulfillment of digital rights; supporting victims of digital rights violations; building the capacity of civil society regarding digital rights; and rallying solidarity for civil society members fighting for human rights. Visit us on https://safenet.or.id/

SHUT*DOWNS* AND TAKE*DOWNS*:

Civil Society-led Concised HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia

In August 2025, the biggest protests since the 1998 Asian Financial Crisis broke out across Indonesia. People were angry that members of parliament were getting a pay raise while everyday life was getting harder due to rising living costs. During the protest, a motorbike-taxi driver, Affan Kurniawan (21), was run over and killed by a 10-ton police tactical vehicle at one of the protest hotspots in Jakarta.

Riding the wave of anger from Affan's death, the rioters hijacked the protests and turned peaceful protest into chaos. People used TikTok to document the situation, broadcast local updates, check street safety, and locate loved ones. Within days, TikTok suspended TikTok LIVE nationwide, cutting off access to critical information and economic livelihoods. TikTok framed the decision as voluntary, but is it?

"Shutdowns and Takedowns: HRIA on TikTok's Restrictions During the August 2025 protest in Indonesia" uncovers the complexity that led to TikTok's decision above using CLARITI, a tool developed by Ranking Digital Rights in 2023 that allows communities to carry out human rights impact analysis to tech companies and telcos, based on the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights.

Published by: SAFEnet

Powered by: CLARITI