

Impunity and Transitional Justice in Indonesia: Aksi Kamisan's Circular Time

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ABSTRACT[∞]

This article positions the Indonesian weekly Thursday silent protests by victims' families, Aksi Kamisan, as a space of and beyond transitional justice. Analysing Kamisan as repeated, embodied creative acts that reset perceptions, possibilities and imaginations about social belonging, political subjectivity and national identity discloses how authoritarian era affective forces undermine transitional justice and demonstrates the power of alternative temporalities in coming to terms with past violence. 'Circular time' brings past and present injustice into the same frame as consistent action extending into the future. Circular time highlights how the time of waiting, uncertainty and lack of justice extends backward and forward connecting past, present and future in the repetition of impunity, and creates community and the space to imagine just futures. Circular time is created by repeated action against impunity in the present and celebrating the perseverance, consistency and agency of victims. Circular time resists the imposition of temporal linearity. Art performed at Kamisan and the act of standing in solidarity engages communities and audiences in a realm of politics and national belonging that is not possible in formal institutions. Over time, these repeated, temporary, inclusive actions can counter still resonant authoritarian era propaganda.

KEYWORDS: Activism, affect, impunity, memory, performance, temporality

INTRODUCTION

Every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. since 18 January 2007, family members and victims of state violence, their supporters and others have gathered and stood silently in front of the state palace

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in Jakarta, sheltered from heat and rain by black umbrellas stencilled with slogans that demand the resolution of particular past cases and an end to impunity. On the side of the road, they stand behind concrete barriers draped with long banners that feature photos of the missing or suspected perpetrators. A long line of police in brown uniforms in the road face the protestors. Supported by various NGOs and activists, this weekly Thursday action, called *Aksi Kamisan*, was initiated by a group of self-described victims (of authoritarian era violence) and their families. Nevertheless, the action is not about their suffering or victimization.

Each week, a letter to the President outlines their requests for attention to past cases in technical, legal and affectively powerful terms. At approximately 4:45, the group circles up and the reflection begins. Early in the action, Sumarsih,¹ the mother of a student slain by the authoritarian regime and iconic stalwart of the action, typically asks newcomers or others from outside of Jakarta if they will reflect. Sometimes they share how they have suffered or they describe their unresolved case, especially if it is a person from outside of Jakarta. Sometimes, they share what they have learned by being there and talking to individuals the state has branded as threats to national security. The event ends with the group chanting 'long live victims' (*hidup korban*) or 'eradicate impunity' (*hapus impunitas*).

The circle is inclusive and welcoming; anyone can attend. Some weeks feature music or performance, and anniversary weeks typically feature multiple performances and activities. A short discussion of the theme for the next week's letter and a request for volunteers to work on drafting it with Sumarsih follows the reflection time. Finally, someone leads the group in a short prayer and everyone is asked to pray (silently) in their own way. When the spoken prayers draw on religious language, they usually ask that God support their struggle for justice. To close, everyone moves from the circle to pose for a group photo with the palace in the background.

Frequently used processes and conventional mechanisms of transitional justice have numerous limitations. To overcome them, scholars have suggested using these mechanisms in sequence or combination or expanding definitions of transitional justice to include various non-legal/formal processes. Marcos Zunino has argued that what is counted as transitional justice in retrospect, often characterized by apolitical legalism and capitalist liberalism, has ideologically constricted the field² underscoring the importance of definitional debates. Emily Willard argues that transitional justice projects that are limited to 'documenting the stories and impact of the violence, loss and pain of war and oppression ... unintentionally reinforce damaging narratives and singularly define the community by this oppression.' Furthermore, she argues that ideas of justice need to be expanded to include what is beyond transitional justice – 'everyday life projects of living, succeeding and celebrating.'³ This is not a replacement for formal transitional justice, but an important correction.

Focusing on the ongoing agency of those harmed in the past draws attention to issues of temporality in transitional justice. Zinaida Miller demonstrates the persistence of 'temporal governance' in transitional justice, and emphasizes that the designation of the pasts to be addressed in various mechanisms excludes patterns of settler colonialism and structural violence and

¹ Sumarsih is the mother of Bernardinus 'Wawan' Realino Norma Irmawan. Wawan was one of the students shot with live bullets as he was helping a wounded student on campus, in what became known as the Semanggi 1 tragedy on 13 November 1999. Sumarsih coordinates JSKK (Jaringan Solidaritas Keluarga Korban, Solidarity Network for the Families of Victims) with support from various civil society organizations including KontraS, LBH Jakarta and Amnesty International Indonesia. Murdered human rights defender Munir Said Thalib's widow Suciwati and Bedjo Untung, a victim of detentions associated with the 1965 genocide, also frequently attend and are part of the Presidium that can sign the letters.

² Marcos Zunino, *Justice Framed: A Genealogy of Transitional Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

³ Emily Willard, 'Beyond Transitional Justice: Learning from Indigenous Maya Mam Resistance in Guatemala,' *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 15(3) (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijab021>.

shapes the forms of justice and futures that can be imagined.⁴ In focusing on temporality, it is important to attend to the affective power of ‘hauntings’ that come from unaddressed pasts.⁵

Engaging art, performance and embodiment are useful ways to understand and overcome limitations of particular strategies and make temporalities and affective issues legible. In the case of Cambodia, Renee Jeffery argues that the arts have contributed ‘evidence, complementary justice, outreach, activism, and critique’ to transitional justice processes.⁶ According to other scholars, the transitional justice related arts can promote individualized and collective healing and social change.⁷ Authors point to the power of the arts to make visible that which was previously unseen or imperceptible, to open new spaces for engagement,⁸ especially affective engagement,⁹ and to imagine new futures.¹⁰ Robin Gill-Leslie urges attention to embodiment and the arts to explore issues of affect in transitional justice.¹¹

This article examines Kamisan as a from-below, non-conventional space where performance and art bring temporality to the forefront. Exploring temporality through these repeated, embodied creative acts that reset perceptions, possibilities and imaginations about social belonging, political subjectivity and national identity highlights the importance of what I call circular time. Circular time brings past and present injustice into the same frame as consistent action extending into the future. This creates a space ‘beyond’ transitional justice narratives, in Willard’s sense of the term. This space centres victims for celebration, engagement and inclusion, and resists the imposition of temporal linearity.¹²

Circular time offers an opportunity for agency and acting in solidarity in the face of overwhelming impunity in a repeated inclusive and expansive space that has both temporal and geographic dimensions. Circular time is created by repeated action against impunity in the present and celebrating the perseverance, consistency and agency of victims. Shifting attention from the past to the present makes the acts and elements that extend and naturalize impunity visible, specific and contingent. Further, linking repeated incidents of past state violence challenges the historical narratives that justify past violence and the ongoing or future marginalization of victims. Highlighting repeated impunity and persistent action creates a space for reclaiming national myths and training youth to regenerate the movement. The repeated demand for accountability resonates with non-conventional and expansive definitions of transitional justice at the same time that it highlights critical issues related to temporality.

VIOLENCE, PROPAGANDA AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN INDONESIA

Indonesian society continues to grapple with the legacies of the genocide of suspected communist party supporters¹³ that ushered in 30 years of repression and violence under General

⁴ Zinaida Miller, ‘Temporal Governance: The Times of Transitional Justice,’ *International Criminal Law Review* 21(5) (2021): 848–877.

⁵ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016); Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

⁶ Renee Jeffery, ‘The Role of the Arts in Cambodia’s Transitional Justice Process,’ *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 34(3) (2021): 335–358.

⁷ Clara Ramirez-Barat, ‘The Path to Social Reconstruction: Between Culture and Transitional Justice,’ *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 14(1) (2020): 242–250; Sherin Shefik, ‘Reimagining Transitional Justice through Participatory Art,’ *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 12(2) (2018): 314–333.

⁸ Arnaud Kurze and Christopher K. Lamont, *New Critical Spaces in Transitional Justice: Gender, Art, and Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

⁹ Kaitlin M. Murphy, *Mapping Memory: Visuality, Affect, and Embodied Politics in the Americas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Catherine Cole, *Performance and the Afterlives of Injustice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020).

¹¹ Robyn Gill-Leslie, ‘The Body Inside the Art and the Law of Marikana: A Case for Corporeality,’ *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 14(1) (2020): 102–121.

¹² Willard, *supra* n 6; Miller *supra* n 7.

¹³ IPT 1965 Foundation, *Final Report of the International People’s Tribunal on Crimes Against Humanity in Indonesia, 1965* (Bandung: Ultimus, 2017); Saskia Wieringa, Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, eds., *The International People’s Tribunal for 1965 and*

Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime (1966–1998). Evidence demonstrates that the army directed the killings with the involvement of Muslim youth groups. The killings and associated bureaucratic efforts to eradicate the left were abetted by the United States and other countries during the global Cold War.¹⁴ Suspected communists were subject to exile and forced labour on Buru island.

Over its three-decade long rule, the New Order committed multiple cases of subsequent gross violations of human rights and suppression of critics. Suharto's regime targeted Islamists (Tanjung Priok 1984; Talangsari 1989), criminal gangs (Mysterious Killings, Petrus, 1980s), journalists and activists (students, labour organizers) and critics, many of whom were killed or disappeared. The military was particularly brutal on the nation's peripheries as it extracted resources, especially in Aceh¹⁵ and Papua. Neighbouring East Timor was violently annexed in 1974 and remained under occupation for 26 years.¹⁶ Suharto's rule yielded rich dividends for international corporations fuelled by resource extraction and implemented modernization and development to create a depoliticized population and class of oligarchs as well as a widespread system of corruption. The New Order regime relied on propaganda and bureaucracy to enforce social stigmatization and maintain the illusion that it upheld the rule of law.

Enduring and affectively powerful state-produced official school histories, films and policies say Suharto took power after a supposed coup attempt by suspected members of what it described as the treacherous and atheist Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI). The anti-PKI propaganda, especially its logic of vigilance against threatening others (communists initially, but applied also to other groups), was designed to cultivate visceral disgust and fear.¹⁷ The narratives were enforced through discriminating policies and pseudo legal means under the New Order and in some cases into the present.¹⁸ Neighbours, families and communities were enrolled in and benefitted from practices of stigmatization enforced through official institutions and social interactions. Affectively powerful state propaganda and official histories mobilize the notion that past threats, such as communism, might return in order to keep citizens constantly vigilant. Social and bureaucratic processes of discrimination over decades created widespread economic losses (seizures of property, loss of jobs) and injustice that ramified over generations. These logics were used to target and stigmatize a range of other 'threats' to the state. In the context of the developmentalist New Order state, families and society often shunned individuals who were poor, thus compounding the civil political rights violations into economic injustice and structural violence.

Amidst the Asian financial crisis, Suharto stepped down in a euphoric and celebrated takeover of the parliament by student activists (1998) accompanied by widespread and systematic violence against women who appeared to be of Chinese descent and incineration of urban poor in malls locked by security forces.¹⁹ There were also three separate incidents in 1998–1999 where

the Indonesian Genocide (London: Routledge, 2019); Jess Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–66* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

¹⁴ Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010); Robinson, *supra* n 16; IPT 1965, *supra* n 16.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Drexler, *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the Insecure State* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁶ Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR). *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)* (Jakarta: KPG in cooperation with STP-CAVR, 2013).

¹⁷ Saskia Wieringa, 'Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41(4) (2011): 544–565; Saskia Wieringa and Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, *Propaganda and the Indonesian Genocide: Imagined Evil* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁸ For review of policies, see Robinson *supra* n 16; Wieringa et al., *supra* n 16; Restaria F. Hutabarat, *Stigma 65: Strategi Mengajukan Gugatan Class Action* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia and LBH Jakarta, 2011).

¹⁹ Jemma Purdey, 'Problematizing the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence', *Asian Survey* 42(4) (2002): 605–623; a state investigative commission determined that these riots were the result of coordinated actions by elements of the state, Tim Gabung Pencari Fakta (TGPF, Joint Fact Finding Team), *Laporan Akhir Peristiwa Kerusuhan Tanggal 13–15 Mei: Jakarta, Solo, Palembang, Lampung, Surabaya dan Medan [Final Report on the Incidents of Riots May 13–15: Jakarta, Solo, Palembang, Lampung, Surabaya and Medan]* (Jakarta: Government of Indonesia, 1998).

state agents shot live ammunition at students and protestors, 32 people were killed and close to a thousand injured in the three incidents known as the Trisakti Semanggi 1 and 2 case.

Notable changes followed in this era of reform (*reformasi*) as elites scrambled to demonstrate their distance from their former patron. These reforms included the passage of human rights legislation, ratification of international conventions and covenants related to human rights and resolutions and legislation to establish an *ad hoc* Human Rights Tribunal and a Truth Commission, in addition to a Corruption Eradication Commission and a Constitutional Court.²⁰

Indonesian NGOs have, since 1998, launched numerous campaigns against unresolved cases of state violence classified as gross violations of human rights using the framework of these reforms to address authoritarian era violence and corruption. The National Commission for Human Rights determined that gross violations of human rights occurred in a number of cases²¹ and *ad hoc* tribunals were formed for the cases of massacres of Muslim communities in Tanjung Priok port area by the state forces and for military violence in East Timor.²² And yet, there has been no meaningful accountability and the political field remains dominated by military and political elites and cronies.

In 2014, Joko Widodo (Jokowi) was elected as Indonesia's first President who did not belong to an established political family or have a military background. Jokowi's vision²³ included addressing the legacies of past human rights violations. Despite his election, which some activists interpreted as signalling support for addressing past violence, impunity has persisted and been compounded. Examining Kamisan as a space of transitional justice discloses how cultures of remembrance and accountability are established even in contexts where transitional justice mechanisms have not been effectively implemented.

KAMISAN AS A RESEARCH SITE

My longitudinal engagement with transitional justice work in Indonesia included interactions and observations at key human rights and legal aid organizations in the final years of the authoritarian period and during the reform period, observation of *ad hoc* tribunals and discussions of policy reforms, as well as demonstrations (1998–2003) and early Kamisan actions (2007). When I began an extended period of research on this topic from 2014 to 2019, I explored how the authoritarian era cases were being addressed in the realms of culture, memory, history and law to take stock of two decades of transitional justice efforts. As part of anthropological participant observation, I attended a wide range of discussions, commemorations, creative performances, demonstrations, events and trainings, as well as official hearings at the constitutional court and national symposium. Individuals who had been active in work on past cases since 1998 shared concerns about engaging the 'next generation' and invited me to numerous events

²⁰ Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, *Transitional Justice From State to Civil Society: Democratization in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2020); Petra Stockmann, *Indonesian Reformasi as Reflected in Law: Change and Continuity in Post-Suharto-Era Legislation on the Political System and Human Rights* (Hamburg: Institut für Politische Wissenschaft, Universität Hamburg, 2004); Bivitri Susanti, 'Constitution and Human Rights Provisions in Indonesia: An Unfinished Task in the Transitional Process,' in *Constitutions & Human Rights in a Global Age: An Asia-Pacific Perspective*, ed. Tessa Morris-Suzuki (Canberra: The Australian National University, 2003), 5–14.

²¹ The unresolved cases include: the 1965 massacre; Petrus, or Mysterious Killings of alleged criminals in the 1980s; 1989 Talangari massacre in Lampung, Forced Disappearance of anti Suharto activists 1996–present; Trisakti, Semanggi I and Semanggi II student shootings (1998–1999); May 1998 Riots; Wasior and Wamena violence in Papua (2002–2003). Komnas HAM (National Human Rights Commission) continues to investigate other past and ongoing cases to determine which ones qualify as gross violations.

²² Only the East Timor and Tanjung Priok cases have been prosecuted. For critical evaluation of the *ad hoc* trials, see David Cohen, *Intended to Fail: The Trials Before the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court in Jakarta* (New York: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2003); Susan Harris-Rimmer, *Gender and Transitional Justice: The Women of East Timor* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); Author.

²³ Nawa Cita. For all nine points, see <https://kominfo.go.id/index.php/content/detail/S629/NAWACITA%3A+9+Program+Perubahan+Untuk+Indonesia/0/infografis> (accessed 22 June 2022).

designed to attract youth including concerts and human rights trainings. In addition to these special events, attending weekly Kamisans provided an excellent opportunity to gauge participation over time and across networks and cases.

While Kamisan resembles the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo protest in Argentina, and some people told me that was an inspiration, it presents a unique context for analysing issues of performance and temporality. Kamisan creates a unique public space for art and performance in Jakarta. Kamisan is also unique in Indonesia for bringing together victims of the major New Order era cases as well as their consistency over time and the spread of linked actions across the nation.

The initiators recognized the importance of creating solidarity between victims of the different cases of New Order violence. Despite their differences in ideology, they were all victims of the same regime. This was initially difficult, they shared, but has succeeded and now extends beyond the families of direct victims, and Kamisan is now attended by a range of supporters – people from NGOs, students, journalists and visitors from outside of Jakarta. The weekly letters delivered to the President generated an innovative archive of shared citizen concerns over a decade.

A core community of civil society and human rights organizations in Jakarta supports and facilitates Kamisan. A group of older victims often met at Kontras, one of the supporting organizations where they stored umbrellas and a megaphone, on Thursday morning and spent time in the courtyard to younger people and riding together to the action. This created a regular time for informal, extended intergenerational conversations. For anniversaries or other significant weeks, a group of representatives from different cases and organizations usually met in advance to brainstorm themes, slogans and activities. Meetings strengthen networks of organizations and integrate Kamisan into other campaigns against past and ongoing impunity.

Kamisan has now spread from Jakarta to 26 other cities across the archipelago and occurs at 36 different sites (several on different campuses).²⁴ A WhatsApp group connects users across different sites and create networks for sharing images and short videos of actions. Over 13 years and in multiple sites simultaneously, Kamisan has become a stage for new creative work (theatre, comedy, music, dance, visual and graphic) and affective responses to injustice and, in so doing, created new forms of public space and political subjectivities. It includes embodied learning and engagement, interactions with victims of past and present cases and commemorations of past cases, and is a constant to which anyone can show up, experience, engage, learn, connect, reflect, remember and protest injustice.

I attended 37 Kamisans in Jakarta (2015–2019) and some coalition meetings related to numbered Kamisans or commemorations. I often sat with victims and interns at Kontras on Thursday mornings. I reviewed the archive of letters and conducted formal, open ended interviews with organizers (often multiple times throughout this period). I conducted shorter anonymous interviews with individuals participating about their experience at the action and thoughts on the past violence (these were not recorded to preserve anonymity). At Sumarsih's request, I also systematically took photographs of the actions for her to use (without attribution) for documentation and social media. I attended a range of other activities related to past cases as well as Kamisan. Using grounded theory, I analysed these materials to discover emergent themes which were often further discussed with organizers and participants.

²⁴ According to Amnesty International Indonesia, a total of 1,961 Kamisan actions had taken place across these sites as of February 2019.

MAKING SITES OF JUSTICE THROUGH CIRCULAR TIME

Unlike truth commissions and trials, which by definition are backward looking and designed to create official narratives of past events and signal breaks from them by imposing linear temporality,²⁵ creative acts, arts and performance collapse linear time – the past and present – into what I call ‘circular time.’ Doing so manifests the ongoing effects of the past violence in the present. As Laura McLeod, Jovana Dimitrijević and Biliana Rakočević write in the case of Serbia, debates about past violence are ‘not just about the past, or a social memory of the past, but also about the present and the future, how the past is recalled in the future.’²⁶ Theatre especially can make visible the haunting presence of the past and afterlives of multiple forms of injustice, systemic violence and racism.²⁷

Navigating the haunting aftermath of revelations of past state violence and continued impunity can be difficult, not only in legal and political contexts, but also in terms of individual and social affective states, for example, inspiring apathy as one Indonesian writer described.²⁸ In the case of South Africa, Catherine Cole, scholar of English and Dance, analyses the importance of the work of performance artists to address the incomprehensible excess of unresolved histories of apartheid that ‘[surpass] ... our ability to do something productive in the face of them, at least in a linear fashion.’²⁹ Cole emphasizes the value of performance artists in such a context:

As their art disorders the toxic real, they wedge open spaces where necessary new fictions can take root, gestate, and become sentient, living, breathing realities in the now. They invite us to sit with the ruins, the pieces of the past they have salvaged, to dwell in a state of confusion.³⁰

Not only do the performance works at Kamisan link past and present realities and create space for imagining just futures, but standing in solidarity also offers a way for individuals to move beyond apathy or despair and do something.

Attention has been paid to geographic space in transitional justice,³¹ but accessing the space ‘beyond’ transitional justice requires attuning to both the geographic and temporal dimensions of the kinds of spaces that Cole describes. A rich literature analyses the role of geographic space in commemoration and memory activism. Commemorations, especially those occurring at sites of violence, can conform to dominant linear temporalities emphasizing ruptures and consigning discrete instances of violence to the past even as they can educate citizens to prevent repetition in the present.³² Repeated actions at a place selected for its proximity to power can give new meaning to a place as a site not for memorializing the past but for acting in and for the present and future. These repeated actions at a particular location at a specific time create what I call sites of justice.

In Jakarta the geographic space of Kamisan is symbolically linked to the president and nation, and regional organizers select similar sites of power. The site plays an important role in constituting Kamisan as a space beyond transitional justice because it does not focus on victimization,

²⁵ Miller, *supra* n 7.

²⁶ L. McLeod, J. Dimitrijević and B. Rakočević, ‘Artistic Activism, Public Debate and Temporal Complexities: Fighting for Transitional Justice in Serbia,’ in *The Arts of Transitional Justice*, ed. Rush and Simić, vol. 6 (New York: Springer Series in Transitional Justice, 2014).

²⁷ *Ibid*; see also Olivera Simić and Dijana Milosevic, ‘Enacting Justice: The Role of the Dah Theatre Company in Transitional Justice Processes in Serbia and Beyond,’ in *The Arts of Transitional Justice*, ed. Rush and Simić, vol. 6 (New York: Springer Series in Transitional Justice, 2014).

²⁸ Jessica Widartha, ‘Dari Aku yang Kau Sebut Apatis,’ *Ingat 65*, 6 September 2017, <https://medium.com/ingat-65/dari-aku-yang-kau-sebut-apatiss-bfd0715506e8> (accessed 22 June 2022).

²⁹ Cole, *supra* n 13 at 220.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

³¹ Kurze and Lamont, *supra* n 11.

³² Kerry Whigham, ‘Reading the Traces: Embodied Engagement with the Past at Three Former Nazi Concentration Camps,’ *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* (2019).

rather it directs attention to the overall problem of ongoing impunity and emphasizes the protestors' agency and the state's responsibility to provide justice and accountability.

Kamisan's repeated sites of justice open up infinite possibilities for interactions between individuals that layer past experiences, memories, present concerns and future hopes. Circular time is inclusive, expansive and extends into the future as long as injustice persists. The sites of justice created by predictable, repeated gathering of anyone who wants to come to the location on Thursday afternoon provide a context for performance and embodied learning, which generates further artwork and images that amplify the action and circulate it to other milieux. These images often inspire other individuals to attend future iterations of the action and extend its reach beyond the weekly circle. Circular time encompasses the sites of justice convened by Kamisan as well as the time individuals spend standing in the circle.

The repeated circle opens up infinite possibilities of what can happen. Hariwi, a millennial age filmmaker creating a documentary on Kamisan, noted in an interview, 'People here [at Kamisan] might say anything.' Comments and reflections may refer back to an authoritarian era case, or ongoing issues in the present that are linked in the action. When Sumarsih asks newcomers to speak at reflection, Hariwi continued,

we don't know what will come out—for example their thesis work has been forbidden on campus, or a mother whose lease has not been honoured by a landlord, or a father whose son was beaten by the security forces in Sumatra. People know about Aksi Kamisan and they come even though it is not clear that they will get any help or resolution, but still they come.

The circle offers a context to connect past violence and injustice with ongoing repression and social injustice in the present.

Many individuals from outside of Jakarta came to the capital to advocate for their cases and often they were turned away at all the relevant state institutions they visited, but they could come to Kamisan and be heard and supported. Young people came to Kamisan to experience protest and to do something in the face of what they had heard about past and ongoing violence. For example, at a well-attended Kamisan on 15 June 2017, a young man from Papua dressed in all black with a traditional Papuan style woven bag under his jacket focused on the importance of being seen and heard: 'I have to stand here [at Kamisan] before I go home to Papua. In Papua we are far and anything can be done to us. We are ignored.' Authoritarian era logics and stigmatization along with anti-Papuan racism make it difficult for violence in Papua to become a galvanizing concern in Jakarta. He continued and emphasized that there were past cases, but that they were also still going on, even as we spoke. The circle links past violence, ongoing political violence and social injustice in the present.

The circle creates sites of justice and opportunities for affective and sensory engagement. A young woman wearing a t-shirt with a dark indigo and white woven ikat shawl around her shoulders came from Medan to protest agrarian issues her community faced; she said that she felt the solidarity of Kamisan and that being there increased her empathy, especially for those in Papua. Another young woman from Medan described her experience and feelings:

This is my first time at Kamisan. I thought I had to be a journalist or researcher to come. We are ordinary ... there is solidarity ... We have to come here because this is a chance [to do something].

Kamisan provides recognition that the state fails to provide. Kamisan inverts the propaganda narrative about the threatening others and the need for constant vigilance for national security. Providing an opportunity to talk to victims develops empathy that decades of propaganda and stigmatizing and polarizing policies have diminished. It provides a way to act by standing in

solidarity with others who have been stigmatized and demanding that the state fulfil its promises and follow its laws. At the same time, it celebrates the repetition of showing up and persevering. The woman who remarked on how Kamisan developed her empathy said, as many others often did, that she was ‘impressed with Sumarsih’s consistency and certainty [konsisten dan yakin].’

COUNTING REPETITION AND CYCLES

In addition to creating sites of justice, circular time emphasizes repetition and consistency through its measures of time which are thematized in actions and visual and performance art-work. Kamisan measures time in two specific ways. Anniversaries of incidents of particular past cases and of the first Kamisan are commemorated during the week in which they occurred. This measure occurs in years and follows calendar dates; for example, 20 years since the Semanggi 1 incident, or 11 years since the first Kamisan action.

Commemorating the anniversaries of disparate incidents of violence that occurred in the same week, but in different years or dates, emphasizes the cyclical nature of past violence and unifies disparate victims. For example, ‘Bloody September’ commemorates the victims of the 1965 genocide and the killing of Muslim protesters in the Tanjung Priok case in 1984. In May, the murder of labour activist Marsinah in 1993, systematic rapes of women who appeared to be of Chinese descent at the end of the New Order in 1998, and the KKA intersection killings in Aceh in 1999 are commemorated together.³³ National holidays and international days of recognition, such as Indonesian Youth Pledge Day, Independence Day and International Women’s Day, are also incorporated into these cycles, linking moments of national pride to past violence and ongoing impunity. The memory work – resisting forgetting (*melawan lupa*) – recalls named cases as moments in a cycle of state violence.

In the second measure of time, each Kamisan is counted and recorded. As of 27 February 2020 the number was 624.³⁴ In the many weeks I attended Kamisan the circle was small and had gaps, but the older victims and Sumarsih were always there. If they were not, it was usually due to health issues, and in smaller conversations news of illness and health concerns were shared. The numbers convey the value of persistence for those who have stood there, facing uncertainty and non-responsiveness by the state. Organizers note the number of Kamisans in their letters to the president, and in graphics circulated on social media that proclaim how many weeks they have been unheard and unseen, or their demands ignored. Kamisans that mark a 100, and notable anniversaries, are usually celebrated by large gatherings, extended by an extra hour, that feature multiple orations, music and drama or pantomime performances and other art installations and activities. Intervening weeks also feature such performances but at a smaller scale.

In the decades since the end of the New Order, there have been multiple efforts to ‘straighten history’ or correct official histories, often by circulating silenced testimonies of those involved in 1965.³⁵ While these efforts have sown some doubts about them, official histories remain powerful in the absence of accountability. At Kamisan, the information presented about cases repeats past statements by the government or officials rather than testimonies from past victims. In drawing on publicly circulated information, Kamisan subtly highlights the problem of complicity and the distance between action and stated ideals, and makes visible the normalization of impunity. A regular attendee said Kamisan was like a pocketbook of history, ‘the dark events of history must be acknowledged ... it is evidence that we are not just fine [*baik baik aja*].’ He continued to

³³ On 3 May 1999 TNI killed 23 civilians protesting violent operations initiated after a soldier went missing in Aceh. Komnas HAM determined this was a gross violations case in 2016.

³⁴ Kamisan does not occur on national holidays and was interrupted by COVID-19 pandemic regulations, but occurred virtually and has resumed in person. Kamisan 726 was on 21 April 2022. Each site keeps its own count.

³⁵ John Roosa, Ayu Ratih and Hilmar Farid, *Tahun yang tak pernah berakhir: Memahami pengalaman korban 65: Esai-esai sejarah lisan* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (ELSAM) with Tim Relawan Untuk Kemanusiaan and Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia, 2004); Aristides Katoppo, *Menyingkap kabut Halim 1965* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1999).

explain the importance of raising awareness of the events because they were a concern of everyone not just those identified as victims. As it 'resist[s] forgetting,' Kamisan engages temporal complexity and ongoing work required to come to terms with the past.

The count of how many times individuals have gathered at sites of justice at the same time to demand an end to impunity connects the past to the present and future in circular time. What could happen to anyone and is happening to many ordinary people across Indonesia has already happened to others. Circular time underscores how the time of waiting, uncertainty, lack of justice and ongoing impunity extends backward and forward. It commemorates anniversaries and also counts the time of impunity in which the state has not acted despite the existence of policies and public statements supporting accountability. At the same time, the action and related artworks and performances create a community in the present and the space to imagine futures where the nation's ideals are upheld and impunity is eradicated.

CELEBRATING REPETITION AT THE 500TH KAMISAN

The 500th Kamisan was spectacular and, as Hariwi the filmmaker reminded me, not at all silent. It demonstrated the momentum of all those weeks in between with the stalwarts present, which amplified the injustice and consistency of the demands. It had embodied activities in addition to performances to affectively engage participants. It occurred on 27 July 2017, coinciding with the 21st anniversary of the 1996 attack on Megawati's PDI-P headquarters, which began the abductions of pro-democracy activists, 13 of whom remain missing.³⁶ This made it a particularly haunting collapse of past and present as the fate of the disappeared and hopes that others would not be disappeared were thematized in activities.

As with other special Kamisans, the gathering started an hour earlier than usual. Rather than the usual megaphone, the 500th Kamisan used sound equipment. A stage was created by a thin red carpet spread on the pavement in front of a standing, printed banner detailing the history and purpose of Aksi Kamisan that would appear in photos taken of celebrity musicians. The cloth covering the concrete barricades was black with white handprinted capital letters that read: '500 Kamisans Only Sweet Promises. Jokowi has almost forgotten.' The first letters of 'almost' (HAMpir) spelt out the acronym for human rights (HAM) and suggested that Jokowi has almost forgotten human rights. Recalling promises made during campaigns that had not yet come to fruition focuses attention on what the President himself had promised he would do and what appeared possible at the moment he was seeking election.

Other slogans made specific demands; for example, to fire Wiranto, who was Minister of Defense and Commander of the Armed Forces in 1998 and is implicated in several of the cases of gross violations. He had been appointed by Jokowi to serve as Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, which included coordinating the response on past cases.³⁷ In pointing to specific appointments that furthered impunity, Kamisan highlighted not only how the past cases became unresolvable, but also what was in the power of the President to do now. In another example of circular time, the past, present and future blur into persistent impunity, reinforced appointment by appointment of alleged perpetrators to positions of power in the present, failed promise by failed promise.

The circle was large and linked stalwarts and curious newcomers. Pak Sigit, the father of one of the students killed at Semanggi 1, attended on his motorcycle with signs that read 'Looking

³⁶ This is one of the 'gross violations' cases that has been investigated and, despite receiving required authorization, an *ad hoc* tribunal has not been formed.

³⁷ Wiranto served as coordinating minister following the National Symposium (27 July 2016 to 20 October 2019); in December 2019 he was appointed as head of the Presidential Advisory Council. In March 1998 Suharto appointed him as Minister of Defense (he continued until October 1999). He has been investigated by the UN for his role in facilitating violence in East Timor during the referendum vote; in addition he has been implicated in human rights violations that occurred in the transition, including shooting the students and other violations in Aceh.

for justice while looking for a living.’ This slogan emphasized not his victimization in the past but his agency in the present and highlighted the ways in which past violence translates into socioeconomic challenges in the present for families of victims. Families of most major cases were represented: the women whose children (dismissed as looters) were incinerated in the mall set on fire by security forces in May 1998; 1965 victims and their family members; the daughter of a victim of Tanjung Priok; and activists from Papua. Many of the student activists from the 1998 generation, including one who worked across the street for Jokowi, and other human rights activists were also scattered through the crowd. Individuals from different cases gave orations, mostly focused on the present. Many of the older victims who attended each week wore commemorative t-shirts of other Kamisans over their regular clothes, materially layering the repetition of their actions on their bodies. The crowd was at least 10 people deep. More than 300 people huddled under shared umbrellas or stood or sat on the ground in black attire, and most were young (approximately in their 20s).

Pantomime artist Wanggi Hoed, who initiated a parallel Kamisan in the nearby city of Bandung, travelled to Jakarta to perform a pantomime and parody focused on President Jokowi. Wanggi appeared as the President dressed in his trademark white shirt and wearing a black *peci* (a traditional cap shaped in a long oval with tall, straight sides). Before he began his pantomime performance, Wanggi started with a short dialogue that mimicked Jokowi’s recent public events, where bicycles were given to those who correctly answered questions. Wanggi, as President, states that he is deaf (echoing the feeling of many of the victims that their pleas have not been heard). He stammers that there were victims in the attack on Megawati’s headquarters, notes that the perpetrators ‘are comfortable, all are comfortable, enemies have become friends in one interest.’³⁸ As the military and political elite closed ranks, it was harder to believe that political processes would yield justice for past cases. The satire emphasized the current power of certain individuals in the present as opposed to the near universal condemnation of their role in violence in 1998.

The performance emphasized the theme of resisting forgetting. Behind the mask, Wanggi continues to read from his phone: ‘Do you remember? I remember, I am the President. I was selected by the people. Because I am for the people not the state apparatus [*aparatus*]:’ One letter to the President from Kamisan had stated that were it not for reform, Jokowi himself could never have been elected as president and because of this he had a responsibility to fulfil the goals of students martyred in 1998. Voicing the sense of many activists that Jokowi and other politicians cared only for their re-election and did not work to follow through on their campaign promises, Wanggi sighs that he should work but he is tired from the campaign. The satire allows audiences to laugh at the President rather than to despair how he has failed to fulfil campaign promises.

Wanggi then moved away from the microphone and dropped the mask to reveal his pantomime appearance: his face covered in white makeup and a black *peci* on his head, he still looked like Jokowi. A large red silk scarf fluttered behind him as he unbuttoned his white shirt and put the red scarf through it and put it behind him. Beneath the white shirt he wore a black t-shirt with a white woodcut print that proclaimed ‘Resolve the Cases of Human Rights Violations’ (*Tuntaskan Kasus Pelanggaran HAM*). He removed his *peci* and his long hair flowed free behind him embodying the look of activists and others who were stigmatized by the regime in the past. He laboured under the weight of dragging the burdens of the white shirt and red scarf behind him. Finally, he laid the red scarf and white shirt under the umbrella stencilled with cases of eviction of the urban poor, an ongoing and acute problem in large cities like Bandung and Jakarta, especially as Jokowi pursued his infrastructure and development agendas.

³⁸ Jokowi’s victory over Prabowo in 2014 was interpreted as a vote for his campaign promises to resolve the past. Activists focused on the past were bitterly divided by their rematch in the 2019 election; while the elite consolidated, civil society remained fragmented.

When we discussed the performance much later, he said that by taking off his shirt and peci he wanted to emphasize that all people are the same in God's eyes. Without the shirt and peci (symbols of Jokowi in his appearance as President), he struggled with his own blood and efforts as an ordinary person for victims' rights, but also to voice injustice itself, which he said created anxiety for all Indonesians. The performance modelled and inspired the efforts that ordinary people must make for justice at the same time that it sought to undermine the stigmatization and marginalization of the urban poor and others that had occurred since 1965. The woodcut illustration on Wanggi's t-shirt recalled the popular leftist artwork of the past as applied to a current issue.

Kamisan draws on the arts for social justice and creates a space for reviving formerly prohibited, politically engaged arts. Rather than focus on victimization, these artistic practices emphasize the struggle for justice. Diyah Larasati, a former Indonesian national troupe dancer and descendant of women stigmatized for their political role in 1965, performed a dance which had been co-opted by the New Order and reconnected it to resistance.³⁹ A popular indie band, Efek Rumah Kaca, played songs with lyrics about the struggle of Kamisan for justice. Kamisan reforges the bond between the arts and justice that was severed in 1965. The art forms at Kamisan engage and disseminate the feeling of justice and hope for change; they also circulate beyond the sites of Kamisan. They provide an affective and fun way for participants to engage in the struggle for memory against impunity.

There were also embodied activities that allowed those attending Kamisan to take part in actions that engaged them more deeply than standing and observing and that would create further images that would circulate on social media. These embodied activities ground participants in the present which differs from the past but requires ongoing struggle to avoid returning to a time where children might be kidnapped. Participants posed for selfies in front of a wooden backdrop that proclaimed 'We will continue to struggle because we do not want our children to be kidnapped, killed or poisoned.' Inserting themselves into a larger 'we' linked to victims challenged practices of stigmatizing and isolating victims. In addition to allowing victims to move 'beyond' their role as victims, this process also created embodied activities in which they were socially moved beyond the status of stigmatized victims. Non-victims could demonstrate that they were not complicit with practices of social stigmatization of victims and celebrate their solidarity on social media.

Another more embodied activity asked participants to literally dirty their hands with the ink normally used by police to fingerprint suspects, and join the struggle by making black handprints (and 'becoming Kamisan') on a metre-wide white cloth with 'I am Kamisan' written in thick letters at the top. Participants added their message and handprints. One read 'Where did you put the corpse of the disappeared activists in 1998?' Jokowi was not president then, but the direct address contracted time and connected him to the victims. Emphasizing the intergenerational aspect of the struggle, and extending it beyond the present into the future, one child-sized set of handprints was captioned 'Small hands remember the past.' Older generations also participated. Ordinary people did not have to be fulltime human rights defenders to participate; they could come, engage in activities, be part of the circle, learn from actual 'agents' of history and be part of an action in the face of the past injustice and betrayals that had been perpetrated by the state.

Another way in which the Kamisan is beyond transitional justice rituals that focus on victimization is that it creates a context for all individuals to practice citizenship by demanding rights for justice and addressing the President. The 500th anniversary event provided opportunities to share demands, experiences and desires directly with the President on a large chalkboard with 'Dear Mr. President' (in English) spelled out on multicoloured fluorescent post-it notes across

³⁹ Diyah Larasati, *The Dance That Makes You Vanish* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xxi.

the top. The black space beneath filled up over the afternoon. Several notes spoke to the importance of ending practices of dehumanization, the ongoing problems of discrimination and a failure to honour the rights of all citizens, including the urban poor, evicted in the name of infrastructure and development, and the LGBTQ community. For example, 'Make those who are marginal part of humanity' (manusiakan marginal) and 'Human rights are for everyone not just a few.' These notes and the rhetoric of humanization that NGOs use in other contexts addresses the repeated practices of stigmatization of marginal groups. The post-it notes were addressed to the President, but they were also something that participants were doing through the action. Many messages reiterated the importance of a judicial solution for past cases and demanded that Indonesia respect the rule of law (in the present).

As daylight faded, small candles like those placed on graves were passed out with small paper squares below to catch the dripping wax, and people leaned together to light candle to candle. Many of those stigmatized in the past, especially the suspected criminals extrajudicially killed in the 1980s, were denied proper burial rights. Lighting candles was a way to mourn the victims and include them in cultural practices that asserted their humanity and inclusion in the community. The aesthetic performances conveyed the problem of injustice for past cases in novel ways to interest an audience that might otherwise have tired of repetitive and seemingly futile demands. The audience, mostly dressed in black, also became part of the action – they had a chance to express their grievances and hopes in writing, take selfies, listen to songs, laugh as the powerful were parodied and lean together feeling the heat as candles were lit and the light passed through the crowd. They were able to do something in the face of knowledge that the state narratives were lies and what they grew up believing was wrong; this betrayal by the state prompted anxiety and apathy in many accounts, but Kamisan provided a way to act in the face of it. The audience for this event was too young to have experienced many of these cases first-hand, which indicates that the struggle had resonance beyond its direct victims and would not quietly disappear as older victims aged and died.⁴⁰ The boring and sparsely attended weeks as well as the spectacular, noisy weeks of Kamisan are both embodied and experiential. In addition to regenerating the movement for the future beyond the direct victims, the count and the celebration of numbered Kamisans also promises consistent actions in the future until the cases are resolved.

REGENERATING MEMORY AND RECLAIMING NATIONALIST HISTORY

Kamisan engages the future by reclaiming past histories and training a new generation of human rights defenders through the repeated opportunity to stand in the circle, to experience demonstrating and to engage with individuals who have been stigmatized by state propaganda. The Legal Aid Foundation and KontraS each offer training programmes for students to become public lawyers and activists, respectively. Both offer an intensive summer training programme in Jakarta. Kamisan is one of the key field trips for these programmes. Often the group of students (more than 30 in each programme each year) will attend one or more Kamisans. Frequently, they make signs to emphasize a particular issue or anniversary. After I delivered a guest lecture on transitional justice to the 2016 cohort, one woman wearing a hijab shared that her grandfather had participated in the killings and was proud of his role. She struggled with understanding her grandfather doing something he thought was right, that she had learned in school histories had saved the nation, but that was now revealed as a genocide. Her cohort made signs that emphasized different unresolved cases for the Kamisan that occurred the day before the 71st anniversary of Indonesian independence (16 August 2016). Her sign did not address

⁴⁰ One student who had been part of the summer institute at KontraS wore a t-shirt that proclaimed 'Our generation is tasked with eradicating the old generation who messed things up [mengacua]—Soe Hok Gie.'

the genocide, but it contained a plea to let the Papuans decide (their relationship to Indonesia) and to end the ongoing violent repression. Supporting Papuans' right to determine their future demonstrated that she rejected the latest iteration of state violence against marginalized communities.

Participation at Kamisan ensures that the human rights and legal aid trainees go forward to do the work with the foundation of seeing victims in their full humanity and learning the details of their individual stories, which includes their current daily struggle, issues of social justice and structural violence as well as legal uncertainty and arbitrary exercise of power by the state apparatus (bureaucrats as well as police/military). The affective exchanges and human bonds supplement legal skills to ensure that the future human rights workers will go forward from a place of caring and humanity that is required to achieve justice for the past cases and to build a nation in which ideals can be realized. Contact with survivors-victims at Kamisan is part of the intergenerational transmission of resistance and the regeneration of critique.

The way that circular time emphasizes the cycle of national holidays and past violence provides an opportunity for Kamisan to directly address nationalist myths and challenge official narratives that justify violence in the past and present. The Youth Pledge Anniversary celebrates the role of youth from across the archipelago in founding the Indonesian nation and struggling for independence against colonial powers. A 2015 Kamisan commemorated the day with a performance by uniformed high school students. A student who attended a talk I gave in Jakarta encouraged me to attend, explaining that every year his school, the Theological Academy Drikarya, coordinated a performance at Kamisan. The students rode their bicycles through Jakarta's busy streets to the action. The time they had invested in preparing for their performance was evident. 'Youth care about human rights' was spelled out in capitals with white tape on the black umbrellas, which were arranged after a silent dance performance in which three students mimed the important contributions youth had made to the nation. The weekly letter was printed in very large format and positioned for all to read. It linked their generation, 'the future continuity of the nation, and the elders along with those brothers and sisters who have become victims and families of victims of human rights violations in Indonesia.' They critiqued commemorations of the youth pledge that did not engage in justice projects in the present and linked their struggle to historical rhetoric and the spirit of the original pledge. The letter stated that in the 87 years since the pledge they have learned deep lessons about the history of the nation and that 'truth and justice are very expensive in this state.' They expressed their hope that past crimes against humanity would not be repeated and then pled:

We hope that Jokowi can become the first president of the nation of Indonesia who is brave enough to resolve a few cases of past human rights violations in this state [*negeri*] so that later, one moment in the future, we can be proud that we once had a president who was brave and on the side of truth and justice.

Highlighting the importance of affect, they move beyond the facts of cases or legal procedures to demand Jokowi demonstrate bravery not through violence but through siding with truth and justice. In contrast to the histories that justify the state violence, the letter detailed consistent failures of the state to follow through on truth and justice. It took a nationalist symbol of pride and transformed it from something nostalgic into something that must be fulfilled in the present and future. The letter and performance emphasized that those standing at Kamisan are the pioneers (*youth, pemuda*) and heroes of the future. Not all Kamisans are this directly historical, but all of them share a pedagogical experience of nationalism and hope for a state that follows through on its ideals.

The New Order blatantly co-opted the political, nationalist symbols, rhetoric and law in Indonesia. The system has been held together by the repeated mobilization of symbols and a pretext of law and democracy to justify and conceal extra-legal and undemocratic practices including routinized violence. Kamisan performs alternative commemorations and exposes the misuse of law. At Kamisan, victims claim the symbols and values of the nation. Each week they stand in solidarity on the side of truth and justice and practise claiming their rights to make demands of the state as citizens.

CONCLUSION: KAMISAN AS A SPACE BEYOND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Victim testimony is central to many transitional justice initiatives, but these initiatives can consign victims to the past even when forms of injustice persist in the present. The context of transitional justice in Indonesia differs significantly. There has been no meaningful accountability for authoritarian era violence. Affectively powerful propaganda and stigmatizing policies remain in effect; many people experience ongoing discrimination into the present. Stories of victimization fail to provoke empathy or remorse. At Kamisan, arts and performance place the focus on ‘eradicating impunity’ and demanding justice, rather than victim testimony. Kamisan’s circular time creates sites of justice where victims and their supporters make visible the persistence of impunity.

Kamisan repeatedly demands justice by specifying particular formal, legal mechanisms. Kamisans detail the failures of institutions and officials to be true to their rhetoric and principles. Over two decades, previous activist efforts to achieve transitional justice in Indonesia have become ensnared in technicalities and strategic evasions of law or machinations of politics and bureaucracy. Kamisan – while seeming to do the same thing, and advocate for the legal resolution of past cases based on victims’ voices – has focused on the problem of impunity and highlighted key elements of how past governance and impunity for violence are visible but perhaps also unseen today.

In the process of repeating this demand for justice for more than a decade, the act of Kamisan has created a space and community, a site for justice, for those consigned to civil death and social isolation in the past (through legal and cultural means) alongside their family members and the next generation. Kamisan does not represent one particular community, rather it has through everyday practice convened an inclusive, open and consistently welcoming community that seeks to bring the ideals of the nation into being in the present. It has done so not by focusing on the stories of suffering that victims have endured but by celebrating their perseverance, the number of times they have shown up at the action, their consistency in advocating for justice and their claims to national ideals. The circle allows those who show up the opportunity to be heard or to listen, to do something in the face of overwhelming impunity, to interact with those who have been and continue to be stigmatized and see them as dignified people rather than menacing traitors to the nation, to laugh together and experience moments of consistency and community.

Kamisan chips away at one of the most powerful elements of New Order impunity: the emotionally powerful narratives of stigmatization and danger that are spread through school curriculum and within families and communities. At Kamisan the stigmatized others are humanized and approachable, and the violence of the past is not justified as a defence against the betrayal of the nation; instead, impunity is exposed as the work of powerholders and the force that corrupts national ideals. National myths and ideals must be struggled for in the present by achieving the Kamisan slogans of eradicating impunity (*hapus impunitas*) and empowering victims (*hidup korban*).

Departing from the time spent standing in the circle, I use circular time to conceptualize how the time of impunity is measured and how repeated, consistent actions engage temporal complexity in embodied and affectively powerful ways. While the protestors may be advocating for a formal transitional justice process, circular time is the opposite of linear temporality that many formal transitional justice processes aspire to in which justice is done to the past in the present to build a new future upon the reclaimed past. Circular time makes visible the compounding consequences of past injustice in the present, exposes and undermines the system of impunity built on affectively powerful narratives that stigmatize victims, and allows victims a role in articulating national values and narratives. Kamisan's circular time demonstrates the power of alternative temporalities in coming to terms with past violence in and beyond transitional justice.