

Pro-Prabowo parties united behind 'zaken' cabinet plan

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Members of the coalition of political parties supporting president-elect Prabowo Subianto appear to have thrown their weight behind his plan to form an enlarged cabinet consisting of politically aligned professionals at the start of his presidency, as the parties put forward their finest talent as potential ministers.

The Gerindra Party, the de facto leader of the coalition, has said Prabowo may install professionals who are affiliated with members of the coalition, in a bid to help him balance the need for competent governance and the pressure to accommodate allies.

Parties in the coalition now suggest that there is a shared understanding between political parties and the president-elect that professionals with political party backgrounds are fit to manage ministries.

"Clean, effective and efficient governance is a priority in [Prabowo's campaign platform of] *Asta Cita*," said Drajad Wibowo, a senior politician of the National Mandate Party (PAN), a member of the coalition.

Drajad told *The Jakarta Post* that there should not be a dichotomy between professionals and political parties when it comes to forming a cabinet, arguing that "there are plenty of experts and professionals who are members of political parties".

On a similar note, the Democratic Party, another pro-Prabowo party, said having professionals sitting in the cabinet would help Prabowo "produce and execute policies effectively".

Having professionals leading the ministries would also help ensure the incoming government can "realize Prabowo's big ideas that we have conveyed to the public in the campaign rallies", Democratic Party spokesperson Herzaky Mahendra told the *Post*.

Herzaky stopped short of commenting on how many Democrats would become ministers but said: "We are of the opinion that Prabowo is the only one who understands best how the composition of the future cabinet should be, who will be suitable and right to have which positions".

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Prabowo reportedly also plans to increase the number of ministries from the current 34 to 44, either by creating new ministries or splitting several ministries into two distinct entities, such as the Public Works and Housing Ministry, the Education, Culture, Research and Technology Ministry and the Environment and Forestry Ministry.

Prabowo has started vetting prospective candidates for his cabinet and is expected to announce the lineup on the day of his inauguration as the next president on Oct. 20.

Other pro-Prabowo parties have put forward their lists of prospective ministers, such as Golkar, the largest party in the coalition.

"Golkar has proposed names to Pak Prabowo. So let's wait [for his decision on] which candidates will make it to the cabinet," Golkar politician Bambang Soesatyo said on Friday.

Aides of Prabowo have said that he is seeking to form a "zaken" cabinet, a term for a cabinet

that features ministers who are experts in their fields, to ensure a more effective government.

But critics are skeptical that Prabowo can assemble an all-technocrat cabinet given the need to reward loyalists, allies and political parties that have supported him throughout his tumultuous political career.

Prabowo's aides later clarified that a professional could in fact come from a political party.

Prabowo spokesperson Dahnil Simanjuntak, for instance, said that the president-elect might not adopt the same model of *zaken* cabinet that was formed by his predecessor in 1957, when first president Sukarno assembled his cabinet consisting of professionals who did not represent any political parties.

Dahnil said in a talk show with Kompas TV that Prabowo wanted to work with professionals, "regardless of whether they are from political parties or not" and that he wanted "to ensure that cabinet members have total loyalty to their duties and toward the President".