

The struggle for justice in Indonesia for those who have lost loved ones "has just started", said a pioneer of the human rights movement in Argentina, Taty Almeida.

"Don't give up," she said Tuesday.

"Look at us, we are old and we are still fighting."

Together with Aurora Morea, 84, they were here at the invitation of the independent Committee for Victims of Violence and Disappearance. Morea's daughter, Susana Pedrini, and Almeida's son, Alejandro M. Almeida, were among the 30,000 victims of forced disappearance in Argentina in the 1970s to early 1980s.

With other women who lost family members, they initiated the movement against impunity, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in reference to the historic plaza in Buenos Aires where they held their weekly protests.

On Tuesday, they took part in a commemoration of Kartini Day in honor of Kartini, who fought for women's rights in Indonesia in the early 20th century, mainly through the educating of girls in Central Java.

The host, Kamala Chandrakirana, chairwoman of the National Commission of Women Against Violence, said today's "Kartini" figures were "women who were victims, but who have become fighters for... human rights, for themselves, their families and their nation".

The Argentinians met with women who had lost husbands, fathers or children.

They included Suciwati, the widow of assassinated activist Munir; Yettie, whose father was among those kidnapped on the night of the Tanjung Priok massacre in North Jakarta in 1984;

Sipon, whose poet husband Wiji Thukul remains among several people missing, and mothers of students shot in May 1998.

Many of the cases remain unresolved, including that of Munir.

Tinneke Rumkabu of Biak, Papua, shared her experience at a press conference. Her hands shaking and her eyes turning red, she described the day when residents raised the flag of the Free Papua Movement.

"It was July 6, 1998. Papua was in military operation area (DOM) status. The military massacred men, women and even children, and threw their bodies into the sea," she said.

The police last said the case was still under investigation. Tinneke added Papuans are stigmatized as separatists every time they spoke of freedom, justice or truth.

"Society even rejects the women who became victims of sexual violence during the DOM period," Tinneke said.

Azriana, the commission's deputy for women's recovery, said justice could not be achieved without greater political will and a strong legal basis.

"The culture of society that can so easily forgive and forget human rights violations are among the factors that hinder the rule of law," she added.

Following their arrival here last Thursday, Morea and Almeida witnessed weekly protests near the National Monument (Monas) park, involving survivors of rights violations, which were inspired by the Argentinian movement.

"We were so emotional," Almeida said through an interpreter.

"On your faces we saw our own, when we started so long ago." **(fmb)**