**Position paper for the Roundtable Meeting in the Tweede Kamer.**

**The Hague, 23 May 2022**

**The Long Line of Colonial Violence**

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There are two perspectives in dealing with the issue of violence during the Dutch recolonization period in Indonesia 1945-1949. First, there is a perspective of understanding  that the violence was a result of the Japanese occupation in Indonesia.  Sutan Sjahrir, the first prime minister of the Republic of Indonesia, wrote the brochure *Our Struggle* at the end of 1945 that presented his arguments about how the Indonesian youngsters, back then in 1945, were influenced by Japanese fascism.

The violence took place in Indonesia during a time of Revolution. Beside, as a kind of day of reckoning towards Indonesian aristocracy and civil servants of all ethnic backgrounds who worked for or with the Dutch East Indies Government, it included violence against five groups of victims: Dutch, Indo-Dutch, Chinese, Ambonese and Manadonese. Among the Indies community in the Netherlands, this violent period is referred to as the "Bersiap Tijd". In Indonesia there are in fact many terms regarding these violent times.

Second, a perspective that comprehend the violence as a result from the colonial era, affected by the unjust system created by the colonial ruler, economically, politically and culturally. As we all know, Dutch colonialism was initially started when the VOC came to the Archipelago for trading activities. These commercial organizations got rights equal to that of a government which allowed them to have their own currency, army and the right to corner and establish trading posts. After the bankruptcy of the VOC in 1799 due to corruption, the Dutch East Indies government gradually annexed the Indonesian archipelago.

The Netherlands carried out its imperialist policy by pacifying several regions in Indonesia. Objects as the evidence of the violent conquest are still being kept in several museums in the Netherlands. Dutch colonialism also created a racial segregation based on *Regeerings Reglement* 1854. Indonesian society was segregated into three group of races: *Europeanen*, *Vreemde Oosterlingen* and *Inlanders*.

When the Japanese invaded Indonesia in March 1942, the colonial power collapsed instantly. As the Dutch government moved to London during the Nazi occupation in the Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies government left Indonesia to set up a government of exile in Australia. However, there is one fundamental difference between Indonesia and the Netherlands being occupied by the fascists. When the Nazis occupied the country in May 1940 The Netherlands was a free country . Meanwhile when the Japanese came in March 1942 Indonesia was a Dutch colony

The Indonesian national liberation movement could freely rise to the stage during the Japanese occupation. The nationalist movement that was suppressed by the Dutch Colonial government found its momentum when Japan overthrew the Dutch colonial rulers. When Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces on August 15 1945, the situation changed quickly. On August 17, 1945 Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declared Indonesia's independence. The Indonesian people, especially the pemudas (youngsters) immediately took the initiative to take power over Indonesia.

That was the time when the Indonesian national revolution began. The Indonesian revolution has always been depicted as a period full of violence. The fact is that the Indonesian revolution was not predominantly about violence. It is also about people being highly motivated to have a better life than it was before. The Indonesian revolution involved many people from various backgrounds: scholars, artists, writers, journalists, diplomats, women, peasants, workers and youth who participated in the revolution in various ways.

This decolonization research has scientifically proved that the Dutch structurally carried out violence against Indonesia, while the violence was sporadically perpetrated by the Indonesians. This research has also addressed the need of the Dutch, especially those who have experienced these periods both personally and commonly, to know what has happened during these violent times.

What does the research mean to me as an Indonesian? There are five things that I can put forward to comprehend the research report. First, the systematic and structural violence that has been committed by the Dutch did not only occur during the recolonization period between 1945-1949. It was deeply rooted in the colonial system  ever since the VOC came to the archipelago, as part of Dutch colonialism and imperialism.

Secondly, the sporadic violence perpetrated by the Indonesian side was also rooted in the colonial period which could be understood as a form of social protest and a symbol of frustration among colonized people. Thirdly, the decolonization research gives us light to shows how the violence was committed by all sides. Therefore, it is very important to teach the young generation in the Netherlands about the dark sides of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia, as it's important as well to share the knowledge about that violence to the Indonesian young generation.

Fourth, the research on decolonization can be seen as a stepping stone for further research toward into colonial violence in Indonesia. Fifth, as we all know, Mark Rutte, the prime minister of the Netherlands, has apologized after a research revealed that the Dutch state condoned the systematic use of extrajudicial executions and torture during the 1945-1949 Indonesian war of independence. However, the apology, with all do my respect to the Prime Minister, apparently is being imbalanced and unequal concerning the position of the Dutch government in 1945 - 1949 that has never recognized Indonesian independence.

The Prime Minister actually apologized to the Indonesian people who at that time were still treated as citizens of the Dutch East Indies, as they were before the Japanese invaded Indonesia, in March 1942. This is of course a good opportunity to convey that there are burdens that are still left behind. History provides a foundation for us to walk into the future. Therefore, the Dutch acknowledgment of Indonesia's independence on August 17, 1945 becomes important as a way of releasing the burdens left behind in the past.