

According to the 1945 constitution, the Indonesian state is based on five principles, known as Pancasila: belief in one supreme God; a just and civilized society; the unity of Indonesia; democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives; and social justice for all the people of Indonesia. All political parties and social organizations must adhere to these five principles.

The constitution of 1945 provides for a presidential system with strong executive power. The country's highest political institution, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), comprises 1 000 members who represent five factions: the Armed Forces, the Functional Development Group (GOLKAR); the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI); the United Development Party (PPP); and regional representatives. The MPR meets at least once in five years to set guidelines of state policy and to elect the president and the vice-president for five-year terms. It will be convened next in 1988.

The president is the highest executive of the state. He heads the government, besides being the head of state. He is assisted by cabinet ministers who are answerable to him. President Soeharto, a retired army general, was appointed acting president in 1967. He was elected as president by the MPR in 1968, and re-elected in 1973, 1978 and 1983.

The House of Representatives (DPR) has 500 members, 400 of whom are elected through general elections and 100 of whom are appointed from the Armed Forces. All members of the DPR are also *ex officio* members of the MPR. The DPR is divided into 11 committees, covering all areas of government. By law, only GOLKAR and the two political parties, PDI and PPP, may contest the elections. GOLKAR enjoyed an absolute majority in past elections. The next general elections will be held in 1987.

Other state organs include the Supreme Advisory Council, the Supreme Court and the State Audit Board.

The People

With 167 million inhabitants, Indonesia is the fifth most populous country in the world, exceeded only by China, India, the Soviet Union and the United States. Approximately two-thirds of the population lives on the island of Java. While the people of Indonesia are