



This commentary was prepared as part of the CSIS Internship Program, through which interns develop an original, evidence-based analysis on a topic relevant to their research interests. The article has been reviewed and approved for publication by a CSIS researcher serving as the author's supervisor.

August 21st, 2026

Why Are Store Managers Trained Like Soldiers?

Five deaths, 32 missed pregnancies, and no independent investigation — the cost of putting a business program under military training.

Allezka Soetadi
Research Intern, CSIS

Koperasi Desa Merah Putih (KDMP) is, on paper, an economic program: village-level cooperatives meant to run stores, warehouses and basic services. In practice, the pipeline that produces its managers runs through the Defense Ministry, not the Cooperatives Ministry. That detail reflects a broader trend of expanding military involvement in civilian institutions. In March 2025, the House of Representatives unanimously passed Law No. 3/2025, revising the 2004 TNI Law and expanding the military's mandate beyond defense into cybersecurity, counterterrorism and a wider range of civilian posts. That expansion of military authority into civilian space is the context in which prospective managers of

village stores ended up completing basic military training at TNI facilities before taking up business roles. This context can also explain why a cooperative-management program has a body count.

Between June 17 and June 26, five young Indonesians died during that training: Yonanda Muhammad Taufiq, Anisa Muyassaroh, Novia Rahmadhani Sihotang, Muhammad Rifki Renaldi Gunawan and Nola Dya Sari. All were civilians recruited through the Sarjana Penggerak Pembangunan Indonesia (SPPI) program to manage KDMP cooperatives. They died of cardiac arrest, heat stroke, tuberculosis and pneumonia complications, within a nine-to-ten-day span inside a program that then ran roughly one month under the Reserve Component (Komcad) track.

A second, less reported, fact surfaced the same week: the Defense Ministry disclosed that 32 participants in the same training were pregnant and had to be sent home mid-program. One had already given birth at the training site before being withdrawn. This raises real questions about what the screening process actually covered before training began. The Defense Ministry has said participants passed medical checks prior to training. If that's accurate, a process that missed 32 pregnancies, and cleared people with cardiac conditions and active tuberculosis, either wasn't testing for conditions that should disqualify someone from physically extreme training, or wasn't acting on results that should have. Neither possibility has been addressed.

The heat stroke deaths raise a separate question about the training itself. The military routinely trains personnel in high-heat conditions with established medical monitoring, precisely because that risk is well understood. Fatal heat stroke in an entry-level program is not an inherent property of physical conditioning, rather, it is what happens when monitoring fails. That points to two investigations the government owes the public: who was cleared to train and why, and whether the training met a safety standard that should have caught a heat emergency before it turned fatal. Neither has happened.

The investigation that exists is run jointly by the Defense Ministry and the Health Ministry. These are the same institutions responsible for the training that failed both these trainees. Imparsial, a civil society coalition on security sector reform, has called for police and Komnas HAM involvement, since a ministry cannot credibly investigate itself. Legal and development expert Hardjuno Wiwoho argues any credible inquiry needs outside participants, published findings, and a reassessment of why civilians managing cooperatives were trained like military reservists at all. Neither has happened.

Compensation has stood in for both. About Rp 92 million reached each family in total: Rp 50 million from the Defense Ministry, plus roughly Rp 42 million from BPJS Ketenagakerjaan. Public reaction fixed on an uncomfortable comparison: the Rp 50 million was smaller than the penalty charged to participants who voluntarily withdrew. PBHI put it plainly: compensation like this cannot be treated as a resolution. A payment settles a family's loss. It does not explain who cleared five people to die.

None of this is settled history. As reported by Kompas Bandung, nearly 29,830 prospective KDMP managers were still completing this pipeline as of mid-July, with placements beginning in early August. Unfortunately, the investigation into what killed five people and endangered dozens more remains unconcluded, unpublished, with no reason given to pause deployment. Indonesia's cooperative program may or may not become the rural economic engine its designers intend; that argument is already being litigated elsewhere over financing and institutional design. But on how this program has been run, it has fallen short of two standards a flagship national program should meet: accountability and transparency. There is no published methodology for how trainees were screened, or why that screening missed 32 pregnancies and cleared people with cardiac conditions and tuberculosis. There is no independent investigation into five deaths, and no timeline for one.

There is also a curriculum problem underneath these failures. On paper, the managerial component is extensive: roughly 90 teaching hours across 12 modules, covering business feasibility, cooperative governance, financial management, marketing and digitalization, with certification from the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP). While it passes as a legitimate business curriculum, it raises the question of why it needs to sit downstream of a Defense Ministry-run national defense component at all. A store manager needs training in supply chain, cash flow and member governance, not a reserve-component legal framework. Indomaret and Alfamart already solve the same problem through their own retail-focused trainee programs, run under commercial oversight with no ministry of defense involved, because managing a small outlet isn't, anywhere, a national security function.

The government should pause further KDMP deployments until three conditions are met. First, an investigation with genuine outside participation, the police and/or Komnas HAM involvement Imparsial has requested, should complete its work and publish its findings. Second, independent medical and safety experts should certify that any revised screening and curriculum are adequate before another cohort trains. Third, the managerial curriculum should move under the Cooperatives Ministry's ownership, dedicated to cooperative governance and business skills, not national defense education. None of this requires years, only treating these as preconditions for deployment, not afterthoughts.

The government owes Yonanda, Anisa, Novia, Muhammad Rifki and Nola, and the 32 pregnant participants sent home mid-training, something more specific than a payment and a shortened program. It owes an honest account of how a business program came to be run like a military one, and an answer to the question underneath that: why does training someone to run a village cooperative require the Defense Ministry at all?

Sources:

UU No. 3/2025 (TNI Law revision):

- [Analisis Penolakan Judicial Review terhadap UU No. 3/2025](#) — UINSA
- [Indonesia: Proposed Military Law Amendments Threaten Rights](#) — Human Rights Watch
- [Revisi UU TNI, Perluasan Pos Jabatan Sipil](#) — Tempo

Deaths timeline and causes:

- [Apa Alasan Calon Pengelola Kopdes Merah Putih Ikuti Latihan Dasar Militer?](#) — Kompas, June 18
- [Terungkap Sebab Kematian 5 Calon Manajer Kopdes Usai Latihan Militer](#) — Kompas, July 2

32 pregnant participants / childbirth during training:

- [32 Peserta Latsarmil Kopdes-Kampung Nelayan Ternyata Hamil, Sudah Dipulangkan](#) — Kompas, June 27
- [Kemhan Pulangkan 32 Peserta Hamil dari Latsarmil Kopdes Merah Putih](#) — RMO
- [Di Tengah Sorotan 5 Calon Manajer Meninggal, Terkuak Ada 32 Peserta Hamil](#) — Viva
- [32 Bumil Jadi Peserta Latsarmil, 1 Orang Melahirkan di Tengah Pendidikan](#) — Jawa Pos

Compensation figures:

- [Kemhan Beri Santunan Rp50 Juta untuk Keluarga 5 Calon Manajer Kopdes yang Meninggal](#) — Kompas.tv, June 27
- [Heboh! Santunan Rp50 Juta Disorot, Disebut Lebih Kecil dari Denda Mundur](#) — Akurat.co

PBHI statement:

- [Keluarga Korban Kopdes Dapat Santunan Rp50 Juta, PBHI: Nyawa Tidak Dapat Dikompensasi dengan Rupiah](#) — Kompas.tv, June 27

Curriculum structure:

- [Ini Materi Manajerial yang Didapat Calon Manajer Kopdes hingga 29 Juli](#) — IDN Times
- [Kemenkop Bekali 29.830 Calon Manajer KDKMP dengan Pelatihan dan Sertifikasi](#) — Antara Jabar

Deployment figure (29,830 managers, August placement):

- [29.830 Calon Manajer Koperasi Merah Putih Digembleng, Pemerintah Kejar SDM Siap Kelola Ekonomi Desa](#) — Kompas Bandung, July 17

Hardjuno and Imparsial quotes:

- [5 Peserta SPPI Meninggal, Hardjuno: Negara Harus Bentuk Tim Investigasi Independen](#) — Harian Terbit
- [Imparsial Minta Polisi-Komnas HAM Usut Kematian di Latsarmil Kopdes](#) — IDN Times