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Populist Politics in Indonesia

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Populist politics burst onto Indonesia's national stage in 2014 during the country's presidential election which pitted two leaders with starkly contrasting styles. Joko Widodo, dubbed a "polite" or "technocratic" populist campaigned against the establishment by portraying himself as an affable "man of the people" and a pro-poor reformer with a track record of getting things done. Prabowo Subianto also campaigned against the establishment but more angrily and bombastically, condemning corruption and economic 'traitors.' More recently, Jakarta's 2016 gubernatorial elections saw a surge of Islamic forces engaging in populist-style politics, organizing mass rallies against the Chinese Christian incumbent and claiming that he had committed blasphemy.