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**NDI MOURNS THE DEATH
OF FORMER INDONESIAN PRESIDENT ABDURRAHMAN WAHID**

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) expressed its condolences today to the family, friends and supporters of former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, who died Dec. 30 at the age of 69.

Wahid, who was known as Gus Dur, became Indonesia’s fourth president in 1999, chosen by the parliament in the nation’s first democratic transfer of power. Prior to entering politics, he served three terms as chair of Nahdlatul Ulama, the world’s largest Muslim organization, where he distinguished himself by pushing for a tolerant, pluralistic and democratic Indonesia.

“Gus Dur provided courageous leadership during a critical period in Indonesia’s transition to democracy,” said NDI Chairman Madeleine K. Albright. “He will be remembered as a strong advocate for democratic reform and religious tolerance as the nation emerged from three decades of dictatorship.”

A longtime friend of NDI, Wahid advocated for a stronger Indonesian position against the repressive military regime in Burma and pressed for pluralism within Indonesia and the broader Muslim world.

“Indonesia has emerged as an increasingly important voice for democracy, the protection of human rights and good governance in southeast Asia,” Albright said. “Indonesia’s leadership in these areas reflects the legacy of Gus Dur.”

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