

The Constitutionality of Simultaneous Elections in The Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 and its Implications for Democracy in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Constitutional Court;
simultaneous elections;
democracy

Article history:

Received 2025-08-29

Revised 2025-09-27

Accepted 2025-10-31

ABSTRACT

General elections, as the primary means of exercising popular sovereignty, form a vital pillar of Indonesia's constitutional democracy. The Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, submitted by the Perludem Foundation, marks a critical judicial review of the constitutionality of the five-box simultaneous election model used in 2019 and 2024. This study aims to examine whether the system aligns with the principles of convenience, fairness, and legal certainty mandated by the 1945 Constitution, and how the Court's decision redefines electoral design in Indonesia. Employing a normative juridical approach combined with case and conceptual analysis, the research focuses on constitutional provisions and relevant electoral laws. The findings reveal that the five-box model undermines the effective exercise of popular sovereignty, weakens political party institutionalization, and disregards the Constitutional Court's prior guidance on electoral simultaneity. Consequently, the study proposes a new framework dividing elections into national and local stages, held at separate intervals to enhance manageability and voter participation. The results underscore the Constitutional Court's role as the guardian of the Constitution in correcting electoral practices that deviate from democratic principles. It concludes that legislative follow-up through simpler and more participatory regulations is imperative to ensure the integrity and sustainability of Indonesia's democratic process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

General elections are a fundamental mechanism for realizing the people's sovereignty as enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The electoral process is not merely procedural but embodies the substantive essence of democracy that guarantees citizens' constitutional rights. One of the most debated issues in recent years concerns the design of simultaneous elections, particularly following the implementation of the five-box system in the 2019 and 2024 general elections. The Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, initiated by the Perludem Foundation, reflects a serious critique of this system. The decision stems from the reality that the five-box model has generated excessive administrative complexity, overburdened election organizers, and diminished voter participation. The high rate of invalid ballots and the declining institutional capacity of political parties serve as clear indicators of systemic weakness. Within this context, the debate over the constitutionality of simultaneous elections has reemerged in both academic discourse and constitutional practice. The Constitutional Court's role as the guardian of the Constitution is thus pivotal in ensuring that electoral governance remains consistent with the principles of justice and democracy.

The controversy surrounding the five-box simultaneous election did not arise in isolation but rather evolved from prior Constitutional Court rulings, particularly Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019. In that ruling, the Court emphasized the need for lawmakers to consider the principles of accessibility, representation, and the integrity of the presidential system. However, until the 2024 elections, these recommendations were largely ignored, reflecting legislative non-compliance with constitutional jurisprudence. This failure resulted in recurring problems such as administrative overload, voter confusion, and the inability of political parties to conduct effective cadre formation. Normatively, such conditions constitute a constitutional injury to civil society and democratic institutions advocating for substantive democracy. Perludem, as the petitioner, argued that several provisions in the Election Law and the Regional Election Law contravene Articles 1(2), 22E, 27(1), and 28D of the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, the debate extends beyond technical administration, reaching the core of popular sovereignty in a constitutional democracy.

The relevance of this issue is amplified by the fact that the five-box system has now been implemented twice with similar outcomes. In practice, it has proven difficult for voters to focus on multiple ballots at once, while election administrators face substantial technical and logistical burdens that heighten the risk of miscounts and delayed recapitulations. Such challenges undermine public confidence in electoral integrity and weaken the institutionalization of political parties, which increasingly rely on financially strong or popular candidates rather than nurturing qualified cadres. Consequently, the five-box simultaneous election model fails to strengthen the presidential system as originally intended. This raises a crucial constitutional question: does this electoral format still align with the principles of people's sovereignty and the ideals of Indonesian democracy?

The problem also highlights doubts about the legislature's ability to reform the electoral system. Experience shows that political parties in the House of Representatives often face conflicts of interest when designing electoral laws, prioritizing short-term political advantage over systemic reform. This underscores the necessity of the Constitutional Court's intervention in setting constitutional boundaries for electoral design. As the *guardian of the Constitution*, the Court holds the authority not only to annul unconstitutional norms but also to interpret statutes in harmony with the 1945 Constitution. Accordingly, this study examines how Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 provides new directions for reforming Indonesia's electoral system, assessing to what extent the ruling addresses substantive democratic challenges and reinforces constitutional democracy.

Beyond institutional considerations, the issue also bears broader implications for the governance of national and regional development. The five-box simultaneous election merely unifies voting schedules without synchronizing the terms of office between central and regional governments. This temporal misalignment often disrupts policy continuity and hampers long-term national development planning. Hence, the proposal to separate national and regional elections with an appropriate time interval becomes increasingly relevant. Such a framework would allow for stronger policy integration, greater

opportunities for party consolidation, and more efficient election management thereby improving voter participation and the quality of democracy.

Ultimately, the core problem in this study lies in the inconsistency between the electoral law and the constitutional principles of the 1945 Constitution. While the law promotes simultaneous elections as an instrument of sovereignty, in practice it undermines democratic substance. This contradiction raises a fundamental constitutional question: to what extent can the Constitutional Court actively shape new normative frameworks to safeguard citizens' constitutional rights? The present research therefore aims to examine the Constitutional Court's position in restructuring Indonesia's simultaneous election system to ensure its alignment with constitutional mandates and democratic needs. Based on this context, several key questions guide this study: (1) Does the five-box simultaneous election model conform to the principles of the 1945 Constitution and strengthen the presidential system? (2) How does Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 address the constitutional challenges of simultaneous elections? (3) Can a model of national and regional elections with a defined time interval serve as a constitutional solution to the flaws of the five-box system? and (4) What role does the Constitutional Court play as the guardian of the Constitution in providing normative interpretation to ensure that elections uphold democratic values?

2. METHODS

This study employs a normative juridical method that focuses on the analysis of positive law through statutory and case-based approaches. This methodological framework is appropriate because the core issue examined directly relates to the constitutionality of legal norms contained in the Election Law and the Regional Election Law, both reviewed under Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. The research primarily uses secondary data complemented by primary legal materials. The primary data consist of official copies of Constitutional Court decisions, while secondary sources include relevant statutes, scholarly books, academic journals, and legal commentaries that discuss electoral constitutionality, the principle of people's sovereignty, and the role of the Constitutional Court as the guardian of democracy.

Data were collected through an extensive literature review, emphasizing the examination of statutory provisions, judicial decisions, and academic interpretations. All collected materials were processed and analyzed using qualitative techniques based on normative interpretation and comparative evaluation. This analytical process involves assessing the relationship between electoral law provisions and the constitutional principles of the 1945 Constitution, as well as evaluating the Constitutional Court's legal reasoning in its decisions. The research did not involve fieldwork, interviews, or surveys; instead, it relies entirely on documentary and library sources to ensure conceptual and doctrinal accuracy. Through this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis that contributes to the academic discourse on constitutional law and offers insights for reforming Indonesia's electoral system in alignment with democratic and constitutional principles.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Constitutionality of the Five-Box Simultaneous Election under the 1945 Constitution

The implementation of the five-box simultaneous election system in 2019 and 2024 raised profound constitutional concerns regarding democratic principles and electoral governance. Designed to synchronize the presidential, legislative, and local elections in one simultaneous event, the system has instead revealed procedural and structural complexities that hinder voters' constitutional rights. The high percentage of invalid ballots exemplifies the failure to uphold the constitutional principle of convenience for voters. Moreover, election administrators faced overwhelming workloads that compromised institutional professionalism and procedural integrity. Although the Constitutional Court had previously emphasized the need for electoral simplicity and

legal certainty in earlier rulings (Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019; Harijanti & Lindsey, 2020), lawmakers failed to implement the Court's recommendations. Consequently, the five-box simultaneous election model appears inconsistent with Article 22E(1) of the 1945 Constitution, which mandates fairness, accessibility, and justice in the conduct of elections.

Normatively, the 1945 Constitution stipulates that elections must be conducted directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly, and fairly. However, the practical execution of the five-box system deviated from these foundational principles. Many voters experienced confusion and fatigue while handling five separate ballots simultaneously an obstacle that contradicts the principle of accessibility guaranteed by the Constitution (Pangalila, 2021). The system also weakened political party institutionalization by incentivizing reliance on financially dominant or popular candidates rather than ideological or programmatic representation (Zalil et al., 2025). Theoretically, simultaneous elections were expected to reinforce Indonesia's presidential system by aligning electoral cycles, yet the empirical outcomes show otherwise. Thus, despite being legally sanctioned, the five-box model fails the substantive constitutional test of democratic integrity.

From the standpoint of strengthening the presidential system, the model also falls short. The intended goal of simplifying Indonesia's fragmented party system was not achieved; instead, party fragmentation persisted and political consolidation weakened (Nurhasim, 2019). The logistical and political complexity of simultaneous elections diverted attention from the presidential race, diluting voter engagement and policy focus. Consequently, political parties struggled to consolidate legislative support, undermining governmental stability. Given the mismatch between design objectives and real outcomes, a fundamental evaluation of the system's constitutionality is warranted. The Constitutional Court therefore plays a vital role in re-examining whether the five-box format aligns with the spirit and intent of the 1945 Constitution.

3.1.1. The Principle of People's Sovereignty

The five-box election system demonstrably undermined the expression of people's sovereignty as guaranteed in Article 1(2) of the 1945 Constitution. The overwhelming number of invalid votes reaching millions nationwide indicates that many citizens failed to exercise their voting rights effectively. The technical difficulty of handling multiple ballots in a limited timeframe deprived voters of clarity in political choice (Haryanto, 2021). Reports from polling stations in 2019 reveal that voters often confused provincial and regency legislative ballots, a clear symptom of overcomplexity. Such barriers directly contradict the democratic ideal that sovereignty should be exercised freely and without obstruction. As a result, the five-box system constrained, rather than facilitated, the substantive realization of people's sovereignty.

3.1.2. The Principle of Legal Certainty

Article 28D(1) of the 1945 Constitution enshrines the principle of legal certainty, requiring that every electoral norm be clear, predictable, and consistently applied. In practice, however, the five-box system generated widespread procedural uncertainty and administrative disputes. During the 2019 elections, the Constitutional Court received over 300 petitions challenging vote tabulations, largely attributed to human fatigue and administrative error (Zalil et al., 2024). A similar trend re-emerged in 2024, when delays in result recapitulation occurred in several regions due to the logistical burden of counting five ballots per voter. The failure of legislators to heed the Constitutional Court's 2019 directive to revise the simultaneous election format exacerbated this uncertainty. Consequently, the five-box system violated the constitutional guarantee of legal certainty by producing inconsistent regulations and unpredictable outcomes (Ichwan, 2022).

3.1.3. The Principle of Electoral Justice

The constitutional principle of electoral justice demands that all voters enjoy equal opportunity and fair treatment in exercising their political rights. Yet, the 2019 elections witnessed the tragic

deaths of numerous polling officers (KPPS) from exhaustion caused by the system's extreme workload (Tempo, 2019). This imbalance in administrative responsibility represents a failure of justice, as the excessive strain undermined the quality of service provided to voters. The 2024 election saw similar logistical deficiencies, with reports of delayed ballot distribution and mismanagement in multiple districts (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2024). Furthermore, voters with disabilities faced significant obstacles in completing five ballots independently, further highlighting systemic inequity. Therefore, the five-box simultaneous election system clearly failed to meet the constitutional standard of electoral justice (Saragih, 2021).

3.1.4. The Principle of Simplicity and Accessibility

While the 1945 Constitution does not explicitly list "simplicity" as an electoral principle, it is inherently tied to the constitutional requirements of direct, general, free, and confidential elections. The five-box system contradicts this implicit standard by overcomplicating the voting process. In 2019, widespread voter confusion was documented, particularly in differentiating between provincial and local legislative ballots. The General Elections Commission (KPU) itself acknowledged that such complexity contributed to a surge in invalid votes (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2019). The 2024 elections reflected the same pattern, confirming that excessive procedural demands hinder electoral participation, especially among citizens with low political literacy (Nurhasim, 2019). Hence, the system fails to uphold the principle of accessibility a cornerstone of democratic elections as emphasized by Norris (2021).

3.1.5. The Principle of Strengthening the Presidential System

The original intent behind simultaneous elections was to reinforce Indonesia's presidential system by aligning presidential and legislative mandates. However, the five-box model failed to realize this vision. Party fragmentation remained high, forcing elected presidents to form oversized coalitions that diluted accountability and weakened opposition (Butt & Lindsey, 2020). This pattern persisted in both the 2019 and 2024 elections, indicating that simultaneous elections neither simplified party dynamics nor strengthened presidential governance. Instead, political parties became overstretched, focusing on multiple candidacies rather than consolidating legislative functions or nurturing long-term cadres (Muhtadi, 2019). Consequently, the system undermined rather than enhanced presidential stability. The Constitutional Court, acting as the guardian of the Constitution, thus bears a critical duty to reinterpret and realign electoral mechanisms with the spirit of Indonesia's constitutional democracy (Isra & Fajlurrahman, 2020).

3.2. The Constitutional Court's Response to the Problem of Simultaneous Election Constitutionality

The Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 represents a constitutional response to the failure of Indonesia's five-box simultaneous election model to realize the democratic principles mandated by the 1945 Constitution. The Court found that the system was excessively complex, failed to provide legal certainty, and caused constitutional harm to both voters and election administrators. In its legal reasoning, the Court emphasized that the principle of people's sovereignty must be realized through an electoral process that is simple, transparent, and easily understood by the public. Accordingly, the Court corrected the electoral design by introducing a new dual-stage format consisting of *national simultaneous elections* and *regional simultaneous elections*. The national stage includes elections for the President, the Regional Representative Council (DPD), and the House of Representatives (DPR), while the regional stage covers elections for governors, regents, mayors, and members of provincial and local legislative councils (DPRD). These two stages are to be separated by an adequate time interval to prevent excessive administrative burdens on voters and organizers. Thus, this decision not only invalidated unconstitutional norms but also provided a constructive interpretation to ensure that future elections align with constitutional principles. The Court's

approach reaffirms its active role as *the guardian of the Constitution* in improving Indonesia's electoral governance (Isra & Fajlurrahman, 2020).

Table 1. Comparison between the Five-Box Election System and the Two-Stage Election Model under Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024

Corrected Aspect	Five-Box Elections (2019 & 2024)	Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024
Form of simultaneity	Five ballots at one time	National simultaneous and regional simultaneous elections
Administrative burden	Extremely high; many KPPS officers died from exhaustion	More manageable due to two-stage division
Legal certainty	Numerous disputes and tabulation errors	Improved certainty with separate regulations
People's sovereignty	High invalid votes; voter confusion	Voters more focused due to fewer ballots
Party institutionalization	Weak; ineffective cadre development	Greater opportunity for political consolidation

The Constitutional Court's considerations were grounded in empirical evidence from the 2019 and 2024 elections. The Court highlighted the extraordinarily high number of invalid votes as concrete proof that the five-box system failed to safeguard citizens' voting rights (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2024). Furthermore, the Court noted the significant number of fatalities among polling officers (KPPS) as evidence of an excessive administrative workload an alarming humanitarian consequence of poor electoral design (Tempo, 2019). The Court also underscored the legislature's failure to comply with its prior ruling, Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, which had mandated the evaluation of the simultaneous election format. By introducing the two-stage electoral model, the Court reaffirmed the constitutional boundaries that lawmakers must respect when formulating election regulations.

This decision thus transcends mere judicial review; it serves as normative and policy guidance for electoral reform. The Court's reasoning demonstrates its evolving role not only as a *negative legislator* that invalidates unconstitutional norms but also as a *positive interpreter* shaping the direction of democratic lawmaking (Butt & Lindsey, 2020). By offering a constitutionally coherent electoral design, the Court seeks to restore the balance between administrative feasibility, democratic participation, and legal certainty.

The implications of Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 are profound. Legislators are now obliged to revise the Election Law and related regulations to conform with the new dual-stage model established by the Court. Without timely legislative follow-up, Indonesia risks repeating the same structural and procedural problems in future elections. Therefore, the parliament must immediately draft technical regulations concerning scheduling, procedures, and the time gap between national and regional elections. The effective implementation of this ruling depends largely on this regulatory realignment.

Under the two-stage structure, voters will be able to participate more consciously, avoiding fatigue and confusion. Election administrators will also experience a more proportionate workload, reducing human error and safeguarding the integrity of the process (Harijanti & Lindsey, 2020). In the long term, this decision is expected to strengthen the legitimacy of elections, improve the quality of voter participation, and enhance the institutionalization of political parties. Ultimately, Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 stands as a constitutional milestone in reshaping Indonesia's electoral system toward greater simplicity, fairness, and democratic integrity.

3.3. The Model of National and Regional Simultaneous Elections with an Interval as a Constitutional Solution

The idea of holding *national simultaneous elections* and *regional simultaneous elections* with a time interval between them represents the constitutional solution proposed by the Constitutional Court in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Under this model, national simultaneous elections would combine the presidential, parliamentary (DPR), and Regional Representative Council (DPD) elections, while regional simultaneous elections would include the selection of governors, regents, mayors, and members of local and provincial legislative councils (DPRD). The two stages would be separated by an interval approximately two years to provide space for political consolidation and effective preparation. This separation enables voters to focus better on their political choices without being overwhelmed by multiple ballots at once. It also reduces the administrative and logistical burdens on election organizers, allowing for a more manageable preparation process. For political parties, the model offers a wider opportunity to conduct cadre recruitment and candidate selection at various levels. The system is considered more constitutional as it aligns with the principles of people's sovereignty, legal certainty, and electoral simplicity guaranteed by the 1945 (Zalil et al., 2025). Moreover, it allows citizens to assess national and regional leadership programs separately, enhancing substantive democratic participation.

The key strength of the dual-stage model lies in its ability to address the weaknesses of the five-box election system. During the 2019 election, hundreds of thousands of ballots were declared invalid as voters struggled to complete multiple ballots simultaneously. By separating elections into stages, the number of invalid votes can be significantly reduced because voters handle fewer and simpler ballots. Similarly, logistical delays and vote-counting errors, which became major issues in the 2024 election, can be minimized. The interval between elections provides time for election administrators to evaluate and correct technical problems identified in the earlier stage before proceeding to the next (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2024). Additionally, this model improves the synchronization of government terms, ensuring that the presidential and regional leadership cycles do not overlap irregularly. This creates legal certainty in planning and implementing national and local development programs. Empirical experiences from other countries show that staggered elections can help balance public attention between national and local political issues, resulting in a healthier democratic process (Reilly, 2021).

From the perspective of constitutional law, the dual-stage model also better reflects the mandate of the 1945 Constitution. Article 22E(2) of the Constitution stipulates that elections are conducted to elect members of the DPR, DPD, President, and DPRD but does not require that all elections occur simultaneously. This interpretation provides the legislature with flexibility to structure elections in stages as long as they are held once every five years. The Constitutional Court affirmed this interpretation, emphasizing that electoral design must conform to the principles of justice and effectiveness (Zalil et al., 2025). Therefore, separating national and regional elections is not merely a technical innovation but also a progressive constitutional interpretation. Since this model originates from a final and binding constitutional ruling, it holds strong juridical legitimacy and can serve as a legal foundation for revising the Election Law. As such, it represents not only a constitutionally valid reform but also a pragmatic solution for Indonesia's democratic framework.

Politically, this model also strengthens Indonesia's presidential system. National elections that focus on the presidency and the national legislature clarify the political alignment between the executive and legislative branches, thereby reducing party fragmentation and easing coalition-building for the elected president (Oktarina, 2024). Meanwhile, separate regional elections enhance the legitimacy of local leaders, allowing voters to evaluate candidates based on their regional competence rather than national political coattails. This helps mitigate the *coattail effect* that was prevalent in the five-box simultaneous elections, improving the quality of local democracy. Political parties will also have more flexibility to prepare qualified local candidates without being constrained

by overlapping national campaign schedules. As a result, both the presidential and decentralized systems can operate in a more balanced and mutually reinforcing manner.

The implementation of the dual-stage election model, however, requires strong legal and administrative readiness. Legislators must immediately amend the Election Law to align with the new constitutional framework established by the Court. The revision should address the scheduling interval, transition mechanisms, and synchronization of presidential and regional terms. Another challenge lies in ensuring adequate budget allocation to finance both election stages without imposing excessive burdens on the national or regional budgets. Nevertheless, the long-term benefits of this model far outweigh the additional financial costs. With proper management, the two-stage election model is expected to be more efficient, just, and democratic. It will also restore public confidence in the electoral process following the difficulties experienced during the five-box elections. Therefore, the national and regional simultaneous election model with a time interval should be regarded as the most appropriate constitutional solution for strengthening Indonesia's democratic system in the future.

3.4. The Role of the Constitutional Court as the Guardian of the Constitution in Interpreting the Electoral System

Over the past five years, the Indonesian Constitutional Court has issued a series of landmark rulings on electoral matters, reaffirming its vital role as the *guardian of the Constitution*. These include Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, which provided normative direction that simultaneous elections must not be seen purely as a technical arrangement but must also uphold the principles of simplicity and effectiveness; Decision No. 80/PUU-XX/2022, which rejected the closed-list proportional system to preserve transparency in political recruitment; Decision No. 114/PUU-XX/2022, which affirmed electoral fairness for voters with disabilities; and Decision No. 85/PUU-XX/2022, which prohibited discriminatory restrictions against former convicts seeking legislative candidacy. Finally, Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 became the culmination of the Court's corrective stance toward the flawed five-box election model. Collectively, these rulings demonstrate the Court's consistent efforts to uphold democratic principles and constitutional integrity. They also signify that the Court's function extends beyond formal judicial review to a proactive constitutional role in shaping Indonesia's electoral policy direction (Butt & Lindsey, 2020).

The Court's consistency across these decisions reveals a progressive interpretative approach toward the electoral system. In Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, the Court reminded lawmakers to design elections that uphold legal certainty; however, this guidance was largely ignored. The Court then reinforced the principle of popular participation in Decision No. 80/PUU-XX/2022 by maintaining the open-list proportional system, ensuring citizens' direct influence in choosing their representatives. Similarly, Decision No. 114/PUU-XX/2022 emphasized the protection of vulnerable groups to prevent discrimination in the electoral process. These rulings collectively indicate the Court's balancing act between legal certainty, justice, and popular sovereignty (Harijanti & Lindsey, 2020). The culmination came with Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, in which the Court instituted a fundamental reform by separating national and regional elections. Through these rulings, the Constitutional Court has demonstrated a dynamic interpretive method that adapts constitutional meaning to evolving democratic needs.

From a comparative standpoint, the Court's responsiveness reflects its engagement with empirical realities. During the 2019 election, hundreds of polling officers (KPPS) died from exhaustion, a tragic fact noted in Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 even though it did not immediately alter the electoral format. In the 2024 election, the high rate of invalid votes further strengthened the Court's reasoning that the five-box system was overly complex. In Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, the Court responded by introducing a two-stage electoral model. Compared to its earlier position in 2019, the Court adopted a more progressive stance in 2024, drawing upon empirical data as evidence of systemic failure. This shift demonstrates that the Court's interpretation of constitutional norms is

not confined to textual analysis but is grounded in social and institutional realities. Thus, the Constitutional Court's interpretive role has evolved into one that is adaptive, empirical, and deeply engaged with democratic practice (Isra & Fajlurrahman, 2020).

Furthermore, the Constitutional Court reaffirmed its authority as *the sole interpreter of the Constitution*, and its decisions are binding on all state institutions. The Court's interpretation goes beyond declaring statutory provisions unconstitutional it also involves formulating new normative frameworks when necessary. A clear example of this is found in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, where the Court not only identified the deficiencies of the five-box system but also prescribed a dual-stage national and regional election model. In doing so, the Court effectively acted as a *positive legislator*, filling legislative gaps to safeguard constitutional democracy (Butt, 2021). Although this role has sparked scholarly debate, it underscores the Court's commitment to constructive constitutionalism ensuring that judicial intervention supports democratic renewal rather than institutional paralysis. Without such intervention, the democratic crisis caused by the flawed electoral system would likely persist. Hence, the Court's interpretive authority is both corrective and creative, ensuring that electoral governance remains aligned with constitutional principles (Asshiddiqie, 2023).

The implications of the Court's role as the guardian of the Constitution are evident in the evolving relationship between the judiciary, legislature, and executive. Through Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, the Court admonished the legislature for its failure to implement previous rulings and compelled it to adopt a new constitutional electoral design. The executive branch was likewise required to adjust administrative and budgetary policies to comply with this model. Consequently, the Court's decision triggered systemic reform across political institutions, transforming it from a mere supervisory body into a driver of constitutional reform. This dynamic function is especially crucial in contexts where legislative bodies are constrained by partisan interests. The Court thus serves as a constitutional counterbalance, ensuring that the democratic trajectory remains faithful to the 1945 Constitution (Harijanti, 2022).

Ultimately, within the past five years, the Constitutional Court has reaffirmed its position as the final bastion for protecting citizens' constitutional rights. Its landmark rulings not only assess the legality of statutes but also address emerging democratic crises. From maintaining the open-list proportional system to safeguarding electoral accessibility for people with disabilities, and finally to reforming the flawed five-box model, the Court has demonstrated steadfast consistency in protecting democracy. This record underscores that the Constitutional Court should not be viewed merely as a judicial institution but as an active guardian of democratic integrity. Through its interpretive and reformist role, particularly in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, the Court has provided both substantive solutions and constitutional direction. As such, its role as the *guardian of the Constitution* remains indispensable in ensuring that Indonesia's electoral system continues to uphold the principles of directness, universality, freedom, confidentiality, honesty, and fairness.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Indonesia's five-box simultaneous election system, as implemented in 2019 and 2024, failed to uphold the constitutional principles of simplicity, fairness, and legal certainty mandated by the 1945 Constitution. The Constitutional Court, through Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, addressed this deficiency by introducing a dual-stage electoral model separating national and regional elections, thereby strengthening democratic participation, reducing administrative burdens, and ensuring greater alignment with constitutional values. This decision reaffirms the Court's proactive role as the guardian of the Constitution and establishes a normative framework for future electoral reforms that are both effective and democratically legitimate.

Acknowledgments: The author expresses sincere gratitude to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia for providing access to official documents that form the foundation of this study, as well as to the academic community whose discussions on constitutional law and electoral reform have enriched this research. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues and reviewers for their constructive insights that contributed to the refinement of this work.

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