

# ‘When They Go Low, We Go Lower’ | The New York Times

By Ross Tapsell

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Will fake news decide Indonesia’s election this week?

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Indonesia , the world’s third-largest democracy, will head to the ballot boxes on Wednesday for a largely unremarkable general election. The two presidential candidates — President Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto, a former army commander — also faced off five years ago. The gap between them on major policy issues has since narrowed, but the president’s lead in polls seems to have widened. Still, the election is noteworthy in one respect: the record deployment of negative campaigning, and sometimes outright disinformation, on both sides.

The two candidates, though nominally quite different, hardly have distinguished themselves from the other on the economy, foreign policy or [even religion](#). Perhaps that’s why their official campaign strategists, the officious operations they tacitly back and overzealous independent supporters together have produced a cocktail of negative ads, fake news and outright hoaxes to create buzz around their man.

[...]

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