



INDONESIA

VISIT REPORT 10-23 MAY 2017

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“TELL THE WORLD THE TRUTH”

An Ahmadiyya representative in Bekasi
See p.7

Cover image: Young men outside the main Islamic Cultural Centre for the Ahmadiyyah community in Indonesia. See p.6

Photo: Giulio Paletta

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indonesia's tradition of religious pluralism is under severe threat, and its reputation as a role-model of a moderate, tolerant and democratic Muslim-majority nation that protects freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is being seriously undermined. Christians, Ahmadiyya and Shi'a Muslims, other religious minorities and moderate Sunni defenders of pluralism are increasingly fearful of the rise of radical Islamism and its influence on politics and society in the country. "We really feel afraid," one group of pastors in North Sumatra told Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) on a recent visit.

CSW visited Indonesia in May 2017, arriving in Jakarta the day after the verdict was delivered in the trial of the former governor of the capital, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, known as Ahok. On 9 May Ahok – a double minority, as an ethnic Chinese and a Christian – was sentenced to two years in prison, on false charges of blasphemy. In April he had lost his campaign for re-election as governor, after his opponent Anies Baswedan used religion as a campaign tool, visiting mosques throughout the city to urge Muslims not to vote for a non-Muslim. Baswedan also built a coalition of support that included some of Indonesia's most radical Islamist groups, including the vigilante Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front or FPI). Ahok had been a popular governor, respected for his improvement of public services, his efficiency and his efforts to tackle corruption. A Jakarta taxi driver summed up the mood with these words: "Ahok is very, very good. The only reason he is no longer governor is because some people do not like his religion".

Many religious minorities and civil society activists see Ahok's high-profile trial and prison sentence as symbolic of rising religious intolerance in Indonesia. "Ahok's case has become a barometer," a representative of the Ahmadiyya community told CSW.

Over the course of a two-week visit CSW had meetings with religious communities and civil society in Jakarta; visited Christian and Ahmadiyya communities facing restrictions on FoRB in Jakarta's suburbs of Bekasi, Bogor, Yogyakarta and Depok; met representatives of religious communities in Bandung, West Java; and visited Medan and Sidikalang in North Sumatra and Yogyakarta in Central Java.

CSW is deeply concerned by the continued closure of churches such as GKI Yasmin in Bogor and HKBP Philadelphia in Bekasi, and the Ahmadiyya mosque in Depok. In Medan, CSW visited St Joseph's Church, a Catholic church which survived an attempted terrorist attack by a suicide bomber in August 2016. CSW met a Christian pastor from Aceh Singkil who had fled his home village after facing numerous death threats, with a price on his head of 100 million Indonesian rupiah (USD7,500). In Yogyakarta CSW was informed that in the days following Ahok's sentencing, a 15-year-old Christian schoolgirl received a telephone call from her best friend, a Muslim girl of the same age. The two teenagers were close friends and studied together at what was described

as 'the most tolerant high school in Yogyakarta', while Yogyakarta itself has had a reputation as the 'City of Tolerance'. Yet the Muslim girl told her Christian friend, "We can no longer be friends." When asked why, she replied, "My god does not allow me to be friends with people like you."

If this occurs in a high school which prides itself on its acceptance of children of all religious backgrounds, in a city known for being tolerant, it is evident that Indonesia now has a serious problem with religious intolerance.

CSW has travelled to Indonesia regularly over the past two decades, and in February 2014 published a major report, *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril – the rise of religious intolerance across the archipelago*.¹ When Joko Widodo was elected President of Indonesia in July 2014 it was hoped that he would make it a priority to address religious intolerance. While he has taken some welcome steps, it is clear that there is much more to be done both by the government, and by the international community, to protect freedom of religion or belief in Indonesia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

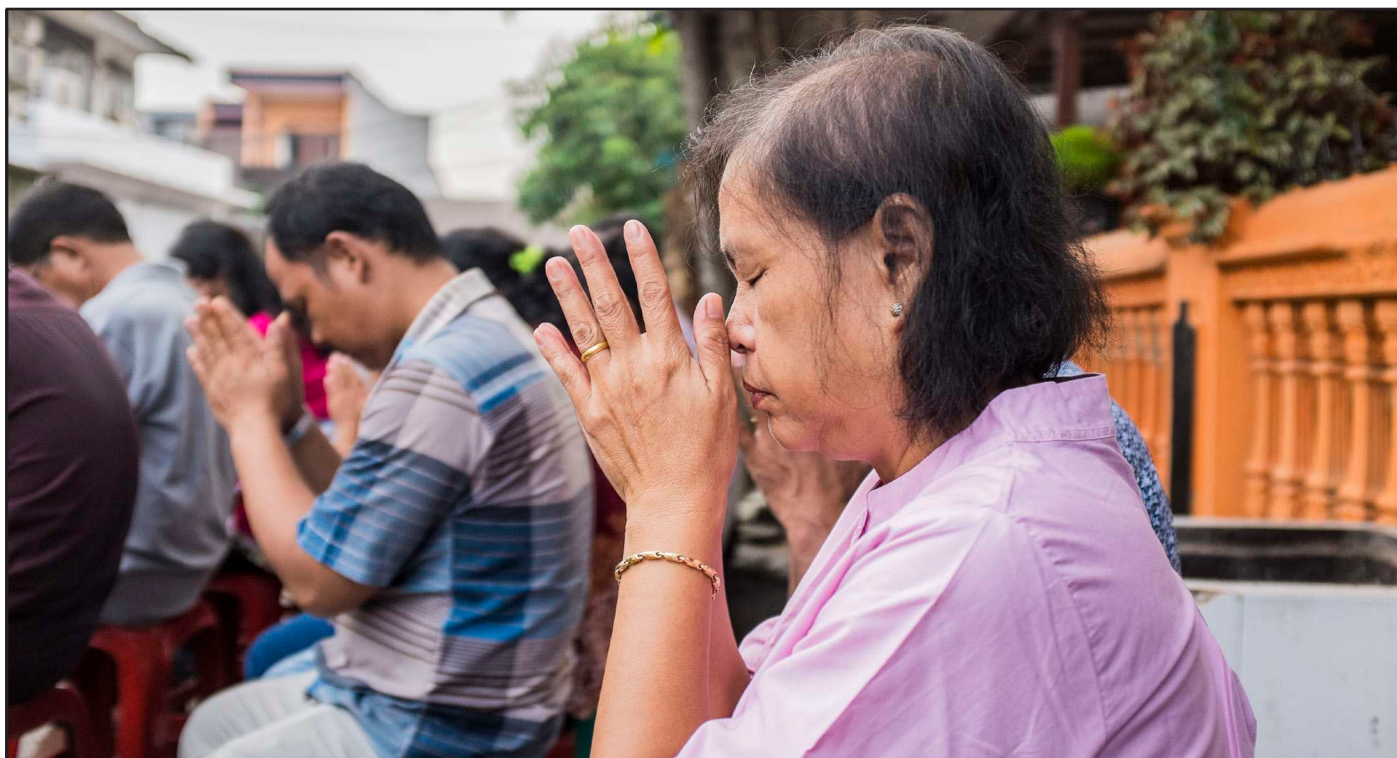
To the government of Indonesia

- Immediately review the blasphemy laws and work towards their repeal
- Immediately review the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya decree and work towards its repeal
- Extend human rights education, including principles of freedom of religion or belief, in the security forces
- Invest further in initiatives to protect and promote the principles of freedom of religion or belief and the Pancasila
- Invest further in initiatives to promote interfaith harmony and dialogue
- Protect and promote the rule of law and the rights of minorities
- Invite the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit the country with unhindered access.

To the international community

- Stop describing Indonesia as a role model of tolerance and, while celebrating Indonesia's tradition of pluralism, speak out more clearly about the threats to freedom of religion or belief
- Urge the government of Indonesia to immediately review the blasphemy laws and work towards their repeal
- Urge the government of Indonesia to immediately review the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya decree and work towards its repeal

¹ Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2014), *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril – The rise of religious intolerance across the archipelago*, www.csw.org.uk/2014-indonesia-report



Prayer during Sunday Holy Mass
Photo: Giulio Paletta

- Urge the government of Indonesia to extend human rights education, including principles of freedom of religion or belief, in the security forces
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- Invest further in initiatives to promote interfaith harmony and dialogue
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- Urge the government of Indonesia to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit the country with unhindered access.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

CSW travelled to West Java, Central Java and North Sumatra, visiting Jakarta, Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, Bandung, Medan, Sidikalang and Yogyakarta, over the course of two weeks in May 2017, for the following purposes:

- To obtain up-to-date, first-hand information and evidence of the situation of freedom of religion or belief in Indonesia
- To consult religious communities and civil society for the purposes of informing international advocacy
- To express solidarity with vulnerable religious minorities in Indonesia.

BACKGROUND TO CSW

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is a human rights non-governmental organisation specialising in freedom of religion or belief; it promotes and defends the right of freedom of religion or belief for all, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. CSW has worked on Indonesia for almost 20 years, and works actively with and for vulnerable Protestant, Catholic, Ahmadiyya, Shi'a, Buddhist and indigenous traditional belief communities, and with defenders of freedom of religion or belief and interfaith harmony of all religious traditions and none. The organisation's primary work is research and advocacy, but it also engages in capacity building through training workshops. CSW is based in London with offices in Brussels and Washington, DC, and partners and affiliates in Hong Kong, Nigeria, Norway, Denmark and the United States. It engages regularly at the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

BACKGROUND TO INDONESIA

With 260 million people, Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation, and the world's largest Muslim-majority population.² A demographic study by the Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project in 2012 concluded that 13% of the world's Muslims live in Indonesia.³ An estimated 87.2% of the population is Muslim, while 7% is Protestant, 2.9% Catholic, 1.7%

² UN Data, Indonesia <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=indonesia>

³ Pew Research, The Global Religious Landscape: Muslims, 18 December 2012 www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-muslim/

Hindu; 1.3% belong to 'other' or 'unspecified' religions, which include Buddhism, Confucianism and traditional indigenous beliefs.⁴

Prior to attaining independence in the early 20th century, there was a split among Indonesian Muslims over whether to ground the Indonesian constitution in Islamic law or pluralism.⁵ President Sukarno, Indonesia's founding father, maintained that religious minorities must have a stake in Indonesia's future. He proposed 'Pancasila' as Indonesia's foundational pluralistic philosophy. It consists of five points:

- Belief in the one and only God
- Just and civilised humanity
- The unity of Indonesia
- Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives
- Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia.

The first principle was a compromise – a recognition that religion has a central place in Indonesian society, but a rejection of an explicitly Islamic state. It was an attempt to satisfy both religious conservatives and secularists. While in some respects it is restrictive, prescribing a belief in a theistic religion and thereby inherently discriminatory towards non-theistic or atheistic beliefs, its intention was to resist the imposition of Islamic law and protect religious pluralism. As the government explains, 'belief in the one and only God' means that 'every Indonesian citizen, no matter which religious denomination or faith they follow, should respect each other's belief for the sake of the harmony and peace of mankind. This Principle contains the precepts of religious tolerance and freedom of all to adhere to the religion or faith of his or her choice.'⁶

Pancasila has historically ensured peaceful coexistence between Indonesia's religious groups, and it formed the basis of the 1945 constitution, which enshrines freedom of religion in Article 28(e):

Each person is free to worship and to practice the religion of his choice, to choose education and schooling, his occupation, his nationality, his residency in the territory of the country that he shall be able to leave and to which he shall have the right to return.

Each person has the right to be free in his convictions, to assert his thoughts and tenets, in accordance with his conscience.

Each person has the right to freely associate, assemble, and express his opinions.⁷

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

In recent years Indonesia's strong and proud pluralistic tradition, rooted in the heart of the constitution, has come under threat. CSW's 2014 report *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril – The rise of religious intolerance across the archipelago* provides detailed background on the situation of freedom of religion or belief and increasing violations over the past decade.⁸ It examines the record of the previous president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, particularly several speeches in which he made remarks which can be interpreted as encouraging radical Islamists; and legislative initiatives which have set the framework for the rise of religious intolerance, namely the 2006 Joint Regulation on Houses of Worship and the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya Joint Decree.

The report also examines abuses of the blasphemy laws set out in Articles 156 and 156(a) of Indonesia's criminal code and in the 1965 Presidential Decree (No. 1/PNPS/1965) on the Prevention of Blasphemy and Abuse of Religions. Furthermore, the report details incidents of violence, abuse, discrimination and restrictions faced by Christians, Ahmadiyya, Shi'a, Buddhists, adherents of traditional indigenous beliefs and others. It concludes that 'Indonesia is at a crossroads, and if responsible actors both within the country and in the international community do not respond to these challenges effectively, Indonesia's pluralism will be in peril.'

Since 2014 the situation has continued to deteriorate, although it is important to note that incidents of severe violence against minorities, particularly the Ahmadiyya, appear to have declined. President Joko Widodo's government should also be commended for a change in tone, attitude and approach compared with the administration of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. President Widodo has distanced the government from radical Islamists, attempted to remove some of the previous government's apparent complicity with intolerant groups, and in recent months announced an intention to ban the activities of the Islamist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir and to establish a presidential unit to strengthen and protect the Pancasila.⁹

Furthermore, there is growing support for grassroots initiatives to promote inter-religious harmony. The Wahid Foundation found a rise in attempts to foster communal

⁸ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2014

⁹ *Jakarta Post*, 'Jokowi inaugurates chief, advisors of Pancasila working unit,' 7 June 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/06/07/jokowi-inaugurates-chief-advisors-of-pancasila-working-unit.html

⁴ CIA World Factbook, Indonesia www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html

⁵ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2014:25-26

⁶ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2014:26-27

⁷ Asian Human Rights Commission, The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945 www.humanrights.asia/countries/indonesia/countries/indonesia/laws/uud1945_en

solidarity;¹⁰ for example, Muslims and Christians in Tual, Maluku, worked together to renovate Al-Huriyah, a local mosque.

Nevertheless, on 10 January 2017 the Indonesian National Commission for Human Rights (Komnas HAM) published a report detailing a steady increase in FoRB violations in recent years.¹¹ The Setara Institute's latest report on FoRB documents 270 incidents of religious intolerance and 208 incidents of violations of FoRB in 2016, an increase on previous years.¹² The Setara Institute also notes that the politicisation of religion, particularly surrounding the recent Jakarta gubernatorial election, has contributed to an increasingly toxic atmosphere for religious minorities.¹³

The present report focuses entirely on the findings from CSW's recent visit to Indonesia. For background information please see CSW's previous reports, in particular *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril*.

THE CASE OF AHOK AND THE BLASPHEMY LAWS

On 9 May 2017 the governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, known as 'Ahok', was found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to two years in prison. This followed his defeat in the final round of the gubernatorial election in Jakarta on 19 April.

The case dates back to 27 September 2016, when Ahok quoted a Qur'anic verse on the campaign trail while addressing concerns that his political opponents may use the verse to discourage people from voting for him as a non-Muslim. He was then falsely accused of criticising the verse itself. Several conservative Islamic groups filed the case against the governor, after his statement went viral via a doctored YouTube video.

On 13 November 2016 Ahok was formally charged with blasphemy, and his trial began on 13 December 2016. An estimated 500,000 Muslims turned up to a number of



A billboard calling for the release of Ahok
Photo: Giulio Paletta

rallies in November and December 2016 to protest his supposed blasphemy.¹⁴

Ahok is a symbol of Indonesia's pluralism. As an ethnic Chinese and a Christian serving as governor of the capital of the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, he was an advertisement for Indonesia's religious and ethnic diversity and tolerance. Furthermore he was a popular and respected governor, with a reputation for tackling corruption and improving public services. Although religion was not the only factor in the attempts to bring him down, his opponents used it as a political tool, campaigning from mosque to mosque on the message that Muslims should not vote for a non-Muslim. Anies Baswedan, who won the election, built a coalition of supporters that includes radical Islamist groups such as the vigilante Front Pembela Islam (FPI), thus empowering and emboldening extremists and providing them with a platform.

Initially, when the verdict was delivered and Ahok was sentenced to two years in prison, he promised to appeal. However, after he received death threats – including from Jafar Umar Thalib, a jihadi who fought alongside Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan – and after his own family was threatened, he announced he would drop the appeal. His sister, Fidy Lety Indra, a lawyer and part of his legal team, had been warned that if he proceeded with an appeal, she could be charged with blasphemy. On 23 May Ahok's wife Veronica Tan read out a handwritten letter from Ahok at a press conference in Jakarta, in which he announced his decision to abandon his appeal against the conviction and sentence, "for the sake of the nation."¹⁵

10 *Jakarta Post*, 'Religious-based discrimination lives on, but more positive initiatives grow: Wahid Foundation', 28 February 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/02/28/religious-based-discrimination-lives-on-but-more-positive-initiatives-grow-wahid-foundation.html

11 *Jakarta Post*, 'Violations of religious freedom increase in 2016: Komnas HAM,' 10 January 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/01/10/violations-of-religious-freedom-increase-in-2016-komnas-ham.html

12 *Jakarta Post*, 'Government inaction creates space for rising intolerance in Indonesia,' 1 February 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/02/01/government-inaction-creates-space-for-rising-intolerance-in-indonesia-.html

13 Setara Institute, 'Intolerance Supremacy: The report of Condition of Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Minorities in Indonesia in 2016,' January 2017 <http://setara-institute.org/en/>

14 *Jakarta Post*, 'Anti-Ahok rally ends peacefully', 2 December 2016 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/12/02/anti-ahok-rally-ends-peacefully.html

15 *Jakarta Post*, 'Teary Veronica reads Ahok letter on reasons for appeal withdrawal,' 23 May 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/05/23/teary-veronica-reads-ahok-letter-on-reasons-for-appeal-withdrawal.html

Key international actors have condemned Ahok's imprisonment. On 9 May 2017 the European Union issued a statement on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression which called on the Indonesian government, its institutions and people to continue to defend the country's 'long standing tradition of tolerance and pluralism', and noted that 'laws that criminalize blasphemy when applied in a discriminatory manner can have a serious inhibiting effect on freedom of expression and on freedom of religion or belief'.¹⁶

The US State Department urged Indonesia 'to uphold the freedoms of religion and speech' and US Ambassador Joseph Donovan said, "We believe that blasphemy laws anywhere in the world jeopardize freedom of religion, expression, assembly and freedom of the press."¹⁷ ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights also issued a statement expressing concern and called on Indonesia to take steps to counter religious intolerance.¹⁸ The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Asia section tweeted on 9 May: "We are concerned by jail sentence for #Jakarta governor for alleged blasphemy against #Islam. We call on #Indonesia to review blasphemy law".¹⁹ On 10 May the British Ambassador to Indonesia tweeted: "I know Ahok. Admire his wk for Jkt. Believe he isn't anti-Muslim. Praying for BuVero&kids. Leaders must step up to protect tolerance&harmony."²⁰

In a statement on 22 May, the UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief, freedom of opinion and expression and the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, described blasphemy laws as "an unlawful restriction on freedom of expression" which "disproportionately target persons belonging to religious minorities, traditional religions, non-believers and political dissidents".²¹

The three experts described the imprisonment of Ahok as "disappointing" and as a step that will "undermine freedom of religion or belief and freedom of speech in Indonesia". Blasphemy laws, they argued, are incompatible with a democratic society and harmful

to religious pluralism. Ahok's case "illustrates that the existence of blasphemy law can be used to justify intolerance and hate speech". Instead of speaking out against hate speech and violent protests against Ahok, the UN experts said, "the Indonesian authorities appear to have appeased incitement to religious intolerance and discrimination".

Ahok's case is one of a number of recent blasphemy cases. The Setara Institute reports that of the 97 blasphemy cases brought to court since the law was enacted in 1965, 89 of them have been since the fall of Suharto's dictatorship in 1998.²² A lecturer at the prestigious Universitas Indonesia, Ade Armando, was charged in January 2017 for writing on Facebook, "God is not an Arab. Surely God would be happy if His scripture was read in the dialects of Minang, Ambon, China, Hip-hop, blues..."²³ He could face up to 11 years in jail on two charges, under the blasphemy law and the Information and Electronics Transaction Act.

Three leaders of a spiritual movement known as Gafatar (see below) are currently on trial for blasphemy in East Jakarta District Court. For the first time, a prominent Islamist leader, Rizieq Shihab, who leads the FPI, which is responsible for violent attacks on religious minorities and many church closures, has also been charged with defamation of the Pancasila and blasphemy. Rizieq Shihab is one of the most prominent leaders of the campaign against Ahok.²⁴

THE AHMADIYYA

"Tell the world the truth," an Ahmadiyya representative told CSW in Bekasi. "Our hope is that you remind the government of Indonesia that Indonesia is not an Islamic country. We are based on Pancasila. Remind our government that it is not a religious government. Remind our government to protect tolerance and pluralism as the basis for Indonesia. Our country is multi-ethnic and multi-religious."

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community has existed in Indonesia since 1925, and claims a population of approximately 500,000, across 330 branches throughout

16 Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, EU Local statement on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, 9 May 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/indonesia/25799/eu-local-statement-freedom-religion-or-belief-and-freedom-expression-jakarta-9-may-2017_en

17 *Jakarta Globe*, 'US Ambassador Calls on Indonesian Leaders to Speak Out Against Intolerance', 10 May 2017 <http://jakartaglobe.id/news/us-ambassador-calls-on-indonesian-leaders-to-speak-out-against-intolerance/>

18 ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, 'Regional lawmakers alarmed at conviction of Jakarta governor', 9 May 2017 <http://aseanmp.org/2017/05/09/alarmed-at-conviction-of-jakarta-governor/>

19 Twitter, UN Human Rights Asia @OHCHRAsia, 9 May 2017 <https://twitter.com/OHCHRAsia/status/861871089500045312>

20 *Guardian*, 'Protests in Jakarta after Christian governor convicted of blasphemy', 10 May 2017 www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/10/jakarta-protests-christian-governor-ahok-guilty-blasphemy

21 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 'Indonesia: UN experts call for the release of Ahok', 25 May 2017 www.csw.org.uk/2017/05/25/news/3570/article.htm

22 Setara Institute, 'Calls in Indonesia for Repeal of Blasphemy Law', 12 May 2017 <http://setara-institute.org/en/english-calls-in-indonesia-for-repeal-of-blasphemy-law/>

23 Coconuts Jakarta, 'Universitas Indonesia lecturer formally named blasphemy suspect for writing "God is not an Arab" on FB', 25 January 2017 <https://coconuts.co/jakarta/news/universitas-indonesia-lecturer-formally-named-blasphemy-suspect-writing-god-not-arab-fb/>

24 *Guardian*, 'Indonesia police accuse Muslim hardliner of defaming founding president Sukarno', 31 January 2017 www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/31/indonesia-police-accuse-muslim-hardliner-of-defaming-founding-president-sukarno



An Ahmadiyya mosque closed by local authorities and police outside Jakarta
 Photo: Giulio Paletta

the country. The Ahmadiyya consider themselves to be Muslims, but are regarded by some other Muslims as heretical. Since 2005 they have experienced serious violations of freedom of religion or belief, including incidents of violence; and a Joint Ministerial Decree introduced in 2008 by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Attorney General and the Minister of Home Affairs prohibited promulgation of Ahmadiyya teachings. In 2011 the then Minister of Religious Affairs repeatedly called for an outright ban on the Ahmadiyya, and in 2013 the governor of West Java said that there would be no violence against the Ahmadiyya if there were no Ahmadiyya teachings or practices, which he described as “a deviant belief”. The “problem”, he added, “will disappear if the belief disappears.”²⁵

CSW met representatives of the Ahmadiyya community in Bekasi, Depok, Bandung, Yogyakarta and at the community’s national headquarters in Bogor. Although there has been, according to Ahmadi representatives, “some improvement” under the government of President Joko Widodo, intimidation of the Ahmadiyya continues. One representative told CSW that the community now enjoys a good relationship with the Minister of Religious Affairs, other ministers and the Chief of Police in Jakarta, but argued that there is a need for the security forces to receive human rights education so that they can better

protect and respect the rights of religious minorities. Ahmadiyya activities continued to be restricted, with some gatherings prohibited, particularly for the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed. The Indonesian Red Cross has stopped the Ahmadiyya community’s humanitarian work, particularly gathering blood donations. “The root of the problem is the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya joint decree,” said one Ahmadi.

In parts of West Java, threats to the Ahmadiyya have intensified since the governor of the province issued an anti-Ahmadiyya decree in 2011. CSW visited the Ahmadiyya mosque in Depok, for example, which was built in 1993 and existed without difficulties until 2011, when it was forced to close by the local authorities and remained closed until 2014. It reopened in 2015 but continuously closed and reopened. Most recently the local mayor closed the mosque on 23 February 2017, and in May 2017 ordered the worshippers not to conduct prayers or meetings outside the mosque.²⁶

On 4 June 2017 the authorities of Depok City sealed the mosque. “The mayor had the police confiscate the mosque’s CCTV recordings to prove that there had been activity in the mosque recently,” said Ahmadiyya spokesman Yendra Budiana in a press release.²⁷ “The mayor also reported Depok’s Ahmadiyah congregation to

²⁵ *Jakarta Globe*, ‘Another Ahmadiyah Mosque Sealed in West Java’, 7 May 2013 <http://jakartaglobe.id/news/another-ahmadiyah-mosque-sealed-in-west-java/>

²⁶ Asian Human Rights Commission, ‘Indonesia: Discrimination and prohibition of Ahmadiyya Congregations to pray in their Mosque’, 1 March 2017 www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAC-009-2017

²⁷ *Jakarta Post*, ‘Authorities allegedly seal Ahmadiyah mosque in Depok’, 4 June 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/06/04/authorities-allegedly-seal-ahmadiyah-mosque-in-depok.html



Ahmadiyya women at prayer in Bekasi, West Java
Photo: Giulio Paletta

the police for using the mosque as a place of worship.” The mosque was subsequently vandalised on 24 June 2017 by a group who reportedly threw eggs and paint at the mosque.²⁸ The National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) wrote a letter to the mayor of Depok on 27 February 2017, appealing the decision to force the mosque to close. The letter cited the right to freedom of religion or belief, especially the freedom to pray and conduct religious activities, guaranteed in the constitution. Komnas HAM requested a dialogue between the mayor and the Depok Ahmadiyya community regarding the unsealing of the mosque, but so far no progress has been made.

“Our security is disturbed,” said one Ahmadiyya spokesman at the headquarters in Parung, near Bogor. “If we want to hold any religious activities, intolerant groups always disturb us, even if we already have a permit to conduct activities. For daily prayers and office activities at the headquarters, we can run normally, but if we want to conduct larger gatherings such as our annual Jalsa Salana [the formal annual gathering of Ahmadi Muslims], there is always trouble. We always have to move the event to another location. Even when we conduct Friday prayers, the police come to monitor and report on our activities.”

On 9 July 2005 the Ahmadiyya headquarters were attacked and forced to close for three years. “The attack happened during our annual gathering,” one spokesman told CSW. “The attackers wanted to occupy the place and stop the event. People had to evacuate. The attackers threw stones at the people, and some people were

injured. Subsequently, there were other smaller incidents – intruders, robberies. We hope that the situation will be more conducive now, both here at our headquarters and throughout the country. We never conduct activities against the law. If we are attacked, we never confront them, we never attack back.”

CHRISTIANS IN ACEH SINGKIL

In October 2015 Christians in Aceh Singkil regency came under severe pressure, with extremists demanding churches be closed. Violent clashes broke out after a demonstration on 6 October by an Islamic youth group demanding that the local government tear down a number of churches that they claimed had been built illegally without permits. They threatened to tear down the churches themselves if their demands were not met. On 13 October 2015 one man was killed and a church burned down in violent clashes, even though the local government had already agreed to demands by extremists to close 13 churches in the area and force the churches to register for new permits. The authorities also decided to force the Christian community to adhere to a 1979 agreement which stated that only one church and four chapels can be built in Aceh Singkil.

However, the group took matters into their own hands. After the church was burned down, they clashed with Christians at another church. The police and the military were deployed to restore order and President Joko Widodo

²⁸ *Jakarta Post*, ‘Ahmadiyah mosque in Depok vandalized ahead of Idul Fitri’, 24 June 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/06/24/ahmadiyah-mosque-in-depok-vandalized-ahead-of-idul-fitri.html

condemned the attack.²⁹ On 21 October a Protestant Christian Church of Pakpak Dairi (GKPPD) church and a chapel, Undung-undung Katolik Desa Mandumpang, were destroyed by the government.

The organisation Solidarity of Victims of Freedom of Religion and Belief Violence (SobatKBB) stated that the incident in Aceh must not be viewed as an isolated incident, but is the result of discriminative policies against churches which have been applied since 1979. Furthermore, the government's 2006 Joint Ministerial Regulation on Houses of Worship has complicated the question of legality for houses of worship built before 2006. Palti Panjaitan, National Coordinator of SobatKBB, said that the government's focus must not only be on halting the violence but also on conflict resolution and the repeal of discriminative legislation: "Without any serious effort, violence in Aceh will keep recurring. Christians practically live without any protection, which keeps them in fear of further attack and violence."

In May 2017 CSW travelled to North Sumatra to meet pastors from Aceh Singkil. Unfortunately we were only able to meet one pastor, but his testimony is an illustration of the dangerous situation developing in the area.

29 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 'One dead and church burned in Aceh', 15 October 2015 www.csw.org.uk/2015/10/15/news/2815/article.htm

CSW met Pastor A³⁰ in a remote location in North Sumatra. He told CSW that he had been born in Aceh Singkil, and ordained as a pastor in 2006. In 2015, following the attacks on churches, he had to flee because he was receiving constant, numerous and severe threats on social media and on posters erected in the area.

The threats began on 10 October 2015, three days before the attacks on churches began (see above). On 12 October he received a letter and a video from someone who had attended a meeting of extremists who demanded his death. Subsequently an attempt was made to attack him in the street. A price was placed on his head, with a reward of 100 million Indonesian Rupiah (USD7,500) for anyone who captured him, dead or alive.

He was targeted because he was the leader of his denomination, and because he was the only Acehnese-born pastor; he had therefore become a representative of local Christians and a vocal defender of human rights. With the death threats mounting, his denomination decided to evacuate him. His wife and three children, and his parents, were evacuated separately and they were separated for over a week.

"My children were very traumatised," he said. "My daughter was very frightened and asked me many times

30 Name withheld for security reasons.



St Joseph's Church, Medan, North Sumatra
Photo: Giulio Paletta

to give up my ministry." Another pastor confirmed this. "I helped evacuate them. His wife asked many times what the future would hold. She was very frightened. Every time a car comes, she is afraid, wondering whether it is the police or the FPI. They are traumatised."

Pastor A and his family remain in a safe location and have not returned to Singkil. "The threats make me too worried to return," he told CSW. "I feel insecure. My parents are still there and they feel under pressure, worried, because the hardliners spread rumours that I have been killed or kidnapped. The response of the authorities is not reassuring. Our dilemma is if we report such threats to the police, they may provide information to the hardliners. The police might reveal my location to them. Sometimes the government invites me to meet them, but I feel it is threatening."

The pastors in North Sumatra described the atmosphere in Aceh Singkil, claiming that the religious police "control everyone's lifestyle", requiring Christian women, as well as Muslim women, to wear the jilbab (or hijab, headscarf). "Implementation of shari'a is supposed to be only for Muslims," said one pastor, "but in the last three years shari'a has also been targeting Christians, so we really feel threatened. How long should we stay in Aceh, or should we leave?"

On 27 September 2014 Aceh's parliament approved bylaws that extend shari'a to non-Muslims. This has led to a variety of violations of freedom of religion or belief, including mandating lashes for women who dress 'immodestly', people who drink too much alcohol, or have sex outside of marriage.³¹ More than 20 churches and Buddhist temples have been closed since 2012.³² On 13 March 2017 two Buddhists were whipped for gambling.³³

Voices of moderation among Muslims in Aceh have been silenced, the pastors argue. "There are no prominent moderate Muslims left in Singkil," one pastor said. "Every voice against the implementation of shari'a faces difficulties. One university lecturer who criticised the implementation of shari'a and said it was out of date was fired and had to flee. Another lecturer who posted a picture with a dog on Facebook faced a lot of criticism." After Ahok's imprisonment, the pastors told CSW, "We feel really afraid."

NORTH SUMATRA

CSW visited Medan and met Christians and followers of the Parmalim traditional religion. CSW visited St Joseph's Church, which was the target of an attempted terrorist attack by a suicide bomber on Sunday 29 August 2016. A man came to the Catholic Church during Sunday Mass, entering the church from the door on the right-hand side. According to an eyewitness who spoke to CSW, he sat about a quarter of the way down. Ten minutes into the Mass, as the priest was reading the Gospel from the pulpit, the man tried to detonate a bomb. However, the bomb malfunctioned and only set the bomber's own hair alight. As members of the congregation tried to help him put out the fire, he produced an axe and a knife and ran towards the pulpit. The priest ran down the aisle, and the attacker managed to slash his arm, causing the priest to require two stitches. Members of the congregation overpowered the attacker, and then called the police.

The man has been jailed for five years. According to the eyewitness he was a young man, aged about 18, who worked in information technology and had a scholarship to study in Yogyakarta. He lived about two kilometres from the church, and was allegedly inspired to carry out this attack by a similar attack on a Catholic priest, Fr Jacques Hamel, murdered in a church in Rouen, France in July 2016. "If the bomb had worked," said the eyewitness, "it would have blown an area of 10 metres. The church was full, with about 600 people."

In a separate incident, in Tanjung, North Sumatra, a Buddhist woman of Chinese ethnicity known as Meliana is facing blasphemy charges simply for requesting the local Al Maksum Mosque to lower the volume on its loudspeakers when broadcasting Qur'anic recital recordings. According to CSW sources, on 29 July 2016 Meliana asked the owner of a kiosk near the mosque to request the mosque to lower the loudspeaker volume, because her children were sick. It is important to note she was not requesting any change to the call to prayer, but rather to the volume when the Qur'an was being recited.

The mosque agreed to lower the volume, but then someone enquired why, and was told that Meliana had made the request. Through Facebook, the false news was spread that a Chinese woman had asked for the call to prayer, the *azan*, to stop. At midnight that night a mob attacked and burned a Buddhist temple, a Chinese temple and a social care home. They also planned to burn Meliana's home, but a neighbour stopped them because the houses were connected and it would have resulted in many homes being burned.³⁴ Her lawyers say she did not commit blasphemy.

31 *New York Times*, 'As Shariah Experiment Becomes a Model, Indonesia's Secular Face Slips', 12 January 2017 www.nytimes.com/2017/01/12/world/asia/indonesia-sharia-law-aceh.html?_r=0

32 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 2014:57-58

33 *Jakarta Post*, 'Buddhists caned for violating sharia in Aceh', 13 March 2017 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/13/buddhists-caned-violating-sharia-aceh.html

34 *Jakarta Post*, 'Vihara, pagodas burned down, plundered in N. Sumatra', 30 July 2016 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/07/30/vihara-pagodas-burned-down-plundered-in-n-sumatra.html

YOGYAKARTA

Yogyakarta used to be known as the 'City of Tolerance', but without exception everyone CSW spoke to claimed it has long since ceased to merit that title. "The wave of intolerance is very strong in Yogyakarta," said one pastor.

A few days after Ahok's sentencing, a 15-year-old Christian school girl received a telephone call from her best friend, a Muslim girl of the same age. The two teenagers were close friends and studied together at what was described as "the most tolerant high school in Yogyakarta. Yet the Muslim girl told her Christian friend, "We can no longer be friends." When asked why, she replied, "My God does not allow me to be friends with people like you."

If this occurs in a high school with a reputation for tolerance, in a city known for accepting children of all religious backgrounds, it is a sign of how widespread extremism and intolerance has become.

According to one pastor, it is now "almost impossible" to build a new church in Yogyakarta. "Every new church would be rejected by society. Many churches have closed. The intolerant groups monitor church activities. They have spies in churches everywhere, every week. It is very dangerous."

Repairing a church or building an extension or a new building on existing church property is now impossible without permission, the pastor claimed. "The problem is, our church is very fast-growing because there are many students at universities in the city, but they have nowhere to meet and pray in the university. So they come to church. We have 6,000 members. But we are not allowed to repair the church, so eventually the church will fall down."

Even moderate Muslims in the influential Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) organisation are threatened, he claims. "Two months ago at an interfaith meeting with a speaker from NU, the radicals threatened the speaker and asked to stop the meeting. Two of the most respected *kyais* [Islamic scholars] from NU talked about Yogyakarta as a City of Tolerance and the radicals protested and threatened them. If NU, the majority, is in danger, imagine how it is for the minorities."

Some housing complexes are being constructed and reserved for Muslims, according to one source. "Christians are forced to move out," he said.

In December 2016 a radical group came to the Duta Wacana Christian University and objected to a promotional billboard which pictured girls in headscarves. The university, although Christian, is open to students of all religious backgrounds, but the extremists demanded that the billboard be removed. The university conceded and removed the image, even though it had been there for several years.

In 2016 a secular study group known as RausyanFikr ('Enlightenment') came under pressure from radicals because it is led by a Shi'a. RausyanFikr members live in community together and come from a variety of backgrounds including Sunni, Shi'a and Christian; but they had to close down activities when a mob staged protests outside their centre.

Similarly, Al Fatah Pesantren Waria, an Islamic *pesantren* (boarding school) established in 2008 for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community was forced to close in February 2016 when the Islamic Jihad Front (FJI) staged protests.³⁵

GAFATAR

Gafatar (Gerakan Fajar Nusantara), and its affiliated spiritual body known as Millah Abraham, is a religious and social action movement drawing on the teachings of the Abrahamic faiths. Gafatar established a community in West Kalimantan, based on spiritual and environmental values and a desire to be close to nature.

In January 2016 the Minister of Home Affairs ordered the closure of Gafatar in Indonesia, and on 24 March 2016 the government issued a joint decree signed by the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs banning Gafatar, its activities and the propagation of its beliefs.

In January 2016 a mob set fire to nine houses belonging to members of Gafatar in Mempawah District, West Kalimantan.³⁶ Indonesian security forces then violently evicted over 8,000 Gafatar members from West Kalimantan, forcibly detaining them in temporary detention centres before returning them to their hometowns.³⁷ Mobs on standby immediately looted and burned the community's property.

The leaders of Gafatar were convicted and jailed for blasphemy in March 2017 – the founder, Ahmad Moshaddeq, and the president, Mahful Muis Tumanurung, were sentenced to five years each in prison, while the vice-president was jailed for three years. The Setara Institute reports that Gafatar adherents were the victims of more freedom of religion or belief violations than any other religion or belief group in 2016.³⁸

CSW met former Gafatar members in Jakarta and in Yogyakarta. One man and his family left their village to join the community in West Kalimantan in August 2015, but were forcibly evicted and returned home in January 2016. When he returned to his home village,

35 Sky News, 'Transgender Muslim school closed in Indonesia,' 27 February 2016 www.skynews.com.au/news/world/asiapacific/2016/02/27/transgender-muslim-school-closed-in-indonesia.html

36 Amnesty International, Annual Report, Indonesia 2016/2017 www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/indonesia/report-indonesia/

37 Human Rights Watch, Indonesia: Events of 2016, www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/indonesia

38 Setara Institute, 2017:49

the local community, including his own parents, rejected him. His wife tried to start a small shop (*warung*), but the community did not accept it. The family moved to another location and finally to another village where they are accepted, but they continue to be monitored by the authorities. Gafatar members, he claims, were required to submit to retina checks and fingerprints conducted by the Indonesian Automatic Fingerprint System (INAFIS).

The family was forced onto a military ship from West Kalimantan to Semarang, a two-day journey. The nine-year-old daughter suffered extreme dehydration on the ship, and so when they were transferred to a transit camp, the father demanded to take his daughter to hospital. Initially the authorities denied permission but he insisted, and eventually succeeded in securing medical treatment for his daughter. He said many people suffered dehydration on the ship.

CONCLUSION

"It's over for Indonesia's tradition of moderation," said Andreas Harsono, Human Rights Watch's researcher in Jakarta. "In ten years, Indonesia could be Pakistan. No bars, no beer, very limited rights for minorities, and women completely covered, especially in the most conservative Muslim areas. And there might be big violence." Or, in the words of a Christian pastor, "If action is not taken soon to curb the radicals' influence, Indonesia could be the next Syria." To compare Indonesia with Syria today is a very alarmist exaggeration – the two situations are completely different – but for a pastor to even be thinking of making such a comparison is an indication of how concerned many in Indonesia are becoming.

Radicalism, as one person in Bandung told CSW, is "a time bomb". Key positions in local government, national government, the military and the police have been taken or influenced by radical Islamist elements; in forthcoming elections mayors, governors and other local elected officials who are known to be defenders of pluralism will be increasingly vulnerable.

The case of Ahok, both his trial for blasphemy and his defeat electorally because his opponents made an issue of his religion, sets a dangerous precedent. In the words of one source: "The radicals now feel victorious. If this can happen in Jakarta, the most pluralistic area, then other areas such as West Java and beyond will be even worse."

The importance of mayors and governors, and their attitude towards freedom of religion or belief, should not be underestimated. In the case of Santa Clara Church, a Catholic church in Bekasi under construction, the mayor of Bekasi has intervened several times to defend the church's right to construct a new church building, even in the face of regular protests by extremists. CSW has visited Santa Clara Church twice and met the congregation. Similarly the mayor of Bandung has a reputation for championing pluralism and positioning Bandung as a city of tolerance. The influence of such officials is significant, and can be used to positive effect, though at the same time these officials who do defend pluralism are placing themselves in an increasingly vulnerable position.

CSW met the former leader of FPI in Bandung, Syaiful Abdullah, who left the vigilante extremist organisation and now works with religious minorities to promote pluralism, interfaith harmony and counter-extremism. CSW has met Mr Abdullah on several previous occasions. He told us that his own situation has become more restricted, as a growing number of mosques have blacklisted him from speaking about interfaith harmony and counter-extremism.

"In the past I used to receive death threats, but now I receive threats to stop my activities, threats to sideline and silence me. The radicals are spying on me actively," he said. He concluded that President Joko Widodo needs to take a public stand, particularly in defence of the Ahmadiyya and Shi'a. "Be brave. They have no protection. Defend the Pancasila," he said.

Dr Peter Carey, a British academic married to an Indonesian Chinese and living in Jakarta, told CSW that he presented his Indonesian relatives with three possible scenarios to explain the consequences of Ahok's case. "The first – that it's a storm in a teacup, an isolated incident, and we will move on. The second – it's more serious than that, but Indonesia will recover, muddle through, and carry on much as before. The third – that a rubicon has been crossed, the die cast, and the radicals now have the upper-hand," he said. "'It's the third,' they replied, without a moment's hesitation."

The level of fear among religious minorities is palpable. "Christians face pressure from radical groups and in some cases they have lost the courage to worship. They feel afraid," said one pastor in Bandung. The same is true of the Ahmadiyya, the Shi'a and other minorities, and of Sunni Muslim voices defending pluralism. Indonesia's pluralism is very much in peril.

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CSW is a Christian organisation working for religious freedom through advocacy and human rights, in the pursuit of justice.

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