

Indonesia

Visit report, 5-15 August 2018

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Pastor Yonathan Biantoro Wahono
Surabaya Centre Pentecostal Church

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Reverend Gomar Gultom, General Secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia

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Alamsyah M Djafar, Wahid Foundation

Executive summary

Radical Islamist extremism, the politicisation of religion, and identity politics are contributing to a continuing and severe rise in religious intolerance in Indonesia. Despite a long tradition of moderate Islam and religious pluralism, violations of freedom of religion or belief have become more frequent and serious over the past decade. Identity politics and the ‘instrumentalisation of religion’ are becoming more intense, according to the General Secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), Reverend Gomar Gultom. “The seed of radicalisation has spread throughout Indonesia,” he added. Alamsyah M Djafar, a researcher at the Wahid Foundation, agreed. Although many Indonesians still want a moderate, pluralistic society, he said, “If intolerance increases, the threat of radicalism increases, and that will change the face of Indonesia.”

CSW visited Indonesia for ten days in August 2018 and met civil society groups, human rights defenders and religious communities in Jakarta and Surabaya – including the Ahmadiyya mosque in Depok, a suburb of Jakarta, which has been forcibly closed (see p.6); and three churches in Surabaya which had been attacked by suicide bombers three months previously, on 13 May (see p.6). CSW met survivors of the attacks, and we were deeply impressed by their message of forgiveness. According to Father Aloysius Widyawan, a priest at Santa Maria Tak Bercela Catholic Church, the consistent message from all his parishioners was: “We must love others, we forgive the attackers, we do not want revenge.” The mother of two young boys, aged 8 and 12, who died from their injuries, said just two days after their deaths, “I have already forgiven the bombers.”

Vice presidential candidate

CSW was also present in Indonesia when President Joko Widodo announced his choice of Ma'ruf Amin, a 75 year-old conservative cleric, as his vice-presidential candidate in the presidential election in 2019. Mr Amin is the head of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), and had signed the *fatwa* (religious edict) which resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of the former governor of Jakarta, President Widodo's close friend and ally, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (known as Ahok) on charges of blasphemy. Mr Amin was also responsible for other *fatwas* including the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya edict which led to severe restrictions on and violence against the Ahmadiyya; an edict which banned Millah Abraham (or Gafatar), a syncretistic spiritual movement, and led to the evictions of nearly 8,000 members from their farms

in Kalimantan and the imprisonment of three leaders on blasphemy charges; proposals to criminalise homosexuality; and support for female genital mutilation/cutting and for local shari'a laws.

President Widodo's defenders argue that by choosing a religious conservative such as Mr Amin, Mr Widodo has neutralised the religion factor that his opponents would have tried to use against him because he, Mr Widodo, is regarded as very moderate and as a defender of religious minorities and of pluralism. Some would also argue that this choice may prevent violence against minorities during the election campaign, and that in office the president will be able to contain Mr Amin's influence. Others, however, particularly among human rights groups and civil society, regard the choice as dangerous pandering to the hardline voices of intolerance; and believe Mr Widodo's opponent, former General Prabowo Subianto, will not be deterred from playing identity politics. There is concern that by bringing a prominent conservative cleric into the centre of the government, a moderate such as Mr Widodo is unwittingly handing over significant influence to those who promote intolerance. Time will tell.

Government 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 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. Although there have been fewer state-sponsored incidents of closure of places of worship since Mr Widodo took office, according to Reverend Gultom “There has been no justice for old cases.” Indonesia's blasphemy laws continue to be misused, most recently with the case of Meiliana, a Buddhist woman in North Sumatra who was jailed for 18 months for asking a mosque to reduce the volume on its loudspeakers during Qur'anic readings because her child was unwell.² On 25 October 2018 she lost her appeal in the High Court in Medan.³

Societal oppression

But it is within society, among non-state actors, that the most serious threat to freedom of religion or belief lies. CSW was concerned to hear from a foreign scholar, who has lived in Indonesia for more than half a century, an anecdote he was told by a Muslim man. The man asked his 12-year-old son what he had learned at school one day, and his son said, “We learned about *kafir* – infidels.” When the father asked what they had learned, the boy replied, “We learned that they must be killed.”

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

2 *Jakarta Post*, ‘Breaking: Buddhist woman imprisoned for complaining about mosque's speaker’, 21 August 2018 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/08/21/breaking-buddhist-woman-imprisoned-for-complaining-about-mosques-speaker.html

3 UCA News, ‘Indonesia court rejects woman's blasphemy appeal’, 26 October 2018 www.ucanews.com/news/indonesia-court-rejects-womans-blasphemy-appeal/83730

This story is alarming, especially when taken alongside an anecdote CSW heard last year in Yogyakarta from a Christian man who said that his 15-year-old daughter's best friend, a Muslim, had told her that they could no longer be friends. In the aftermath of Ahok's case, this Muslim girl explained, "My God does not allow me to be friends with people like you."⁴ Meanwhile, a recent study shows that nearly 60% of Muslim teachers are intolerant of other religions and highly prone to radicalisation.⁵ News footage showing marching children at a kindergarten in East Java, dressed in black robes and face veils and wielding realistic-looking toy rifles, with the theme 'Fight with the Messenger of Allah to Increase Faith and Piety,' further reinforces concerns about the rise of extremism and radicalisation.⁶

On the other hand, the reaction of many Muslims to the terrorist attacks on churches in Surabaya provides some hope that Indonesia's tradition of moderate Islam and respect for pluralism is not dead. Within hours of the bombings people of all faiths, including Muslims, came to the churches to offer condolences, solidarity and practical assistance. At the Catholic Cathedral in Jakarta that evening two Muslim women arrived at Mass, offering red and white roses, the colours of Indonesia's flag, to the congregation. Such voices need to be strengthened if Indonesia is to recover its reputation for pluralism.

Recommendations

To the government of Indonesia

- Immediately review the blasphemy laws and work towards their repeal.
- Immediately release those imprisoned for blasphemy, particularly Meiliana, the Buddhist woman from Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, jailed on blasphemy charges after enquiring whether the mosque's loudspeaker volume could be reduced.
- 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.
- Urge the government of Indonesia to 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.
- 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 Jakarta and Surabaya, over the course of ten days in August 2018, for the following purposes:

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

Background to CSW

CSW is a human rights organisation specialising in freedom of religion or belief around the world. CSW 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, Confucianists 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 engages regularly at the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

4 CSW (2017), *Indonesia: Visit report* www.csw.org.uk/2017/07/31/report/3648/article.htm

5 *Jakarta Globe*, 'Nearly 6 in 10 Indonesian Muslim Teachers Intolerant; Many Vilify Modern Science: Survey', 18 October 2018 <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/nearly-6-in-10-indonesian-muslim-teachers-intolerant-many-vilify-modern-science-survey/>

6 *Jakarta Post*, "'Jihadi' kindergarten parade raises questions about radicalism within TNI', 21 August 2018 www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/08/21/jihadi-kindergarten-parade-raises-questions-about-radicalism-within-tni.html

Background to Indonesia

With 260 million people, Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation and the world's largest Muslim majority population.⁷ 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.⁸ An estimated 87.2% of the population is Muslim, while 7% is Protestant, 2.9% Catholic and 1.7% Hindu; 1.3% belong to 'other' or 'unspecified' religions, which include Buddhism, Confucianism and traditional indigenous beliefs.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.'¹¹

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):

7 UN Data, Indonesia <http://data.un.org/en/iso/id.html>

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

9 CIA World Factbook, Indonesia www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/index.html

10 CSW, 2014:25-26

11 CSW, 2014:26-27

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.¹²

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 has documented increasing violations of freedom of religion or belief in recent years, most recently in our 2017 visit report.¹³ Our 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.¹⁴ It examines the record of the previous president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, particularly several speeches in which he made remarks which could be interpreted as encouraging radical Islamists; and legislative initiatives which 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 the 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.'

Developments since 2014

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

12 Asian Human Rights Commission, The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945 www.humanrights.asia/indonesian-constitution-1945-consolidated

13 CSW, 2017

14 CSW, 2014

intolerant groups, and last year banned the activities of the Islamist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir and established a presidential unit to strengthen and protect the Pancasila.¹⁵

According to Rev Gomar Gultom, General Secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), there is increasing emphasis on religious identity in society, and in particular in politics, since Ahok's case and especially in local elections in 2018 and ahead of forthcoming presidential elections in 2019. Although there are fewer forcible closures of churches now, there has been "no justice for old cases", he said. Rev Gultom believes the "big tension" is now in the politicisation of religion and the rise of identity politics. "The instrumentalisation of religion in politics is much more intense now," he explained. In the regional elections in 2018 this was seen in many provinces, and was successful in Medan, North Sumatra and West Kalimantan, where the winning candidates were those who used religion very actively. This is detailed in a report by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) entitled *Update on Local Election Results in West Kalimantan and Papua*.¹⁶ In Central Java, East Java and West Java, the candidates who played the religion card did not win but, said Rev Gultom, "They made us worried."

At a discussion hosted by the Setara Institute, civil society groups emphasised the need to distinguish between three categories of intolerance: conservative voices of intolerance, non-violent radicals and violent radicals. There is some overlap between the first two categories, and the distinguishing feature that both non-violent radicals and violent radicals share is a desire to change the system and impose a theocracy on the country. Alamsyah M Djafar from the Wahid Foundation agrees. "Not every intolerant person is a violent extremist," he argues. "People need to be able to see the difference between intolerance and violent extremism. But we also need to remember that if intolerance increases, the threat of radicalism increases, and it will change the face of Indonesia."

There is growing support for grassroots initiatives to promote inter-religious harmony. The Wahid Foundation found a rise in attempts to foster communal solidarity; for example, Muslims and Christians in Tual, Maluku, worked together to renovate Al-Huriyah, a local mosque. The Archdiocese of Jakarta currently has a 'good neighbour' campaign in which its congregations are encouraged to build better relations with Muslims and to strengthen inter-faith harmony. One Catholic priest in Tangerang, near Jakarta, has been particularly successful, building strong relations with the local Muslim cleric who has turned from leading demonstrations against church construction to helping to build churches in a strongly Muslim area. They are building a 'unity in diversity' village together, the Archbishop says.

State vs non-state violations

Nevertheless, according to the Wahid Foundation's new annual report, released in August 2018, while there has been a significant decrease in state-sponsored violations of freedom of religion or belief, there has been a marked increase in violations perpetrated by non-state actors. The Wahid Foundation reported 170 incidents of religious intolerance and violations of freedom of religion or belief perpetrated by non-state actors in 2017, compared with 95 incidents for which the state was responsible.

Acts of intolerance perpetrated by non-state actors mostly involve:

- Hate speech
- Prohibition of religious activities
- Intimidation and threats.

The state is responsible for incidents such as:

- Criminalisation based on religion
- Discrimination
- Restrictions on or closure of places of worship.

Following the case of the former governor of Jakarta, Ahok, Jakarta is now ranked the worst for religious intolerance, according to the Wahid Foundation, with West Java second worst.

According to Alamsyah M Djafar from the Wahid Foundation, the police are taking hate speech more seriously, but there is a challenge in terms of defining hate speech and ensuring impartiality. The Rabat Plan of Action and Resolution 16/19 should be used to guide the police, argues Mr Djafar, particularly in understanding what types of hate speech should be prohibited regardless of who the perpetrator is; what levels of hate speech may be prohibited if used by a person of influence with the capacity to mobilise people; and what should be protected.

The Setara Institute also published its report in August 2018 and documented 136 incidents of violations of freedom of religion in 20 out of the country's 26 provinces. The report finds, as did the Wahid Foundation, that Jakarta has the region with the highest number of violations. In 2018 so far, according to the Setara Institute, there have been 23 incidents, while in West Java 19 have been reported. Yogyakarta also ranks high. Out of the 136 incidents reported by the Setara Institute, only 40 were by state actors, with the majority perpetrated by non-state actors.¹⁷

15 *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

16 Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 'Update on Local Election Results in West Kalimantan and Papua', 16 August 2018 www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/74/Update-on-Local-Election-Results-in-West-Kalimantan-and-Papua

17 Coconuts Jakarta, 'Highest number of religious freedom violations took place in Jakarta so far this year: Setara Institute', 21 August 2018 <https://coconuts.co/jakarta/news/number-religious-freedom-violations-took-place-jakarta-far-year-setara-institute/>

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 Ahmadiyya

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community has existed in Indonesia since 1925 and claims a population of approximately 500,000, across 330 branches throughout 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.”¹⁸

During this visit CSW met representatives of the Ahmadiyya community in Depok, a suburb of Jakarta. CSW had previously visited the Ahmadiyya in Depok in 2017.¹⁹ The Ahmadiyya mosque in Depok 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. 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. On 4 June 2017 the city authorities 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. “The mayor also reported Depok’s Ahmadiyah congregation to 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 it.

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.



The Ahmadiyya community in Depok told CSW that exactly one week before our meeting, 15 officials from the sub-district level government, the district level government, the chief of the sub-district police, the chief of the sub-district army and representatives of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) visited them and ordered them to cease all activities, including prayer. Although the mosque itself has been sealed for over a year, the community had been holding prayers and other meetings in the yard outside the mosque. For Friday prayers the congregation was usually 60-70 people and for big Muslim festivals such as Eid-ul-fitr they could expect over 100. Weekday prayers five times a day were usually attended by about ten people. They were told that all of these gatherings are prohibited. This was the third time local officials had visited the mosque since it was closed in June 2017.

Unlike some Ahmadiyya communities in other parts of Indonesia, the community in Depok has not experienced direct violence so far, although they told CSW that at Eid-ul-fitr in 2017 a mob threw paint and rotten eggs at the mosque and put up anti-Ahmadiyya banners near the market. However, the relationship with their neighbours in the surrounding area is, they say, good. “Our neighbours can park their cars in our yard, and sometimes they give us vegetables. People around here welcome us. If we sacrifice an animal, we share the meat with our neighbours,” one Ahmadi representative said.

Attacks on churches in Surabaya

On Sunday 13 May 2018 three churches were attacked by suicide bombers within minutes of each other, in Indonesia’s second largest city, Surabaya. The attackers were all from one family. CSW visited the three churches almost exactly three months after the tragedy, and learned in detail what had happened.

At 7.15am on Sunday 13 May two teenage boys aged 16 and 18 drove motorbikes at high speed through a red light and into the gate of Santa Maria Tak Bercela Catholic Church, as parishioners were leaving the first Mass and others were arriving for the second Mass, due to start 15 minutes later. The security guard, a Muslim, stopped the motorbike because he was suspicious and removed the backpack from one of the boys; as he did so, a bomb detonated. Six people were killed (three died in the compound, one on their way to hospital and two died a few days later) and over 30 were injured.

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

19 CSW, 2017

The two boys studied at a school nearby, and passed the church every day. The Muslim security guard lost both eyes and legs in the explosion, and later told the priest, "Please forgive me because I was not able to protect the church and the people, and am unable to work again."

Minutes later a woman and her two daughters, aged six and eight, wearing niqabs, arrived at the GKI Protestant church. The security guard there was also suspicious. As the woman and her daughters rushed in he stopped them, and a bomb exploded. According to one account, "There were many bombs strapped to her body, and to her daughters', including a big bomb on her leg." The quick-wittedness of the security guard prevented any loss of life except those of the suicide bombers, although some motorcycles and cars parked nearby were damaged by the blast.

At 7.53am a third church, a Pentecostal congregation, was hit as a man drove a Toyota through the gates, ploughing through people and into the church building, detonating a bomb. According to the pastor, Reverend Yonathan Biantoro Wahono (see cover image), who was standing at the pulpit making announcements after his sermon, he could see a "big red fire and black smoke" and he calmly asked the thousand-plus congregation to evacuate. A further small bomb exploded, and the police, when they came, defused a third.

At the gate, the car hit and killed three people: a 15-year-old boy who had just finished Sunday school; a man who had arrived for the next service; and the security guard, a Muslim, who had worked for the church for 22 years. The 15-year-old boy was run over, but got stuck underneath the car and thus slowed its progress. "He was blown up by the car bomb. All we could find to identify him was his teeth and DNA," the pastor told us.

Five others died of their injuries later, including 64-year-old Tee Suk Tjien and her son Agus Trisno Wiyogo. When CSW visited the church we met Tee Suk Tjien's sister and other relatives. With remarkable dignity and composure, she told CSW, "We were very sad that my sister and nephew died. We lived together in the same house. They were very involved in the church. Suk Tjien sang in the Mandarin choir, ran a sewing business, and was a very patient, very kind person." Eight people in total died.

At the Catholic church Fr Aloysius Widyawan showed CSW an upstairs room which he said had been strewn with blood and body parts flung by the force of the blast. He pointed out windows that had been blown out, and the icons of St Luke and St John, damaged but not destroyed. Everyone spoke of their shock. "That day was very terrible for us, because Surabaya was a safe city, with many moderate Muslims," Fr Widyawan told us.

Without exception, the message from survivors of these attacks who spoke to CSW was consistently clear: forgiveness. Fr Widyawan said all his parishioners were united in saying, "We must love others; we forgive the attackers; we do not want revenge." Even the mother of two young Catholic boys, Evan and Nathan, aged 12 and 8, who died as a result of their injuries, said just two days after the bombing, "I have already forgiven the bombers. I don't want to cry any more. I know that our Mother Mary also lost her son, Jesus. I forgive." They

had been baptised two years before and had just received their first Communion.

"For the Church, we must forgive - this is our doctrine. But for an individual, like the mother of these two boys, the ability to forgive is about 'faith', not doctrine," said Fr Widyawan. "None of the victims ever asked 'Why has this happened to me?' They just said 'OK, we forgive them, and we pray for the victims.' There was no anger, no criticism of other religions, only forgiveness. It's not about religion, it's about humanity, relationship. Of course they had not conferred with each other. It came from their heart."

The message at the other churches was similar. "We don't understand why this happened, but we continue to teach about forgiveness and love. God's plan is still good," said Pastor Wahono.

The other response was from Muslims and people of other faiths, throughout the country. The Catholic Archbishop of Jakarta, Monsignor Ignatius Suharyo, told CSW about an incident at evening Mass that same day in Jakarta's cathedral, opposite the large Istiqlal Mosque. Two young Muslim women arrived unannounced and began to hand out roses, red and white, the colours of Indonesia, to the congregation in a gesture of solidarity. Fr Aloysius said that in Surabaya, Muslims came to the churches to express condolences and help clear up the wreckage. "Our message: it's about equality, solidarity and unity. Respect for God means respect for other persons," he said. Although the church cancelled the Mass that was due to start soon after the attack and the first afternoon Mass, the 6.30pm Mass that day went ahead, and normal church activities, including daily Mass, resumed the next day.



Conclusion

“Indonesia’s tradition of pluralism can survive only if the military and the police unite to stop extremism and intolerance, and if Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah [the two largest Muslim organisations in the country] stand up. If they do, then I will feel safe.” Those were the words of the Catholic Archbishop of Jakarta, Monsignor Ignatius Suharyo.

Indonesia is at a crossroads. Many Indonesians still cherish the country’s diversity and pluralism and embrace a peaceful, moderate Islam. The work of organisations such as the Wahid Foundation, and the example of the response of many Muslims to the Surabaya terrorist attacks, is evidence of this. However, the voices of moderation and pluralism need to be strengthened if they are to defeat the voices of intolerance and extremism. CSW is concerned that by choosing as a candidate for vice-president a cleric with the record of Ma’ruf Amin, President Joko Widodo is conceding ground to the voices of intolerance and providing a political platform to those who politicise religion and play identity politics.

CSW urges the government of Indonesia to increase its efforts to strengthen initiatives to promote inter-faith harmony, protect freedom of religion or belief for all, and ensure security for religious minorities who are feeling increasingly vulnerable. As President Widodo said in a recent speech, “If the Indonesian people want to remain united, tolerant and care for their fellow children of the nation, then Indonesia is no longer just a name or picture of a chain of islands on a world map, but rather a force respected by other nations in the world.”²⁰ Key to Indonesia’s success is its ability to reject extremism and intolerance, protect the rights of all religious communities and individuals, and return to the path of pluralism.

20 Human Rights Watch, ‘Indonesia President’s Belated Call for Tolerance’, 16 August 2018 www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/16/indonesia-presidents-belated-call-tolerance