

United Nations Special Procedures
Universal Periodic Review
Submission on Indonesia

**Religious Intolerance, Discrimination and Situations of
Extremist Violence in Indonesia**
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Are **BOLDED** in this document; relevant international legal obligations
UNDERLINED.

Pax Christi International is a non-profit, non-governmental Catholic peace movement working globally on issues of human security, disarmament and demilitarisation, human rights and concerns relative to religion and violent conflict. The organisation has held Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC since 1979.

Summary

A disturbing trend towards increasing intolerance, restrictions and violence toward religious minorities has been noted in the Republic of Indonesia. The Setara Institute, which monitors issues of religious freedom in Indonesia, has documented 184 incidents of religious violence in the first nine months of 2011 alone. Despite constitutional protection for the freedom of religion, the Indonesian government has been unable or unwilling to ensure security for religious minorities. Instead it has enabled radicalized groups, such as Hizbut-Tahir Indonesia and the Islamic Defenders Front, to function more freely, thereby contributing to a culture of violence.

The Government of Indonesia's response toward such groups has in recent years been one of accommodation, silence and impunity. This has been most notable in the case of public hate speech and violent actions that have been directed toward the members of the Ahmadiyah sect. Official Indonesian government policy restricts Ahmadiyah activities and is frequently used to legitimize attacks against the community.

Christians have also suffered violence and the denial of protection under the law. New legislation could further compromise freedom for religious minorities and reinforce a climate for extremist violence to take root. Pax Christi International urges prompt and independent investigations into incidents and policies of discrimination against religious minorities in Indonesia and decisive measures to strengthen democratic principles of religious pluralism.

Issue Cluster One and Recommendations

Discriminatory policies against religious minorities
Resurgence of violence perpetrated against particular religious groups

Discriminatory policies directed toward religious minority groups have especially been noted in respect to the Amadiyah sect. According to the Indonesian human rights group Imparsial, there have been at least 56 cases in West Java province in which government soldiers allegedly forced Ahmadiyah followers to convert to mainstream Islam. Soldiers have entered mosques, gathered followers of the sect and ‘forced them to repent and convert to Islam,’ said Imparsial.

The government has denied that forced conversions have occurred, claiming that military actions were only taken to protect members of the sect from extremists. At the same time, the government has prohibited the sect from distributing pamphlets, putting signs in front of their offices and places of worship or wearing anything indicating that they are Ahmadiyah members.

In an especially vivid example of injustice, Indonesian courts handed down suspiciously light sentences for members of an extremist Muslim mob that killed three Ahmadhis on 6th February 2011. The government’s response to these sentences has been decidedly weak. In the face of such impunity, other religious extremists may now be emboldened to follow suit.

Pax Christi International joins other rights groups to urge prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all reports of intimidation. We appeal to national systems of justice to adjudicate these perpetrators. We also urge the UPR Working Group to call upon Indonesia to:

- 1) Address legal, juridical and administrative reasons for continued impunity**
- 2) Take action against unconstitutional religiously inspired acts of aggression—through legislation and due diligence enforcement; this includes:**
- 3) Change laws and practices which contravene the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 18 on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

- 4) Establish national working groups of diverse stakeholders with stringent reporting requirements**
- 5) Send a fact-finding mission, including the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.**

Issue Cluster Two and Recommendations

Hate speech used by politicians and other public figures
Challenges to religious freedoms

Indonesia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion but rights groups say violence against minorities, including Christians and Amadhis, has been escalating since 2008.

There have been reports of Christians being beaten and attacks on churches. Churches have been burned down in Central Java and Riau. A suicide bomber targeted a church in Solo, killing himself along with several churchgoers.

The situation of one particular Christian community in Bogor, West Java, has become emblematic of the growing tension. Bogor's mayor has refused to approve the construction of a new Protestant church, despite a Supreme Court ruling to permit it. Even still, the government has remained conspicuously silent on the issue. Such disrespect for the rule of law can only serve to undermine the public's sense of justice.

In addition to Christians, the Ahmadiyah minority sect has also faced hate speech and open acts of political aggression. In 2008 President Yudhoyono decreed the sect to be heretical and banned the group from converting fresh members. He also remained silent while Suryadharma Ali, Minister of Religious Affairs, called for the group to be banned entirely. Several provinces imposed further restrictions on the group at the local level.

Even still worrying is the proposed 'Religious Tolerance Bill' that is presently before the legislature. If enacted, the bill would further restrict the freedom of religious minorities to function in the country, for instance, severely limiting Ahmadiyyah activities and making it more difficult for

minorities to construct places of worship. Many religious leaders in Indonesia have objected to the bill, raising the fear that it would further entrench discrimination against religious minorities and strengthen support for the extremist fringe.

Pax Christi International appeals for the establishment of transparent and consistently-applied administrative procedures for the approval of applications for churches and other houses of worship. When policies are applied arbitrarily and procedures shrouded in complex and opaque mechanisms, trust for government and public officials is severely undermined. Pax Christi International urges the Republic of Indonesia to comply with binding international legal obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 1 and 2), which it ratified on 23 Feb 2006.