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INDONESIA European Parliament adopts resolution on attacks against minorities in Indonesia

The European Parliament yesterday adopted a resolution on human rights in Indonesia, which makes reference to attacks on religious minorities such as Christians and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

The move by the European Parliament follows a resolution in the UK Parliament, which has been signed by 38 MPs so far, a letter of concern signed by members of Congress in the US and a resolution in the Swedish Parliament, all highlighting the violent persecution of minorities in Indonesia.

The European Parliament resolution expresses “grave concern at the incidents of violence against religious minorities, particularly Ahmadi Muslims, Christians, Baha’is and Buddhists...at the local blasphemy, heresy and religious defamation by-laws, which are open to misuse, and at the 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree prohibiting the dissemination of Ahmadiyya Muslim teachings”, calling on the Indonesian authorities to “repeal or revise them.” The resolution also applauds the work of civil society groups in Indonesia, including Muslim, Christian and secular think tanks, human rights organizations and counter-extremism organizations promoting religious freedom and human rights, and pledges support for those “actively promoting democracy, tolerance and peaceful co-existence between different ethnic and religious groups.”

Finnish MEP Mitro Repo, Member of the European Parliament S&D group, said, “While Indonesia’s national ideology ‘Pancasila’ has been a great example of enshrining pluralism, cultural harmony, religious freedom and social justice, there is a deep concern that the blasphemy, heresy and religious defamation by-laws are open to misuse. Such laws do not have a place in a State that truly respects human rights and engages in an open dialogue with its civil society.” He added, “Indonesia should be open to cooperation with the international community so that emerging problems can be pre-empted.”

In June a delegation from Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) returned from a three-week visit to Indonesia with first-hand evidence of increasing violence against religious minorities, particularly Christians and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. CSW visited churches in Bekasi and Bandung which have been forced to close, and met pastors who have faced increasing harassment, threats and attacks. CSW also met with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and heard from victims of violence in Cisalada and Cikeusik.

CSW’s Special Ambassador Stuart Windsor said, “CSW welcomes the European Parliament’s commitment to religious freedom in Indonesia and concern for the increasing frequency of attacks on the country’s religious minorities. We hope that this resolution, taken together with the actions in the UK and Swedish parliaments, will increase the pressure on the Indonesian government to take firm action to protect Indonesia’s religious minorities from violent attacks. We urge the Indonesian government to uphold the nation’s proud tradition of religious pluralism, freedom and harmony enshrined in the country’s guiding philosophy of ‘Pancasila’, to promote peaceful co-existence between different religious groups, and to combat religious extremism and violence.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The European Parliament resolution on “Indonesia, including attacks on minorities” can be found [here](#)

2. Finnish MEP Mitro Repo is a member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D).