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## INDONESIA | New Report Warns of Growing Religious Intolerance

CSW's new report on Indonesia, which will be launched Feb. 25 in the UK Parliament, warns: "Religious intolerance is no longer confined to areas such as West Java and Aceh, known to be particularly conservative, nor is it confined to Christians and Ahmadis. Shi'a Muslims, Sufi Muslims, Confucians, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'is, Jews, traditional indigenous believers and atheists are all under attack."

The report, *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril – The rise of religious intolerance across the archipelago*, draws on more than 15 years of work in Indonesia by CSW and contains first-hand testimonies and comprehensive analysis of trends such as impunity in crimes against religious minorities and the criminalization of the victims of persecution.

The launch event at the House of Commons is co-hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Freedom of Religion or Belief, the APPG for Indonesia and the APPG for Ahmadiyya. It will be presented in the European Parliament on March 4.

An interfaith delegation from Indonesia will testify at a hearing to launch the report, including:

- The Rev. Favor Bancin from the Communion of Churches in Indonesia
- Dr. Ahmad Suaedy, Executive Director of the Abdurrahman Wahid Centre for Inter-Faith Dialogue, at the University of Indonesia and former Director of the Wahid Institute
- Father Benny Susetyo from the Catholic Bishops Conference
- Representatives of the Ahmadiyya and Shi'a communities

Leading scholars and experts specializing in Indonesia have endorsed the report, including Martin van Bruinessen, of Utrecht University, who describes it as a "timely and well-researched" study of "probably the most worrying developments in post-Suharto Indonesia." Government inaction "or worse", says van Bruinessen, has "deprived numerous Indonesians of the most basic human rights and has arguably empowered society's most intolerant voices."

Dr. Peter Carey, Adjunct Professor at the University of Indonesia and Emeritus Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford, has described the report as "required reading" for anyone concerned about Indonesia's future. "Standing firm against religious bigots and safeguarding its dearly bought traditions of pluralism and tolerance are vital if Indonesia is to realize its full potential as Southeast Asia's largest democracy," he said.

The report contains in-depth analysis of the government of Indonesia's policies and actions

which, the report concludes have fuelled intolerance. There are also detailed recommendations, which are especially pertinent given Indonesia's upcoming Presidential elections later this year.

Benedict Rogers, author of the report and CSW's East Asia Team Leader, said, "This report is intended to serve as a wake-up call to Indonesia and the international community, to warn that Indonesia's much celebrated tradition of religious pluralism is in grave peril. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has presided over the introduction of the most discriminatory legislation in the country's recent history. He has given religious extremists license to spread hatred and perpetrate violence, some of his ministers have made inflammatory remarks that could be interpreted as a green light for intolerance; the number of Christian churches, Ahmadi mosques, Shi'a communities and other religious minorities that have been forcibly closed, violently attacked or otherwise marginalized has risen year on year, and many Indonesians now live in fear. With Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Indonesia this year, now is the time to highlight these issues and urge the new government to take action to prevent further intolerance and to protect and promote the values of pluralism on which Indonesia was founded."