

United Nations Human Rights Council, 36th Session (11 – 29 September 2017)

Item 6 – Indonesia UPR

Thursday 21 September 2017

Speaker: Humanists UK representative¹, Jay Harman

Mr. President,

We join various states in expressing our concern about what is the growing marginalisation of religious, non-religious, and other minorities in Indonesia, both by state institutions and by those intent on taking the law into their own hands.

It is not acceptable that atheists remain legally unrecognised in Indonesia, and that the non-religious are even barred from holding government office.² And it is not acceptable that the country's discriminatory blasphemy laws remain active. The use of such legislation in prosecuting and persecuting Ahok, the Christian former Governor of Jakarta, is just one example among a growing number, and his imprisonment is a stain on the record of what has historically been a tolerant and pluralist democracy.³

It is not only religious minorities that have faced marginalisation in Indonesia in recent years, however. As a number of states have identified, 'the deterioration of the rights of LGBT persons' is of grave concern. Whilst LGBT people have long faced discrimination under the law, in recent years this inequality has been accompanied by vigilante attacks, police raids, and violent, extra-judicial punishment by the authorities.⁴

It was particularly chilling just a few months ago to see the police chief of one Indonesian province announce the establishment of a dedicated taskforce to investigate and crackdown on LGBT activity.⁵

Mr President, given recent events, Indonesia's reputation for plural identity and the accommodation of minorities cannot survive much longer. We call on Indonesia to free all those detained under its blasphemy laws, to abolish such laws immediately, and to halt and publicly condemn the wave of anti-LGBT activity that has swept through the country.

Thank you.

¹ Humanists UK recently changed its name from the British Humanist Association.

² <http://freethoughtreport.com/countries/asia-south-eastern-asia/indonesia/>

³ <http://iheu.org/blasphemy-prison-term-for-jakarta-governor-is-the-wail-of-a-warning-siren-in-indonesia/>

⁴ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/31/asia/indonesia-lgbt-rights/index.html>

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<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-lgbt-police/new-police-taskforce-to-target-indonesian-gays-idUSKBN18K10A>