

Oral Statement delivered by Mr. Rafendi Djamin on behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

8th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review - Indonesia

Monday, 9 June 2008

Mr. President,

On behalf of FORUM-ASIA and the Indonesian NGO coalition, which consists of over 25 Indonesian NGOs that submitted reports and contributed to this UPR process, we would like to express our appreciation to all members and observers of the Working Group that raised critical comments reflecting the most pressing human rights issues in Indonesia.

The Government of Indonesia report indicates that the process of strengthening local democracy will provide political structure within which human rights will be guaranteed.¹ Electoral democracy and decentralisation programs have been manipulated to create new oligarchies of power at the district and provincial levels, which have emerged as the greatest impediments to the full realisation of human rights at the local level.

Mr. President,

On combating extreme poverty as raised by distinguished delegates from Tunisia, Morocco and Bangladesh,² the number of Indonesians living in extreme poverty has increased significantly in the last few years despite the implementation of some pro-poor policies, and recent and impending rises in fuel prices will only exacerbate the mounting challenges that face Indonesia's poor. The Government of Indonesia's UPR report indicated that despite a constitutional provision that 20% of the national budget be allocated to education, the government was only able to allocate 11.8%. The national human rights commission, KOMNAS-HAM, and civil society have argued that the inability of the State to reach the 20% goal is a result of the significant burden of international debt payments. From 2004 to 2008, the State budget allocated for health and education was totally insufficient, and made full realization of economic, social and cultural rights impossible.

On the protection of minorities as raised by distinguished delegates from the Netherlands and South Korea,³ the vestiges of authoritarian rule are still alive and functioning, as evident in the case of the 'Coordinating Body to Monitor Beliefs within Society'. This body is led by the Junior Attorney General in charge of Intelligence and includes members from various intelligence units from civilian, police and military forces all over the country. This body has become a serious threat to the protection of religious minority rights, as it has been accompanied by a wave of violent acts by religious extremist groups, such as the Front of Islam Defenders (FPI), who have increased attacks against religious minorities and supporters of religious pluralism over the last 8 months. One recent incident took place in front of the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, where pluralist groups were conducting a peaceful demonstration. At least 75 were

¹ Para 11 UPR Working Group Report on Indonesia A/HRC/WG.6/1/IDN/4, April 15 2008

² Para 37, 57, 58 UPR Working Group Report on Indonesia A/HRC/WG.6/1/IDN/4, April 15 2008

³ Para 52 UPR Working Group Report on Indonesia A/HRC/WG.6/1/IDN/4, April 15 2008

wounded in the attack. Now we see the whole country at a tipping point with mounting tensions which could deteriorate into communal conflict between fundamentalist and secular Islam.

Finally, Mr. President, we urge the Government of Indonesia to implement the recommendations contained in the Working Group report, in addition to the recommendations made by all UN human rights bodies. And we encourage the Council and its members to closely monitor the progress made in implementing recommendations, and to develop a concrete and measurable follow-up mechanism to the UPR review process.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
246 Times Square Building, 12 Fl., Room 12-01, Sukhumvit Road, Between Soi 12-14
Klong Toei, Klong Toei, Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66-(0)2-653-2940 (Ext. 601) Fax: +66-(0)2-653-2942
<http://www.forum-asia.org> / una@forum-asia.org