

Indonesia



Australian Government

Refugee Review Tribunal

Indonesia – IDN37294 – Jakarta – Ahmadis 8 September 2010

1. Please provide an update on the treatment of Ahmadis in Indonesia (in Jakarta and other areas).

Ahmadis in Indonesia¹ continue to face societal and governmental discrimination, legal barriers to the practice of their beliefs, and harassment and violence from hardline Islamic groups. There is no indication that the situation for Ahmadis is improving. According to religious freedom reports for 2009, Ahmadiyah leaders reported that they had been allowed, in most parts of the country, to worship, though they are not free to proselytise or practice their faith publicly.² In some parts of West Java, extremist groups interpret any visible Ahmadiyah activity as proselytising and pressure local officials to close mosques or places of worship. In some other areas local officials have already banned Ahmadiyah activity completely.³ According to a recent report by an Indonesian human rights group, "persecution and discrimination against Ahmadiyah followers" is a rising trend in Indonesia.⁴ Recent incidents against Ahmadis have been reported in areas around Indonesia, especially Java, including Jakarta.⁵ Most recently, in late August/early September 2010, *The Jakarta Post* reported that Religious Affairs Minister, Suryadharma Ali, has proposed to disband the Ahmadiyah congregation because it has violated the 2008 joint ministerial decree that stated that Ahmadiyah cannot propagate its teachings (more

¹ The latest US Department of State (USDOS) report says there are 400,000 Ahmadis in Indonesia. Recent *Jakarta Post* articles put the number at 200,000. According to a 2008 International Crisis Group report, Indonesian government figures put the number at a much lower 50,000 to 80,000 (US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia*, 26 October, Section 1 – Attachment 1; Hapsari, A. 2010, 'Planned Ahmadiyah ban humiliating', *Jakarta Post*, 1 September

http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/09/01/planned-ahmadiyah-ban-'humiliating'.html – Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 2; 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 31 August http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html – Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 3; International Crisis Group 2008, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, 7 July, p. 2

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78 indonesia implications of the ahmadiyah decree.pdf – Accessed 8 July 2008 – Attachment 4).

² US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia*, 26 October – Attachment 1.

³ US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, 'USCIRF Watch List: Indonesia' in *Annual Report* 2010, USCIRF website, May, p. 259 <u>http://www.uscirf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 5.

⁴ Haryanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java', *Jakarta Globe*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/jakarta/politically-motivated-anti-ahmadiyah-sentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 6.

⁵ Minority Rights Group International 2010, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010* (*Events of 2009*), *Focus: Religious Minorities*, July, pp. 128-130 – Attachment 7; 'Religious intolerance in Indonesia said on decline despite sporadic attacks' 2010, *BBC Monitoring Online*, source: *The Straits Times*, 4 January – Attachment 8; US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2009* – *Indonesia*, 26 October – Attachment 1.

information on the decree is given below). Human rights groups fear that the minister's statement "will inflame hard-line groups to commit even more violence".⁶ The minister has said that more discussions about banning the group are scheduled for after the Idul Fitri holidays (10 September).⁷

In June 2008 a joint ministerial decree was issued warning Ahmadiyah against propagating its beliefs (which include the controversial tenet that the Prophet Mohammed was not the final prophet⁸)⁹, but still allowing the practice of those beliefs. Earlier, in 2005, the influential Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued a fatwa declaring Ahmadiyah to be "outside Islam" and its members apostates.¹⁰ The 2008 decree stopped short of the full ban on Ahmadis, advocated for by many hardline groups. Some local authorities, however, have used the decree to justify full bans. Following the decree, provincial governors in West Sumatra, South Sumatra, and West Nusa Tenngarra issued outright bans on Ahmadiyah activity.¹¹ Incidents against Ahmadis reportedly increased after the 2005 fatwa¹² and have increased further since the 2008 decree.¹³

One of the dangers of the decree is that the public was urged to monitor Ahmadiyah activities to ensure compliance with the decree.¹⁴ Although the decree warns against the public engaging in violence against Ahmadis, there is an obvious implication that hardline groups might take matters into their own hands.¹⁵ This has been the case in many

⁸ 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, Jakarta Post, 31 August

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78_indonesia_ implications of the ahmadiyah decree.pdf - Accessed 8 July 2008 - Attachment 4).

¹⁰ International Crisis Group 2008, Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree, 7 July, pp. 13-14 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78 indonesia implications of the ahmadiyah decree.pdf – Accessed 8 July 2008 – Attachment 4

http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html - Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 3

⁶ Hapsari, A. 2010, 'Planned Ahmadiyah ban humiliating', *Jakarta Post*, 1 September http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/09/01/planned-ahmadiyah-ban-'humiliating'.html - Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 2

⁷ 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, Jakarta Post, 31 August http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html - Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 3

http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html - Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 3

⁹ "The decree referred to only one group of Ahmadiyah members [Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI)]. Sometimes called Ahmadiyah Qadiyani, it is based in Parung, Bogor, south of Jakarta, and its members regard Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet. It claims some 400,000 members across Indonesia, but government figures are much lower. A second, much smaller group called the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Movement (Gerakan Ahmadiyah Indonesia, GAI), also known as Ahmadiyah Lahore, is based in Yogyakarta and sees the founder only as a religious reformer. It has also faced discrimination but to a much lesser extent than JAI" (International Crisis Group 2008, Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree, 7 July, p. 2

¹¹ US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, 'USCIRF Watch List: Indonesia' in Annual Report 2010, USCIRF website, May, p. 259 http://www.uscirf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf - Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 5.

¹² US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, 'USCIRF Watch List: Indonesia' in Annual Report 2010, USCIRF website, May, p. 259 http://www.uscirf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf - Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 5.

¹³ Harvanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java', Jakarta Globe, 10 August http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/jakarta/politically-motivated-anti-ahmadiyahsentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375 – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 6. ¹⁴ 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 31 August

¹⁵ International Crisis Group 2008, Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree, 7 July, pp. 7-8 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78 indonesia implications of the ahmadiyah decree.pdf - Accessed 8 July 2008 - Attachment 4

incidents since the decree. Hardline groups have pressured police and local authorities to act against Ahmadis.¹⁶ Ahmadis also face overt violence from such groups (most notably the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)¹⁷) which have been growing in strength and numbers since the fall of Soeharto.¹⁸ There are claims that President Yudhoyono has courted the hardline Muslim vote since he first took office in 2004¹⁹, and relies heavily on the support of Islamic parties in parliament.²⁰

On 9 August 2010 Indonesian human rights group, the Setera Institute for Peace and Democracy, released a report which "highlighted a worrying and rising trend of persecution and discrimination against Ahmadiyah followers, particularly in the West Java districts of Tasikmalaya, Bogor, Garut and Kuningan."²¹ While the report is in Bahasa Indonesia²², and an English translation has not been released, a number of English-language sources refer to the contents of the report. The report alleges that much of the harassment of religious minorities, including Ahmadis, is driven by local authorities and local politics: "We concluded that all incidents had telling political motives. During elections, candidates for district head announce[d] publicly that they would disband the Ahmadiyah if they were elected," said Institute researcher Ismail Hasani, who has been monitoring Ahmadiyah affairs for the institute since 2007."²³ A *Jakarta Post* article dated 10 August 2010 quotes another Setera spokesman who states that the discrimination faced by Ahmadiyah congregation has "worsened with the politicizing of the Ahmadiyah issue".²⁴

²⁰ 'Religious minorities in Indonesia push back' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 16 August

http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/16/religious-minorities-indonesia-push-back.html – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 11. Also see: International Crisis Group 2008, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, 7 July, pp. 15-16

 ¹⁶ 'Worst to come for Ahmadiyah as more turn a blind eye' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 10 August
<u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/10/worst-come-ahmadiyah-more-turn-a-blind-eye.html</u> – Accessed
1 September 2010 – Attachment 9.

¹⁷ International Crisis Group 2008, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, 7 July, pp. 13-14 <u>http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78_indonesia___implications_of_the_ahmadiyah__</u> <u>decree.pdf</u> – Accessed 8 July 2008 – Attachment 4

 ¹⁸ 'Indonesia and Religious Violence' 2010, *Wall Street Journal*, 11 August
<u>http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704901104575424521954895724.html#articleTabs%3Darticle</u>
– Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 10.

 ¹⁹ 'Indonesia and Religious Violence' 2010, *Wall Street Journal*, 11 August
<u>http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704901104575424521954895724.html#articleTabs%3Darticle</u>
Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 10.

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78_indonesia____implications_of_the_ahmadiyah____decree.pdf – Accessed 8 July 2008 – Attachment 4.

²¹ Haryanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java', *Jakarta Globe*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/jakarta/politically-motivated-anti-ahmadiyah-sentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 6.

 ²² <u>http://www.setara-institute.org/content/persekusi-ahmadiyah-di-bogor-garut-tasikmalaya-dan-kuningan</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
²³ Haryanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java',

²³ Haryanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java', Jakarta Globe, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/jakarta/politically-motivated-anti-ahmadiyah-</u> sentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375 – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 6.

sentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375 – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 6. ²⁴ 'Worst to come for Ahmadiyah as more turn a blind eye' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/10/worst-come-ahmadiyah-more-turn-a-blind-eye.html</u> – Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 9

No reports of the targeted killing of Ahmadis were found in the available sources. There are reports of a number of incidents in which Ahmadis have been injured.²⁵ The largest and most publicised incident took place about a week before the joint ministerial decree was passed in June 2008.²⁶ The most recent occurred in West Java in late July 2010.²⁷ Most anti-Ahmadiyah incidents have involved property destruction, harassment, discrimination, and destruction or closing of Ahmadiyah mosques.²⁸ A *Jakarta Post* article (10 August 2010) reports on a June demonstration in Garut district (West Java) organised by the Anti-Ahmadiyah Movement in which the members went in convoy to several administration offices to seek out civil servants who were Ahmadiyah members. The article also reports other incidents against Ahmadis.²⁹

Sources indicate that the police have often not adequately protected the Ahmadiyah community from attacks, and sometimes are instrumental in actions against the Ahmadiyah community. Recent reports were found of a number of incidents in which police have forced the closure of Ahmadiyah mosques, while acting at the behest of hardline groups and/or local authorities.³⁰ Recent statements by the International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have addressed the failure of police and Indonesian authorities to stem the violence against Ahmadis. A *Global Post* article dated 23 August 2010 quotes ICG senior analyst Sidney Jones, who states that "it was unacceptable that the Indonesian police and military have stood by and let these attacks continue. Individuals in the FPI should be prosecuted for assault, but the police should also be held responsible".³¹ On 2 August 2010 HRW issued a statement urging that: "Indonesian authorities should end discriminatory policies against the Ahmadiyah religious community and investigate and prosecute anti-Ahmadiyah violence".³²

Jakarta

The information regarding the situation for Ahmadis in Jakarta is conflicting. A Voice of

²⁷ Hapsari, A. 2010, 'Planned Ahmadiyah ban humiliating', *Jakarta Post*, 1 September
<u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/09/01/planned-ahmadiyah-ban-'humiliating'.html</u> – Accessed 1
September 2010 – Attachment 2; 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 31 August
<u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html</u> – Accessed 1
September 2010 – Attachment 3.

³⁰ Religious minorities in Indonesia push back' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 16 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/16/religious-minorities-indonesia-push-back.html</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 11; 'Police reform key to conflict management' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 14 July <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/07/14/%25E2%2580%2598police-reform%25E2%2580%2599-key-conflict-management.html</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 12.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch 2010, 'Indonesia: End Policies Fueling Violence Against Religious Minority', Human Rights Watch website, 2 August <u>http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/08/02/indonesia-end-policies-fueling-violence-against-religious-minority</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 11.

²⁶ International Crisis Group 2008, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, 7 July, p. 7 <u>http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78_indonesia___implications_of_the_ahmadiyah___</u> <u>decree.pdf</u> – Accessed 8 July 2008 – Attachment 4.

 ²⁸ US Department of State 2010, International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia, 26 October – Attachment 1.
²⁹ 'Worst to come for Ahmadiyah as more turn a blind eye' 2010, Jakarta Post, 10 August

²⁷ Worst to come for Ahmadiyah as more turn a blind eye' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/10/worst-come-ahmadiyah-more-turn-a-blind-eye.html</u> – Accessed 1 September 2010 – Attachment 9. ³⁰ Philipping and the set of the set of

 ³¹ Schonhardt, S. 2010, 'In defense of Islam, vigilante justice in Indonesia', *Global Post*, 23 August
<u>http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/indonesia/100822/fpi-islam-vigilante-justice</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010
– Attachment 13.

 ³² Human Rights Watch 2010, 'Indonesia: End Policies Fueling Violence Against Religious Minority', Human Rights Watch website, 2 August <u>http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/08/02/indonesia-end-policies-fueling-violence-against-religious-minority</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 11.

America article dated 11 August 2010 quotes the head of an Ahmadiyah mosque in northern Jakarta as saying that "he and his congregation have practiced their religion as usual since the ministerial decree."³³ Other reports were found, however, of recent attacks on Ahmadis in Jakarta. In December 2009 a group of people claiming to be members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) raided a house in Jakarta where Ahmadis had held Friday prayers. Police took six Ahmadis to the police station in order to prevent them from being physically harmed, a police chief said. The deputy head of the FPI Jakarta chapter later said that his group had initiated the raid and demanded that police detain the Ahmadis for violating a government decree.³⁴ There was also a deliberate arson attack on an Ahmadiyah mosque in Jakarta in June 2009.³⁵

Recent Religious Freedom Reports

The situation for the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia is updated in two recent religious freedom reports: The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 'USCIRF Watch List: Indonesia' in Annual Report 2010³⁶; and the US Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia³⁷. Reading these two reports is recommended.

Previous Country Advice

The most recent previous updates on the situation for Ahmadiyah in Indonesia can be found in:

- Question 5 of *Research Response IDN34217*, dated 21 January 2009³⁸; •
- *Research Response IDN33990*, dated 14 November 2008.³⁹

Attachments

- 1. US Department of State 2010, International Religious Freedom Report 2009 Indonesia, 26 October.
- 2. Hapsari, A. 2010, 'Planned Ahmadiyah ban humiliating', Jakarta Post, 1 September http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/09/01/planned-ahmadiyah-ban-'humiliating'.html – Accessed 1 September 2010.

³³ Dewan, A. 2010, 'Followers of Ahmadiyah Face Pressure in Indonesia', Voice of America, 11 August http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Followers-of-Ahmadiyah-Face-Pressure-in-Indonesia-100451979.html – Accessed 2 September 2010 – Attachment 14.

³⁴ Minority Rights Group International 2010, State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 (Events of 2009), Focus: Religious Minorities, July, pp. 128-130 – Attachment 7. ³⁵ US Department of State 2010, International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia, 26 October –

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³⁷ US Department of State 2010, International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Indonesia, 26 October – Attachment 1.

³⁸ RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response IDN34217*, 21 January – Attachment 15.

³⁹ RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response IDN33990*, 14 November – Attachment 16.

- 3. 'Minister calls for Ahmadiyah to be disbanded' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 31 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/31/minister-calls-ahmadiyah-be-disbanded.html</u> Accessed 1 September 2010.
- 4. International Crisis Group 2008, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, 7 July <u>http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/indonesia/b78_indonesia___implications____implications_____indonesia____implications_____indonesia____implications_____indonesia____implications_____indonesia____implications_____indonesia____implications_____indonesia_____implications_____indonesia_____implications_____indonesia_____implications_____implications_____indonesia_____implications_____impl</u>
- US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, 'USCIRF Watch List: Indonesia' in Annual Report 2010, USCIRF website, May, p. 259 <u>http://www.uscirf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- Haryanto, U. & Osman, N. 2010, 'Politically Motivated Anti-Ahmadiyah Sentiment Growing in West Java', *Jakarta Globe*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/jakarta/politically-motivated-anti-ahmadiyah-sentiment-growing-in-west-java/390375</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- 7. Minority Rights Group International 2010, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 (Events of 2009), Focus: Religious Minorities*, July, pp. 128-130.
- 8. 'Religious intolerance in Indonesia said on decline despite sporadic attacks' 2010, *BBC Monitoring Online*, source: *The Straits Times*, 4 January. (CISNET Indonesia CX238293)
- 9. 'Worst to come for Ahmadiyah as more turn a blind eye' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 10 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/10/worst-come-ahmadiyah-more-turn-a-blind-eye.html</u> Accessed 1 September 2010.
- 10. 'Indonesia and Religious Violence' 2010, Wall Street Journal, 11 August <u>http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704901104575424521954895724.html#a</u> <u>rticleTabs%3Darticle</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- 11. 'Religious minorities in Indonesia push back' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 16 August <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/16/religious-minorities-indonesia-push-back.html</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- 12. 'Police reform key to conflict management' 2010, *Jakarta Post*, 14 July <u>http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/07/14/%25E2%2580%2598police-</u> <u>reform%25E2%2580%2599-key-conflict-management.html</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- 13. Schonhardt, S. 2010, 'In defense of Islam, vigilante justice in Indonesia', *Global Post*, 23 August <u>http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/indonesia/100822/fpi-islam-vigilante-justice</u> – Accessed 2 September 2010.
- Dewan, A. 2010, 'Followers of Ahmadiyah Face Pressure in Indonesia', *Voice of America*, 11 August <u>http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Followers-of-Ahmadiyah-Face-Pressure-in-Indonesia-100451979.html</u> Accessed 2 September 2010.
- 15. RRT Research & Information 2009, Research Response IDN34217, 21 January.
- 16. RRT Research & Information 2008, Research Response IDN33990, 14 November.