

The WAHID Institute

MIRORI

Monthly Report on Religious Issues

This month FPI was the object of protest. After being protested against in Palangkaraya, a protest was also held at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout. Demonstrators voiced their dislike of the organisation's hobby of spreading violence. Prior to this, FPI had thrown stones at the Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Gamawan Fauzi, who usually gives only muted responses to FPI's violence, issued an immediate warning that if FPI resorted to violence again, after the Monas tragedy and the attack on the Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, then the organisation would be disbanded. Gamawan also suggested that the Law on Social Organisations be revised so that they could be more quickly disbanded. Concrete action to this effect is yet to be realised.

In other incidents, several Islamic organisations in Yogyakarta demanded that the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Movement (GAI) be disbanded because it was deviant. They demanded that the movement's national gathering was disbanded, and unfortunately the regent chose to do so for the sake of law and order. Meanwhile in Kudus, as occurred in Ponorogo, an MTA (Majlis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Qur'an Interpretation Council) was protested against because it critiqued the practice of tahlil (reciting La ilaha illa-Allah, there is no God but God) which is a ritual practice of the local NU community. MTA's intolerance was the cause of the demonstration. The incident is a lesson for all to remain tolerant of difference and courteous in delivering teachings.

Enjoy reading.



FPI, the Police and the Minister of Internal Affairs Saga

FPI was very active this month. The organisation was quick to respond to the planned revision of all local regulations banning alcohol that contradict the Presidential Instruction No 3/1997 on Monitoring and Controlling Alcoholic Beverages. The presidential instruction will be used to evaluate the anti-alcohol regulations of Bandung, Banjarmasin, Balikpapan, Tangerang, Pamekasan, Maros, Manokwari, Penajam Paser Utara and Bali, as they contradict higher legislation.

“If this keeps happening, according to Law No. 8/1985 the organisation will be frozen, and if they continue after than then it will be disbanded. If they continue to act violently, we will take action according to the law. We’ve currently given them a second warning. If there is any more violence, we will disband FPI,” explained the Minister of Internal Affairs, Gamawan Fauzi

FPI approached the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Thursday (12/01) in protest. The FPI crowd then hurled a number of different missiles at the ministry on Medan Merdeka Utara Road, including rocks, soil, rotten eggs and water bottles. The garden lamps, the security post and the glass windows of the ministry were damaged. FPI demanded that the anti-alcohol regulations not be revoked because in essence they did not contradict the presidential instruction. In fact, they argued, that the regulations were much more firmer and effective

in eradicating alcohol as they banned its distribution while the presidential instruction ‘only’ monitored it.

The ministry was irate and immediately reported the destruction to the police. Gamawan announced that the ministry would not tolerate that kind of anarchic behaviour and that the perpetrators would be dealt with. In Indonesia, he continued, the freedom to form allegiances and to voice an opinion was guaranteed by the constitution, but there was no such guarantee for vandalism or destruction. Gamawan also deplored the incident because he felt that both sides should have been able to discuss the issue. If they still disagreed, then a review could have been undertaken, instead of acting violently.

FPI apologised for the incident. The secretary of FPI’s Advisory Board, Hasan Misbakhul Anam, visited the Ministry of Internal Affairs and apologised to the ministry. Diah Anggraeni accepted the apology. Hasan said that the aim of the demonstration was to meet with the ministry staff, whether it be the Minister of Internal Affairs or one of his staff, so long as the representative dealt with the anti-alcohol regulations. However, FPI received no word that the ministry would agree to the meeting, so they took their time dispersing. Apparently, Hasan said, those who started throwing objects were from LPI (Laskar Pembela Islam, The Islamic Youth Militia), a group of youths who were unable to restrain their emotions. “If we had known earlier that we could meet with the ministry, we would have dispersed immediately,” Hasan explained, as cited by Tempo.co (12/01). An MRoRI source said that FPI started throwing objects as soon as they reached the Ministry. The ministry accepted the apology, but the perpetrators will still face charges.

The following day FPI approached the ministry to meet with Gamawan Fauzi. Led by Rizieq Shihab, they talked

for two hours. Rizieq presented the issue as he saw it, and criticised a letter sent to the Regent of Indramayu and the Mayor of Bandung which could be interpreted as instructions to revoke the two cities’ anti-alcohol regulation. FPI was guaranteed that the anti-alcohol regulations would not be revoked.

There are several interesting aspects to the incident, particularly the attitude of the minister. The Minister of Internal Affairs, usually quite cordial towards FPI, became firm. He threatened to disband FPI under Law No. 8/1985 if FPI acted similarly again. Another incident would be the third by FPI since the Monas tragedy on 1 June 2008 and the current incident at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In fact, the minister said he wanted to hasten the process required to disband a violent social organisation. “If this keeps happening, according to Law No. 8/1985 the organisation will be frozen, and if they continue after than then it will be disbanded. If they continue to act violently, we will take action according to the law. We’ve currently given them a second warning. If there is any more violence, we will disband FPI,” explained Gamawan, as quoted by Okezone.com (15/01).

This was in contrast to the ministry’s response when FPI was linked to the tragedy in Cikeusik in which three people were killed. At the time the incident occurred in February 2011 the ministry insisted on the need to have evidence of FPI involvement. Similarly after the Monas tragedy in 2008, when Mardiyanto was the minister, Mardiyanto left the matter to the police, which meant that it was purely a criminal act by individuals, and not by an organisation. Afterwards, the organisation was gradually brought into the spotlight. Mardiyanto dragged his colleagues, the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs and the Attorney General, into the matter. “Of course we have to examine this in depth. This is not

just coordinated by the ministry, because the issue of social organisations involves other legislation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs cannot just disband organisations alone, but requires involvement of the Attorney General and the police," Mardiyanto said, as cited by Detik.com (03/06/08).

The letters that FPI criticised above were written after local residents in Palangkaraya rejected FPI, with the full support of the government, including the police. FPI was to inaugurate a branch in Central Kalimantan. On Saturday morning (12/01), head of the Propagation Department Muhsin Ahmad al-Attas, Secretary General K.H. Ahmad Sobri Lubis, Assistant Secretary General K.H. Awit Masyhuri, and LPI Commander Ustad Maman boarded a Sriwijaya plane. They were scheduled to land at the Tjilik Riwut Airport after which they would inaugurate the branch and undertake outreach activities in commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad. Rizieq was absent as he was sick. (See: FPI Refused Entry at Tjilik Riwut Airport).

This attitude was in stark contrast to the stance the Ministry of Internal Affairs took over the previous cases. Previously when FPI threatened to

overthrow the president if he disbanded social organisations, Gamawan said that if this was to be called treason, then it needed to be proven. "We need to refer to the law and to the evidence. We can't just jump to conclusions or we'll be wrong again," said the Minister for Internal Affairs, as cited by VIVAnews (16/02/11). The current change in attitude is even more surprising when government support for disbanding social organisations decreased after a meeting with FPI. The Minister for Internal Affairs, who had previously seemed quite resolved stressed the need for dialogue. In fact, he said that it was not easy to disband social organisations, despite having done it before. He even asked that those parties demanding that FPI be disbanded to calm down. "Social organisations or civil society is a necessity," he said at the time, as cited by Tempo.co (16/02/11).

The police also displayed a similar attitude when several elements, including the former Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, were seriously considering treason. The police were ambivalent in dealing with FPI after the Monas tragedy. They went to the FPI headquarters in Petamburan and arrested 59 FPI members and Rizieq

Shihab. However they allowed Rizieq Shihab outside of jail to give a speech to FPI members who gathered at the police headquarters. This is a special privilege for detainees, and begged the question of whether it had any connection with the report from Wikileaks about FPI receiving funding from the Indonesian Intelligence Agency and the police.

The police have currently confirmed the report by the Ministry for Internal Affairs and will process it immediately, but at the same time have offered the possibility of dialogue before legal action is taken. This is being considered as the best solution. "Everyone asks that the law be enforced, so we've processed the case, but there's another path we can take, of dialogue. So I'll allow either option, if we go down the legal path that's fine, or we can engage in dialogue too," explained Inspector General Untung S. Rajab. However, dialogue cannot stop the legal process currently underway. By the middle of February six people according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs or three according to the police have been declared as suspects.

Hopefully the ambivalence will be resolved shortly.

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FPI Refused Entry at Tjilik Riwut Airport

On Saturday morning (12/01), head of the Propagation Department Muhsin Ahmad al-Attas, Secretary General K.H. Ahmad Sobri Lubis, Assistant Secretary General K.H. Awit Masyhuri, and LPI Commander Ustad Maman boarded a Sriwijaya plane to Palangkaraya. They expected to land at the Tjilik Riwut Airport after which they would inaugurate the Central Kalimantan branch of FPI and undertake outreach activities in commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad. Rizieq was absent as he was sick.

They were, however, only allowed to disembark at Banjarmasin after they

were not allowed to disembark in Palangkaraya. Flight number PK-JNA was besieged by a crowd who had been waiting at the airport since the morning. They forced their way onto the runway after breaking through the fence. They then ran towards the plane until they were only 50 metres away, armed with sabres. Given the situation, the FPI leaders were flown to Banjarmasin after consultation with the Head of Traffic Control, the Head of Airport Security, and the Sriwijaya pilots and crew. The other passengers on the plane had been allowed to disembark safely as per normal.

Prior to the protest, Dayak leaders had rejected having FPI in Central Kalimantan. The Central Kalimantan branch of the Indonesian Dayak Youth Movement (GPDI-KT) and the Central Kalimantan Dayak Customary Council (DAD) expressed their rejection of FPI since Thursday (09/02) in a letter, according to Yansen A. Binti, head of GPDI-KT in Tambun Bungai. The letter also mentioned that the Chairman of Central Kalimantan DAD, Sabran Achmad, had voiced similar aspirations. Hundreds of Dayak youth also demonstrated a similar rejection in Palangkaraya through the declaration of the Central Kalimantan

Front in Defence of Dayak Customs. The Assistant Secretary General of the National Dayak Customary Council (MADN) who is also Regional Secretary of Central Kalimantan, Siun Jarias, and the

“People believe that we have given FPI permission to open a branch, but to date the government has never issued or received a letter in relation to the plan to establish a Central Kalimantan FPI branch,” explained the Mayor of Palangkaraya, HM Riban Satia.

Assistant Head of the Central Kalimantan DAD, Lukas Tingkes, were present at the demonstration.

The following day, a number of leaders from different religions, ethnicities and organisations protested against the inauguration of an FPI branch in the province. The protest had no connection to a particular religion or ethnic group. In addition, to ensure that there would be no repeat, all parties collectively helped maintain peace and harmony and upheld the government’s three principles for religious harmony (Tri Kerukunan Umat Beragama) in accordance with current regulations. The local community was also asked to avoid provoking any parties and the security apparatus was asked to perform its duties in accordance with the law. All parties were asked to increase unity and oneness. “All religious leaders, social organisations and Coordinating Forums for Local Leadership (FKPD) in Central Kalimantan express that the rejection of FPI has no connection with any religion or ethnicity,” said the Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan, H Achmad Diran, when reading out the declaration by local leaders in Palangkaraya.

Those involved included the

head of Central Kalimantan MUI, the head of Central Kalimantan NU, the head of Central Kalimantan Muhammadiyah, the head of Central Kalimantan LDII, the head of Central Kalimantan FKUB, the head of Central Kalimantan PGIP, the head of Central Kalimantan DAD, the head of Central Kalimantan GKE Council, the head of Central Kalimantan PGLI, the head of Central Kalimantan MBAHK and the head of Central Kalimantan GPDI. Also present at the event were Central Kalimantan Governor Agustin Teras Narang, Vice Governor H Achmad Diran, deputy head of Central Kalimantan DPRD H Arief Budiatio, Central Kalimantan Police Chief Brigadier General Drs H Damianus Jackie, head of the Central Kalimantan High Court DR Syaifudin Kasim, representative of Military Command 102/Pjg Major ARH Kurniawan Fitriana and Executive Head of BIN Brigadier General IGN Anjar Pramono.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs supported the stance. “The governor has sought to maintain law and order. He dealt with the increasing resistance so that it caused no unrest,” said the spokesperson for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Reydonnyzar Moenek, as cited by Tempo.co (14/02). According to Reydonnyzar, the governor’s action was one of prevention and was not discriminative.

FPI protested immediately. Rizieq said that those who besieged FPI at the airport were thugs, not Dayaks. “Don’t be mistaken, it wasn’t Dayaks who attacked FPI, but thugs,” he emphasised. Rizieq stressed that FPI came to Central Kalimantan because the Dayaks had asked for their help in agrarian conflict with nasty businessmen. Meanwhile, the Mayor of Palangkaraya, HM Riban Satia, said that, “People believe that we have given FPI permission to open a branch, but to date the government has never issued or received a letter in relation to the plan to establish a Central Kalimantan FPI branch.”

FPI also reported the incident to the police. They claimed that the

Criminal Code had been violated, in particular Article 335 on unpleasant behaviour, Article 333 concerning denial of freedoms, Article 170 on collective vandalism (FPI accused the protestors from Indonesian Without Violence of violating this article) and Article 338 on attempted murder. Rizieq even named the suspects as Yansen Binti, Lukas Tingkes and Sabran. The case was handed to the Central Kalimantan Police, given the location in which the incident occurred. The governor was also reported because FPI felt that he was the force behind the opposition to FPI.

Unsatisfied, FPI reported to the National Commission on Human Rights on Monday (21/02). FPI, through Munarman, reported attempted ambush, siege and murder, which they argued was a violation of human rights. They highlighted three points: (1) the agrarian conflict affecting dozens of residents in Seruyan, Central Kalimantan had received no attention from the government, DPR or DPD; (2) the rejection of FPI by Central Kalimantan residents was, according to FIP, organised and promoted by Agustin Teras Narang, the Central Kalimantan Governor; and (3) human rights were also violated by the police on a number of occasions, including the accusation of attempted murder of FPI members and vandalism and arson during the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday.

FPI’s older actions, however, have been in violation of human rights. In 2008, for instance, Sobri Lubis as Secretary General of FPI said that he did not care if killing Ahmadiyah members was considered a violation of human rights, what was more important was Ahmadiyah’s deviance. “To hell with human rights, human rights is bullshit,” Sobri said during a public gathering for Muslims. FPI also once interrupted human rights training held for transvestites in Depok in 2010 because the event managers had not reported to local leaders. FPI is, however, prepared to acknowledge the existence of human rights when it is its own rights

that are violated. In 2000, FPI had even demanded that the National Commission on Human Rights be dismantled. Hesti

Armi Wulan, who met with FPI, said of this, "It's the obligation of the National Commission on Human Rights to

accept complaints by members of the society". Cited by Tempo.co (23/02).

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Protesting against Violence on Valentines Day

FPI has for a long time banned, raided and dispersed activities in the name of religious values and morality. They have also consistently demanded that Ahmadiyah be disbanded, as they believe that the sect has deviated from Islamic teachings. FPI even threatened to lead a revolution if SBY did not disband the group. In the latest incident, FPI vandalised the Ministry of Internal Affairs during a demonstration in which the organisation demanded that the anti-alcohol laws in nine regions not be revoked. FPI's actions have occurred at different times and places, but each involved the same method: violence.

"What moved us was a unifying feeling of anger with all of FPI's violence.

And so the movement was given the name Indonesia without FPI, without violence. This came from all kinds of individuals in Jakarta. Some were journalists, office employees, mothers, NGO activists or from mass organisations with shared interests in protesting against FPI," explained Vivi Vidyawati, field coordinator of the Indonesia Against Violence demonstration

The police have taken action against FPI, but only managed to

stop the organisation in a few cases. Punishment has been light and has therefore not had the desired effect. This has led to a discussion of the most appropriate treatment for anarchic social organisations like FPI. Opinions range from the moderate to the extreme: members or sympathisers involved in violence should be brought to justice as in any criminal case, or the police should act firmly against these organisations as they would with any other, without fear of repercussions, and as such FPI should be disbanded because of its systematic resort to violence. In the midst of this debate, suggestions have arisen that the Law on Social Organisations from 1985 should be revised. The general public has protested in its own ways against FPI: in South Sulawesi residents protested against FPI members who damaged a restaurant while in North Sumatra the head of FPI's car was set alight by a group of women in response to FPI arrogance. The latest story of resistance is the rejection of FPI in Central Kalimantan by residents who were fed up with FPI's unfriendly nature. The protest went further than simple demonstrations, and FPI was besieged at the airport.

This latest incident invited people using social media to oppose FPI. Using momentum from Valentines Day, protestors campaigned for an Indonesia Without FPI and for an Indonesia Without Violence on Twitter. This immediately invited other parties to become involved in a peaceful protest at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout on Tuesday afternoon (14/02). The participants were of different faiths, genders and professions. Participants included NGO activists, females, males, LGBT activists

and film directors.

"At first I was inspired by the opposition of the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan, who openly rejected the establishment of an FPI branch," said Tunggal Pramesti, who devised the idea. The action was also based on concern over the amount of violence FPI had been involved in where the security forces failed to act firmly, as cited by BBC Indonesia (14/02).

Vivi Widyawati said that the unifying force was anger that had reached breaking point. "What moved us was a unifying feeling of anger with all of FPI's violence. And so the movement was given the name Indonesia without FPI, without violence. This came from all kinds of individuals in Jakarta. Some were journalists, office employees, mothers, NGO activists or from mass organisations with shared interests in protesting against FPI," Vivi explained, as quoted by KBR 68 H (20/02).

The protest began at about 4pm, with the singing of the Indonesian anthem. This was followed by speeches from participants, including Alissa Wahid and Hanung Bramantyo. Hanung, who spends much of his time producing films about tolerance and diversity, emphasised the need to take a stance. "As with out friends in Palangkaraya, they can be militant, they can determine when they take a stance, when we take a stance, when we can be disturbed, or when we can't be disturbed. So far we have been unhappy because we've always been considered to be in the wrong," he said. Militancy in Palangkaraya referred to the opposition to FPI when they landed at the Tjilik Riwut airport. Alissa Wahid asked that everyone be courageous enough to

speak out. "We want to work hard for Indonesia. We need Indonesia to be free from fear of violence from groups who feel that they are right. The government is scared of those who have the courage to voice their feelings. So we must speak up for an Indonesia without violence," she said.

During breaks in the demonstration hundreds of people continued to chant, "Indonesia with Peace, Without FPI, Without Violence". They also carried banners reading "Reject Violence! Enough Already" and "Denounce Violence in the Name of Religion". There was also a banner reading "A Valentines Day Present for Habib Rizieq". This banner was pulled down by a handful of people who

could not accept a Valentines Day slogan bearing Habib's name. They also shouted out anti-homosexual slurs and assaulted some of the protestors. Victims included Bandi and Fan Baga, a member of the Gusduran network which campaigns for diversity and against violence. Ahmad Dahlan (24), Burhan (23), Syarifudin (44), and J (48), were interrogated and J, who was an FPI member, was declared a suspect on Wednesday (15/02). "The evidence includes the medical files of the victims and video recordings. He clearly was involved in pushing and shoving and beating the victim," said the head of Public Relations of the Metro Jaya Police Station, Chief Commissioner Rikwanto, as quoted by Kompas.com (15/02).

The incident was disappointing given that the demonstration was moved to out the front of Plaza Indonesia after rumours of attack by FPI members from Petamburan. The demonstrators followed advice by the security forces but were still attacked. "We told the police that the demonstration would take place from 4-6pm. We asked, please secure the demonstration, we still have faith in you, and we've told you about the demonstration. However the police said, 'We can't guarantee your safety because FPI will be there.' We asked the state to anticipate the presence of organisations that threaten civil society," said Ririn Sefsani, a demonstrator.

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Protest against GAI in Yogyakarta

A crowd bearing banners reading the Anti-Vice Movement (GAM), the Islamic Jihad Front (FJI), the Ka'bah Youth Movement (GPK), the Muslim Forum (FUI), and the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) protested against a national religious gathering on Friday afternoon (13/01). About one hundred people attended the event at the Indonesian Islamic Teaching School (SMK PIRI) opposite Mandala Krida Stadium in Yogyakarta.

Ahmadiyah in Yogyakarta is not the Ahmadiyah banned by the Joint Decree of the Minister for Religious Affairs, the Minister for Internal Affairs and the Attorney General on 9 June 2008," said M. Yusuf Asry, the head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs's investigative team

The crowd protested against the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Movement (GAI), a gathering of Ahmadiyah members from the Lahore sect, because it was deemed deviant for believing that Prophet Muhammad was not the final prophet. Banners read "Ahmadiyah is Deviant, Disband it". One speaker said, "Ahmadiyah must be disbanded because it acknowledges Mirza Ghulam as a prophet". This makes the group deviant, as cited from Tempo.co (13/01), because in Islam there is no prophet after Prophet Muhammad. Other speakers brought the government into the equation. "The central government has already stated that Ahmadiyah teachings are deviant and the group is banned from holding any kind of activities. As such, we demand that the organisation be disbanded," explained Abu Chaidar from MMI, as quoted by Berita Satu (13/01).

GAI denied the accusations, arguing that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not a prophet. "He is an ulama," explained the head of GAI's General Code, Muslich Zainal Asikin. Several literary sources also mention that Lahore Ahmadiyah considers Mirza Ghulam as a mujaddid

or reformer and acknowledges Prophet Muhammad as the final prophet. Muslich said that the demonstrators might have thought that GAI was the same as JAI (the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Community).

The event, which was scheduled to continue until Saturday, was cancelled for security reasons after the arrival of the Mayor of Yogyakarta, Haryadi Suyuti and his deputy. Haryadi denied that he had cancelled the event, arguing that an agreement was reached. "Participants of the gathering and the event committee understood the situation. They agreed to call off the event this afternoon," Haryadi said. Haryadi also urged the demonstrators to disperse because the event against which they were protesting had been cancelled. The mayor also urged all parties to maintain peace and security in Yogyakarta. The police took similar action, with demonstrators leaving the location after the Police Chief, Chief Commissioner Mustakim, confirmed that GAI's gathering would end that evening.

The police and army secured the location, afraid of a violent clash. The fear was raised after a meeting at the FJI

headquarters in Padokan, Kasihan, Bantul the night before. During the meeting FJI agreed to deploy 250 people to break the event up. The security forces, dominated by female officers, formed a human fence to try to stop protestors entering the site, however the protestors kept pushing and eventually fought their way through the police line.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs deployed an investigative team from 25-27 January 2012. It found that the demonstrators were mistaken because GAI was not the same entity as the

Ahmadiyah banned by the Joint Decree. "Ahmadiyah in Yogyakarta is not the Ahmadiyah banned by the Joint Decree of the Minister for Religious Affairs, the Minister for Internal Affairs and the Attorney General on 9 June 2008," said M. Yusuf Asry, the head of the investigative team, as cited by Tempo.co (27/01). The group banned in the Joint Decree was JAI or the Qadiyan sect of Ahmadiyah, while GAI in Yogyakarta adheres to the Lahore sect of Ahmadiyah. Yusuf also said that the decree on Ahmadiyah was not explained to the public very well.

"So there's an incorrect perception of who it targets," Yusuf said in a speech at the Yogyakarta Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

MUI in Yogyakarta said it would monitor GAI more closely after the event. "We will continue to monitor all activities by GAI and JAI," said the head of MUI in Yogyakarta, Thoha Abdurahman as cited by ANTARA News (15/01). Thoha said that GAI's event had not been reported to Yogyakarta MUI despite the fact that an agreement had been made that they report all activities. [M]

Police Arrest Shi'ites in Garut

Shi'ites in Karang Gayam are not the only ones to receive threats. In Garut, dozens of Shi'ites were arrested by Garut Police. They spent two nights at the station on Jalan Sudirman Karangpawitan, Garut.

"The residents from Margamulya village became increasingly irate and to avoid a clash the 18 Shi'ites were evacuated to the Garut Police Station", said the head of Garut Police, Adjunct Senior Commissioner Enjang Hasan Kurnia

The Shi'ites, from Margaluyu village in Cikajang, had asked police for protection after local residents became offended when Shi'ites left the Friday sermon before it had finished (20/01). The local residents then approached the Shi'ites to seek an explanation but were still noticeably angry. "The residents from Margamulya village became increasingly irate and to avoid a clash the 18 Shi'ites

were evacuated to the Garut Police Station", said the head of Garut Police, Adjunct Senior Commissioner Enjang Hasan Kurnia as cited by Detik.com (27/01).

On Friday (27/01) they were released after the situation was declared safe and negotiations had been held, though no agreement had been reached. "The result is not 100% but they've agreed to maintain peace in Garut. We've released all the Shi'ites, who returned home this morning," said Enjang as quoted by Tempo.co (27/01).

The fate of Shi'ites in Karang Gayam has not improved either. They met with Commission III of the House of Representatives to complain about the burning of their houses and pesantren and other discriminative treatment. "I only ask for justice, those who break the law must be dealt with. I also ask for no more oppression of minorities," said KH Tajul Muluk as quoted by ANTARA News (17/01). Tajul asked for protection from the law enforcement agencies, arguing that Shi'ites were also Indonesian citizens like everyone else.

Tajul said that he had been offered to relocate but had declined because there was no guarantee of their safety. "If there's no protection in my place of birth, my village, what will it be like in a place

I'm not familiar with?" Tajul asked. As for being deviant, as some parties claim, Tajul dismisses the accusation as pure fabrication.

The head of NU's Central Board, KH Said Aqil Siradj, rejected claims that Shia Islam is deviant. He said that there is nothing that makes Shi'ites deviant, including Wahabbis, which is the most radical sect in Islam. There are only differences between Sunnis and Shi'ites, which need not be accentuated, including on deviance - something which occurs within Sunni Islam too. "Within Sunni Islam there are a lot of significant differences, for instance between followers of Imam Syafii and Hanafi, that's a big difference, not just with Shia Islam," explained Kang Said, as quoted by Tempo.co (27/01). What is needed is tolerance and sincerity. As a result, Kang Said disagrees with the attitude of the Minister of Religious Affairs, Suryadharma Ali, who says that Shi'ism contradicts Islam - although he denied this on a separate occasion.

In Bandung, West Java, Shi'ites have been 'threatened' since 2011. The Indonesian Ulama Forum (FUUI) asked the Governor of West Java to ban the sect when banning Ahmadiyah, though the demand was not heeded. "We believe in our government, in those

who wield power, that there is law, there is a president and so on. And there is no need to fight for heaven. There are other things to do rather than talk about what is deviant and misleading,”

said a member of the Advisory Council of IJABI, Muhammad Bagir, as quoted by KBR 68H (12/04/11). In Tegal, Central Java, a regulation was issued to monitor the Shi'ites in 2011. The regulation was

Circular No 451.1/008 dated 02 February 2011 urging residents to monitor the Shi'ites, issued by the Mayor of Tegal, H Ikmal Jaya. The legislation received much criticism. [M]

Civil Servant Arrested for being Atheist

Alexander or Aan was arrested by police on Wednesday (18/01). The civil servant candidate at the Regional Planning Board in Dharmasraya, Padang had acknowledged that he was an atheist. He did not acknowledge the presence of God, of the devil and hell, because of all the wickedness still present in the world. “If there is a God, why do bad things happen? There should be only goodness in the world if God is full of love. God can't do this,” Alexander explained, as cited by Padang Ekspres (19/01). He thus stopped praying and fasting, which he had done since childhood, in 2008.

“I don't know what I did wrong, all I knew was that I was in the office and a mob came and beat me up and took me to the Pulaupunjung Police Station,” Alexander explained

In addition, he also opened an account with a social networking site. Using the name Atheis Minang (Minang Atheist), Alexander became an administrator and with three others talked about atheism in his posts. About 1200 people eventually signed up to his posts.

Some responded to the posts, even gave critiques. Others seemed uneasy. Alexander said that the members did not know one another. However, some were curious to find out who Alexander was, and eventually

discovered that he was a civil servant candidate. He was beaten up and taken to a police station. “Communication was all through cyberspace, with other members who remained anonymous. I don't know what I did wrong, all I knew was that I was in the office and a mob came and beat me up and took me to the Pulaupunjung Police Station,” he explained.

After interrogation, Alexander was detained under article 27 verse 3 of the Electronic Transactions and Information Law. He faces a maximum sentence of 6 years imprisonment for using internet facilities for religious defamation, for violating article 156A on religious defamation and article 260 of the Criminal Code on forgery for claiming to be a Muslim while being an atheist. He is a suspect, according to the head of Pulau Pujung Police, Adjunct Commissioner Nofrial SE, after being reported by MUI for managing a social media account that upset residents. Police, according to Padang Ekspres (28/01), have interrogated six witnesses and have seized printouts from Facebook, a computer, and several other media forms used to spread Alexander's convictions.

The local MUI branch has stated that being atheist is forbidden in Islam. As a result, MUI will ask Alexander to repent. Atheism is also a violation of the law in Indonesia because the state only recognises six religions or faiths. MUI therefore stated that Alexander's superior should fire him immediately. “I urge the head of his department to punish him, if need be by firing him,” said the head of the Fatwa Department of MUI in West Sumatra, Gusrizal Gazahar.

MUI suspected that Alexander became an atheist because he did not study monotheism or was reluctant to study. Or it could have been that he studied it but did not have a teacher who gave him a comprehensive explanation, said the head of MUI. He asked that ulama deliver long sermons on monotheism, differing from the current practice where entertainment is emphasised over preaching.

Several people have visited Alexander. The Regent of Dharmasraya, Adi Gunawan, visited for about an hour to make Alexander repent, but was not successful. However the regent said he would not fire Alexander until he was proven guilty. During the investigation he would be dealt with by the police and prosecutor. “We cannot fire him yet. We must presume his innocence while the legal process is underway,” he explained, as cited by Padang Ekspres (20/01).

The head of the Minangkabau Indigenous Peoples' Institute (LKAAM) of West Sumatra, M Sayuti Dt Rajo Pangulu and the head of LKAAM in Dharmasraya, Zulfikar Atut Dt Penghulu Besar embarked on a similar mission. During a 40 minute meeting at the police station, at which the head of Dharmasraya Police, Adjunct Senior Commissioner Chairul Aziz, was also present, Alexander was asked to return to Islam. LKAAM said they were pleased because there were signs that Alexander was changing. “Praise be to God, he is beginning to change and we hope he will return to Islam. We should all support him. It is our collective responsibility to heal him,” said Zulfikar Atut as quoted by Padang Ekspres (25/01).

Meanwhile, Alexander's boss

at the Regional Planning Board said he would not intervene in the legal process, and stressed that the case was a personal matter, not one that involved his institute. "We will not intervene in the legal process," said the head of the Regional Planning Board in Dharmasraya, Adilisman, as cited by Tempo.com (19/01).

Alexander's family acknowledged that they were embarrassed by his atheism. "What Alex has done has embarrassed and pressured us. We didn't know he was like that. We just hope that

Alex will return to the correct teachings. We will do anything, the main thing is that he realises what he believes in is wrong," said Armas, Alexander's father. Alexander said that he felt he was wrong, but as an alumni of Padjajaran University in Bandung he also felt that having a belief that was different to others was normal and allowed.

Alexander told LKAAM that he had become interested in atheism since primary school and through to the end of his university studies in 2007. In 2008,

after graduating, he declared himself an atheist. Alexander, as told by his parents, is bright and was always top of his class. After finishing senior high school at SMAN 7 Lubukbuaya Padang, Alexander studied statistics at Padjajaran University. When he graduated in 2008 he lived in Jakarta with his aunt. Returning home the following year, Alexander was accepted as a civil servant candidate in Dharmasraya. His boss saw Alexander as a bright but introverted man, who addressed all matters rationally. [M]

MTA Protested Against for Insulting Practice of Tahlil

Dozens of young NU activists demonstrated in front of the Nagsirah Building on Jl. Sudirman, Kudus, Central Java on Saturday (28/01). They were upset with an MTA (Qur'an Interpretation Council) public gathering which had critiqued the practice of tahlil (reciting La ilaha illa-Allah, there is no God but God), a ritual practices of the local NU community. Protestors came from GP Anshor, Fatayat, IPNU, IPPNU, PMII in Kudus and Banser in Kudus.

"This could have been prevented if there was communication between the MTA managers and the kyai elders in Kudus, who are part of a culture highly respected by the local community," said the head of Kudus Police, Adjunct Senior Commissioner Andik Setyono

They demonstrated because the MTA's interpretation had upset Kudus residents, the majority of whom are affiliated with NU. The MTA insulted the practice of tahlil, which it claimed was a big sin. "Their sermon also insulted kiai

(religious scholars/teachers). The worst part was that they said that the sins of those who practice tahlil were greater than those of adulterers, even though the practice is a tradition amongst NU people here," said Saiful Anas, the coordinator of the protest and head of the Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama's Youth Association (PP IPNU), as cited by KRjogja.com (28/01). In addition, NU people in Kudus also practice a number of classical traditions brought by Sunan Kudus. MTA's intolerant attitude, if allowed to continue, will cause further unrest amongst residents. Another issue with the council was that it failed to seek authorisation for the gathering from the local police station.

The demonstrators walked together to the Ngasirah Building after gathering at 10.00am. Coordinated by Saiful Anas, the protest began with tahlil in front of the building, which was tightly guarded by police. Protestors then took it in turns to give speeches. Saiful Anas asked the MTA committee to pull down all the banners, including the welcome banner, displayed within five minutes. If not, the protestors would do so themselves.

The event was guarded by 300 officers and the head of Kudus Police, Adjunct Senior Commissioner Andik Setyono, was present. He said that he had been informed of the gathering but

he asked for dialogue with the kyai elders in Kudus out of respect for community traditions. "This could have been prevented if there was communication between the MTA managers and the kyai elders in Kudus, who are part of a culture highly respected by the local community," said Andik.

The gathering ended around midday although it was due to finish at 3pm. About 3000 participants returned home under police guard. Abdur Rozaq, the head of the committee and the chief representative of MTA in Kudus, said that the event was not dispersed by the demonstrators but had concluded before the Dhuhur prayer so that participants could return home earlier. He also denied that MTA was deviant. "MTA is just a normal religious study group that teaches the Qur'an and Hadith. Not teachings that deviate from Islam," he explained, as cited by Mediaindonesia.com (28/01).

MUI in Kudus did not condemn or justify the action. It was seen as an attempt to prevent social unrest. "Kudus has remained peaceful. The Kudus community is largely an NU community, and the MTA insulted the NU community," said the head of MUI in Kudus, KH. Syafiq Nashan, as quoted by Suara Merdeka (29/01).

After the demonstration, rumours had it that there would be a meeting

between Central Java GP Ansor and the MTA. "I've just been told from the regional branch about the meeting with MTA. We'll wait for the results first," said the head of Ansor in Kudus, Abdul Ghofar. The head of the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kudus, Hambali, asked the MTA to temporarily halt all activities in order to maintain law and order in Kudus. The NU Central Board also said that it would investigate who participated in the NU demonstration. However the NU spokesman, Sulton Fathoni, emphasised that NU never asserted that the MTA was deviant.

This was not the first time the MTA was the object of protest. Prior to the incident, the MTA had been

protested against by residents of Ponorogo for declaring a traditional art form known as reog as haram or forbidden, and criticising the practice of tahlil, both of which were cultural rituals practiced by the local residents. The MTA was established by Ustadz Abdullah Tufail Saputro in Surakarta on 19 September 1972. The MTA, according to research by the Central Java Research and Development Department (2008), was established to enable Muslims to learn about the Qur'an. They had lacked Qur'anic understanding and were thus marginalised even though they had contributed significantly in the fight for independence against the Dutch.

They believe, as stated in MTA

documents, in *lana a'maluna wa lakum a'malakum* (for me, my charity; for you, your charity). They use the Qur'an and Hadith as references, and do not adhere to any particular school of thought. They have both public and specific sermons. Specific sermons are on interpretation, include roll call and are attended by board members. They have a radio station which was established on 1 March 2007 at 109.7 MHz. They tend to be less flexible in their understandings and their understanding of the Qur'an when faced with differences of other groups or communities. MTA members are also reluctant to attend activities held by other parties aside from Friday sermons. [M]

DPR Members Pursued by Opponents of Taman Yasmin GKI

The opponents of the Taman Yasmin Protestant Church (GKI) have not just been demonstrating against the congregation every weekend. On Sunday (15/01), they also protested against two members of the House of Representatives (DPR), Eva Kusuma Sundari and Lily Wahid, who were observing the congregation.

"They glared at me. It was really sad," said Eva Kusuma Sundari, from Commission III of the House of Representatives

Given that the security barricade was still incomplete, the church's opponents were free to approach the congregation. They tormented the church congregation while the police tried to stop local residents from approaching the congregation. Pushing and shoving broke out. "The police should not protect them. It means they come every Sunday," said a representative

of the local community in a speech, as quoted by Kompas.com (15/01).

Eva got out of her car when the mob looked like they were dispersing the congregation. The car was attacked because Eva was considered to be too vocal in defending the congregation. Eva, from Commission III of the DPR, was treated inappropriately and even subject to intimidation, although Lily, from Commission I, was safe.

A female demonstrator, according to Eva, made accusations and questioned why Eva had come to the church. They thought Eva was a member of the church, but when she explained that she was a member of parliament it only angered them further. "This is our area. Why are you defending those who have done wrong? They falsified documents. I want to talk with you," Eva imitated the demonstrators, as quoted by VIVAnews (16/01).

The mob shook their fists at her, pushed her and grabbed her shirt. "They glared at me. It was really sad," Eva said. Seeing that Eva was being attacked, she was told to get in the car, but she declined initially. Feeling sorry for the congregation, Eva got in the car and was

escorted by a motorbike to the house where the church service was underway. Lily Wahid was already there.

Shortly afterwards, rumours spread that the mob would head to the house where Eva and Lily were. They arrived and shouted that Eva was an intruder. "You're an intruder. If you're really brave, come outside. Don't hide inside like Satan." The police gave the mob an ultimatum. "If anyone disturbs the two DPR members inside the house, we will arrest you." However the mob then approached the head of the neighbourhood association unit. The church congregation and Eva went home. "This seems to be an intel strategy," she said. Eva's experience made her feel that the constitutional rights of the congregation had been violated by the mob.

The head of West Bogor Police, Commissioner Hida TJ confirmed that Lily and Eva were present, but could not be sure if they were representing a party or were there on a personal basis. He did confirm that the situation was calm, and denied that there had been pushing and shoving or pulling of Eva's shirt. "The situation is safe and under control. The

local residents made speeches without any issues. They really don't want a place of worship there. There was no assault or pulling of clothes," explained

Commissioner Hida, as quoted by Detik.com (15/01). Eva said she had visited Taman Yasmin GKI in preparation for a meeting on the Taman Yasmin issue

in parliament that was to be held the following Wednesday (18/01).

[M]

15 Years for Ba'asyir

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (ABB) has to accept the reality that his sentence was increased by six years when the Supreme Court rejected his appeal on Monday (27/02). Ruling No. 2452 K/Pidsus/2011 revoked the ruling on his appeal at the Jakarta High Court which had decreased his sentence to nine years in October 2011 (Ruling No. 332/Pid/2011 PT. DKI). This decision gave further support to the ruling by the South Jakarta District Court on 16 June 2011.

"The court reinstates the ruling by the South Jakarta District Court No. 148/Pid.B/2011/PN Jaksel dated 16 June 2011 which states that the defendant Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was guilty of an act of terrorism and subject to 15 years imprisonment," said the head of the Supreme Court, Djoko Sarwoko

"The court reinstates the ruling by the South Jakarta District Court No. 148/Pid.B/2011/PN Jaksel dated 16 June 2011 which states that the defendant Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was guilty of an act of terrorism and subject to 15 years imprisonment," said the head of the Supreme Court, Djoko Sarwoko, and quoted by the head of Public Relations of the Supreme Court, Ridwan Mansyur, when announcing the ruling at the

Supreme Court, Central Jakarta, as reported by Kompas.com (27/02). The two other judges, Mansyur Kertayasa and Andi Samsan Nganro, also agreed with the ruling. In addition, the defendant was to pay as much as Rp 2.500,00 (US \$0.25) in court fees. The reason for the ruling was that the High Court had only considered the crime in and of itself, but terrorism is a formal criminal act and as such the consequences of the defendant's actions do not need to be proven.

The criminal actions referred to include military training at Jalin Jantho, Aceh. The defence objected to the accusation, arguing that training does not necessarily need to be seen as an act of terrorism. And while the defence acknowledged that ABB was guilty of possession of illegal weapons, it was argued that article involved was the Emergency Law and as such ABB could not be accused of terrorism, in accordance with Article 14 in conjunction with Article 7 of Law No 15 of 2003 on Implementation of Regulation No 1 of 2002 on Eradication of Terrorism as a Law.

The Muslim Defence Team (TPM), ABB's lawyers, said that they would appeal if what they heard from the media turned out to be true because they had not received a copy of the verdict. The issue they wished to appeal was not the length of time ABB was to serve, but the US intervention in the verdict. "It's clear that the US interfered, because the MA gave a verdict based on the US statement about Ba'asyir," said Akhmad Kholid from TPM, as quoted by Okezone.com (28/02).

The statement referred to here was released by the US Department of Foreign

Affairs and declared that JAT (Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid), under ABB's leadership, was a terrorist organisation. The change in status was a result of JAT's involvement in terrorist attacks in Indonesia, including the bombing of the Kepunton GBIS church in Solo. JAT was also suspected to be involved in a number of robberies of banks, the money of which went towards buying weapons and explosives. The US also froze any international financial links to the JAT network.

JAT described the 15 year sentence as "tyranny and treason of the thaghut rulers against an ulama who has always been consistent in upholding tauhid (the oneness of God) and struggling for Islamic law". The organisation shares the TPM's opinion about foreign intervention. "We believe that the Supreme Court's verdict was influenced by the US Department of Foreign Affairs' release on 23 February 2012, and as such we suspect that the verdict was influenced by American intervention. If this is true then justice in Indonesia is no longer based on just and fair law but on foreign powers, namely America. It seems that the Supreme Court is more afraid of America than it is of God," read JAT's press release dated 28 February 2012.

The Judicial Commission stated that no intervention was possible in ABB's case. If there were strong indications of intervention, then the Judicial Commission, according to its head, Eman Suparman, would not hesitate to investigate the matter.

[M]

Analysis

1. The rejection of FPI in Palangkaraya and at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout was an expression of how fed up society is with the constant violence by FPI and the lack of response by security forces. These incidents were not the first, as women in Medan had previously burnt the car of the local FPI head in response to his arrogance. Unfortunately, the authorities failed to act quickly and the protest, which only occurs rarely against social organisations, spread in its various forms to a number of places
2. Although the Minister for Internal Affairs was rather late with his warning to FPI for their violence, he deserves to be commended, so long his words are followed by concrete action. Similarly for the Supreme Court's verdict that reinstated the 15 year sentence for Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, particularly in light of the fact that terrorism is a significant danger to Indonesia's diversity
3. The suggestion to speed up the process required to disband organisations through a revision of the Law on Social Organisations will be the end of democracy in Indonesia. If this is attempted, it is likely that many social organisations will be disbanded without cause, as these kind of regulations are often used by those in power to meet their own aspirations
4. As mentioned in previous editions of the MRoRI, accusations of deviance which often end with demands to disband the accused group are purely political issues. This applies to GAI in Yogyakarta. Islamic social organisations, which usually resort to MUI's standards, have accused GAI of deviance even though the group does not fit into MUI's deviant category given that it does acknowledge Prophet Muhammad as the final prophet. Such inconstancies have a negative effect on our diverse way of life, especially if the local authorities fail to act as they should
5. Logical reasoning is indeed a rare thing in Indonesia, as seen in the incident in Garut. When the Shi'ite community left a Friday sermon, without clarifying the reason the local community approached and intimidated them. The Shi'ites eventually chose to be evacuated to the police station than to take more abuse. The same applies to the treatment of Eva Kusuma Sundari, member of Commission III of the House of Representatives.
6. Proponents of the religious defamation law now have a new target, atheism. Atheists are now being treated in the same manner as deviant sects: they are reported to police for religious defamation, imprisoned and required to repent. Diversity is thus no longer a matter of appreciation for different beliefs or faiths, but of disciplining the diversity of individuals or groups so that they adhere to the desired belief - usually that held by the mainstream. This becomes a matter of categories, of deviant versus non deviant, or theist versus atheist, as with Foucault's normal and abnormal categories
7. After the demonstration in Ponorogo, the MTA was protested against in Kudus in a move that was aimed at better appreciating diversity which is yet to be fully realised, given that groups are still spreading their own teachings through hate speeches.

Recommendations

1. The security forces should act firmly against perpetrators of violence, regardless of the origins of the social organisation from which they come. Continually turning a blind eye has the potential to lead to a spiral of horizontal violence, to quote Camara
2. The 1985 Law on Social Organisations needs to be revised but not to hasten the process required to disband violent social organisations such as FPI, as the Minister of Internal Affairs has been suggesting. Revision of the law should emphasise the importance of freedom of expression and a code of ethics, particularly a firm response to violence. Violence is to be dealt with by the law enforcement agencies because it is a criminal act
3. We need to internalise the importance of diversity coupled with social ethics. A spirit for diversity needs to be coupled with norms of living together in a humane manner so that there is no intimidation, conflict or spreading of hate. For instance, the MTA does not need to insult NU rituals in sermons or religious gatherings, the local community in Garut should visit Shi'ite settlements to talk about why they left the Friday sermon before it was over and the Muslims who oppose the Taman Yasmin Church do not need to attack and threaten Eva Kusuma Sundari in order to prove their righteousness
4. It is fitting enough that religious and community leaders monitor their communities. Those who are considered to deviate because they engage in deviant behaviours or do not believe in God do not need to be charged with violating the Law on Religious Defamation. This law will not make the individual repent, if that is indeed desired, rather corporal punishment often reinforces beliefs