

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR CHURCH CONGREGATION CONTINUE

The congregation of the Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church fear for their safety after they were intimidated by members of radical Islamist groups on 22 January. They are at risk of further intimidation and possible attacks.

At about 7am on 22 January, members of two radical Islamist groups – the Islamic Reform Movement and Muslim Communications Forum – gathered near the site of the church, blocking the road with tree branches and wooden chairs. Since the church was sealed off in 2008, the congregation have conducted weekly services on the pavement outside the church, where they face continued protests and intimidation by radical groups. However, Amnesty International is not aware of any investigation into the ongoing threats against the congregation.

On this occasion, due to ongoing fears for their safety, the congregation had decided in advance to move their weekly service to a house about 300m from the church. Protesters intimidated and verbally abused some of the congregation as they made their way to the service at the house. At 9am, around 30 minutes after worship began, at least 50 Bogor Municipal Administrative Police (Satpol PP) officers also arrived at the scene. Shortly afterwards, dozens of protesters began gathering outside the house, intimidating the congregation and shouting at them to leave. However, instead of taking steps to ensure that the service could be conducted without interference, the administrative police attempted to persuade the worshippers to leave. Despite such pressure, the congregation refused to leave while the protesters were present. This continued until the Bogor District Police Chief agreed to guarantee protection of the congregation. The congregation then left the house under police protection.

The church was closed in 2008 after its building permit was revoked. The Bogor city administration claimed that the permit was obtained using falsified signatures. However, in December 2010 the Indonesian Supreme Court overturned the decision and ordered the church to be re-opened. Following the failure of the Bogor city administration to comply with the decision, the Indonesian Ombudsman has referred the case to the President.

Please write immediately in English, Indonesian or your own language calling on the authorities in Indonesia to:

- Take adequate measures to guarantee the safety of the Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church congregation so that they can practice their religion free from attacks and intimidation;
- Ensure that the Bogor city authorities immediately comply with the Indonesian Supreme Court ruling and re-open the Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church;
- Conduct prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all reports of intimidation, harassment and attacks against members of the Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church and bring the perpetrators to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 MARCH 2012 TO:

President of the Republic of Indonesia

H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Istana Merdeka

Jakarta, 10110

Indonesia

Fax: + 62 21 345 2685

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Indonesian National Police

General Timur Pradopo

Jl. Trunojoyo No. 3

Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Fax: +62 21 722 0669

Salutation: Dear General

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Amir Syamsuddin

Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav No. 4-5

Kuningan, Jakarta Selatan, 12950

Indonesia

Fax: +62 21 525 3095

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 212/11. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA21/031/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Indonesia, GKI) in Bogor, West Java, was closed and sealed off by the Bogor city administration in 2008 after its building permit was revoked. The Bogor city administration claimed that the permit was obtained using falsified signatures from members of the community. However, in December 2010 the Indonesian Supreme Court overturned the decision and ordered the church to be re-opened. The authorities in Bogor have refused to comply with the ruling, citing fears that it would spark social unrest.

The case of the Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church has received support from various political and religious figures across Indonesia and in the past they have been present at the site of the church to monitor the weekly threats against the congregation. On 22 January Lily Wahid, an Indonesian parliamentarian, and members of her team who were also present, attempted to negotiate with the Bogor Municipal Administrative Police (Satpol PP) officers to allow the congregation to continue their worship.

On 18 July 2011 the Indonesian Ombudsman, tasked with overseeing state officials and public services, gave the Bogor city administration a 60-day deadline to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. On 13 October 2011, after the Bogor city administration had failed to comply with the recommendation, the Indonesian Ombudsman reportedly referred the case to the Indonesian President and House of People's Representatives, as permitted under the 2008 Ombudsman Law (Law No. 37/2008).

The right to freedom of religion in Indonesia is guaranteed in the Indonesian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Indonesia is state party. However, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of attacks and intimidation against religious minorities in Indonesia, including Christians. In 2011 at least 18 churches were attacked or forced to close down. Some churches were burned down or otherwise damaged by violent groups. Church members have also been targeted and attacked.

Name: Taman Yasmin Indonesian Christian Church

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 212/11 Index: ASA 21/004/2012 Issue Date: 24 January 2012