



UMAA  
ADVOCACY

# INDONESIA

THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES



SECURITY REPORT

# INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

JULY 2014

Copyright © 2014 by The Universal Muslim Association of America  
1717 Pennsylvania Ave NW #1025  
Washington, DC 20006.  
Phone: 202-559-9123  
Email: info@umaamerica.net

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Printed in the United States of America

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	7
Policy Recommendations.....	9
Anti-Shia Sentiments .....	11
In the News: World’s first Anti Shia Alliance convention results in calls for violence and sectarian purging .....	15
The 2000 Constitutional Amendment.....	19
The 1965 Blasphemy Law .....	21
1969 Decree on Houses of Worship .....	23

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

2008 Anti-Ahmadiyah Decree.....	25
Key Parties in Parliament .....	27
Secular Parties .....	27
Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (Partai Demokrasi) .....	27
Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat) .....	27
Golkar (Party of the Functional Groups).....	28
Gerinda (Great Indonesia Movement Party) .....	29
Islamic Parties.....	30
PKS (Prosperous Justice Party).....	30
PAN (National Mandate Party) .....	30
PPP (United Development Party) .....	31
2014 Presidential Election .....	33
Notes .....	36
About UMAA.....	40
Vision .....	40
Mission .....	40
Goals & Objectives.....	41

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world has had a tumultuous relationship in dealing with religious minorities within their country. It was the host of history's first ever "Anti Shia Alliance" Convention, where attendees called for violence and hatred against the country's minority population. Various government officials were seen as either in support of the convention or turning a blind eye to its activities, implicitly supporting the hate group.

With elections right around the corner, this is a crucial time for the Indonesian government to address their shortcomings and work to improve relations with minority groups. This begins with addressing laws and policies that have undermined Indonesians' legal guarantees of religious freedom. According to Human Rights Watch, a number of laws and policies pursued by the Indonesian government, targeting blasphemy and houses of worship, have facilitated systematic discrimination and abuse and have impaired the relationship between the government and religious minority groups.





## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the sustained human rights abuses in the country and systematic discrimination by the government, UMAA recommends the following policies to alleviate the persecution against religious minorities in Indonesia:

1. A zero tolerance policy for all persecutions against religious minorities.
2. A zero tolerance policy against all government officials who undermine the Constitution guaranteeing religious freedom, with emphasis on construction of houses or worship.
3. A comprehensive review of all existing laws, regulations and decrees on religion that historically have been used to discriminate against religious minorities.
4. Immediate disciplinary action against all government officials who promote religious discrimination.



## ANTI-SHIA SENTIMENTS

Shia Muslims make up the second largest denomination of Islam in Indonesia. In Arabic, Shia is the short form of the phrase Shi'atu Ali or "followers of Ali" – a reference to Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>1</sup> Sunnis consider Ali the fourth and final of the four caliphs. Shia's regard Ali as the first Immaculate Imam (divine leader) and consider him and his descendants the rightful successors to the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>2</sup>

A 2012 riot in the town of Sampang brought an international spotlight on violence perpetuated against Shias in Indonesia. A group of Sunnis rampaged through a Shia village killing two and displacing hundreds more at a sports complex for months without adequate access to food or water.<sup>3</sup>

The Ministry of Religious affairs wield great influence in government pertaining to all things religion. They wrote the 1969 and 2006 decrees on building houses of worship. They have been staunch critics of Shia; in 2009 they were instrumental in pressuring a Shia cleric to stop Shia activities in his village and in 2011 they supported an anti-Shia edict.<sup>4</sup> Suryadharma Ali, once Indonesia's religious affairs minister has been an outspoken critic of Shia advising them to convert to Sunni Islam to prevent violence against them.

The Setara Institute, an NGO that monitors religious freedom in Indonesia has reported a rise in attacks directed towards the Shia in Indonesia, an increase from 10 incidents in 2012 to 30 in 2013.<sup>5</sup> Bonar Tigor, the deputy chair of the Setara Institute believes the rise in attacks against Shia has been influenced by events in the Middle East mainly in Iraq and Syria where wars have been waged along sectarian pretenses.<sup>6</sup> The conflicts have attracted thousands of foreign fighters; the Indonesian government estimates 50 of its own citizens are fighting in Syria – though those estimates are very conservative.<sup>7</sup> Fundraisers for The Islamic State formerly known as ISIS have also been openly held In Indonesia.<sup>8</sup>

The intolerance aimed at the Shia in Indonesia has culminated to the world's first ever "Anti-Shia Alliance" convention held in Indonesia in April of 2014.<sup>9</sup> The event called for "jihad" against Shia's, drawing in thousands of attendees and several government officials.<sup>10</sup> The convention resulted in an "Anti-Shia Declaration" which read as follows:<sup>11</sup>

The Anti-Shia declaration

1. The alliance is a preaching forum to promote virtues and prevent abominable acts.
2. The alliance will take any necessary measures to maximize the prevention of the proliferation of heretical teachings by Shia followers.
3. The alliance will forge good relations with other preaching organizations.
4. The alliance will demand that the government immediately ban Shia and revoke all licenses for foundations, organizations and institutions owned by Shiites.

According to the Jakarta Globe, West Java governor Ahmad Heryawan had intentions to attend the convention but due to heavy backlash decided against it. Instead, he sent an assistant on his behalf that openly supported the conference.

Tardjono Abu Muas, a radical Islamic figure organized the convention with the sole aim of eliminating Shia Islam in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> He was quoted by Vice News saying, "Shi'ism is a virus that can destroy Islamic Teaching," and went on further to say, "It is deviant from the true teachings of Islam." Numerous local government officials and parliamentary coalitions attended the convention notably the staff of West Java's Islamist Governor Ahmad Heryawan as well as Ahmad Ridwan, the head of the Indonesia Council of Ulema.<sup>13</sup> The Indonesia Council of Ulema is Indonesia's highest Islamic authority and they openly called for a "purge" of Indonesia's Shia minority.<sup>14</sup>

The Anti-Shia rhetoric spewed at the convention has spilled over to the upcoming presidential elections, with calls from Cholil to vote against Joko Widoda of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle over rumors Widoda was considering appointing prominent Shiite figure Jalaluddin Rakhmat as religious affairs minister.<sup>15</sup> "Don't choose to abstain in the coming presedential elections," Cholil said. He continued, "It will pave the way for

Jokowi to become the president. If he's elected, Jalaluddin will be his religious affairs minister. Do you all want that?"

This convention is the latest example that furthers the narrative the Indonesian government is not doing enough to remedy the anti-shia sentiments held by a significant number of powerful individuals and coalition groups in Indonesia. With presidential elections a few months away, the Indonesian government must step in with a sense of urgency to proactively combat anti-shia attitudes before more violence ensues.



# IN THE NEWS: WORLD'S FIRST ANTI SHIA ALLIANCE CONVENTION RESULTS IN CALLS FOR VIOLENCE AND SECTARIAN PURGING



By Rahat Husain, Communities Digital News

April 25, 2014

WASHINGTON, April 25, 2014 – Last week, the world's first ever "Anti Shia Alliance" convention was held in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. The event was attended by

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

thousands of participants, who called for “jihad” against Shia Muslims. Several government officials were in attendance. During the conference, a Shiite journalist who was covering the program for Ahlulbait Indonesia, reported being detained, interrogated, and beaten by group organizers and attendees.

The alliance is a coalition of various groups who all maintain an anti-Shia agenda, including the Anti-Heresy Front, led by Ahmad bin Zein al-Kaff.

The convention resulted in an “Anti Shia Declaration” which reads as follows:

The anti-Shia declaration

The alliance is a preaching forum to promote virtues and prevent abominable acts.

The alliance will take any necessary measures to maximize the prevention of the proliferation of heretical teachings by Shia followers.

The alliance will forge good relations with other preaching organizations.

The alliance will demand that the government immediately ban Shia and revoke all licenses for foundations, organizations and institutions owned by Shiites.

In a speech, bin Zein al-Kaff said “It’s time that we declared jihad against them...We should not tolerate them anymore.”

Another part of the alliance, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) had its members attend wearing black ski masks and camouflage clothing, with shirts that said “Heresy Hunters.”

The Jakarta Globe quotes the group’s leader, Tardjono Abu Muas, as saying “We all have to understand that Shia has tainted the true Islamic teaching... Our government should be like the Malaysian government.” The Malaysian government has increasingly banned the practice of Shia Islam within their country, and has been criticized by Human Rights Watch for human rights violations against the Shiite minority.



---

## IN THE NEWS: WORLD'S FIRST ANTI SHIA ALLIANCE CONVENTION RESULTS IN CALLS FOR VIOLENCE AND SECTARIAN PURGING

---

Another leader in the organization, Athian Ali said that more than 100 Muslim clerics attended the event.

The Jakarta Globe writes that anti Shia attitudes are a key component of upcoming elections in Indonesia, “[The Anti Shia Alliance] was borne out in the message to the crowd from Muhammad Al Khaththath, the secretary general of the Indonesian Ulema and Congregation Forum, or FUUI, which in 2012 issued a call to build ‘anti-Shiite posts’ saying ‘We will support any candidate who wants to make an MOU to purge the Shiites from Indonesia. If [Subianto] is ready to do that. he will become the president.’”

Ahmad Cholil Ridwan, a leader from the Indonesian Council of Ulema (MUI), attended the event and also spoke of the need to “purge the Shiites” from the country.

According to the Jakarta Globe, announcements made before the convention stated the Anti-Shia Alliance event would be “attended by officials including West Java Governor Ahmad Heryawan and Ahmad Cholil Ridwan, a leader of the Indonesian Council of Ulema, or MUI, the highest Islamic authority in the country.”

After extensive backlash, the West Java Governor announced he would not attend the Anti Shia Alliance meeting, but refused to speak out against the convention. Instead, Governor Heryawan sent his assistant, Ahmad Hadadi, who openly supported the conference.

According to DureanAsean, Indonesia has a history of antipathy towards Shias, reporting “[Indonesian] Religious Affairs Minister Suryadharma Ali previously called Shia Islam heretical, saying that it deviated from principal Islamic teachings.

“Persecution of Shia followers has escalated in the past few years. In 2012, Tajul Muluk, a Shia leader from Sampang, East Java, was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for blasphemy.

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

“In the same year, a mob set fire to dozens of Shiite homes in Sampang, killing two Shia followers and forcing hundreds of others to take refuge in Sidoarjo, around 100 kilometers away.”

The Jakarta Post reported that after the Sampang burning “Some [victims] were even forced to convert to Sunni beliefs if they wished to return home.”

Last year, Indonesian Shiite leader Iklil Al Milal protested a decision to give an award to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono for religious tolerance in Indonesia. “We are living as if in prison. We no longer get food rations and there has been no security guarantee from the state,” said Milal at a public forum, speaking to conditions Indonesian Shias faced after the Sampang attacks.

“Today the population of Shia’s in the country is approximately one million, they are distributed all around the country, however, they are mainly found in Jakarta-which is the capital city of Indonesia, Bandanogh and Sowra,” says Imamreza.net. The same website also claims that Shiites originally entered the country when grandchildren of Sayyid Ali al-Uraidhi, son of the Shiite Imam Jafar Sadiq, migrated to Indonesia with his family members in the 9th century CE.

<http://www.commdiginews.com/world-news/worlds-first-anti-shia-alliance-convention-results-in-calls-for-violence-and-sectarian-purging-16020>

# THE 2000 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT<sup>16</sup>

Article 29 of Indonesia's Constitution, promulgated in 1945, states:

1. The state is based on belief in the One and Only God
2. The state guarantees each and every citizen the freedom of religion and of worship in accordance with his religion and belief.

On August 18, 2000, the constitution was amended in ways that in some respects reinforced the principle of religious freedom. Article 28E (2) broadly guarantees the human rights of Indonesian citizens, specifically addressing religious freedom, stating, "[e]ach person is free to worship and to practice the religion of his choice."

But article 28J (2), also introduced in 2000, puts forth legal duties that in practice are being used to restrain religious freedom, explicitly those of religious minorities. In exercising their rights and liberties, individuals have the duty to accept the limitations determined by law. The claimed purpose of those restraints is to guarantee the recognition and respect of the rights and liberties of other people and satisfy a democratic society's just demands based on considerations of morality, religious values, security, and public order.

The latter provision has been and continues to be implored to clamor religious minorities and cater to the demands of the religious majority. By 2010, Indonesia had at least 156 statutes, regulations, decrees, and by-laws that restrict religious freedom, many of them validated by reference to article 28J (2).

Among the most significant legal obstacles to religious freedom in Indonesia according to Human Rights Watch are:

- The 1965 blasphemy law, enacted under President Sukarno

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

- A joint ministerial decree regarding proselytizing of religion signed by the ministers of religious affairs and home affairs (No. 1/1979), titled “Regulating Missionary and Foreign Aid to Religious Organizations”;
- Child Protection Act No. 23/2002, enacted under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, which includes articles “to protect” the faith of a child even when adopted;
- A joint regulation issued by the ministers of religious affairs and home affairs (No. 8 and No. 9/2006), titled “Guidelines for Regional Heads and Deputies in Maintaining Religious Harmony, Empowering the Religious Harmony Forum, and Constructing Houses of Worship”;
- A joint decree issued by the minister of religious affairs, the attorney general, and minister of home affairs (No. 3/2008) ordering the Ahmadiyah to stop spreading their teachings.

## THE 1965 BLASPHEMY LAW<sup>17</sup>

Article 156a of the Indonesian Criminal Code states:

“Any person who deliberately, in public, expresses feelings or commits an act: which principally has the character of being of hostility, hatred, or contempt against a religion adhered to in Indonesia; with the purpose of preventing a person adhering to any religion based on the belief of the Almighty God shall be punished up to a maximum imprisonment of five years.”

The 1965 Blasphemy Law passed by President Sukarno was a result of immense pressure from conservative Muslims and since its passing has been a hot topic of debate with many people arguing the law violates the constitutional right to freedom of expression. According to Human Rights Watch, more than a dozen people since 2005 have been prosecuted for blasphemy including:

- Yusman Roy, a Muslim preacher, sentenced in 2005 by the Malang district court, East Java, to two years' imprisonment for reciting a Muslim prayer in Indonesian Malay, which, according to the Indonesian Ulama Council, tarnished the purity of the Arabic-language prayer
- Lia Eden, M. Abdul Rachman, and Wahyu Andito Putro Wibisono, three leaders of a spiritual group called the “Eden Community” in Jakarta, sentenced in 2006 by a Jakarta court to prison terms of between two and three years. Lia Eden claimed to have received revelations from the Angel Gabriel.
- Dedi Priadi and Gerry Lufthy Yudistira, a father and son, members of Al-Qiyadah Al-Islamiyah Sufi sect, sentenced to three years imprisonment in May 2008 by the Padang court, West Sumatra, for blasphemy.
- Antonius Richmond Bawengan, a preacher and former catholic, sentenced in 2011 by the Temanggung district court, Central Java, to five years in prison for distributing a booklet said to desecrate Islam entitled “Three sponsors, Three

Agendas, Three Results” in Kranggan, a small village near Temanggung, in October 2010.

- Alexander An, a Minangkabao civil servant and an administrator of the “Minang Atheist” Facebook group, sentenced in June 2012 by the Sijunjung court, West Sumatra, to 30 months in prison and a fine of 100 million rupiah (US \$11,000) for inciting public interest via his Facebook page. He was initially charged under the blasphemy law as well as article 28 of the Information and the Electronic Transactions Law. The court, however, only used the Internet Law for the verdict.
- Andreas Guntur, the leader of the spiritual group Amanat Keagungan Ilahi, sentenced to four years’ imprisonment in March 2012 by the Klaten court, Central Java, for drawing upon certain verses of the Quran but not abiding by other conventional Islamic teachings. Guntur’s group was condemned by the Indonesian Ulama Council, which issued a fatwa against it in 2009.
- Tajul Muluk, a Shia cleric in Sampang, Madura Island, arrested in 2012, and tried and sentenced to two years in prison in July 2012 by the Sampang court for blasphemy. In September 2012, the East Java high court had his sentence changed to four years. He appealed again and the Supreme Court kept the four years punishment in January 2013.
- Sebastian Joe, a Muslim in Ciamis, sentenced to four years imprisonment for blasphemy in November 2012 by the Ciamis court, West Java, for his comments about Islam on his Facebook page.

In 2009, activists challenged the blasphemy law at the constitutional court but in an 8-1 decision, the court upheld the blasphemy law arguing it maintained “public order.”

## 1969 DECREE ON HOUSES OF WORSHIP<sup>18</sup>

The 1969 decree authorized local governments to require that “a house of worship may only be built with the approval of a regional administrator.” It goes on further to say, “if necessary, the head of the government could ask the opinions of religious organization and clerics” before a house of worship is authorized to be built. This decree has been used to systematically restrict religious minorities by limiting their rights to a house of worship. Governors have strictly enforced it issuing local regulations that infringe on minority rights to build houses of worship.

Christians in particular have been on the receiving end of this discriminatory law; in some cases waiting 10 to 20 years to obtain a permit to construct a church building. To circumvent the law, congregations began to meet in private homes. In 1975 however, Minister of Home Affairs Amir Machmud advised provincial governments to prohibit the use of private homes for religious services.

In an effort to loosen regulations set forth in the 1969 decree, the law was amended in 2006.<sup>19</sup> Permits to build houses of worship now require:

- List of names and ID cards of at least 90 people who will use the house of worship. This list should be endorsed by the village head
- Support letter from at least 60 people living in the area. The village head should endorse this support letter;
- Written recommendation from the local Ministry of Religious Affairs;
- Written recommendation from the local Religious Harmony Forum (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama, FKUB)

The amended law did little to address the shortcomings of the 1969 decree that came prior to it and in some ways the new decree was even more repressive. The Communion of Churches in Indonesia disputed the substance of the decree because it failed to address the

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

underlying issue of allowing local governments to dictate whom to approve or reject using arbitrary standards.



## **2008 ANTI-AHMADIYAH DECREE<sup>20</sup>**

The Ahmadiya sect is an Islamic religious revivalist movement, founded in Qadian, Punjab, originating with the teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. In Arabic, Ahmadiyah means “followers of Ahmad” and adherents are sometimes called “Ahmadis.” It began its presence in the Indonesian Sumatra Island in 1925. It was legally registered in Jakarta in 1953.

On June 9, 2008, Religious Affairs Minister Basyuni, Home Minister Mardiyanto, and Attorney General Supanji signed a joint decree, instructing the Ahmadiyah community to “stop spreading interpretations and activities which deviate from the principal teachings of Islam,” including “the spreading of the belief that there is another prophet with his own teachings after Prophet Mohammed.” Violations of the decree are subject to up to five years in prison.

Indonesian officials argue the decree helps prevent anti-Ahmadiyah violence. Contrary to their misguided beliefs, violence against the Ahmadiyah in fact has increased significantly since the decree was issued according to the Setara Institute which reported incidents of violence went from 50 in 2010 to 114 in 2011.



## KEY PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT

---

### SECULAR PARTIES

---

#### **Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (Partai Demokrasi)**

The Indonesian Democratic Party touts itself as a populist, secular-nationalist voice of the people. The party was an offshoot of the Indonesian Democratic Party, the main opposition group to the ruling Golkar under Suharto regime. The party has been very vocal in its support for religious tolerance and its opposition to policies that try to impose Islam as a state ideology.

The party was once led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia first president Sukarno up until 2014 when the party nominated popular Jakarta governor Joko Widodo to take her place.<sup>21</sup>

The Indonesian Democratic Party came in at first place in the 2014 Parliamentary Elections, securing a little under 19% of seats (Indonesian Legislative Election).

#### **Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat)**

The secular-nationalist Democratic party was established in 2001 as a means to carry Susilo Bambang Yudhoyona to the presidency in the 2004 elections. They enjoyed immediate success in the 2004 elections winning 55 seats.<sup>22</sup> Identifying themselves as a moderate, centrist party, they have flourished since the 2004 elections securing 148 seats in the 2009 elections.<sup>23</sup> Their immediate success has served as a blueprint for presidential candidates to form their own political parties.

The Democratic Party in its ambitious attempt to appeal to the most Indonesians possible supports “economic liberalization, political and cultural pluralism and an internationalist outlook.”<sup>24</sup>

Fast forward to today, it has been a rocky road for the Democratic Party since its victory in the 2009 elections. They have been on the receiving end of a multitude of corruption investigations resulting in some high-ranking members within their party to resign. The alleged corruption left the once dominant Democratic Party vulnerable, opening the doors for widespread criticisms by political opponents and parties. Though the Democratic Party continues to garner heavy support specifically in urban areas and the middle class, its support is shrinking and they failed to maintain their position as the largest party in the previous parliamentary elections.

In the 2014 elections, the Democratic Party took a severe dip securing a relatively disappointing 61 seats in parliament.<sup>25</sup>

### **Golkar (Party of the Functional Groups)**

Golkar is the oldest operating party in Indonesia, tracing their origins back to 1968 when President Suharto was elected into office.<sup>26</sup> Golkar thrived under Suharto's presidency, becoming the ruling party for over three decades up until Suharto's ouster.

Golkar remained a strong player in parliament even after Suharto's downfall because they recognized that in order to move forward they had to adapt and reform the party. They held a Special National Congress in 1998 to elect the next Chairmen of Golkar, doing away with the precedent of appointing the chairmen by the Executive Board.<sup>27</sup> They elected Akbar Tanjung who went ahead and abolished the Executive Board altogether.<sup>28</sup>

Golkar is one of very few Indonesian parties to consistently hold conventions to select a presidential candidate. This arrangement works out in their favor because it means Golkar fortunes are not tied solely to one individual, which historically has proven to be the demise of several promising parties in Indonesia. The downside with so many factions within the party is increased friction amongst them, which has eroded trust and made it difficult for the party to rally behind one candidate. This is evident with the emergence of smaller parties like Gerindra and Hanura, which were created by dissatisfied ex-Golkar members.

In the run up to the 2014 parliamentary elections, Chairmen of Golkar Aburizal Bakrie came up with a model known as “Vision Indonesia 2045: A Prosperous Nation” to serve as a blueprint to transition Indonesia into a developed nation.<sup>29</sup> The key components of his vision is “developing Indonesia from the villages, strengthening the role of the state, quality economic growth, equalizing incomes, ensuring even development in all areas, quality education and healthcare, strengthening communities, sustained economic development, upholding the law and human rights, industrial development based on technology and revitalization of agriculture and trade.”<sup>30</sup>

Golkar secured 91 seats, or a little under 15% of seats in the 2014 elections coming second only to the Indonesian Democratic Party.<sup>31</sup>

### **Gerinda (Great Indonesia Movement Party)**

Gerinda is a secular party established in 2008 that has made quite the splash in the political landscape of Indonesia behind an ideology that all indications point to be about “fierce nationalism and defense of the unitary state.”<sup>32</sup> Gerinda came about after Prabowo Subianto failed to clinch the presidential nomination in 2004 with his previous party, Golkar.<sup>33</sup>

Gerinda is well funded, receiving substantial financial aid from Prabowo’s brother, Hashim Djojohadikusoma, one of Indonesia’s richest men.<sup>34</sup> This has helped immensely in their efforts to put together an effective public relations campaign that has translated well in elections. They secured 26 seats in the 2009 legislative election and almost tripled their stake with 73 seats in the 2014 legislative elections making it the third most popular party in Indonesia in just a few years.<sup>35</sup> To further solidify its position come election time, Gerinda began taking in smaller parties across the political spectrum to enhance its chances of success. Their sole devotion to Prabowo however could prove detrimental because historically that was the downfall of many parties in Indonesia.

## **ISLAMIC PARTIES**

---

### **PKS (Prosperous Justice Party)**

PKS is an Islamic party led by Anis Matta that believes Islam should play a central role in all facets of public life. The party was founded in 1998 and since has built a reputation as a modern, pragmatic Islamic party.<sup>36</sup>

Its mission is to:<sup>37</sup>

1. Pioneer reforms to the political system, government and the bureaucracy, the judicial system and the military to be committed to strengthening democracy.
2. Address poverty, reduce unemployment and improve the prosperity of all elements of society through a strategy to equalize incomes, high value-added growth and sustained development.
3. Move towards just education by providing the maximum possible opportunities for all the Indonesian people.

PKS first gained recognition in 2004 when it increased its stake in parliament from 7 to 45 seats positioning itself to be a major political player in Indonesian politics.<sup>38</sup> They increased their influence securing 57 seats in 2009 until a graft scandal halted their momentum in 2013.<sup>39</sup> Several high-ranking members within the party were implicated in the scandal staining a once clean image and knocking the credibility of a once promising Islamic party.

PKS has tried to repair the reputation but, by most accounts, have failed. A lot has to do with its struggle to appeal to both conservative and progressive Muslims, finding itself unable to cater to both sides and thus finding itself in the midst of an identity crisis. This is reflected in the 2014 elections where they took a step backwards securing a mere 40 seats in parliament.<sup>40</sup>

### **PAN (National Mandate Party)**

PAN is an Islamic party established in 1998 by Amien Rais and arguably is the most moderate of all religious parties in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup> Its founder Amien Rais is a democratic reformist and chairman of the Muhammadiyah organization, the second largest Islamic organization in Indonesia.<sup>42</sup>

PAN's all inclusive approach has helped them amass support across the country, sponsoring several Christian candidates as well as being the only Muslim party with a representative from Papua, a predominantly Christian province.<sup>43</sup> According to their website, "PAN strives for the sovereignty of the people, social justice, and a better life for the people to bring about an Indonesian nation that is prosperous, developed, independent and dignified.

PAN has secured a solid presence in parliament, winning 34 seats in 1999, 53 seats in 2004 and 46 seats in 2009.<sup>44</sup> Historically, PAN has had success appealing to urban, middle-class Muslims and since have built on that success securing a relatively sizable stake in the 2014 Parliamentary Elections with 49 seats.<sup>45</sup>

### **PPP (United Development Party)**

PPP is an Islamic party with roots dating back to President Suharto, the result of a merger of four Islamic parties in 1973.<sup>46</sup>

PPP identifies itself as a traditional party with socially conservative policies though with time they have adopted a more hard-line stance especially concerning religious minorities. The chairman of PPP, Suryahdarma Ali has long advocated against Shia Islam and the Ahmadiyya sect, labeling both as heretics. He stands alongside radical groups like the Islamic Defender Front who have a history of harassing minority groups, burning down churches and attacking Shia schools and Ahmadiyaa communities.<sup>47</sup>

Since 1999, PPP has lost 20 seats in parliament and their influence is waning.<sup>48</sup> PPP leniency in dealing with extremist groups and their approach in preferring dialogue with such groups rather than turning them away is to blame, leading many voters to feel alienated and putting pressure on them to soften some of their hard line stances.

They secured 39 seats in the 2014 elections, behind both PKS and PAN.<sup>49</sup>



## 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Indonesian presidential election was held on July 9<sup>th</sup> and pitted former general Prabowo Subianto against governor of Jakarta, Joko Widodo. After a heated contest, Indonesia's Election Commission (the KPU) declared Widodo victorious securing 71 million votes amounting to 52.3% of valid votes.<sup>50</sup> Prabowo won 62.6 million votes losing by a margin of 8.4 million votes or 6.3 percentage points; a wider than expected margin by most pollsters.<sup>51</sup> Widodo is due to start his five-year term on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

The 2014 presidential election has been the most divisive in Indonesia's history evident by a defiant Prabowo refusing to concede defeat; hours before the KPU completed its final vote count, Prabowo announced he is withdrawing from the election in protest against "massive cheating."<sup>52</sup> Senior advisors to his campaign have since announced Prabowo will appeal the election results to the country's Constitutional Court alleging rampant voting irregularities calling into question 21 million votes.<sup>53</sup> "The indication of massive fraud and widespread irregularities is overwhelming," said a spokesman for Mr. Prabowo's campaign.<sup>54</sup>

According to constitutional law experts, the likelihood the Constitutional Court will rule in Prabowo's favor is slim considering the court has rejected all prior legal challenges in presidential elections. "I don't think he could present any compelling proof that would trigger revoting at 52,000 polling stations," said Muhammad Qodari, executive director of Indo Barometer, a polling firm.<sup>55</sup> "I'm very skeptical that he has any strong evidence."

Barring any unlikely setbacks by the Constitutional Court, Widodo will inherit a country with a track record of minority rights abuses. His most pressing challenge is working to repair the relationship with minority groups and turning over a new leaf in how the government deals with minorities. Widodo appealed to moderates and minorities alike with a platform that addressed issues of human rights and freedoms, rights of minorities and the fight against religious intolerance. In his victory speech, Widodo said, "This

---

## INDONESIA: THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

---

presidential election has given rise to new optimism for us, for this nation... It is time for us to move together.”<sup>56</sup> Optimism is surely resonating with the people of Indonesia and it is with great hope this optimism is extended to minorities and manifests into a more pragmatic approach in catering to minority rights.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ethan Harfenist, "Anti-Shia Sentiment Simmers Ahead of Indonesia's Election", in *Vice News* <<https://news.vice.com/article/anti-shia-sentiment-simmers-ahead-of-indonesias-election>>

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

<sup>5</sup> Sam Bollier, "Religion the dark horse in Indonesia election ", in *Aljazeera* <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/07/indonesia-election-religious-tensions-201478610125765.html>>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Rahat Husain, "World's first Anti Shia Alliance convention results in calls for violence and sectarian purging", in *Communities Digital News* <<http://www.commdiginews.com/world-news/worlds-first-anti-shia-alliance-convention-results-in-calls-for-violence-and-sectarian-purging-16020/>>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Harfenist, "Anti-Shia Sentiment Simmers Ahead of Indonesia's Election"

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> This section was adopted from: Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia", in *HRW.org* <[http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/indonesia0213\\_ForUpload\\_0.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/indonesia0213_ForUpload_0.pdf)>

<sup>17</sup> This section was adopted from: Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

<sup>18</sup> This section was adopted from: Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

---

<sup>20</sup> This section was adopted from: Human Rights Watch, "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia"

<sup>21</sup> Nadia Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties", in *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/10/24/indonesia-political-parties>>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Indonesian legislative election, 2014", in *Wikipedia.org* <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian\\_legislative\\_election,\\_2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_legislative_election,_2014)>

<sup>26</sup> Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties"

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "Golkar", in *Wikipedia.org* <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golkar>>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Indonesian legislative election, 2014"

<sup>32</sup> Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties"

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "Prosperous Justice Party", in *Wikipedia.org* <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperous\\_Justice\\_Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperous_Justice_Party)>

<sup>38</sup> Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties"

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Indonesian legislative election, 2014"

<sup>41</sup> Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties"

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> "Indonesian legislative election, 2014"

<sup>46</sup> Bulkin, "Indonesia's Political Parties"

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Indonesian legislative election, 2014"

<sup>50</sup> The Economist, "A New Kind of President"

<<http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2014/07/indonesias-democracy>>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Joe Cochrane, "Ex-General in Indonesia to Challenge Election Results, Citing Irregularities", in *The New York Times* <[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/asia/ex-general-to-challenge-results-in-indonesia-election.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/asia/ex-general-to-challenge-results-in-indonesia-election.html?_r=0)>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Yenni Kwok, "With the Election of Joko Widodo, Indonesia Writes a New Chapter", in *TIME* <<http://time.com/3020999/indonesia-joko-widodo-jokowi-declared-president/>>



## **ABOUT UMAA**

### **Vision**

The vision of the Universal Muslim Association of America (“UMAA”) is to be an expert, professional and intellectual organization that shall enrich American society by engendering an appreciation of Shia Ithna-Asheri Islamic values, ethics, and ideals.

### **Mission**

UMAA seeks to provide a forum to foster unity among Muslims, to participate in civic and political responsibilities, for the purpose of dispelling misgivings about Islam and Muslims in order to help fellow Americans better understand Islam in the light of the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his Ahl-ul-Bait. UMAA also seeks to take all necessary measures to help implement this mission and other objectives, which include the social, economic and political advancement of Muslims in America. Specifically, UMAA shall endeavor to:

1. Unify the Shia community in North America;
2. Help and serve in social, economic, and political activities;
3. Be a forum to foster an effective civic participation by Muslims in the United States;
4. Enhance and build our intellectual heritage and facilitate interaction amongst intellectuals;
5. Encourage communication and facilitate networking with other organizations;
6. Strive to ensure civil liberties;
7. Promote an accurate portrayal of the Muslim faith and people through intra-faith and interfaith activities and dialog;
8. Encourage and facilitate education;
9. Provide a forum and a platform for Shia Muslim youth;
10. Promote humanitarian causes;



11. Facilitate research on contemporary issues unique to living in the United States;
12. Enable and facilitate health and human services; and
13. Participate in efforts to counter defamation.

## **Goals & Objectives**

1. In furtherance of its mission UMAA objectives are to:
2. Organize conventions, seminars, and workshops to help achieve its objectives.
3. Cooperate and coordinate with other organizations pursuing similar goals.
4. Publish magazines, websites, newsletters, brochures and written materials.
5. Raise funds for the organization.
6. Create Secretariat and other infrastructure to help implement the objectives of the organization.
7. Engage in any legal activities.











UMA  
ADVOCACY

---

1717 PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW #1025, WASHINGTON, DC 20006 | [WWW.UMA-ADVOCACY.NET](http://WWW.UMA-ADVOCACY.NET)