

## EDITORIAL

## Defamation and Interpretation

The very fast and complex changes that the world has undergone in recent years have led to new responses and social unrest. One such response has taken place in the religious sector. The growth of new religions, new beliefs, and new interpretations is an intellectual response in an attempt to fulfil the spiritual needs of certain groups/individuals these days.

Unfortunately, these new teachings, both in the form of religions or beliefs/sects, are always viewed as defamatory. This basically equates to the denial of a group's/individual's intellectual thought.

The response to this deviance has been a need to rectify it, often through physical violence and intimidation. The PNPS/1965 law places emphasis on this violent attitude. Members of deviant sects are accused of being criminals, their leaders are arrested by police, and the group is disbanded by force. Quite often, their houses of worship and assets are burnt down or destroyed.

It seems we have still not departed from this narrative of deviance and rectification, even though the diversity of our nation can only grow through awareness of difference. What is required in the midst of such differences is a state that provides a place for dialogue and debate, not a state that promotes iron-law and destruction.

*The Editor.*

## LDII MOSQUE BURNT

By: Munif Ibnu



SABDO KUSUMO

As the clock struck 9.15 on December 6, 2009, a thundering sound filled Tlogowero out of the blue. Hundreds of people appeared like a flash flood, running amok and burning down a 12x8m building.

The brick building, at RT 01 RW 01 Tlogowero, Banaran, Temanggung, belonged to the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute (LDII).

Although no one was injured, the burning

down of the building, which functioned as a mosque, was quite traumatic for LDII members. Amin, for instance, spoke about the psychological impact. "Many locals feel intimidated," he said. Similarly, Sriyono also complained to Suara Merdeka a day after the incident, "Several of our members are scared."

It is not the first time the LDII mosque in Tlogowero has been damaged. A similar incident occurred in 2007, but, according to Yusuf, the mosque was not burnt down.

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After the incident a written and signed agreement was made. "But that agreement has been broken," said the thickly bearded man.

"The incident must be investigated thoroughly," Sarifudin told Deport. Especially the unexpected arrival of hundreds of locals that made it difficult to stop them.

As a result of the incident the roof of the mosque was burnt, broken tiles lay strewn across the ground, as did shards of glass and bamboo sticks. "There were a lot of holes in the walls. 11 in total," he continued. The unknown attackers are estimated to have caused up to IDR 60 million in damage. "We estimate it to be at least that much," said Tukirman.

Wahyono said that the burnt building was usually used for sermons, which drew quite a crowd. "We've been holding sermons for approximately four months," he explained. "(We) bought the land from Mr Didik Dwi Wardana," Tukirman added. As for the quite sudden and fast purchase of the land, Tukirman explained, "the thing is the house was vacant at the time."

In regards to the attack, Yusuf Purwanto, an insider in the Temanggung Department of Religious Affairs, said, "It wasn't a house of worship. It was just an ordinary house that was often used for

religious activities."

So why was the LDII mosque destroyed? Tukirman believes it was the result of disharmony within the community. "There has been some social jealousy between individuals which led to friction and disagreement."

The incident was given greater attention after the director of the Bansari Office for Religious Affairs made a mistake in his report to the director of the Department of Religious Affairs.

As a result, Regent Hasyim Afandi found time in his busy schedule to visit the mosque, along with a group from the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and Temanggung Police.

The director of Temanggung MUI, Yacob Mubarak, said that it was best that the case be resolved amicably. "Let's resolve this amicably through discussion," he said. Elsewhere, when asked whether there was often violent clashes in Temanggung, Yusuf answered optimistically, "As far as I know there hasn't been, either inter- or intra-group violence."

Apparently, these kinds of problems should be handled by the section for Information concerning Religion and Mosques. [D]

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# THE PUA IMMA' SECT AND PROPHET KHAIDIR FROM POLEWALI

By: Suaib Amin Prawono

Towards the end of January 2010, the community in Polewali, Mandar, West Sulawesi were shocked with the emergence of a new group known as the Pua Imma' sect and led by Rizal alias Pua Imma' (40).

The sect, which was formed about a year ago, teaches followers that they only need to pray once a day, facing south. In addition, though it recommends attending the Friday sermon, prayers are held in the river without shirts on.

Pua Imma' also teaches that paradise or heaven can be bought with IDR 4 million. "Those who wish to go to paradise need not be observant in their religious obligations or do many good deeds, it's enough that they pay IDR 4 million," Pua Imma' said.

The sect was ruled deviant by Polewali MUI, and has attracted serious attention from local police. On January 27, the sect, which originated in Mirring, Binuang, Polman, was raided by Polman police. The raid was led by the Chief of Polman Police, Chief Police Commissioner I Gusti Ngurahrai Mahaputra, on the grounds that the sect had deviated from Islamic teachings. Not only that, but the group's religious practices were felt to have caused much social unrest. At the time of the raid, Pua Imma' already had dozens of followers.

The raid itself was quite a tense affair as Pua Imma' and his followers took a stand against police, throwing stones and threatening officers with sharp weapons. "When we raided them, they came at us with sharp weapons (small daggers and lances) and threw stones. Their eyes stared, and they seemed to be possessed. They were almost too much

for us and the police to handle," Andi Amir explained.

Andi Amir was directly involved in the raid. The Mirring local and civil servant was even involved in a police surveillance operation for three days and nights with two Police Commissioners, Akbar and Salam.

Eventually, because the authorities outnumbered Pua Imma' members, they were forced to surrender and some fled into the mountains. Despite the resistance, no one was injured.

The raid took place on a hill where Pua Imma' and his followers hold ritual events. In the raid police successfully arrested Pua Imma' and five loyal followers, taking them directly to the local police station. Also arrested was one follower known as Syamsuddin (24) who claims to be the Prophet Khaidir.

## Claiming to be the Prophet Khaidir

Andi said that the Pua Imma' sect was one of deception and distortion that was originally introduced by a fugitive from justice from Bone known as Sudirman. "This deviant teaching was brought to Mirring by Sudirman, from Bone, though he was wanted by Bone police for deception".

Apparently, Sudirman had pocketed IDR 105 million from his deceiving his followers by guaranteeing them entry to heaven. Andi also said that, "before Sudirman was arrested by police Rizal Pua Imma' became a follower."

Andi also confirmed that the sect's teachings were spread by force. Even the local officials and the village chief were targeted. "They were forced and



PARURU DAENG TAU

threatened with a small dagger to follow his teachings. Those who agreed were converted to Islam by being bathed in water from Mecca's sacred well," he said.

Asrul, from Binuang, spoke of similar experiences, "Yes, it is true, they often threatened locals here to join their group so that they got money."

Asrul also said that some locals were not forced, they were deceived instead by Sudirman's appearance and his many cars. "They think, if we join his sect we'll become rich and will be able to buy cars," Asrul explained.

Besides Sudirman, Asrul also talked about Syamsuddin, one of Sudirman's followers who claims to be the Prophet Khaidir. Asrul was shocked by the news. "I was surprised to hear that he claimed to be a prophet, when he's only graduated from a pesantren and Islamic university." Asrul was once Syamsuddin's close friend. "I know him well. You see, I often spent time with him when I was studying in Makassar. He's an introvert who doesn't like to get close to women."

This 2009 alumni from UIN Alauddin, Makassar also said, "When we stayed in the dormitories Syamsuddin claimed he often heard whispers. At the time, my friend Umar told him, don't believe in it, they're Satan's whisperings," he said imitating Umar's voice. Syamsudin became weird, according to Asrul, after being broken hearted over a girl he liked when he was undertaking KKN (compulsory social work for university students).[]

## HDH DECLARED DEVIANT AGAIN

By: Marzuki Rais

The Cirebon branch of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) reissued a fatwa of deviance on December 1, 2009 concerning the *Hidup Dibalik Hidup* (Life Behind Life, HDH) sect. The decree was issued because, according to MUI, Qur'anic teachings without rules for interpretation could mislead the community.

According to KH Mukhlisin Muzarie, director of the Law and Legislation section of Cirebon MUI, HDH was deviant because despite recognising the confession of faith, the group did not implement Islamic teachings/laws.

If traced back, the basis for MUI's fatwa goes back two years, to Saturday night, September 25, 2007. That night, HDH leader Mujoni gave a Ramadhan sermon at the al-Karomah Mosque in Kandawaru, Astatanajapura, Cirebon. When explaining verse 48 of the chapter al-Baqarah which discusses the issue of *syafa'at* (intercession, in communication with God), he was stopped by a non-HDH member who thought his explanation was misleading. HDH was even asked to never hold activities in the mosque again.

After the incident, HDH did not hold any sermons in Kandawaru village for almost a month.

Then one day, November 30, 2007, a HDH member in Kandawaru called HDH manager Rohasan to hold a sermon in his house. Under light rain and after eating *ta'jil* (sweet food eaten upon breaking the fast), Rohasan and Amin arrived at Mr Tamim's house, next to the al-Karomah mosque.

However, when they arrived, they found the house completely empty. After waiting a little, when no one appeared they decided to go home. They took one or two steps towards the door when they



were stopped by a youth who came out of the al-Karomah mosque and asked the two to enter.

An ustad and his congregants were apparently waiting for Rohasan in the mosque. Rohasan was asked to re-explain *syafa'at*, and a debate began. At the end of the debate, Rohasan and Amin were ordered to apologise. Rohasan tried to run, but only metres from the mosque door he was struck in the head with wood and attacked by a mob.

While attempting to ward off the blows, Rohasan tried to walk to the Cirebon-Tegal highway. Not satisfied with just bashing Rohasan, some shouted for him to be burnt.

Several weeks after the incident, HDH was summoned by police, community figures, religious leaders and the local government to give an explanation. However, justice was not sought; instead the group was accused of spreading deviant teachings. In the end, Rohasan and Amin spent three nights at the Cirebon police station, apparently for protection. The initial incident however was never investigated.

In addition to the issue of *syafa'at*, another issue with the group's teachings is the circulation of a booklet containing notes of conversations between Mujoni and Kusnandar, which was written in 2001. The late Kusnandar was the director of HDH before Mujoni. The booklet details Kusnandar's spiritual journey and, according to Mujoni, was private and not

intended for distribution.

In parts of the booklet Kusnandar tells how he once met an angel, travelled to the place and time between death and the Last Judgement, travelled to *sidrotul muntaha* (the tree of life) and so on. Based on these conversations, MUI, the government and society concluded that HDH was deviant.

The distribution of the book, said Rohasan, was initiated by Sukari, the former Surajaya village administrator in charge of water. One night in July of 2003, Sukari, who had often participated in HDH activities, visited Rohasan's house wishing to find out more about HDH. At the time Rohasan was reading the booklet Mujoni had given him. Sukari asked if he could read and copy the book, and it was after this that the issue of HDH's deviance became known to the wider community.

According to Rohasan the booklet was only Mujoni's private notes, given to him as Kusnandar's nephew and not ever distributed to HDH members. As a result most members have no clue what the booklet is about. However, those parties who have taken a dislike to HDH have used the booklet as a tool to pronounce the group deviant.

Hearing his group declared deviant, Mujoni was startled and on his own initiative tried to explain HDH teachings to relevant parties such as police, MUI, Bakorpakem and the regional government council.

According to Rohasan, after giving an explanation, several parties realised that there were no elements of deviance within HDH teachings. However Cirebon HDH still believed that the teachings were on the edge of being deviant because in understanding the Qur'an no principles of interpretation were used, and the group also believed that their leader had received divine revelation, travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem and had ascended from the Al Aqsa mosque passing through heaven and hell, had visited *Sidratul Muntaha*, and did not acknowledge the mediatory role of prophets or their mercy. []

Pak Rohasan (Nephew of Kusnandar, Establisher of HDH)

# HDH EMERGES DUE TO SPIRITUAL VACUUM

By: Marzuki Rais

**H**idup Dibalik Hidup (HDH) is a religious community or majlis ta'lim that arrived in Cirebon in 2002, in Sigong village, Lemah Abang.

Today, the congregation in Cirebon numbers 84. The sect was brought by Mujoni Abdullah (64), a local from Bekasi, East Java, who is now the head of the group. The following is an account by Mr Rohasan, a leader of the group:

The community was established by Muhammad Kusnandar bin Amir from Sigong, Lemah Abang, Cirebon. Born in 1926, he spent most of his life in Jakarta, until his death in 1998.

Kusnandar, nicknamed Ugi Amir, established HDH after seeing how much society at the time prioritised a material life over thinking about and orienting their lives towards the hereafter. In addition, the group's establishment was also based on Mr Kusnandar's reflection and critical attitude towards The Creator. He constantly wanted to meet with God. This desire to meet with his creator emerged when he was still young, and he often asked his aunty about Him. His aunty would answer that Allah created him, and this made him eager to meet Allah.

His spiritual and intellectual restlessness, and his desire to meet Allah remained strong throughout his life until one day, around 1974, Mr Kusnandar met Mujoni in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta.

After becoming acquainted, the two often

talked about their shared restlessness over the spiritual vacuum within society. As a consequence they established Hidup Dibalik Hidup. Initially they did not spread their teachings, and were the only two members.



However, gradually family members, friends and neighbours became involved, until many people joined. Today HDH followers are spread throughout most of Indonesia, including Java, Kalimantan and Sumatra. In terms of numbers, the group has hundreds of followers, most of who live in Java.

After Mr Kusnandar passed away,

Mujoni took over leadership of the group. Mujoni's similar religious understandings meant he felt responsible for continuing to practice and to spread the understandings that Mr Kusnandar had established. Furthermore, according to Mr Kusnandar's beliefs, the HDH leadership did not need to be passed down within the family, but should be passed on to the person who most understood the group's religious teachings.

One HDH teaching is the belief that it is forbidden to associate Allah with anything. As a result, in order to stop followers from worrying about associating things with Allah, Mujoni has never revealed the whereabouts of Mr Kusnandar's grave. Even his close friends in Cirebon do not know where he is buried.

This was intended to prevent followers from making a cult out of Mr Kusnandar, who always preached about not associating Allah with anything. Frequently it is the case that individuals considered to be religious leaders are also seen as saints or even prophets. Followers then bestow on these individuals greater respect than is fitting, and some even seek blessings from the soil of their graves.

Aware of this, Mr Kusnandar always taught us to distance ourselves from behaviours and actions that are oriented towards polytheism. For these reasons he even did not like being called a teacher, *kyai* or HDH leader. []

# PROTECTING TANAH TOA KAJANG

By: Suaib Prawono

“Much of our traditional land has been claimed by companies, and these companies bring no benefits whatsoever to our lives,” Ammatoa angrily told *Deport* on January 26, 2010.

It is easy to understand why traditional elders/leaders in Tanah Toa Kajang say this. For a long time now their traditional land has been of interest to outsiders, and usually these outsiders ignore the locals’ claims to the land. In addition to no longer being managed in accordance with customary traditions, traditional land is now being exploited by the newcomers. “The presence of these companies is ruining the community in Tanah Toa Kajang,” Ammatoa said.

Tanah Toa village itself is situated in the north of Kajang district, on the border of Sinjai regency. The village spans 1820 hectares and consists of nine sub villages.

For the Tanah Toa Kajang community, their traditional land is an inheritance from their ancestors that must be preserved. This is because for the Kajang traditional community, land is part of their cosmology that must be protected and treated with care and compassion. The Tanah Toa community is not prepared to allow the land that has been a key part of their life cycle to be interfered with by outsiders, especially for business interests. “Tanah Toa Kajang is traditional land that must always be protected and managed in accordance with our own customary rules and traditions without outside intervention, from either the government or businessmen,” Ammatoa explained.

In addition, companies have replaced the flora that has been a part of Kajang tradition. According to Ammatoa, the



flora that now exists on their traditional land, specifically the rubber trees, is not what the Kajang community wants. Ammatoa says of the rubber plantations, “We had never seen or known of these trees before, and they are not mentioned in the *Pasang Ri Kajang*, which acts as our guide to life”.

## Occupation of Traditional Land

Nevertheless, the desire to protect their land, and to care for it as is written in the *Pasang Ri Kajang*, is no easy task, especially when they must face forestry companies of the likes of PT London Sumatera (PT Lonsum).

The history of their struggle is quite a long one. Tanah Kajang has been exploited ever since Dutch occupation. PT Lonsum for instance, has been present in Kajang since 1919, originally known by the name NV Celebes Landbouw Maaschappij.

These companies say that they have

rented the traditional land from the government and thus have the right to exploit it. These claims angered Kajang farmers to the extent that the traditional community decided to reclaim their land. The conflict between farmers and PT Lonsum escalated until on July 21, 2003, at least three farmers lost their lives when they demanded the company return the land they were renting.

The government itself is of two minds. Officials do not have a care in the world for the fate of the Kajang community except when it serves their interests such as in the current lead up to elections. “When the elections are over, they won’t talk about the issue anymore. These are just empty political promises,” Tamrin, a resident of Outer Kajang, said.

In the lead up to elections, candidates have flocked to the Kajang community promising locals that they would fight to have their traditional land returned. “But they’ve never realised these promises,” Tamrin said with annoyance.[]

Interview with Tamrin (resident of Outer Kajang)

# Solidarity Necessary to Protect Kajang Community

By: Suaib Prawono

## How has the presence of PT Lonsum affected Tanah Toa Kajang?

The amount of traditional Kajang land has continued to decrease with the presence of PT Lonsum. In fact, there is almost no traditional land left as almost all has been converted to rubber plantations to serve business interests rather than the interests of Kajang locals. PT Lonsum often claims locals' land as their own, including much of the land owned by Galla Kanta (Ammatoa's assistant who is the equivalent of a minister). Not only that, when locals

Unfortunately our friends are not like what they used to be. Now they claim to be defending this group and that group, but there is no effort to unify their perceptions and free Kajang from the political and economic hegemony of those in power.

went to harvest the land they had planted with corn before PT Lonsum claimed it, they were hunted down even though it was clearly their traditional land.

## How has the government responded to the matter?

The matter is only ever discussed if the government has interests in it. Both the central and local governments often preach that traditional communities have to be protected and defended, but in reality it's not the case, in fact traditional communities are fading away. You know the government, you know how they only make promises at particular times such as in the lead up to elections. The other day a candidate running for the position of regent came here and said, "If I'm elected, I'll resolve issues over land and construction taxes." Now if this was to happen, the Kajang community wouldn't get anything, but the landowners including PT Lonsum would receive all the benefits. The Kajang community is not familiar with state administrative affairs such as land and construction taxes, because they follow their own regulations (customary traditions).

## What is the greatest problem that the Kajang community faces today, Mr Tamrin?

Yeah, what we talked about before, what Ammatoa talked about, that

traditional land is being exploited by newcomers such as PT Lonsum, even though these traditional lands are where we seek a living because we all work as farmers. Another problem is government intervention through subtle inducements/bribery that makes people forget reality. Basically, for me, "democracy" has been successful in Kajang because outside interests have been allowed to enter and destroy local Kajang identity.

## How about those who have been assisting the Kajang community?

Unfortunately our friends are not like what they used to be. Now they claim to be defending this group and that group, but there is no effort to unify their perceptions and free Kajang from the political and economic hegemony of those in power.

## What are your hopes for the future, Mr Tamrin?

We need someone who is able to act as a mediator, to meet with traditional elders, executive and legislative bodies, and Kajang locals in order to resolve the land issue. We place a lot of hope in this because we don't want a repeat of the anarchy that took place in 2003. We also hope that political promises made during elections can be realised, and most importantly that our friends find their solidarity once again in the struggle for the Kajang community. []

Prof Dr Minhajuddin (Professor at UIN Alauddin, Makassar)

## “CUSTOMARY LAND BELONGS TO THE STATE”

By: Suaib Prawono

It looks like the dispute of the Tanah Toa Kajang traditional land in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi is endless. Various opinions have surfaced in response to the dispute.

One professor at UIN Alauddin, Makassar, Prof Dr Minhajuddin expressed his ideas when we visited him in his house on Jalan Manuruki No. 2.

“There are traditional lands in almost every part of Indonesia, not only in South Sulawesi or Kajang. In Ambon there are also traditional lands and they are often disputed by the local community, government and companies, and traditional land itself belong to the public

in the extent that it is administered by the government,” said the master’s degree holder from a Pakistani University.

Minhajuddin also said that traditional lands are divided into two categories, that is private land and public land. Private land includes land inherited from parents, donated land and granted land. Public land on the other hand includes land owned by the state, including traditional land, and its usage is administered by government.

The professor, born in Palopo on December 31, 1942 said that in Islam there was a concept of “muamalah”, where relations between men are governed

by the laws from the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Sunnah. The term also applies to traditional land, and thus it should be governed by these existing laws.

Prof Minhajuddin said that it was not right that Kajang traditional land is administered using traditional laws. He reasoned it was against the teachings of the Qur’an and the hadith. “The regulations governing traditional land which are based on local beliefs is not right because they do not follow the Qur’an and hadith, the guides in our life. In addition, because traditional land belongs to the state, the land thus belongs to public,” explained the professor of Shariah. []



Prof Dr Qasim Mathar (Professor at UIN Alauddin, Makassar)

## The State Must Respect Kajang Traditional Land

By: Suaib Prawono

It seems that the issue of traditional land in Tanah Toa Kajang has not been properly investigated. Even today, this land is still occupied by PT Lonsum, including a sacred area used to hold traditional ceremonies and religious rituals.

This phenomenon seems almost normal in our country which known for its rich natural resources. Land exploitation and looting by companies such as in Tanah Toa Kajang has not been wisely addressed by the government.

Traditional land is indeed associated with conflict. Ironically, the government which is expected to be a mediator in the conflict often sides with investors/companies, even more so when the conflict is related to state administration.

Prof Dr Qasim Mathar confirms this, saying that traditional land in this country is never far from conflict, “traditional land has always been an issue in this country, especially when it is connected to state administration issues or written documents” he said.

Qasim Mathar also said that written documents have always been a problem for the government. “When conflict involves the community and companies or the government, it becomes complicated because it ends with a deadlock regarding administration (written documents), as there are no written documents for most of the traditional land in this country which only relies on testimonies from community members,” he said.

Further, Qasim said, “When the issue involves documentation of the land, the government and companies can make it up easily, but the local community can’t.” He also said that it is not right to use violence to solve traditional land disputes as it would not solve anything. He later said that the government should emphasise the use of peaceful dialogue in solving the Kajang land dispute.

In regard to Kajang local wisdoms and beliefs concerning land management, this man born in Sindrap on August 21, 1947 said that the government should respect local wisdoms and Kajang traditional land along with their traditional rules. “What do we talk about local wisdoms for when we fail to understand the beliefs of the local people, including their rules regarding traditional land,” he said. []



# FITRI ALLOWED TO WEAR THE JILBAB

By: Ubaddul Adzkiya



NADIA ILMINA ARKEA

**I**t all started in 2005. Fitri Cahyaningsih, a woman aged 33 years, decided to wear the jilbab on a daily basis, even when working. However, she could not do so because of workplace policies. She works at Telogorejo Hospital, which bans employees from wearing any head cover, including the jilbab, during working hours.

Anticipating this, when she left home for work she wore the jilbab, and then when she got to work she took it off. She wore it again when she went home. She was not happy with this. She wanted to practice her beliefs by wearing the jilbab at all time. So, she submitted a formal request to the hospital management to allow her to wear the jilbab.

“I have been wearing the jilbab, but I also have had to take it off since 2005. At work I have to take it off. In January 2010 I sought permission to wear it when I worked. I was turned down and they even intimidated me,” said Fitri Cahyaningsih to VHRmedia. Every time she went to see management, she was asked to wait for

them on the veranda of the housekeeping department until her shift was over. “As an employee I need actualization, they can’t just ignore me and I don’t want to get paid for not working,” said Fitri.

As reported by Antara News, Nana Noviada, a representative of Telogorejo Hospital management said that the clothing policy regulates not only clothing articles for the head, but also other parts of the body.

Nana said that the policy issued by Telogorejo management had been approved by the hospital’s labor union. She said that the policy was not meant to restrict one’s rights from practicing their religious beliefs. “So you know, every company has their own regulations. We hope that employees provide optimum services, without having to show off a specific religious orientation,” she said. She later explained that with a neutral appearance, employees can provide a service acceptable to all.

In contrast, Fitri argued that wearing

jilbab was not in violation of hospital policy. She also said that she had never signed an agreement banning the jilbab during work hours. “On my first day of work, I didn’t wear a jilbab, and there was no jilbab ban in the work agreement that I signed,” said Fitri to Deport.

Fitri brought her case to the Central Java provincial parliament. Her case won media coverage and because of it, the hospital responded to Fitri’s complaint. A tri-party meeting was then held involving Fitri’s family, hospital management and parliament members. The meeting resulted in the lift of the jilbab ban and thus Fitri is now allowed to wear jilbab when she works. “After the meeting involving provincial parliament, I have gone back to work as usual,” she said.

As reported by Republika, Nana Novianda said that there were three important steps the hospital management took in response to Fitri’s case. Firstly, Fitri’s case was taken up by the foundation that runs the hospital. The foundation, she continued, confirmed that Fitri would continue to work at the hospital in the department of nutrition.

“To solve this particular issue, Telogorejo Health Foundation will thoroughly study the case and will make wise decision,” she said.

Fitri herself felt grateful for being able to go back to work. “I want to work comfortably by wearing jilbab,” she said. When she was asked about her case, Fitri hoped that such discrimination would not be repeated again in future.

In reality, Fitri is not alone. Her friends at work have been doing just as Fitri has done. “They are still doing same thing, wearing the jilbab to work, taking it off when they work, and then wearing it again when they go home,” Fitri explained.[]

# ILGA CONGRESS IN SURABAYA CANCELLED

By: Ingwuri Handayani

The Fourth International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Congress, planned to be held in Surabaya on March 26-28, 2010 was cancelled, due to the lack of a police permit which was not granted for security reasons. "Police did not issue a permit for the congress because they thought it was not safe," said Chief Police Commissioner Sri Rahayu, Chief of the Partnership Section of Surabaya Police, as reported by Liputan6.

Police were not the only party who refused to issue a permit as other government officials also opposed the congress. "We reject this Asian congress. Many community members protest against it," said Arif Afandi, the vice mayor of Surabaya.

In addition to rejection from these two government institutions, opposition also came from the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), the Campus Propagation Institution (LDK), University Students Executive Council (BEM) from Airlangga University and several Islamic mass organisations, such as the Surabaya branch of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).

FPI did not only reject the congress, but they also conducted "sweeping" at the Gaya Nusantara (Indonesian Gay Organisation) office on Jalan Mojo Kidul I St No 11A Surabaya to make sure that the congress was cancelled.

Besides FPI, East Java Islamic Community Forum (FUI) also conducted similar sweeps against congress participants at the Mercure Hotel where the congress would be held. They even demanded the hotel management write a statement



emphasizing that they would not give permission for the congress to go ahead. FUI continued to monitor things when they heard that the congress would be moved to Batu, Malang.

Some people actually accepted the ILGA congress. Ifdal Kasim, head of National Commission for Human Rights, as reported at [www.kompas.com](http://www.kompas.com) said that the congress should continue because the marginalised community risked being discriminated against and they should be protected and given their rights. Ifdal also said that even today there are still no laws governing the rights of marginal groups such as gays and lesbians. They should be treated equally as citizens who possess the same rights as other citizens.

Similar views were expressed by an East Java parliament member. The vice chairman of the parliament, Sirmadji Tjondro Pragolo, spoke of his support of the congress to Kompas, saying, "In principle, I respect the ILGA congress in East Java". Sirmadji said that Indonesian law requires people to respect other people's rights, including the right to choose one's sexual orientation.

In contrast, another parliament members rejected the congress, as reported at [www.detik.com](http://www.detik.com). "We strongly reject the congress and demand its cancellation.

Gay and lesbian activities are worst than adultery," said Mahdi, vice chairman of the United Development Party and Reformation Fraction, to journalists in the East Java parliament building.

At the top right hand corner of the Gaya Nusantara website itself ([www.gayanusantara.co.id](http://www.gayanusantara.co.id)) was written: "Due to some unfortunate circumstances, 4th ILGA-Asia Regional Conference has been cancelled."

## History of ILGA

In their press release, ILGA described themselves as the world's biggest federation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations.

In 1978 the International Gay Association (IGA) was established to build a network and exchange experiences among gay activists in Europe. In later developments, it included lesbian organizations and in 1986 IGA was changed to ILGA.

With its rapid growth, ILGA started to hold regional meetings in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean [LAC], North America, Europe and Australia-New Zealand-Pacific Islands [ANZAPI]. Today ILGA represents more than 560 LGBT organizations in 90 countries.

In Asia, the first ILGA congress was held in Mumbai in 2002. After 4 years without a congress, the second congress was held in Cebu, the Philippines and the third one was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. In the Chiang Mai congress, for the first time an ILGA-Asia committee was appointed, consisting of 10 members from various countries.[]

## THE FLAWS OF THE FILM MENGAKU RASUL (CLAIMING TO BE A PROPHET)

By: Much Nurul Huda

**B**efore I watched this film, I had suspected that the character in it claiming to be a prophet would be a playboy who married frequently and liked to have sex with women. My suspicion was proven right as the film, made in 2008, depicts precisely that.

I also suspected that followers of the prophet in the film were obedient people who submitted themselves to and adored their prophet blindly. Once again, the film proved me right.

Watching the film reminds one of an old film made in 1985 entitled Sunan Kalijaga and Syekh Siti Jenar. The film starts with the story of Samir (Rae Sahetapy), the owner of and teacher at a religious centre who claims to be a prophet. He preaches in his sermons that at all times a prophet is sent to earth and at this point in time, he was the prophet as he had received divine revelation. He promises that those who believe in him will go to heaven.

From here the story continues with several flaws. Flaws? Yes, of course. It does not make sense that redemption and the assurance of heaven are only given to those who buy certificates that have different classes just like train tickets. There is an economy class and an executive class which all depends on how much money people pay the prophet.

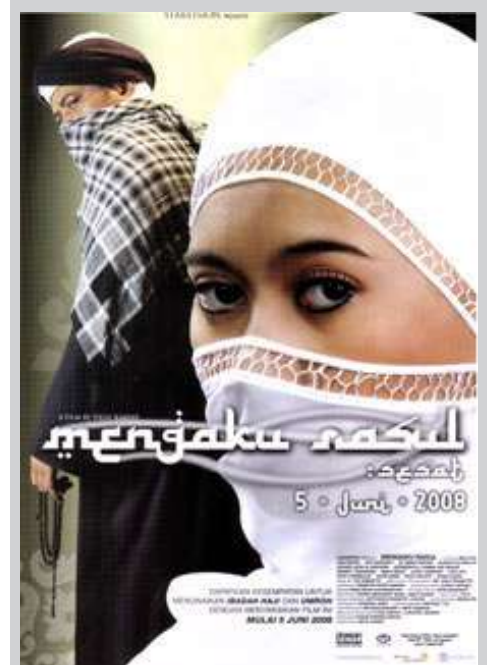
In the beginning of the film, Samir is described as a man with supernatural

powers. For example, Samir seems to have the ability to be in two places at once, as we discover when Aji (Alblen) spies on him. At the end of the film though, it was clear that Samir had no powers when he was killed by Rianti (Jian Batari). Throughout the film, Samir had apparently only used his twin brother, Ki Baehaki, who was willing to sacrifice himself for Samir, even by allowing his hands to be mutilated and burnt.

Can it be possible that a man is willing to sacrifice his hands and even his body for his brother? In the beginning of the film differences between Sami and Ki Baehaki were shown, especially in the way they won the hearts of their students. Ki Baehaki often criticised Samir's perverted ways. Isn't it odd that at the end of the film Ki Baehaki was willing to sacrifice his hands for Samir? And why did Ki Baehaki order people to burn down the religious centre?

The film starring Ray Sahetapy, Vonny Cornelia, Jian Batari, Muhammad Ihsan Tarore, Hengky Tornado and Baby Zelvia also suggests that women are weak. A character in the film named Nyai ignored Samir's background and allowed him to marry her.

The film originally targeted Muslim viewers who have recently encountered the increasing development of deviant sects. However, it received little response from movie-goers in Indonesia. It was



Title	: Mengaku Rasul (Sesat)/ Claiming to be a (Deviant) Prophet
Release	: 2008
Actors	: Ray Sahetapy Vonny Cornellya Jian Batari M. Ihsan Tarore Hengky Tornado Baby Zelvia Alblen Fillindo Fabe
Director	: Helfi Kardit
Script Writers	: Taufik Daraming Tahir Helfi Kardit

not as popular as other films such as Ayat-Ayat Cinta (Poems of Love) or Emak Ingin Naik Haji (Mum Wants to Go Hajj).

Perhaps people did not watch the film because they shared my scepticism, and thus they thought that they would not be worse off for not watching it. I think they are right. Why? The film legitimized the use of violence to solve differences and to annihilate deviant sects.

Besides all the flaws, this question is quite an interesting one. What if an individual appeared, claiming to have received divine revelation, but was not morally flawed? Surely the response would be just the same, and anyone claiming to have received divine revelation, let alone to be a prophet, would receive strong opposition from Muslim majority Indonesia. []

## JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS DEFAMATION LAW

By: Novi Yana

On October 20, 2009 the Advocacy Team for Religious Freedom (TAKB) consisting of seven legal organizations and several individuals appealed to the Judicial Commission to review Law No. 1/1965 concerning religious abuse and defamation, particularly Section 1, Section 2 (articles 1-2), Section 3 and Section 4 (especially point a).

The organizations appealing for the review included the Initiative Association of Participative Society for Just Transition (Imparsial), the Institute for Community Studies and Advocacy (ELSAM), the Association of Unions for Legal Aid and Human Rights (PBHI), the Association of Study Centres for Human Rights and Democracy (DEMOS), the Association of Equal Society (Perkumpulan Masyarakat

Setara), Desantara Foundation and the Foundation for the Institute of Indonesian Legal Aid (YLBHI). Meanwhile the individuals involved were the late Abdurrahman Wahid, Prof Dr Musdah Mulia, Prof M Dawam Rahardjo and Maman Imanul-Haq.

Almost a month later, on November 17, the Constitutional Court did an initial review of the appeal number 140/puu-vii/2009. After feedback and revision, the appeal was resubmitted and on December 2 it was reviewed again. Then, since February 10, judicial hearings presenting arguments from TAKB, witnesses, the government and other related parties have been held on Wednesdays. The following month, the hearings were held on Wednesdays and Fridays until they ended on March 24.

The Constitutional Court is expected to announce their decision sometime in May 2010.

The chairman of the Constitutional COURT, Prof Dr Muh Mahfud MD, stated that he himself would review the law seriously. He stressed his seriousness by saying that he sought for advice from legal and Islamic experts such as Prof Jalaluddin Rahmat, Prof Ahmad Fedyani Saifuddin, Dr Siti Zuhro, Prof Dr Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Prof Komarudin Hidayat, Dr Muslim Abdurrahman and public cultural figures such as Emha Ainun Najib and Taufik Ismail. Meanwhile, TAKB showed how serious they also were by presenting Cole W Dunham, an expert in human rights from Harvard University, via a teleconference.[]



## CREATIVE WRITING TRAINING IN EAST KALIMANTAN

By: Novi Yana

For example, when evaluating the training, participants said that the training was new to them and they had never taken such training. In discussions, participants, facilitators and organizers agreed to continue the training, and to develop and focus the themes participants wrote on so as to turn their work into complete pieces of writing.

Prior to the training, participants were asked to write abstracts. They were to develop their abstracts into outlines. Facilitators gave feedbacks about the abstracts to help participants develop and focus their writing. In addition, the program was felt to be special in its own right by the fact that it was provided by NGOs, where as training in writing and research are usually given by universities.

The themes chosen by participants were

interesting, including one which discussed the relation between culinary and ethnicity. Using this theme, a participant argued that ethnicity influences people's culinary tastes. Another example discussed the relationship between the ecosystem and crocodiles. The participant argued that the disruption of the ecosystem made crocodiles inhabiting the rivers that flowed throughout his village aggressive towards humans, and almost every day they would attack humans. He reasoned that the waste from factories had disturbed the food chain in the river and forced crocodiles to hunt humans for food.

At the end of the training, participants had a chance to meet people from the local daily newspaper *Tribun Kaltim*, and were given the chance to publish their writing in the newspaper. As a follow up to the training, participants have agreed to meet biweekly.[]

Working with Nawaldipa, Desantara held a creative writing program with the theme Multicultural Schools from March 10–20, 2010 in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. Despite a change in participants, it was highly successful.

From an initial 17 participants who submitted written abstracts, about half quit and were replaced by new participants. Despite this, the training achieved its goals. Participants attended every session until the last day of the training. Although one or two participants quit, their reasons were technical.