

# Indonesia: West Java had highest number of religious freedom violations in 2017, Jakarta close behind: Setara Institute

Setara (16.01.2018) – <http://bit.ly/2G9DfmB> – Many people have been concerned about a general rise in religious intolerance throughout Indonesia over the last few years, and the Setara Institute has been carefully documenting specific incidents in which religious freedoms have been violated to highlight which areas of the archipelago have become the most problematic.

According to the Indonesia-based NGO, which conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights issues, last year there were 201 incidences of religious freedom being violated across Indonesia's 26 provinces. And West Java has the unenviable distinction of being the region with the highest number of violations.

"In West Java there were 29 incidents, in Jakarta 26 incidents, in Central Java 14, East Java 12 and Banten 10," Setara Institute researcher Halili said at the NGO's office yesterday as quoted by Kompas.

According to Halili, out of the 201 violations, 75 were acts involving government officials, including local administrations, police, schools and courts. The other 126

incidences involved individuals or non-governmental organizations such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).

The report shows that most of the violations were directed at minority religious groups including Christians, Confucians, Buddhists, Hindus and Shiites, with incidents including intimidation, discrimination, assault, hate speech, bans on worship and the sealing of houses of worship.

Setara and others argue that the weakening of religious freedoms is due to both the strengthening and spread of intolerant organizations as well as weak governmental agencies and policies that do little to combat these organizations (when they're not actively enabling them).

Last year, Setara ranked Jakarta as the least tolerant city in Indonesia (worse even than Banda Aceh), in part due to its high number of reported religious freedom violations as well as the "politicization of religious identity" during the 2017 gubernatorial election.

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