



FACT SHEET

SITUATION ANALYSIS STUDY ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND TOLERANCE

In Greater Bogor, Bandung, and Solo
INDONESIA

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SFCG Indonesia

with Support from
the United States Department of State,
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,
and Labor

For PROTECT Program

Promoting Collective Efforts
Towards Resilience and Tolerance
in Indonesia



BACKGROUND

In 2021, Search for Common Ground launched a program in Indonesia that aims to address grounded issues of freedom of religions and beliefs, and protection of minorities through the entry of point of society collective efforts with the religious leaders and media actors. This situation analysis study is carried out to investigate grounded issues, identify the potential actors and their capacity in the degree of their support to either tolerance or intolerance movements. The study involved 97 respondents across three major Indonesian metropolitan areas.

97

RESPONDENTS

3

METROPOLITAN AREAS

2021

OCTOBER – DECEMBER



RESEARCH FINDINGS

Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Tolerance Situation in the Community

Despite its reputation as a diverse country, in recent years Indonesia has experienced a depressing increase in instances of intolerance towards minority groups, which especially exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic that ensued a digital surge due to the physical distancing norms and lockdowns. The flooding online misinformation has also sparked a rise in intolerant discourse targeting minority groups, as much the pandemic has been limiting room for dialogues and positive interactions between people. In general, however, the situation of freedom of religions, belief, and tolerance can be regarded as 'remaining fragile', putting an emphasis that as though the intensity is increasing, the tension is not extremely violent.

- The most pressing issue within the discourse is the existing discriminatory regulations imposed in both national and regional which justifying the intolerant acts from the divisive groups, in addition to the lack of government's acknowledgement towards the marginal groups and religious minorities.
- There is also a growing fear that politicians and or political parties have tendency to commercialized religion for political gain and has led many to sympathize with radical ideologues and, in some cases, entangled with the supportive views to violence.
- Furthermore, the allies such as the civil society groups, interfaith harmony forum (forum kerukunan umat beragama/ FKUB), and the policies do not have the adequate capacity to help mediate conflicts and resolve disputes amicably, whereas the media actors tend to amplify and trigger insensitive and hateful narratives online.
- Amid the hardships, as notable from the country with most ethnics and cultural diversity, Indonesia is affluent with local wisdom and traditional culture that helps boost tolerance practices. Despite sensitivity, support among public towards initiatives intended to foster tolerance and social cohesion is still compelling to this day. Albeit lacking interfaith and intercultural events convened, multiple efforts of interfaith-intercultural dialogues and meetings have ever been conducted.
- The government support in the establishment of FKUB is a very positive and constructive progress to promote tolerance. There is also a growing trend of more progressive model of FKUB which not only involving religious leaders from the officially acknowledged religions in accordance with the government regulations, but also engaging leaders from local faith believers and other minority groups.
- Similar positive energy also shown from the media actors who run on peaceful and tolerance campaign on their channels, and the minority groups who have awareness and compassion to humanity, who open themselves to join activities upon common-interest and or humanitarian matters.
- Overall, there remains a large gap and unraveled tension between the minority and majority of religious groups in Indonesia. Albeit multiple efforts to support the social cohesion have been convened by the government and the civil society organizations (CSOs), there still has been very little examples where the minority and hard-to-reach communities meet with the divisive promoting groups to mutually share their views and concerns. In the end, diversities were not represented in the forums, or only engaged in an exclusive room for dialogue – still trapped, in the segregation of the majority and minority. There may be harmony, but inequality remains neglected.

Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Tolerance Actors

- The primary group, defined as the most vulnerable groups prone to intolerance and discrimination on both Internum and Externum sectors. They include:
Ahmadiyya, Shia, Baha'i, Christian Protestants and Catholics, local faith believers (e.g. Sunda Wiwitan, Sapta Dharma, Putra Ibu Pertiwi, Simbok Kuoso, Sumarah, and Kepribaden), former militant groups of Islamic Front Defenders (Front Pembela Islam/ FPI), Hizbut Tahrir of Indonesia (HTI), as well as ex-convicted terrorists.
- The secondary group, part of the community who is not necessarily affiliated with religious organization, however their individual religious expression is prone to discrimination and neglect. The group includes:
Women and youth, across all religion and belief.
- The tertiary group, part of the minority groups who is not necessarily affiliated with religious background, and often not included in the discussion on diversity. This group is still rather new discourse on the freedom of religion, belief, and tolerance in Indonesia. This group includes:
People with disability (PWDs) and gender minority groups (LGBTQ), across all religion and belief.
- Other actors who also play significant role in the promotion and protection of FORB and tolerance in Indonesia will also be engaged as the key entry points to advocate FORB and tolerance under the program. These actors are identified as the followings:
Government (both local and national authorities), civil society organizations, journalists and media houses, social media influencers, religious leaders, and the interfaith harmony forum.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that local CSOs have not been actively participating neither outreaching to the minorities and hard-to-reach communities in advocating FORB, and protection of minorities' rights. Although the local CSOs have good rapports and networks with both communities and the authorities, skills on conducting effective advocacy on FORB and protection of minorities rights remain lacking. In addition, the religious leaders and FKUB have not been functioning to their highest potential in bridging conflicts and differences. It was further found that the local CSOs, religious leaders, and FKUB, along with the journalists and other media actors may require trainings on diverse areas such as concepts of FORB, advocacy, and the use of human rights and non-adversarial approaches in the promotion of FORB. The approaches require skills that will enable the minorities and the hard-to-reach communities to be better represented in the link with those promoting divisiveness, the media, and the decision makers

Recommendations for conducting training sessions for the potential actors (local CSOs, religious leaders, interfaith harmony forum, as well as journalists and other media actors)

- Instill awareness on FORB and tolerance based on local interpretation and basic approach to human rights.
- Provide training on advocacy techniques based on non-adversarial approach, such as conflict transformation, cooperative resolution, mediation and negotiation.
- Provide necessary skills and knowledge to detect intolerant narratives online, and how to build counternarratives and public campaign.
- Provide necessary skills and knowledge needed for the FKUB to establish more robust system and mechanism in addressing complaints and grievances.
- Also, the local partners must be provided with necessary skills needed to act as facilitators and or trainers for the local CSOs and other potential allies in their communities in order to accommodate, motivate, and train potential groups as strong allies.
- In addition, to provide capacity building on project management and operations, effective communication and coordination, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, as well as common ground principles for the local partners to ensure the coordinated local initiatives are conducted based on SMART approach and principles of accountability, transparency, and responsibility.



CONCLUSION

Overall, the study highlighted that the situation of freedom of religions, belief, and tolerance in general can be regarded as 'remaining fragile', putting an emphasis that as though the intensity is increasing, the tension is not extremely violent. In addition, there remains a large gap and unraveled tense unseen from bare eyes between the minority and majority of religious groups in Indonesia. Albeit multiple efforts to support religious freedom and tolerance have been convened by support from various elements of community, there still has been very little examples that accommodate person-to-person meetings between the minority, hard-to-reach communities, and the divisive groups. Hence, in the end diversity was not represented in the forum.

Further, it also shed a significant gap in the interpretation of religious freedom and tolerance and its advocacy practices. In the practical implementation, many are still trapped in the segregation and stigma-wall of the majority and minority. There may be harmony, but diversity remains neglected.



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Search for Common Ground is an international humanitarian organization, established in 1982 with a focus on peacebuilding, transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions with an emphasis on problem solving. Our mission is to build sustainable peace for future generations by working with all parties from conflict, providing the tools needed to work together and find constructive solutions.

Search works in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. In Indonesia, Search works with local partners and organizations, supports the process of building a culture of peace through media, dialogue, strengthening community relations and capacity building since 2002.

Address

CoHive Uptown
Jl. Timor No. 16, Menteng,
Jakarta, Indonesia 10350

