

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

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**Questions**

- 1. What is the Christian/Muslim situation in Bandung, West Java?**
- 2. What is the Christian/Muslim situation in Kupang, Nusa Tenggara?**
- 3. Are there safer areas in Indonesia for Christians, e.g. Jakarta?**
- 4. Are the authorities willing and able to protect Christians in Indonesia?**
- 5. Are there any restrictions on relocating in Indonesia?**
- 6. Is there a restriction on practicing Protestant religion in Indonesia?**

**RESPONSE**

**1. What is the Christian/Muslim situation in Bandung, West Java?**

The US Department of State's most recent report on religious freedom in Indonesia has noted that a high number of church closures which have reportedly taken place in West Java, often led by militant groups like the "Islam Defenders Group (FPI) and the Alliance for Anti-Apostates (AGAP)". The report states that "[s]ome church leaders reported those groups threatened them with sticks and similar weapons to close down their church, although there were no reports of actual physical injuries". According to a *Jakarta Post* report of 24 September 2006, "[t]he number of churches forcibly closed in West Java alone since September 2004 is reported to be 30". Recent reports indicate that such incidents are ongoing and that local police have, in recent times, generally intervened to ensure the safety of the Christian congregation and to take control of the situation (though not to ensure the continued operation of unlicensed churches). One recent report of a serious physical attack on a Christian by Muslims was located for West Java sourced from a Christian monitor. The incident related to "Muslim extremists in West Java [who had] attempted to murder a Christian lecturer in mid-October [2006] for converting from Islam three years ago" (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Indonesia*, 15 September – Attachment 10; for the *Jakarta Post* report of 24 September 2006, see: Suwarni, Y.T. 2006, 'Police foil attempted closure of church', *Jakarta Post*, 24 September

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20060924.@02> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 5; for other recent forced closures, see: ‘Residents demand local church closes’ 2007, *Jakarta Post* website, 13 February <http://www.thejakartapost.com> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 26; and: ‘Bandung locals protest, demand church closure’ 2006, *Jakarta Post*, 22 February <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20060222.D01> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 4; for the attack on the Christian lecturer, see: ‘Christian Lecturer Attacked in West Java’ 2006, *Compass Direct News*, 16 November – Attachment 1).

An overview of the available source material follows below.

On 12 February 2007, *The Jakarta Post* reported that “[d]ozens of residents of Warung Satangkal kampung in Majalaya, Bandung, rallied in front of a house belonging to a Christian family Sunday in reaction to the use of the house as a venue for religious rituals” of the “Bethel Church”. It is reported that the rally was placated when a “church representative” “signed a statement, and promised not to hold religious activities in the house until a license was issued by the Religious Affairs Ministry”. Details follow:

Residents’ anger rose over the incident as they gathered at 7 a.m. on Sunday in front of the house of Ayun Sobandi, who is the representative of the church. Alner, another church representative decided to stop the church rituals.

“We’re aware that this church has no permit so I’ve taken the initiative to stop it and disperse. It’s really difficult to process licenses for the construction of churches, especially permits from nearby figures and other local noted figures (as required by the existing law),” Alner said.

Alner signed a statement, and promised not to hold religious activities in the house until a license was issued by the Religious Affairs Ministry.

Alner said around 100 churchgoers in Majalaya routinely took part at the religious rituals at Ayun’s house. Three families in the vicinity became members of the church communion, while others came from surrounding areas in Majalaya.

Alner said they converted the house into a place of worship because they did not have a church which was free from disturbances.

“We haven’t had a license, but we frequently consult with local apparatuses, including the police. Moreover Pak Ayun is an indigenous resident, who has lived here since 1986,” Alner said (‘Residents demand local church closes’ 2007, *Jakarta Post* website, 13 February <http://www.thejakartapost.com> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 26).

On 16 November 2006, *Compass Direct News* reported that “Muslim extremists in West Java attempted to murder a Christian lecturer in mid-October for converting from Islam three years ago”. The attack took place in “Lembang, a small community on the outskirts of Bandung”, and it is reported that “[p]olice arrested one of the men responsible for the attack, but the others escaped”.

Muslim extremists in West Java attempted to murder a Christian lecturer in mid-October for converting from Islam three years ago. The theology lecturer, whose name was withheld for security reasons, has taken shelter in another province to escape further threats to his life. Sources told *Compass* that a man claiming to be a Christian phoned the lecturer saying he wanted to study Islam in order to relate to his Muslim acquaintances. After meeting with the

caller and his friends several times, they asked him to travel with them to **Lembang, a small community on the outskirts of Bandung**. En route, they slipped a rope over the lecturer's neck and attempted to strangle him. They hit him several times over the head with a hammer, but he managed to jump out of the car and roll downhill. **Police arrested one of the men** responsible for the attack, but the others escaped ('Christian Lecturer Attacked in West Java' 2006, Compass Direct News, 16 November – Attachment 1).

On 24 September 2006, *The Jakarta Post* reported that "[a] mob of around 50 people [had] attempted Saturday to demolish a house they claimed was being used illegally by Christians as a place of worship in the hamlet of Cibintinu, Arjasari village, some 20 kilometres south of Bandung". According to this report, "police foiled the attempted closure of the church, telling the mob that neither individuals nor organizations were authorized to shut any house of worship". The report notes that "[c]hurches in several cities across West Java have been under threat due to the actions of Islamic extremists including the Islam Defenders Front (FPI) and the Alliance of Anti-Apostasy Movement". It is also noted that: "[u]nder the revised joint decree issued earlier this year by Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni and Home Minister M. Ma'ruf, the establishment of a house of worship must gain the approval of at least 60 local residents and have a minimum of 90 followers. The number of churches forcibly closed in West Java alone since September 2004 is reported to be 30". *Agence France Presse* reported that this particular incident involved a "protestant sect" "operated by the Missionary Foundation of the Bread of Life". *The Jakarta Post* report follows:

The suppression of religious freedom in this predominantly Muslim nation continues in West Java, where dozens of churches and places of worship have been forcibly closed by Muslim extremists over the past year.

A mob of around 50 people attempted Saturday to demolish a house they claimed was being used illegally by Christians as a place of worship in the hamlet of Cibintinu, Arjasari village, some 20 kilometres south of Bandung.

But police foiled the attempted closure of the church, telling the mob that neither individuals nor organizations were authorized to shut any house of worship.

...The abortive attempt received the backing of Muslim hard-liners grouped under the Anti-Apostasy Division (DAP) of the Islamic Ulema Forum (FUUI) led by Suryana Nur Fatwama.

The move began at around 9 a.m. after a meeting at a nearby mosque. The mob then marched to Yayasan Penginjilan Roti Kehidupan church, where they talked to church administrator Ibu Eri.

As she refused to close the church, the crowd tried to start destroying the roof of the building. Around 10 policemen then arrived at the scene and told the mob to leave.

"We ask all of you to be patient. Anybody who tries to touch this building will be arrested," said Bandung Police chief Adj. Sr. Comr. Suparman who arrived later.

He said no group was allowed under the law to close down or demolish a house of worship except the local authorities.

The mob later dispersed but insisted that they would return to the scene if the church continued its activities.

According to Faidin, a local neighbourhood official in charge of spiritual affairs, the church started activities two weeks ago, around one year after being "closed" by local residents.

“It has a congregation of only seven members, including two residents from the local village. The two had just converted to Christianity,” Faidin said.

“We are disturbed by their presence and worried if they spread their teachings among local residents who are nearly 100 percent Muslim,” he added.

No local Christian leaders were available to respond.

Under the revised joint decree issued earlier this year by Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni and Home Minister M. Ma'ruf, the establishment of a house of worship must gain the approval of at least 60 local residents and have a minimum of 90 followers.

Churches in several cities across West Java have been under threat due to the actions of Islamic extremists including the Islam Defenders Front (FPI) and the Alliance of Anti-Apostasy Movement.

The number of churches forcibly closed in West Java alone since September 2004 is reported to be 30. Dozens of other churches were also forced to close in other provinces.

The UK-based human rights watchdog Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has warned of the increasing trend in church closures in West Java, raising international concern (Suwarni, Y.T. 2006, ‘Police foil attempted closure of church’, *Jakarta Post*, 24 September <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20060924.@02> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 5; ‘Indonesian Muslim mob tries to shut church in West Java city’ 2006, *Agence France Presse*, 24 September – Attachment 6).

On 22 February 2006 *The Jakarta Post* reported that “[m]ore than 150 residents of Jl. Abdurrahman Saleh in Bandung staged a rally in front of the city square shop-house complex Tuesday, demanding that church groups discontinue using the third and fourth floor of the building for their religious services”. The report records that: “[t]he protesters remained calm under the watchful eye of dozens of police officers and military personnel”; and that: “[t]he protesters said that without any proper handling, the presence of the church groups and massage parlour at the city square could result in conflict”. As background to this incident the report observed that: “[t]he controversial issue of church closures came to light again after Andreas A. Yewangoe, an executive of the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) reported to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono last year that 23 Christian places of worship in Bandung had been forcibly closed by hard-line groups, mostly by the Islam Defender’s Front (FPI) between September in 2004 and August last year”. The report follows:

More than 150 residents of Jl. Abdurrahman Saleh in Bandung staged a rally in front of the city square shop-house complex Tuesday, demanding that church groups discontinue using the third and fourth floor of the building for their religious services.

The protesters, calling themselves the Padjadjaran Dalam Forum, gathered in the complex for nearly one hour, carrying banners that read “Church No, Massage Parlour No, Borma (supermarket) Yes, Mall Yes.”

Besides opposing the existence of the two church groups, the residents also protested over the presence of a massage parlour and spa, which employed young women living in the area. They asserted that the parlour and spa had been used as a prostitution centre.

The protesters said that the presence of the church services in the complex was a violation of the original business permit. The Kasih Anugerah Church and Bethel Indonesia Church, they said, had used the complex over the past year.

Abdul Latief, coordinator of the forum, explained that under a 1969 ministerial decree issued by the Religious Affairs Ministry and the Home Ministry, houses of worship were required to obtain a permit from both the local office of the Religious Affairs Ministry and the head of the local neighbourhood unit.

...The protesters said that without any proper handling, the presence of the church groups and massage parlour at the city square could result in conflict.

Arjun, chairman of the local community unit, disclosed that the church meetings and the massage parlour had irked local residents.

“We don’t think they are fitting for our residents,” he said.

The protesters remained calm under the watchful eye of dozens of police officers and military personnel.

The residents failed to meet representatives of the two churches and massage parlour. They did, however, obtain copies of a permit from West Bandung Police for the church groups to hold a gathering from September to October last year.

The controversial issue of church closures came to light again after Andreas A. Yewangoe, an executive of the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) reported to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono last year that 23 Christian places of worship in Bandung had been forcibly closed by hard-line groups, mostly by the Islam Defender’s Front (FPI) between September in 2004 and August last year. The FPI is a right-wing Muslim organization and part of the Alliance of the Anti Apostasy Movement (AGAP), which has been aggressively campaigning for the closure of churches in West Java province.

In response to the complaint, the President ordered Religious Affairs Minister M. Maftuh Basyuni to investigate the issue in a prudent manner.

The report was confirmed by the AGAP itself. The grouping of hard-line Muslim organizations acknowledged Wednesday that it had closed over 20 churches in West Java since 2004.

The groups have claimed that the churches were shut down due to complaints from local residents (‘Bandung locals protest, demand church closure’ 2006, *Jakarta Post*, 22 February <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20060222.D01> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 4; a report on the incident was also published on the Indonesia Matters website, see: Patung 2006, ‘Bigotry in Bandung’, Indonesia Matters website, 22 February <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/125/bigotry-in-bandung/> – Accessed 12 February 2007 – Attachment 9).

On 7 February 2006, *The Jakarta Post* reported that “police in Bekasi and Bandung [had] refused to intervene in scuffles last year [2005] when Muslim residents barred Christians from mass prayers, saying they were being held in illegal venues” (‘Four arrested in Indonesia for attack on Muslim sect’ 2006, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: *Jakarta Post*, 7 February – Attachment 7).

In September 2005 *The Jakarta Post* reported that the Indonesian government had denied that church closures were taking place in place like Bandung. Nonetheless, the situation resulted

in the government's revision of certain laws in attempt to prevent such closures. The report follows:

Guaranteeing there would no more pressure from hard-line Muslim groups to close down churches, West Java Governor Danny Setiawan asked Christian congregations to comply with the regulations on establishing houses of worship.

A 1969 joint ministerial decree requires all houses of worship to be built with the consent of local administration heads and area residents.

The West Java administration later issued Gubernatorial Instruction No. 28/1990 on the matter, which allows a neighborhood to build houses of worship if there are at least 40 families practicing a religion in the area.

Minority Christians often have difficulties in building churches in predominantly Muslim areas of the country. In Bandung, many churches or houses being used to worship have been shut down by Muslim hard-liners since 2003. The groups accuse the congregations of lacking permits and of trying to convert Muslims to Christianity.

..Danny said until the administration issued a new regulation, people should follow the existing ones.

“We’ll work on a draft regulation, which is aimed to address the difficulties (of Non-Muslim groups) in establishing houses of worship,” he said on Thursday after a meeting with the West Java Police and military chiefs, and the head of the provincial ulema council.

...Danny claimed there had been no forced closures of churches by Muslim hard-liners in West Java and no violence committed against congregations.

Many Muslim residents had protested the illegal construction of churches, he said, and because their complaints were not heeded, the residents put pressure on the local administration to close down the churches.

“The churches were closed down by the local administration, which was facilitated by the police. Reports on church closures and demolitions (by vigilante groups) are inaccurate and should be considered lies,” Danny said.

...Meanwhile, John Simon Timorason, who chairs the West Java office of the Indonesian Churches Cooperation Forum said that since August last year, 35 churches had been closed down despite obtaining permits from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

But ministry provincial office head Iik Makid said the office only issued recommendations to the governor and regional heads about the operation of churches, not permits.

“A permit can be sought only if the neighborhood allows it. You know how sensitive religious affairs are,” he said.

Iik said the problem with establishing a church in West Java, where Christians account for less than 10 percent of the province's population of 34 million, was similar to building mosques in predominantly Christian provinces.

Separately, the Papua Bishops Council urged the majority of Christians not to retaliate for the incidents in West Java.

“When your enemies slap your right cheek, give them the left cheek, as retaliation is God’s prerogative,” council spokesman Bishop Leo Laba Ladjar said.

“The closure of churches in Bandung, however, is a great shock. It violates the right to worship God.”

The council urged President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to act against those who obstructed the freedom of to practice one’s religion, as this violated the Constitution (Suwarni, Y.T. & Somba, N.D. 2005, ‘West Java tells Christians to respect government regulations’, *Jakarta Post*, 9 September <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20050909.C03> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 8).

The US Department of State’s most recent report on religious freedom in Indonesia has noted the high number of church closures which have reportedly taken place in West Java, and the involvement of the “Islam Defenders Group (FPI) and the Alliance for Anti-Apostates (AGAP)”. The report states that “[s]ome church leaders reported those groups threatened them with sticks and similar weapons to close down their church, although there were no reports of actual physical injuries”. The report also notes that two Christian women in West Java were jailed “for allegedly attempting to convert Muslim children to Christianity”. The relevant extracts follow:

According to the Indonesian Christian Communication Forum (FKKI), militant groups forced the closing of at least thirty-four churches: twenty-five in West Java, six in Banten, two in Central Java, and 1 in South Sulawesi during the reporting period. Some churches were attacked while services were in session. The Islam Defenders Group (FPI) and the Alliance for Anti-Apostates (AGAP) backed by local Muslim communities orchestrated most of the church closings. Some church leaders reported those groups threatened them with sticks and similar weapons to close down their church, although there were no reports of actual physical injuries. AGAP and FPI said they targeted churches that operated without the required permission of the local government and the surrounding community as required by the 1969 Joint Ministerial Decree on Houses of Worship. Many of the targeted churches operated out of private homes and storefronts. Although often present, police almost never acted to prevent forced church closings and sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure.

...Police arrested three women from the Christian Church of Camp David (GKKD) in Indramayu, West Java, and in September 2005 the court sentenced them to three years in jail under the Child Protection Law for allegedly attempting to convert Muslim children to Christianity. Prosecutors charged the women after community members complained the women used Christian youth recreation programs to proselytize Muslim children. The women claimed that family members gave permission for their children to attend the event. Witnesses failed to support the women during the trial, however, because of alleged intimidation from the community. At the time of this report the defendants’ case remained on appeal at the Supreme Court (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Indonesia*, 15 September – Attachment 10).

The church closures of 2005 were reportedly driven by conservative Islamic groups who sought to have churches closed, with the backing of the local authorities, on the grounds that that the churches were unlicensed or illegal by way of operating without the consent of the local community as per a decree, “issued in 1969, which required consent of local administrations and residents to build houses of worship”. *The Jakarta Post* has reported that “Religious Affairs Minister M. Maftuh Basyuni and Home Minister M. Ma’ruf signed [a new] ministerial decree in March, replacing the one issued in 1969”. The report notes that “[r]eligious minorities have complained that the...revised decree does little to change the

situation” (Diani, Hera 2006, ‘Revised decree “justifies violence”’, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April – Attachment 2).

It would appear that the situation in Bandung has, historically, been one of tense Muslim–Christian relations. In 1998 the Indonesia Christian Communication Forum published a report in which it advised of Bandung that: “[t]his area is a very difficult area for the development of Christian Community”, noting that a number of churches had been closed or could not operate.

...**Bandung West Java.** This area is a very difficult area for the development of Christian Community, especially for the Catholic Church, the Indonesian Christian Church and Gereja Isa Almasih. The Catholic Church, which has completed its Church building, has to surrender it to be used for sport centre and the Indonesian Christian Church cannot operate its Church building. Even the Gereja Isa Almasih is threatened to close down its Church for fear of rousing riots, according to the local village chief, Mr Comaruddin, though the Church is well built and sound proved (Tahalele, P. 1998, ‘Church and Human Rights Reports in Indonesia’, Fellowship of Indonesian Christians in America website, source: Indonesia Christian Communication Forum, 30 November <http://www.fica.org/hr/ChurchPersecution/nov516.pdf> – Accessed 14 September 2006 – Attachment 3).

## 2. What is the Christian/Muslim situation in Kupang, Nusa Tenggara?

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has recently published a study of communal violence in East Nusa Tenggara, the province of Indonesia which takes in the island areas of Flores, Sumba, and West Timor (on which the provincial capital, Kupang, is located). The study does not identify Christian–Muslim conflict as a major issue in recent times (though the Kupang riots of November 1998 are noted as a major event in the past). According to this study the most significant problems in present-day East Nusa Tenggara relate to the communal tensions which have erupted between certain East Nusa Tenggara communities living in West Timor and the displaced communities which moved into West Timor areas from East Timor following the events of 1999. According to this report: “[t]he key actors in East Timor-related violence and hostile acts committed in West Timor since 1999 have been displaced pro-integrationist East Timorese who sought refuge in West Timor in 1999 following the referendum on 30 August”. Further to this: “[t]he victims or targets of this violence (during the initial stages of the presence of displaced East Timorese in West Timor) consisted of other East Timorese, members of local/host communities, members of the Indonesian civil service, UN workers and others regarded as opponents by the pro-integrationists, such as the foreign press”. The report also notes that East Nusa Tenggara generally suffers from high rates of violence attributed to general lawlessness. In terms of everyday politics, it is reported that local political rivalries in East Nusa Tenggara tend to be fought along ethnic lines as well as along a Catholic–Protestant divide. According to this report, “[e]thnicity is closely related to religion. Most Catholic bishops, pastors, brothers and nuns as well as Islamic *ulamas* (religious leaders) are stationed in Flores, whereas most Protestant preachers, bible teachers and Sunday school teachers tend to be stationed in West Timor and Sumba”. The report give the religious demography of East Nusa Tenggara as follows: Catholic 55.49%; Protestant 34.46%; Muslim 9.07%; and Other 0.88% (see page 6). Some extracts from the report’s overview of the situation follow below:

In 1999, violence broke out during the independence referendum in East Timor and an estimated 270,000 East Timorese fled to the neighbouring Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur, NTT). This report examines the causes, dynamics and



impacts of conflict between these displaced East Timorese and the local population of West Timor.

...East Nusa Tenggara Province, NTT, is divided into one municipality (the provincial capital of Kupang) and 14 districts: Alor, Belu, East Flores, East Sumba, Ende, Kupang, Lembata, Manggarai, Ngada, North Central Timor, Rote Ndao, Sikka, South Central Timor and West Sumba. These are comprised of 170 subdistricts, 2,207 desa (rural villages) and 309 kelurahan (urban villages). The total population of NTT in 2002 was 3,924,871, of which 39.42 percent live in West Timor. There are 11 major local ethnic groups in NTT. These are Alor, Ende, Larantuka, Manggarai, Ngada, Nge Reo, Rote, Sabu, Sikka, Solor and Sumba ethnic groups. The majority of NTT's population is Catholic.

...Ethnicity is closely related to religion. Most Catholic bishops, pastors, brothers and nuns as well as Islamic ulamas (religious leaders) are stationed in Flores, whereas most Protestant preachers, bible teachers and Sunday school teachers tend to be stationed in West Timor and Sumba (see Annex 3). Since religion in NTT is inextricably intertwined with ethnicity, ethnic rivalry for control of strategic executive and legislative positions at the provincial level inevitably contains undertones of religious rivalry, especially between Catholics and Protestants. Ethnicity and religion have always played an important role in the election and appointment of local public officials, and ethnic and religious issues are accentuated during local elections.

In the 2004 national elections, however, NTT voters tended to vote for nationalist parties rather than religious parties. In 1999, during the nation's first free and fair election since 1955, the dominant Functional Group Party (Partai Golongan Karya, Golkar) saw its support in NTT decline to 39.61 percent (in the 1997 elections, it had garnered as much as 94.94 percent). The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDI-P) garnered 39.04 percent. In the 2004 election for seats in the DPR, the Golkar Party and PDI-P remained the front-runners.

Although the majority of the population was either Catholic or Protestant (see Figure 1), religion did not play an important role in this election. The newly established Christian party, the Peace and Prosperity Party (Partai Damai Sejahtera, PDS) only received one seat, while the overwhelming majority of voters supported nationalist parties. Golkar won five seats, PDI-P three, while the Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat), Justice and Unity Party (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan, PKPI), Enhancement of Indonesian Democracy Party (Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia, PPDI) and Pioneer Party (Partai Pelopor) each won one.

...Tadjoeddin classifies NTT province between 1990 and 2001 as an intermediate conflict area involving 14 incidents of violence, mostly communal in nature (96 percent), of which eight involved at least one fatality. A total of 55 fatalities are recorded. In a presentation of their ongoing research on post-New Order local level conflict in Flores, Barron et al identify the following types of conflict in Flores: natural resource conflicts; administrative disputes; gender/sexual violence; and vigilante retribution.

...In their study in the Manggarai and Sikka districts in Flores, Barron, Kaiser and Pradhan also found that cases of conflict tended to be under-reported by the village authorities.

...Crime statistics collected at the village level in West Timor show that, in comparison with other crimes, torture or violence is reported by a relatively high number of rural and urban villages (Table 8). They also report a high incidence of other crimes, such as rape and murder (Sunarto, K., Nathan, M. & Hadi, S. 2005, *Overcoming Violent Conflict, Volume 2: Peace And Development Analysis in Nusa Tenggara Timur*, pp.1-23

[http://www.undp.org/bcpr/documents/prevention/integrate/country\\_app/indonesia/NTT-final%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.undp.org/bcpr/documents/prevention/integrate/country_app/indonesia/NTT-final%5B1%5D.pdf) – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 11).

September 2006 did see a major outbreak of Christian–Muslim related violence in two areas of East Nusa Tenggara: “Atambua, Belu, West Timor”, and “Maumere, Sikka regency, Flores island”. The violence was perpetrated by Christian members of these local communities who had “come out onto the streets to protest the execution of...three Catholic men”. The three men, “Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva and Marianus Riwu”, had been controversially sentenced to death for their alleged involvement in the sectarian violence which has affected Sulawesi. One of the men, Dominggus Da Silva, originated from the East Nusa Tenggara locale of Maumere. Information on the September 2006 disturbances follows:

Thousands of people in Atambua, Belu, West Timor, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), have come out onto the streets to protest the execution of the three Catholic men. The offices of the Attorney General have been burned down and one report says that the homes of people in a certain area, likely a Muslim populated one, have been attacked. The main Atambua market has also been burned down and all roads leading into and out of the town have been blocked by protestors. The protests began at about 6am but by about 11am the situation had calmed.

A prison in the town was also attacked and 190 inmates were thereby able to escape. Another 15 decided to stay put.

...In Maumere, Sikka regency, Flores island, NTT, the state courthouse building was burnt down at around 18.30. Maumere is where Dominggus Da Silva originates from and protestors were apparently angry that da Silva’s last request, that he be buried in his hometown, was initially refused by the Central Sulawesi government. Da Silva has no relatives in Sulawesi. Now it appears the regional government in Sikka is offering to fly his family to Palu to fetch his remains (‘Atambua Protests’ 2006, Indonesia Matters website, 22 September <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/714/atambua-protests/> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 12; for further information on the case of the executed men, see: Mark, D. 2006, ‘Christians executed in Indonesia’, *ABC News* website, 22 September <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2006/s1746918.htm> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 13).

The most serious episode of Christian–Muslim violence to have occurred in Kupang, and the larger area of East Nusa Tenggara, took place in November 1998. “The attacks came after thousands of Christians took to Kupang’s streets to protest the burning of the Jakarta churches on November 22. Fourteen people died in the Jakarta violence, while no injuries were reported in Kupang”. A brief overview of the incident follows below sourced from *The Christian Century*. A more detailed study of the events, sourced from a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, is supplied as Attachment 15. *The Christian Century* report follows:

Christians said to be bent on revenge attacked four mosques in eastern Indonesia November 30, less than a week after Muslims burned and ransacked more than 20 churches in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. The violence continued on December 1 when Christian mobs attacked Muslim property, as Muslims retaliated by hurling stones at homes used for Christian worship on Java, Indonesia’s main island.

The mosque attacks occurred in Kupang, a Christian-dominated city in eastern Indonesia. Christians also burned a market, a Muslim school, a hotel used by Muslim pilgrims and several other Muslim-related facilities. At least two Muslim homes, a car and a motorcycle were set ablaze in the second day of unrest.

The attacks came after thousands of Christians took to Kupang’s streets to protest the burning of the Jakarta churches on November 22. Fourteen people died in the Jakarta violence, while no injuries were reported in Kupang. Following the first Kupang attacks, the city’s Roman Catholic bishop, Petrus Turang, went on television to apologise for the mob action against

mosques and urged Muslims not to continue the violence by seeking their own revenge. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation. About 90 percent of its 202 million people are Muslims ('Indonesian Christians attack mosques' 1998, Find Articles website, source: *Christian Century*, 16 December [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1058/is\\_35\\_115/ai\\_53475490](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_35_115/ai_53475490) – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 14; for the more detailed HRW report, see: 'Background Briefing on Indonesia: Urgent Action Needed to Halt Communal Violence' 1998, Human Rights Watch, 9 December <http://www.hrw.org/press98/dec/kupang2.htm> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 15).

Beyond the events of September 2006 and November 1998, little information could be found to suggest that there are ongoing Christian–Muslim tensions in Kupang. Those tensions which are reported tend to be of a low-level nature and do not appear to represent a significant risk to the local Christian population. Some examples follow:

- *The Jakarta Post* has reported statements which suggest that some Indonesians perceive the situation in East Nusa Tenggara to be the reverse of that in Bandung insofar as the Muslim–Christian situation is concerned. For instance, reporting on research into “religious tolerance” a *Jakarta Post* report of 18 January 2006 noted the “closure of many houses of worships in Bandung” and that one research “participant argued that in Christian-majority provinces like East Nusa Tenggara, Muslims also face obstacles in establishing a mosque or making the call to prayer (adzan)”. And on 30 March 2006 *The Jakarta Post* reported that: “Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni says Muslims can hardly build their mosques in Christian enclaves like Papua or East Nusa Tenggara” ('Indonesian survey reveals Islamic schools intolerant of other faiths' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: *Jakarta Post*, 18 January – Attachment 17; 'Let's revive religious tolerance on all sides' 2006, The Persecution website, source: *Jakarta Post*, 30 March <http://www.thepersecution.org/world/indonesia/06/03/jp30.html> – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 18).
- In December 2005 it was reported that: “Sms text messages sent to a radio station in Kupang, capital of East Nusa Tenggara province, in West Timor, threatened to bomb thirty-one churches in the city on New Year's Eve” ('Bomb Threats in West Timor' 2005, Indonesia Matters website, 29 December <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/41/bomb-threats-in-west-timor/> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 16).
- On 19 December 2005, *the Jakarta Post* reported that: “[a] week before Christmas, police personnel have begun to comb churches for explosives in Kupang city, East Nusa Tenggara capital. The increased security is aimed at preventing possible terrorist attacks ahead of Christmas, said a police spokesman here” ('Indonesia tightens security ahead of Christmas in Kupang' 2005, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: *Jakarta Post*, 19 December – Attachment 19).

A less recent report, published in the July–September 1998 edition of *Inside Indonesia* (just prior to the November 1998 troubles), provides some historical background on the ethno-sectarian troubles which have previously affected the West Timor area of East Nusa Tenggara. It may be of interest that this report suggests that mosque construction in the area was, at this time, reportedly enjoying the support of the authorities.

The Bugis are Muslim, while the Timorese are Christian. To the Timorese, this adds another, threatening dimension to the economic clash. Nusa Tenggara Timur province (NTT) encompasses West Timor. Its total population only numbers around three million. Yet it is commonly thought of as the 'Christian stronghold' of Indonesia, which is the world's most populous Muslim nation. Although in a minority, migrant Bugis Muslims in NTT receive government support in ways that add an aura of official sanction to their activities.

The most obvious form of government support is funding for new mosques. Muslims qualify for assistance once a sufficient number of Muslim households are present in a community. Such funding is not available to build churches. While there is still no mosque in the village I described above, others have sprung up in equally unlikely places on Timor.

As if in response, this seems to have triggered what could almost be described as a competition between Christian parishes to construct bigger and better churches. An impartial observer might feel that the manpower and funding for this frenzy of construction – almost entirely drawn from the local congregations – could be better spent on community development. But the importance of the church as a focus of community strength cannot be underestimated.

As with the Three Little Pigs who sought safety in vain from the Big Bad Wolf by making houses of straw and wood, the new churches are equally unlikely to be effective protection against the prevailing wind of Islam. But they are a highly visible indication of the threat the Timorese perceive.

Adding to the picture of tacit government support for migrants is a story related to me by missionaries teaching theology in Kupang. Many of their graduates hope to find jobs giving religious instruction in village primary and junior high schools. But they often experience difficulty, because the Department of Education and Culture has allotted the vacancies to Muslim migrants. This is in spite of the fact that the Muslim teachers have little knowledge of the Christian religion practised by the local community.

Conversion to Islam is virtually unheard of amongst West Timorese. Yet there are persistent rumours of aggressive Muslim proselytising amongst the villagers in the southern sub-districts of Amanatun and Amanuban. Travelling by bus, I myself sighted a dilapidated mosque in this area. Timorese passengers casually told me that locals were offered money to register as Muslims. If true, this kind of missioning suggests naked political empire building, rather than religious evangelism.

...The political implications of an increasing number of Muslim immigrants to West Timor are perhaps clearest in the changing ethnic make-up of regional administrators. In the strongly Protestant sub-district of Amfoang Utara, on the north coast, for example, a Javanese Muslim has been reappointed for two consecutive terms as sub-district head (camat).

The administrative centre for Amfoang Utara is the remote village of Naikliu, often completely cut off from access to Kupang by both sea and land approaches in the wet season. Yet it is home to a community of Bugis traders, and boasts a mosque.

It was in Naikliu that I first encountered what turned out to be one of several documents purporting to be the Muslim blueprint for the destruction of the Catholic church in NTT. Whether genuine or not, as with the panic construction of churches, they seemed symptomatic of the alarm the juggernaut of Islam has caused amongst both Protestant and Catholic Timorese.

Within a few short years the image of NTT as the 'Christian stronghold' of Indonesia seems to have become less convincing. Instead I think of the Lilliputians in Gulliver's Travels, who

nervously await the next move of their giant alien intruder (Andrewartha, S. 1998, 'Travels in West Timor', *Inside Indonesia* website, July–September <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit55/timor.htm> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 20).

### **3. Are there safer areas in Indonesia for Christians, e.g. Jakarta?**

In February 2006, Ann Buwalda of the Jubilee Campaign told the Christian advocacy publication *World Magazine* that Christians in Jakarta were fearful that the widespread closures seen in West Java would soon also affect the Jakarta area:

Government-forced closings of dozens of churches in the West Java region in recent months serve as evidence of emboldened persecution. Ms. Buwalda says her group has counted “upwards of 40 churches” that the government has forced to close since last summer. Compass Direct reported that local officials in Bandung, West Java, ordered eight house churches in a local housing complex to close as of Jan. 15, charging that the churches do not have permits to meet in private homes. Church leaders say they have applied for permits, but that their applications have been repeatedly rejected.

Ms. Buwalda says the church closings are part of a wider campaign of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), a government-sponsored organization of Muslim clerics who oppose Muslim cooperation with non-Muslims. Ms. Buwalda says MUI leaders use threats to stir neighbourhood opposition to churches that have existed for decades. Without support from Muslim neighbours, Christian churches can't meet in private homes. “It's their mode of operation, and it's working,” she says.

Though most church closings have been concentrated in West Java, the government may soon set its sights on Jakarta, the bustling capital city that has dozens of new church groups. Most churches meet in rented rooms at hotels and office buildings since “hostility towards the Christian minority makes it simply impossible to build a church structure in Jakarta,” according to Ms. Buwalda. She says Christians in Jakarta fear they will “be the next target after West Java is purged of its churches” (‘Home invasions’ 2006, *World Magazine*, 11 February <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/11510> – Accessed 11 September 2006 – Attachment 21).

On 31 March 2006 a report on the *Indonesia Matters* website stated that: “[a] Christian pre-school in Tangerang, Banten, near Jakarta” had been “surrounded by a mob yesterday which demanded that it close down”. The report continues:

The school, Taman Kanak-kanak Kristen Daniel, was empty at the time and the owner of the building pled with the demonstrators not to damage it. They didn't but before dispersing threatened to return another day, when the school was open.

Metro TV says that the mob claimed the school was teaching Christianity to Muslim students while Tempo reports that the demonstrators believe the school does not have authorisation to operate.

Whichever account is true, and likely both arguments were heard from different sections of the mob, the obvious reason is simply that the school is run by Christians, is small and therefore an easy target.

The school headmaster, Teddy, said that it was true he did not have building and educational permits but that these were in process and had already been verbally given by the local council (‘Christian School in Tangerang Targeted’ 2006, *Indonesia Matters* website, 31

March <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/211/christian-school-in-tangerang-targeted/> – Accessed 18 September 2006 – Attachment 22).

In May 2006 the Christian advocacy publication *Compass Direct* reported that “[o]n April 17, a group of approximately 150 people claiming to represent the neighbouring community” had forced the closure of “the Shining Christian Church in West Semper, Clincing sub-district, North Jakarta”. The report continues:

They bullied Pastor Yoshua Sugiharto into ceasing worship activities underway in the building since 2001.

The mob also presented a letter from West Semper authorities dated April 12 asking the church to cease worship services, and listing complaints from people in the neighbourhood. These complaints included religious activities being carried out in a residential building; attendance of church members who did not live in the immediate neighbourhood; and operation of a church in a Muslim-majority area.

Church members protested that they were officially registered with West Semper authorities, under Registration No. 133/1/824/VIII/2005. The church was established in West Semper when there were only a few houses, and although a majority Muslim neighbourhood grew up around them, there were no problems until 2005 (Rionaldo, S. 2006, ‘Radical Muslims Stop Church Services in Indonesia’, *Compass Direct*, 2 May – Attachment 23).

Even so, there have been no reports of violence in such incidents and this would seem to suggest that it remains true that “Chinese Christians in Jakarta are not affected necessarily by current violence against Christians elsewhere in Indonesia” (US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2003, *Indonesia: Information on Attacks by Muslims Against a Chinese Christian Neighborhood in Jakarta in September 2002, and Police Protection of Chinese Christians in Jakarta*, 14 November.

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/asylum/ric/documentation/IDN04001.htm> – Accessed 2 December 2005 – Attachment 24).

Further to this, reports indicate that Muslims in some areas of Jakarta have been actively campaigning to ensure that local Christian communities are free to worship. On 26 February 2006, *The Jakarta Post* reported that “there are also many instances of Christians and Muslims working and living together as good friends and neighbors. One example of this can be found in Jati subdistrict, East Jakarta”:

[The local minister] said before building the new church, congregation members approached local authorities and residents to seek their approval.

“Without any hassle, they gave us permission. From the start, our relationship with our neighbours has always been harmonious,” he said.

Arnold said that last Christmas, members of the Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama and the Betawi Brotherhood Forum helped guard the church.

Not far from the church is an orphanage established by five members of a Nahdlatul Ulama foundation that looks after the welfare of Muslims. Among the founders of the orphanage was Solichach A. Wahid Hasyim, the mother of former president Abdurrahman Wahid.

Orphanage head Nurdin Solichin said he had lived in the area much of his life and had never seen or heard of conflicts between Muslim and Christian residents.

“This orphanage has a close relationship not only with Protestants and Catholics, but also with people from Vihara Dharma Bhakti (a Buddhist temple). We have received donations from them for years. We never differentiate between the assistance we receive from our fellow humans,” Nurdin said.

While religious conflicts may receive more attention in the media, it is not difficult to find people of all faiths living and working together in peaceful coexistence (‘Locals set example of religious harmony’ 2006, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 February – Attachment 25).

Research on the situation for Christians across Java was recently completed, on 11 August 2006 as *Research Response IDN30344*, and this is supplied as Attachment 27. Research was also recently completed, on 7 February 2007 as *Research Response IDN31305*, on the generally favourable conditions for Christians on the Indonesian island of Bali, and this is supplied as Attachment 28 (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response IDN30344*, 11 August – Attachment 29; RRT Country Research 2007, *Research Response IDN31305*, 7 February – Attachment 28).

#### **4. Are the authorities willing and able to protect Christians in Indonesia?**

There is evidence to suggest that the Indonesian authorities are willing and able to protect Christians. As is noted in response to Question 1, on 16 November 2006 Compass Direct News reported that Bandung police had arrested one of a number of “Muslim extremists in West Java [who] attempted to murder a Christian lecturer in mid-October for converting from Islam”. The others involved in the attack reportedly escaped. And on 24 September 2006 *The Jakarta Post* reported that “police [had] foiled the attempted closure of the church, telling the mob that neither individuals nor organizations were authorized to shut any house of worship”. However, *The Jakarta Post* has also reported that “police in Bekasi and Bandung refused to intervene in scuffles [during 2005] when Muslim residents barred Christians from mass prayers, saying they were being held in illegal venues” (‘Christian Lecturer Attacked in West Java’ 2006, Compass Direct News, 16 November – Attachment 1; Suwarni, Y.T. 2006, ‘Police foil attempted closure of church’, *Jakarta Post*, 24 September <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20060924.@02> – Accessed 8 February 2007 – Attachment 5; for the report on 2005, see: ‘Four arrested in Indonesia for attack on Muslim sect’ 2006, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: *Jakarta Post*, 7 February – Attachment 7).

The US Department of State’s most recent report on religious freedom in Indonesia confirms that Indonesia has been affected by troubles of this kind, noting that: “Many of the targeted churches operated out of private homes and storefronts”. And that: “Although often present, police almost never acted to prevent forced church closings and sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure” (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Indonesia*, ‘Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination’, 15 September – Accessed 21 September 2006 – Attachment 10).

#### **5. Are there any restrictions on relocating in Indonesia?**

The Indonesian identity card (the *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* or KTP) allows local authorities to regulate the residential arrangements of Indonesian citizens in such a way that relocation can sometimes prove difficult. In November 2006 an editorial piece appeared in *The Jakarta Post* addressing the problems which can confront those who seek to relocate to Jakarta. According to this report the problem typically affects internal migrants from “from poorer regions” who attempt to relocate to “regencies and cities” experiencing “social and public order problems”,

particularly in Jakarta. Nonetheless, the report also notes that, while “the procedures for obtaining a Jakarta ID card (KTP) are quite stringent”, “[i]n truth...a new KTP can be easily acquired for Rp 150,000 (US\$17)”. Some pertinent extracts follow:

The Constitution guarantees the freedom of movement of citizens inside the country, and their right to earn a decent living. However, we are now witnessing more local governments close their doors to outsiders who want to try their luck.

They do not want migrants, especially those from poorer regions, coming into their regencies and cities and exasperating already existing social and public order problems. Many of these migrants are often treated as if they were foreigners in their own country.

...Many of the provincial government officials who are now shouting about the problem of migrants in Jakarta and threatening to send the new job seekers packing, including Governor Sutiyoso, themselves arrived here as migrants, unwanted by the city authorities at that time. How ironic that people who so greatly benefited by migrating to Jakarta now want to block others from following in their path.

For decades, it has been a matter of routine for the city administration to launch raids aimed at rounding up the “undesirables” – the unskilled, uneducated and poor – a few days after Idul Fitri.

Security and public order officials are deployed at bus and train stations, in the slums and in public areas, ready to expel those who don’t have proper ID cards or who somehow fail to meet the requirements to become Jakarta residents.

...Officially, the procedures for obtaining a Jakarta ID card (KTP) are quite stringent. In truth, though, a new KTP can be easily acquired for Rp 150,000 (US\$17). With tighter controls on migrants attempting to settle in the capital, Jakarta officials are unfortunately in a position to extort money from job seekers in need of a local ID card.

...This view is not unique to Jakarta. Restricting the movement of Indonesian citizens inside their own country has become an increasingly popular stance with many local governments. More and more cities, regencies and provinces are placing tighter restrictions on people attempting to settle in their areas. Bali, Tangerang, Depok, Bekasi, Batam, Balikpapan. Even smaller regencies and mayoralities have adopted tough measures to curtail migrants (‘Jakarta magnet’ 2006, *Jakarta Post* website, 4 November <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20061104.E01> – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 31).

In December 1994 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided advice relating to the manner in which KTP identification cards (and the related family card, the *Kartu Keluarga* or KK) regulate freedom of movement and relocation for Indonesian citizens. The relevant sections follow:

## 2. Indonesian Identity Card

Q. How is it obtained – the responsible department, cost,

Documentation required for issue, period of validity?

A. An Indonesian identity card called the *Kartu Tanda Pengenal* or president identification card to be exact is issued by a lurah (subdistrict head) on behalf of a camat (district head) based on a KK (*Kartu Keluarga*, family card) which serves as proof that an individual belongs to a family residing in a neighbourhood referred to as an RT (*Rukun Tetangga*,



neighbourhood association). A column in the KK contains information of the citizenship of the individual concerned. The current validity period is three years. The cost is very low, only an administrative cost. However, it is an open secret that when one wants to get this card, one is expected to give a “tip” (rp 5,000-10,000 in urban areas, in hinterland areas it may be as low as RP 2,000) to the official at the subdistrict administration office.

...Q. What are the procedures for relocating in Indonesia? Are there certain circumstances in which problems can arise for people wishing to relocate?

A. The main regulation is to report one’s relocation from the old place to the subdistrict head there and to report same to the subdistrict head at the new location. The *Kartu Keluarga* will be marked accordingly to show the relocation. Letters and documents indicating that relevant authorities including police know of and approve the move will also be required (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 1994, RRT and DIEA Request: Personal Freedoms, 23 November & 2 December – Attachment 32).

## **6. Is there a restriction on practicing Protestant religion in Indonesia?**

No information could be located that would suggest that there are any restrictions on the Protestant faith in Indonesia (though as is noted in response to Question 1 there are restrictions on the establishment of houses of worship which must have the consent of the authorities and local residents). According to the US Department of State’s most recent report on religious freedom: “[t]he Ministry of Religious Affairs extends official status to six faiths: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and as of January 2006, Confucianism” (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Indonesia*, 15 September– Accessed 21 September 2006 – Attachment 10).

*The Jakarta Post* lists the times for regular church services for a number of Jakarta based protestant faiths, including the Immanuel Church (or *Gereja Kristen Immanuel*; or Gereja GKIm) which the Applicant’s mother attended in Bandung (‘Where To Go in Jakarta’ (undated), *Jakarta Post* website [http://www.thejakartapost.com/wtg/wtg\\_jkt.asp](http://www.thejakartapost.com/wtg/wtg_jkt.asp) – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 29; it may be of interest to the Member that a 2004 publication, *Sarawak & Brunei Diocesan News*, provides information which indicates that “Gereja Kristen Immanuel Hossana” church in Bandung is a Presbyterian Church and that, at the time of publication, its pastor was Erick Sudharma, see: Gimang, D. 2004, ‘A Bahasa seminar at the Cathedral’, The Diocese of Kuching website, source: *Sarawak & Brunei Diocesan News*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 30).

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