



For immediate release – 6 August 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Indonesia: ARTICLE 19 Helps to Ensure Effective Implementation of Freedom of Information Law

This week, 2 – 5 August 2010, ARTICLE 19, in cooperation with PATTIRO, a leading Indonesia NGO, and the National Information Commission of Indonesia, organised pioneering training for public officials on Indonesia’s Freedom of Information Law, to increase their understanding and capacity to provide access to information. The training took place in Bandung, Indonesia.

In May, the Indonesian Freedom of Information Law of 2008 came into effect. However, most public bodies have yet to develop measures to implement the Law. The newly established National Information Commission has limited capacity to fulfil its mandate, monitoring the implementation of the law and dispute settlements. The Commission requested assistance from ARTICLE 19 in training public officials and developing standards for public information services.

Following in-depth workshops, 25 officials who will serve as public information officers at various state institutions, including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, gained greater understanding of freedom of information principles and standards, learning how to respond effectively to information requests. The training also provided them with resources and best practices from around the world on freedom of information procedures and standards. The training module will be further used to instruct local information commissioners and other public officials in Indonesia.

During the instruction, a Forum of Public Information Officials was established that will provide a new platform for sharing common concerns, knowledge and experience in the implementation of the Law.

“ARTICLE 19 had been supporting efforts to adopt Freedom of Information in Indonesia for several years”, comments Agnes Callamard, Executive Director of ARTICLE 19. “We believe that at this early phase of the implementation of the Law, raising the capacity of public bodies and prioritising their freedom of information obligations is critical for improving access to information in Indonesia. ARTICLE 19 is delighted to actively assist in this process.”

In the coming months, ARTICLE 19 will continue cooperating with PATTIRO, the National Commission and other local partners, setting the standards established in the Law and ensuring that it is implemented effectively.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information please contact: Amy Sim, Senior Programme Officer for Asia, ARTICLE 19, at amy@article19.org, or +44 207 324 2500.
- PATTIRO (Centre for Regional Studies and Information) is a Jakarta based NGO founded in 1999 to promote good governance and develop public participation in Indonesia, particularly at the local level.
- The National Information Commission of Indonesia is an independent body that functions to implement the Freedom of Information Law and its regulations, to provide the standard technical directives for public information services and to settle public information disputes by mediation and adjudication.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.