
Hosted by 

Search News

Indonesia mob victim: No justice for minorities

By NINIEK KARMINI, Associated Press – 2 days ago

0

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A man wounded when Islamic hard-liners launched a deadly attack on his minority sect questioned Indonesia's commitment to religious freedom after he was sentenced to six months in jail — more than some of the assailants caught on video.

Deden Sudjana said he was trying to defend 20 Ahmadiyah members holed up in a house in the village of Cikeusik when they were surrounded by a frenzied mob of 1,500.

The attackers, carrying wooden clubs, machetes and rocks, killed three people and chanted "God is Great!" as they pummeled the lifeless bodies, police helplessly looking on. Footage of the lynching, posted on YouTube, drew worldwide condemnation.

Sumartono, presiding judge of the Serang District Court, sentenced Sudjana to six months in jail Monday for resisting police orders to leave the scene and then hitting one of the mob's leaders.

The attackers — being held in a separate, nearby Serang prison — got three to six months. Two have already been freed.

"I had hoped the state and the judicial system could protect minorities, but I see now that I was wrong," Sudjana — whose hand was nearly severed by a machete during the Feb. 6. attack — said after the verdict was read out.

"I'm the victim," he told reporters. "Why am I getting a higher sentence than some of the perpetrators?"

Human rights groups condemned the ruling, saying it showed how the police, the judicial system and the government are helping fuel religious intolerance in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The United States, which values Indonesia as a key democratic ally in Asia, also said it was disappointed.

Indonesia, a secular nation of 240 million, has a long history of religious tolerance.

But a small, extremist fringe has grown more vocal and violent in recent years. They've been emboldened by the inaction of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who relies on the support of Islamic parties in Parliament, and does not want to offend conservative Muslims by taking sides.

Perpetrators of such violence often go unpunished.

Human rights groups say police, under pressure by hard-liners, did not carry out a proper investigation into the Feb. 6 attacks and that prosecutors, claiming the Ahmadis were instigators, didn't call key eyewitnesses.

Andreas Harsono, of the New York-based Human Rights Watch, called it the Talibanization of Indonesia.

"We have the impression that the Indonesian justice system has surrendered to (those) who have decided to take the law into their own hands," he said.

The decision to punish one of the victims will only encourage more such violence, he added.

So far, 12 members of the mob have been convicted, including teenager, Dani bin Misra, who was captured on camera smashing in an Ahmadi member's skull with a rock.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland noted Sudjana's sentence was equal or greater than those who took part in the "brutal murder."

"We again encourage Indonesia to defend its tradition for all religions," Nuland told a news conference in Washington.

The Ahmadiyah, which has followers around the world, is considered heretical by many Muslims and banned in many Islamic countries because of its belief that Muhammad was not the final prophet.

In recent years, hard-liners in Indonesia have attacked the sect's mosques and intimidated some of its 200,000 followers, but the lynching in Cikeusik was by far the most brutal.

Associated Press writers Ali Kotarumalos in Jakarta and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report.

Copyright © 2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Related articles

Indonesian sect member jailed for defying mob
Financial Times - 2 days ago

Indonesia jails sect member wounded in mob
attack
AFP - 3 days ago

Victim of Indonesian mob attack sent to jail
eTaiwan News - 3 days ago

[More coverage \(1\) »](#)



Add News to your Google Homepage



Photo



Meml
Sudja
during
Serar
Aug.
Musli
of his
sente
more
more
attac



Map

