

LGBT Rights

More political leaders speak out against LGBT

The Jakarta Post, 04-03-2016

More politicians have spoken out against the spread of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement, but have warned people not to commit any violence and discrimination.



People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Chairman Zulkifli Hasan urged the public to narrow the space for the LGBT movement to spread, adding that he considered LGBT to have no place in Indonesia as the act of homosexuality had been warned against in every religion.

"As a movement, the existence of LGBT must be opposed. We must limit its room to move. However, as individual people, they must be protected like any other citizen," said Zulkifli, chairman of the National Mandate Party (PAN), as quoted by Antara news agency.

The concept of LGBT has no place in Indonesia because there is not one race, ethnicity or religion in our homeland that permits same-sex relations, he added.

Rocky Gerung, a philosophy lecturer at the University of Indonesia, explained that certain ethnic groups in Indonesia recognize more than two genders. Gender recognition in South Sulawesi, he noted, acknowledged five genders: men, women, feminine men, masculine women and the neutral gender, considered a godly quality.

Based on his belief that same-sex orientation is an illness, Religious Affairs Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin has argued that LGBT people required treatment and counseling, be this either religious or psychological, because with treatment and counseling, he said, homosexual people may, hopefully, alter their orientation.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has now demanded that Islamic organizations and all religious affairs offices in provinces, regencies and cities, conduct intensive religious counseling for LGBT people.

"We cannot be hostile nor hate as they are also citizens of the state. This doesn't mean that we condone or allow for the LGBT movement to shift the religious values and the identity of the nation," said Lukman, who is a senior United Development Party (PPP) politician.

Meanwhile, People's Consultative Assembly Deputy Speaker H. Hidayat Nur Wahid warned against underestimating the LGBT movement as it risks widening the spread of what he called a "social disease".

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"The LGBT movement cannot be trivialized. The crime is very closely entwined within society, not only in big cities but also small villages," said Hidayat, who is senior politician of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

For this reason, the government must take a firm stance on the issue despite the lack of a law that clearly prohibits or punishes homosexuals, he said.

Hanura calls for law against LGBT people

The Jakarta Post, 05-03-2016

The People's Conscience Party (Hanura) has called for a specific law against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community to curb their presence in the country, amid heightened discrimination against the community.

The law should provide for sanctions, rehabilitation and restrictions on LGBT activities said Hanura secretary-general Berliana Kartakusumah, who believes that people are turned homosexual or transgender because of environment influences. "Being LGBT is an infectious and dangerous disease," he said in a discussion at the House of Representatives on Friday. "LGBT must be banned, like we banned communism and drug trafficking."

Social and state pressure on the LGBT community has recently risen as Indonesian psychiatrists declared LGBT people mentally disordered while clerics declared them haram, or forbidden according to Islam. Ministers of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo also said that LGBT identity is a social disease that must be cured, but called for the public not to be violent toward LGBT people because they were still Indonesia citizens. Still, the recent reports have caused rising discrimination against LGBT people. Threats have also been reported like those directed at an Islamic boarding school for transgender students in Yogyakarta that faced shutdown last month amid pressure from locals and hard-line groups.

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has rejected the call for a new law and questioned the government's willingness to ensure the fulfilment of rights for all citizens. "The state has an obligation to prevent LGBT people from phobias that lead to violence." "Do not let them be discriminated against in terms of work, health services or freedom of expression. The state has to be there for them," Komnas HAM commissioner Indadun Rahmat said, adding that the state must use a humanistic approach in handling LGBT issues.

In contrast, advisor at the Indonesia Ulema Council (MUI) Din Syamsuddin said that same-sex relationships violated the human right to reproduce and were *haram* as stated in an edict issued by the MUI. However, Din called for Muslims not to show hatred for the LGBT community. "We do not need to hate, abuse or neglect them. Rather, we should sympathize and help them," he said.

Death penalty

Indonesia will maintain death penalty for drugs traffickers

The Jakarta Post, 04-03-2016

The government will continue to hand out the death sentence to big players in drug trafficking world despite criticism from foreign countries and human rights activists, arguing that consistency in law enforcement is the key to success in curbing the distribution of drugs.

"The best way to reduce the trafficking of drugs is through consistency. We have no tolerance for drug dealers," said the Jakarta head of the National Narcotics Board (BNN), Brig. Gen. Ali Johardi at a press conference in Jakarta to launch the annual International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report on Thursday.

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The country manager of the UN office on drugs and crime (UNODC) in Indonesia, Collie F. Brown, took the opportunity to reinstate the UN's opposition to the death penalty. Brown urged countries to find an alternative punishment for drug traffickers.

Attorney General M Prasetyo has stressed that a third round of drug convict executions would be carried out this year.

To date, 14 drugs drug convicts have been executed. The previous executions received strong criticism from anti-death penalty activists and caused a temporary souring of diplomatic relations with a number of countries including Brazil and Australia.

Johardi said the government was considering the development of a prison island, which will be used for drug-lord convicts, an idea proposed by BNN chief Budi Waseso.

There is a possibility, the idea was further discussed during the agency's recent meeting with the House of Representatives Commission III overseeing legal affairs, Johardi added.

Forced evictions

House committee to question Ahok, Tito on Kalijodo eviction

The Jakarta Post, 07-03-2016

A House of Representatives committee is seeking an explanation from Jakarta Governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama and Jakarta Police chief Insp. Gen. Tito Karnavian about the eviction of residents and workers from Kalijodo red-light district in West and North Jakarta.

A law enforcement working committee, from House Commission III overseeing legal issues, have summoned Ahok and Tito to explain the legal basis of the eviction at a hearing next week. "It is not only a prostitution issue, but it is also about the rights of Kalijodo residents, whose economy was affected," said Desmond Junaidi Mahesa, the working committee's chairman, in Jakarta on Monday. He initially said that the committee would listen to Ahok and Tito's explanations on Monday, but because both leaders had to prepare the city to host the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit on Monday and Tuesday, the House postponed the hearing until next week.

The Jakarta administration closed down the red-light district on Feb. 29. The administration plans to develop parks on the land formerly used as the red-light district. Hundreds of residents have been relocated to low-cost apartments, prepared by the city administration, while sex workers had to move to neighboring red-light districts or to other areas like Bongkaran in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta.

Police are investigating various figures from the area, including Daeng Aziz, who was known as the informal leader of Kalijodo and operated two cafes there.

Rights of the child

Emergency of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo: Group

The Jakarta Post, 03-03-2016

The Child Protection Institution (LPA) has recorded an alarming increase in sexual violence committed against children in Gorontalo. LPA secretary Salhuddin Idris spoke of an "emergency" in sexual violence against children in the province of 1.1 million people, revealing that in 2015, his institution had recorded 117 cases of

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sexual violence against children, up from 70 in 2014 and 30 in 2013. This year, the LPA received three reports of sexual violence against children, the activist said. Salhuddin said the figure might be just the tip of the iceberg, because many cases of sexual violence against children were not reported to the police. “Ironically, the majority of sexual violence against children is committed by someone known to the victim, such as stepfathers, grandfathers and neighbors,” he told thejakartapost.com on Thursday.

Salhuddin said there were many factors that might trigger the high level of violence against children in Gorontalo, including poor parental education and control, the influence of the internet and lifestyle-related problems. The LPA and other non-governmental organizations concerned with the protection of women and children are calling on the Gorontalo legislative council to immediately pass a regional bill on the elimination of violence against women and children. The bill aims not only to regulate procedures to control sexual violence against children but also to strengthen institutions in preventing the crime. “We should act not just as ‘fire extinguishers’, in responding to a case only after it happened,” said Salhuddin.

Based on Gorontalo Police data, 251 cases of sexual violence against children occurred across Gorontalo during the 2013-2015 period. From January to February this year, the police recorded at least five cases of sexual violence against children, one of which was a human trafficking case. Trafficking is one of the most common issues affecting children in Gorontalo and involves a vast network across the province. Gorontalo Police spokesperson Adj. Sr. Comr. Bagus Santoso said all parties, starting with parents, government institutions and relevant social organizations, had to work together to prevent sexual violence against children. “The most important thing is control and education in the family environment,” he said.

Political developments

House to Summon Justice Minister Over Graft Convict's Escape

The Jakarta Globe, 07-03-2016

The House of Representatives will soon summon Justice and Human Rights Minister Yasonna Laoly over the escape of graft convict Labora Sitorus. Labora was sentenced to 15 years in prison after being found guilty of illegal logging and fuel smuggling charges in September 2014, but fled last week after convincing prison officials he was in need of medical treatment.

He surrendered in the early hours of Monday (07/03) after running out of food and safe places to go, police said.

The escape has been an embarrassment for the Ministry, which is responsible for the country's prisons. The department is already under fire for allowing high-profile graft convict Gayus Tambunan to leave prison on a lunch outing last year.

Bambang Soesatyo, chairman of the House Commission III, which oversees legal affairs, said his commission will summon the minister to ask “how can inmates so easily escaped.”

The House, he said, will demand the minister take strict actions against his employees and call for a complete overhaul in the country's prison system. “Maybe [Yasonna] is too busy meddling with political parties' internal conflicts,” he said.

Labora Sitorus, a former officer of the Raja Ampat Police, made national headlines in 2014 after anti-money laundering agency the PPATK found the low-

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ranking officer had Rp 1.5 trillion (\$114 million) in his bank accounts. He was sent to a prison in his home town of Sorong, West Papua.

The Sorong Prison had granted Labora permission to undergo medical treatment at local hospital, however while in transit he requested treatment at his Sorong home instead. When police arrived at his home on Friday morning to check on the prisoner before transferring him from the Sorong Prison to the Cipinang Prison, East Jakarta, he had already fled.

Labora was flown to Jakarta on Monday just hours after he turned himself in.

West Papua police chief Brig. Gen. Royke Lumowa personally oversaw the transfer with Labora transported to a local airport using an armored vehicle. Upon his arrival in Jakarta, he was taken straight to the Cipinang Prison.

Analyst: Bomb Found at N. Sumatra Landfill Could Be Tied to Joko Visit

The Jakarta Globe, 06-03-2016

Binjai, North Sumatra. The discovery of a homemade explosive and hundreds of rounds of ammunition at a landfill on the outskirts of Medan this weekend may be linked to a possible threat against President Joko Widodo, who visited North Sumatra last week, an analyst believes.

Joko was initially scheduled to visit the town of Binjai, where the explosive device was found, but changed the plan at the last minute to go straight to Lake Toba to announce his strategy to revitalize the tourist destination.

“The heavy security during the president's visit and the sudden change of plans may have caused the perpetrators to call off their plot,” Horas Siagian, a security analyst, said on Sunday (06/03).

North Sumatra is not known to be a terrorism hotbed but several radicals are believed to have fled to the province after a paramilitary training camp in a mountainous region of Aceh, which neighbors North Sumatra to the north, was raided in 2011.

Police secured a homemade explosive and hundreds of bullets inside a suitcase at a landfill in Binjai, an hour's drive from the North Sumatra capital, on Saturday.

A local worker at the landfill, Komeng, 32, said he was the first to discover the suitcase, which he said was unusually nice for an item to be found at the site.

“I quickly grabbed the suitcase when I saw it, hoping that it would contain cash or jewelry,” he said.

But when Komeng opened it, the suitcase was filled with cables connected to what he assumed were explosives.

Several police officers were deployed to the location and found the bomb wrapped in duct tape with hundreds of nails attached to it as well as a nine-meter cable believed to function as the bomb's fuse.

The North Sumatra Police detonated the explosive and confiscated other items found in the case — hundreds of rounds of ammunition of various calibers, two firearms, three maps, female clothes, two pictures of rifles, one light bulb, and nails of various sizes.

Police are investigating how the suitcase ended up at the landfill and who is responsible.