

## Members of Ahmadiyah community file petition to revise blasphemy law in Indonesia's Constitutional Court

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Indonesia's blasphemy law has been severely criticized by both international and local human rights activists who argue that [it has been used to persecute and criminalize numerous minority groups within the vast archipelago nation](#). One of the groups hit hardest by the blasphemy law is the country's Ahmadiyah community, who follow a sect of Islam that has officially been declared deviant by the government.

Under the auspices of the blasphemy law and other laws ostensibly meant to maintain “religious harmony”, the Ahmadiyah have been [systematically discriminated against by the government](#) and [their communities have been the targets of numerous violent and sometimes deadly attacks in the last few years](#).

Recently, the community has become quite proactive in fighting for their legal rights. Yesterday, nine members of Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia, from various regions of the country, came together to file a petition for judicial review against the blasphemy law with the Constitutional Court (MK).

Represented by their legal counsel, Fitria Sumarni, the applicants submitted the points of their petition for judicial review at the Constitutional Court in Central Jakarta on Monday.

Fitria said that Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the original 1965 blasphemy law has impaired the constitutional rights of her clients, noting that their vague wording allows them to be interpreted broadly. Article 1 prohibits the “deviant interpretation” of religious teachings while articles 2 and 3 give the government the power to banish deviant religious groups or punish them with imprisonment.



Furthermore, the petition argues that the blasphemy law has been used as the basis for discriminatory local regulations that have been used by local governments to discriminate against members of the Ahmadiyah community.

“The ambiguity of the norm in the article which was then translated into the SKB (the 2008 joint government decree on Ahmadiyah’s deviancy) and interpreted by the regional regulation makes the losses suffered by the applicants very specific and concrete,” Fitria told the Constitutional Court panel of judges as quoted by [Tribun](#), noting that the SKB had been used to justify the sealing and even attacks on Ahmadiyah mosques.

Fitria also argued that the blasphemy law has created legal uncertainty for the Ahmadiyah community, depriving them of their rights to security and equal treatment before the law.

The petition asks that the Constitutional Court should amend Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Blasphemy Law to make them conditional on the guarantee of the constitutional rights of the applicants.

Whether the traditionally conservative Constitutional Court will give serious consideration to the Ahmadiyah petitioners is yet to be seen, but we can hope.

The Ahmadiyah community is fighting back against government discrimination in other ways. In June, [representatives of the group in West Java’s Kuningan regency filed a complaint against a local government requirement that they renounce their faith to obtain national ID cards](#), which are critical to accessing a range of government services.

And despite the persecution they have faced, the community continues to show their commitment to helping all the people in Indonesia, with [6,800 Ahmadiyah members signing up to donate their corneas to those in need](#), breaking an Indonesian record in July.

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