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## INDONESIA CSW urges Constitutional Court to repeal blasphemy laws and uphold religious freedom and pluralism

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Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) today urged Indonesia's Constitutional Court to defend the country's tradition of religious freedom and pluralism by repealing blasphemy laws that have been widely misused to persecute religious minorities in the country.

Indonesia's Constitutional Court is reviewing the blasphemy laws, introduced in 1965 and enshrined in Article 156A of the country's Criminal Code, and a ruling is expected later this month. The blasphemy laws impose a jail sentence of up to five years for those convicted of defamation against any of Indonesia's six officially recognized religions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Confucianism. Many religious figures, particularly those from religions outside the six officially recognized faiths, have been jailed and denied access to basic civil rights.

CSW's National Director, Stuart Windsor, said: "Religious freedom is a universal right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Indonesia's own constitution. Indonesia's long tradition of religious freedom and pluralism, and its guiding values encapsulated in the 'Pancasila', are values which Indonesians should take pride in. In order to uphold, defend and protect those values of religious freedom, pluralism, harmony and tolerance, we sincerely urge the Indonesian Constitutional Court to repeal the unjust blasphemy laws, which have been misused to suppress minorities, restrict religious freedom and perpetuate extremism. It is in Indonesia's own interests to abolish legislation which violates its own constitution."