

## **What will be the next violation of human rights in Indonesia?**

First there was the Aceh Legislative Council that passed the *Qanun Jinayat* punishing adultery and homosexual conduct with stoning to death and caning. Then there was the Constitutional Court decision upholding the Anti-Pornography law that criminalizes homosexuality, and leaves room to criminalize sensuality violating especially cultural minorities' freedom of expression. **Finally there came the mobs attacking the ILGA Asia Conference participants in broad daylight of Surabaya.**

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> the Indonesian police cancelled the regional Asia Conference of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA) that was to be held in Surabaya through 26 – 28 March and was to be attended by more than 150 activists representing 100 organizations from 16 Asian countries. It is claimed that the police cancelled the conference due to pressures and threat of attacks from conservative Muslim groups, though in fact the duty of the police was to deter such attacks. **As the inability of a state and its law enforcement units to protect the freedom of expression and association can only reflect institutional discrimination and systematic intimidation against human rights advocates.**

On March 26<sup>th</sup> these groups did indeed attack the Conference participants in the Oval Hotel where they were trapped, having arrived in Surabaya unaware of the last minute cancellation, and unable to leave the city.

We know that the freedom of association is protected by the law in Indonesia, and we also know that though not required by law, the Organizing Committee had received the permit for the conference and that this permit was withdrawn by the police in Surabaya, which allegedly feared violent attacks by radical Islamic groups.

Yet the same police had no fear dining with the attackers in the lobby of the Oval Hotel, while the mob harassed the Conference participants subjecting them to verbal and physical abuse. The mob also sealed the office of GAYa NUSANTARA, the local organization that hosted the conference. This office is still closed and human rights activists in Surabaya are still under the threat of further attacks.

In a country such as Indonesia that prides itself on its diversity, and is supposed to uphold the universal principles of human rights, these acts of violence and intimidation against human rights activists are simply and completely unacceptable. In a democratizing country such as Indonesia, the duty of the state, its legal instruments and its police is to guarantee the constitutional right of association of the people, and not to deprive them of this right by sheltering pressure groups that wrongfully use the name of Islam to further their political agendas.

**As 38 leading non-governmental organizations and academic institutions from 16 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South and South East Asia, we call upon the members of the press to spread the news on these outrageous violations of human rights, so that the authorities take immediate and solid action to guarantee the safety of the Conference organizers and participants who are still in Surabaya, and reopen the doors of GAYa NUSANTARA and safeguard the security of all its members.**

## **Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR)**

*CSBR Coordination Office: Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways, TURKEY*

*AAHUNG, PAKISTAN*

*Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche et le Développement (AFTURD), TUNISIA*

*Ahfad University for Women (AUW), SUDAN*

*AMARGI, TURKEY*

*Association Marocaine des Droits des Femmes (AMDF), MOROCCO*

*Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), MALAYSIA*

*Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), MOROCCO*

*Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD), TUNISIA*

*BRAC University, BANGLADESH*

*Collectif Maghreb Egalité, ALGERIA*

*Egyptian Initiative For Personal Rights (EIPR), EGYPT*

*GAYa NUSANTARA, INDONESIA*

*HELEM, LEBANON*

*Indonesian Women Association for Justice (APIK), INDONESIA*

*Institut Pelangi Perempuan (IPP), INDONESIA*

*IWRAW-AP, MALAYSIA*

*Jordanian Women's Union, JORDAN*

*LAMBDAISTANBUL LGBTT Association, TURKEY*

*Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW), LEBANON*

*MADA al-CARMEL - Arab Center for Applied Social Research, PALESTINE*

*Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), MALAYSIA*

*Meem, LEBANON*

*Muntada - Arab Forum for Sexuality, Education and Health, PALESTINE*

*New Woman Foundation (NWF), EGYPT*

*Pilipina Legal Resources Center (PLRC), PHILIPPINES*

*Rassemblement Contre la Hogra et pour les Droits des Algériennes (RACHDA), ALGERIA*

*RAHIMA, INDONESIA*

*RESEAU WASSILA, ALGERIA*

*Sisters Arabic Forum (SAF), YEMEN*

*Sisters in Islam (SIS), MALAYSIA*

*Synergie Civique, MOROCCO*

*VISION, PAKISTAN*

*Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), PALESTINE*

*Women Against Violence (WAV), PALESTINE*

*Women's Aid Organization (WAO), MALAYSIA*

*Women's Health Foundation, INDONESIA*

*The Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID), JORDAN*