



June 22, 2015

H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo  
President  
Republic of Indonesia  
Istana Merdeka  
Jalan Medan Merdeka Utara  
Jakarta, Indonesia 10110

Dear Mr. President:

We write collectively to encourage you to protect religious minorities in the Republic of Indonesia and also address rising religious intolerance. We come from a variety of countries with different parliamentary systems in various regions and are concerned by reports of growing intolerance and extremism that threaten the right of all Indonesians to believe or not believe as they choose. We respectfully ask you and your administration to ensure that all individuals in your country can fully enjoy freedom of religion or belief without fear of discrimination, attacks, or other forms of intimidation that restrict their basic rights.

We are optimistic about statements made early in your presidency about the importance of protecting religious minorities, and the recent steps taken to allow followers of religions and faiths other than the six officially recognized religions to appropriately note their own faith on national ID cards. While we welcome efforts to strengthen legal protections, we understand early reactions to the first publicly available draft of legislation to protect religious minorities have been mixed. We are hopeful that the legislative process will result in improved protections for vulnerable individuals and communities, along with more effective law enforcement measures. Moreover, we were encouraged to learn that Indonesia has agreed to temporarily shelter Rohingya Muslim refugees and has called for the international community to work together to address the growing refugee crisis.

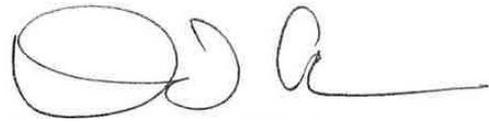
However, Indonesia faces a number of challenges that currently restrict or otherwise violate genuine religious freedom. For example, those perceived to have insulted Islam often face trumped-up blasphemy charges, and Shi'a, Sufis, and Ahmadis are considered "deviant" for not following traditional Sunni practices. Laws and regulations such as the 2008 anti-Ahmadiyya Joint Decree and the 2006 Joint Regulation on Houses of Worship are discriminatory and contravene international standards. Religious sites, whether churches or mosques, and the followers who worship there encounter closures and violence. These are just some of the critical challenges to religious freedom Indonesia needs to address in order to strengthen freedom of religion nor belief. Tackling these issues will require courageous and consistent direction from the highest levels of government. We stand ready to assist you in this important work.

The inclusiveness with which you speak of religious minorities is tremendously encouraging, and we respectfully urge you to continue leading with such a positive and forward-looking tone. We, as parliamentarians from different jurisdictions and faiths, respectfully urge you to seize this moment and chart a path that respects and protects freedom of religion or belief and promotes peaceful co-existence between all faith communities as well as those who profess no faith.

Sincerely,



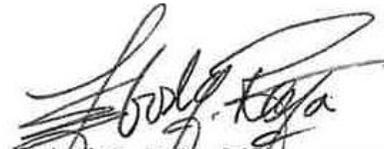
Baroness Elizabeth Berridge  
British House of Lords  
IPP FoRB Steering Committee



David Anderson, MP  
Canadian House of Commons  
IPP FoRB Steering Committee



Leonardo Quintão, MP  
Brazilian Chamber of Deputies  
IPP FoRB Steering Committee



Abid Raja, MP  
Norwegian Parliament  
IPP FoRB Steering Committee

*Other Members of Parliament supporting this letter include:*

Lord David Alton  
British House of Lords

Senator Raynell Andreychuk  
Canadian Senate

Marina Berlinghieri, MP  
Italian Parliament

Kelly Block, MP  
Canadian House of Commons

Rt. Rev. Christopher Cocksworth  
British House of Lords

Baroness Caroline Cox  
British House of Lords

Lokmani Dhakal, MP  
Nepalese Parliament

Cherylyn Dudley, MP  
South African Parliament

Senator David Fawcett  
Australian Senate

Heribert Hirte, MP  
German Parliament

Senator Rose Freitas  
Brazilian Federal Senate

Rômulo José de Gouveia, MP  
Brazilian Chamber of Deputies

Sylvi Graham, MP  
Norwegian Parliament

Shwe Maung, MP  
Myanmar Parliament

Senator José Medeiros  
Brazilian Federal Senate

Asiya Nasir, MP  
Pakistani Parliament

Kasthuri Patto, MP  
Malaysian Parliament

Mario Redondo Poveda, MP  
Costa Rican Parliament

Áureo Lídio Ribeiro, MP  
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Lord Indarjit Singh  
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