Countries

| All Regions | Afghanistan | Algeria | Angola | Argentina | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Bahrain | Bangladesh | Belarus | Bolivia | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Brazil | Burma | Burundi | Cambodia | Canada | Central African Republic | Chile | China and Tibet | Colombia | Cote d'Ivoire | Croatia | Cuba | Democratic Republic of Congo | Ecuador | Egypt | Equatorial Guinea | Eritrea | Ethiopia | European Union | France | Georgia | Germany | Greece | Guatemala | Guinea | Haiti | Honduras | Hungary | India | Indonesia | Iran | Iraq | Israel/Palestine | Italy | Jordan | Kazakhstan | Kenya | Kuwait | Kyrgyzstan | Lebanon | Liberia | Libya | Malaysia | Mali | Mexico | Morocco/Western Sahara |
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Freedom of Religion

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Despite the rhetoric, the Yudhoyono administration has failed to enforce Supreme Court decisions against local officials who have long blocked building permits for the Christian churches in Bogor and Bekasi. It also maintains dozens of regulations, including ministerial decrees on building houses of worship and a decree against religious practice by the Ahmadiyah community, which discriminate against religious minorities and foster intolerance.

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Human rights showed little improvement in 2013, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s last full year in office. Although the president made public appeals for greater religious freedom and tolerance, national authorities continued to respond weakly to growing violence and discrimination against religious minorities. Other areas of concern include new onerous restrictions on the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the proliferation of local decrees that violate women’s rights, and mistreatment of the increasing number of refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied migrant children, reaching Indonesia.

Forestry sector reforms made some headway in 2013, but timber concessions on lands with pre-existing community claims continue to generate rural conflict and abuse. Corruption and mismanagement deprive government coffers of billions of dollars in forest revenues, and threaten Indonesia’s ability to deliver on its “green growth” promises.

Conditions in Papua, still virtually off-limits to foreign journalists, remain volatile, with security forces enjoying virtual impunity for abuses, including excessive and at times lethal use of force against peaceful proponents of independence. Meanwhile, the armed Free Papua Movement, though small and poorly organized, continues to carry out attacks against government forces.

Local elections in Indonesia in recent years have resulted in the emergence of young politicians, including Jakarta’s governor Joko Widodo, who have pledged to break with traditional patronage-style politics by tackling corruption, poverty, and crumbling infrastructure. National parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 2014 will give an indication of whether these politicians reflect a national trend.

Freedom of Expression
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On July 2, Indonesia’s parliament enacted a new law on NGOs that infringes on rights to freedom of association, expression, and religion. The law imposes a variety of vague obligations and prohibitions on NGO activities, severely limits foreign funding of NGOs, and forbids NGOs from espousing atheism, communism, Marxist-Leninism, beliefs deemed contrary to Pancasila, the state philosophy.
Military Reform and Impunity

A military court in September sentenced 12 members of the Special Forces Command (Komando Pasukan Khusus, Kopassus) to prison terms of between several months and 11 years for their role in the well-orchestrated murder of four detainees in a prison in Yogyakarta. The guilty verdicts marked an important departure from the usual impunity enjoyed by soldiers implicated in serious crimes, but the sentences imposed on the three most culpable soldiers failed to match the gravity of their crimes.

Women’s Rights

A gender equality bill first submitted to parliament in 2009 remained stalled in 2013 due to opposition from Islamist politicians. Meanwhile, discriminatory regulations continued to proliferate. An August update by Indonesia’s official Commission on Violence against Women reported that national and local governments had passed 60 new discriminatory regulations in 2013. Indonesia has a total of 342 discriminatory regulations, including 79 local bylaws requiring women to wear the hijab.

As of July, the Ministry of Home Affairs had signaled its intention to revoke only eight of them. These regulations include one banning women from straddling motorcycles—only riding side-saddle is permitted— in Lhokseumawe, Aceh. In neighboring Bireuen, a local regulation prohibits women from dancing. In Gorontalo, Sulawesi Island, the government transferred its entire female support staff to other offices in July, replacing them with men as part of an initiative to discourage “extramarital affairs.”

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Land Rights

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Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Indonesia is a transit point to Australia for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing persecution, violence, and poverty in countries including Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Burma. As of March 2013, there were almost 10,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia, all living in legal limbo because Indonesia lacks an asylum law. This number includes an unprecedented number of unaccompanied migrant children; more than 1,000 such children arrived in Indonesia in 2012 alone.

While Indonesia delegates the responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers to the office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it often refuses to release even UNHCR-recognized refugees from detention centers, where conditions are poor and mistreatment common. Those who are released face constant threat of re-arrest and further detention.

Key International Actors

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In 1965-66 by allowing the release of the award-winning documentary on the massacre, the government continued its policy of not releasing footage of the massacre. This year, the government for the first time released the footage of a hostage-takeover of a TV station in Medan in 1997.

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