

# Indonesia: Regional governments accused of using anti-LGBT bylaws to foster identity politics

Monday 6 February 2023, by [GHANI Hakim](#), [ICHSAN A.Syalaby](#), [WAMAD Sudirman](#) (Date first published: 30 January 2023).

**Garut — A coalition of civil society organisations is protesting a number of proposed Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) draft regional regulations (Raperda) that they say is a form of identity politics ahead of the 2024 elections.**

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One of the regions that has proposed an anti-LGBT regional regulation (Perda) is Garut regency in West Java. Garut Regent Rudy Gunawan has spoken out in response to the protests saying that the Raperda was a proposal by and a matter for the people of Garut.

“This is a Perda, not a law. We are a provincial region. So, this is a proposal by the Garut people. The Perda is a proposal by the Garut people”, Gunawan told journalists on Sunday January 30.

Gunawan said that a ban on LGBT in Garut is already included in Regional Regulation Number 13/2015 on Immorality in which the Garut regency government regulated a ban on all forms of immorality being committed in Garut.

Recently however, there have been groups that have proposed that the anti-LGBT stipulations be separated and a new special regulation be drafted. Currently, said Gunawan,, the matter is being deliberated by the Garut Regional House of Representatives (DPRD).

“We welcome it if the Garut DPRD exercise its initiative rights. We will provide support for this”, said Gunawan.

Gunawan added that the proposal for an anti-LGBT regulation originated from the Garut community which was conveyed through the Garut DPRD. He believes that the Garut community strongly supports such a regulation. “Yes, it was a proposal to make a Perda. It has support”, concluded Gunawan.

Protests against the proposed anti-LGBT regulations have been raised by some 24 social organisations that are part of the Civil Society Coalition for Gender and Sexual Diversity Rights (We Are Courageous or Kami Berani). According to the Coalition, the anti-LGBT regulation is a form of identity politics in the lead up to the 2024 legislative and presidential elections.

“The We Are Courageous Coalition, which is made up of 24 civil society organisations, regret the

widespread push for discriminative policies in the form of anti-LGBT regional regulations (Perda) in different parts of Indonesia”, said the Coalition as quoted by Detik News.

## **Conservative Islamic party PKS blamed for pushing anti-LGBT bylaws**

A. Syalaby Ichsan, Jakarta — The sudden emergence of regional governments planning to enact anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) regulations (Perda) has drawn scorn from LGBT rights activist Hartoyo.

According to Hartoyo, who is from the group SuaraKita (Our Voice), the planned bylaws that have suddenly sprung up in different parts of the country are only based on statements by individual politicians and local officials.

He gave the example of the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar where the discourse on an anti-LGBT bylaw emerged following remarks by a Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) legislator from the Islamic based Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS).

“For PKS cadres, it’s not just in Makassar, in Senayan [the national parliament] there are also PKS cadres who want to propose criminalising LGBT. So they also want to in Bandung and Garut [West Java], Makassar, as well as nationally. The PKS cadres or maybe the PKS as a party, are itching to criminalise LGBT. So it’s not a new phenomena”, said Hartoyo when contacted by Republika recently.

Hartoyo asserted that the PKS habitually criminalises members of the LGBT community. This is why, said Hartoyo, the PKS was one of the political parties that opposed the recent enactment of the Draft Criminal Code into law.

“One of their main reasons I suspect was because there were no articles criminalising LGBT”, he explained.

Nevertheless, Hartoyo accepts these different views and considers it natural for there to be proposals for anti-LGBT regulations, which he said do not yet have any academic studies backing them.

“The proposals or views on these Perda are only at the stage of personal proposals, only just a personal dream or ideal. Now, how will these dreams be realised, we’ll just wait and see the future dynamics in each area. There are also many kinds of parties and views in the regions. And I’m sure that this diversity of views does not have a single understanding of LGBT”, he said.

Earlier, a number of regions have initiated moves to take the LGBT problem into the legislative arena, one of which is Makassar. Makassar Mayor Mohammad Ramdhan Pomanto has declared his support for deliberations on a draft regional regulation (Ranperda) banning LGBT by the Makassar city DPRD.

“We very much support such deliberations and right from the start we have indeed rejected LGBT because we are a religious and traditional people”, said Pomanto in Makassar on Sunday January 8.

Pomanto said that the draft regulation was initiated by the Makassar DPRD’s Commission D that has also begun discussing the regulation. He said that with such a regulation banning LGBT, all forms of campaigning or activities that deviate from [normal] life or sexual orientation will no longer be justified.

## **Discourse on anti-LGBT bylaw in Bandung a step back for human rights say activists**

Bandung — The sudden emergence of a discourse on drafting an anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) regional regulation (Perda) in the West Java (Jabar) provincial capital of Bandung has attracted support and opposition. Activists believe that the discourse is an alarm signalling a step back for human rights in Bandung.

West Java Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI) representative Deti Sopandi says that in humanitarian terms it is very wrong. The PBHI believes that the bylaw could be an indicator of a step back in the development of human rights.

“This anti-LGBT Perda is a setback for the rule of human rights. In humanitarian terms of course this Perda is wrong”, Sopandi told Detik Jabar on Thursday January 26.

“There’s a circulation of different understandings related to universal human rights in the world, with a local perspective of human rights in Bandung. If they go ahead with this, the development of human rights will go backwards”, Sopandi added.

A similar view was conveyed by the Inter-Religious Community Network (Jakatarub). Jakatarub believes that an anti-LGBT regional regulation could discriminate against certain groups and it therefore opposes such a regulation in Bandung.

“If this is truly happens and is pursued seriously, of course, yes, Jakatarub regrets this. Because it will add further to the discriminatory Perda in Jabar”, Jakatarub Coordinator Arfi told Detik Jabar.

As reported earlier, Bandung city Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) Speaker Tedy Rusmawan explained that the proposal for an anti-LGBT regional regulation from the Healthy Life Concern Alliance is still just a submission. Rusmawan said that the proposal by the group will first be deliberated by the Regional Regulation Drafting Agency (Bapemperda).

“It’s only just a submission. Now, we will discuss it with the Bapemperda. The data and details haven’t been received yet”, Rusmawan told reporters on Wednesday January 25.

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