



Indonesia - U.S.
Council on
Religion & Pluralism



Cordially invite you to a Special Open Forum on

***Relations between Religious Minorities, Majorities and the State in
Indonesia and the United States: Current Trends and Issues***

With



Prof. Brett Scharffs
Director of the International
Center for Law and Religion
Studies and Professor of
Law at Brigham Young
University's J. Reuben
Clark Law School



Yenny Wahid
Indonesian Co-Chair,
Indonesia-US Council on
Religion and Pluralism and
Executive Director of Wahid
Foundation



Prof. Dr. Nur Syam
Secretary-General
Ministry of Religious
Affairs
Republic of Indonesia



Febi Yonesta
Chairman of SUAKA and
Head of Organizational
Development Indonesian
Legal Aid Foundation
(YLBHI)

Moderated by:

Bonar Tigor Naipospos
Vice Chairman Executive Board
SETARA Institute

**Monday, July 31, 2017
13:00 – 15:00**

**Venue:
Lotus Room 3
Jakarta Design Center,
Jl. Gatot Subroto Kav 53, Jakarta Pusat 1026**

This event is open and FREE of charge. To register, please kindly RSVP [HERE](#) or email to usindoikt@usindo.org by July 31, 2017 at 10:00 AM.

The U.S. and Indonesia are two of the most religiously diverse and vibrant countries in the world. However, religious diversity has always had the potential to be either beneficial or problematic for countries, depending upon how well the government and civil society can uphold principles of tolerance and respect among different religious groups.

Tensions between religious majority and minority groups have always been present in both countries, but lately those tensions have become more significant. In both the US and Indonesia in the past year political campaigns have successfully used messaging against minority religious groups to mobilize society and gain political support.

Also, in both countries there have been instances where the use of state and legal power has influenced the dynamic of religious majority and minority relations. These included in the US, the process of instituting of a ban on incoming travel for citizens of six Muslim-majority countries, and in Jakarta, the use of religious messaging and the Blasphemy Law to defeat and then imprison a candidate of Chinese-Christian descent

Are cases such as these, part of a larger pattern of inter-religious tension and intolerance which will continue to grow in both countries? How do existing laws impact the dynamic of religious majorities and minorities' relations? What does it mean for religious minorities when their religious views come into conflict with something that the government, law, or the majority wants? What do U.S. perceptions of Islam in relation to US security and the use of Indonesia's Blasphemy Law mean for the future of religion and politics in the two countries? How should religion, society in the U.S. & Indonesia interact to ensure harmonious relations between religious majorities and minorities?

Our excellent panel of speakers will appraise these issues in this Special Open Forum with **Prof. Brett Scharffs**, Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies and Professor of Law at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School; **Ms. Yenny Wahid**, the Indonesian Co-Chair of Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion & Pluralism, and the Executive Director of Wahid Foundation; **Prof. Dr. Nur Syam**, the Secretary-General of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs; and **Mr. Febi Yonesta**, the Chairman of SUAKA (Indonesian Civil Society Network for Refugee Rights Protection) and the Head of Organizational Development for Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI).

Speakers' Bio:

Prof. Brett G. Scharffs is Francis R. Kirkham Professor of Law and Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University Law School. His teaching and scholarly interests include law and religion, legal reasoning and rhetoric, philosophy of law, and legislation and regulation. He is a visiting professor at Central European University in Budapest and at the University of Adelaide Law School. He has previously taught at Yale University and the George Washington University. For several years, he has been helping to organize certificate training programs in religion and the rule of law in China and in Vietnam and has taught and helped organize programs at several Indonesian universities on sharia and human rights. He recently has also spoken at G20 Interfaith Summit 2017.

Prior to his current position, Prof. Scharffs worked as an attorney for the New York law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, a law clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit and legal assistant at the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal in The Hague. Author of more than 100 articles and book chapters, he has made more than 300 scholarly presentations in 30 countries. His book, *Law and Religion: National, International and Comparative Perspectives* has been translated into Chinese and Vietnamese, with Turkish, Burmese, Indonesian and Arabic in process.

Prof. Scharffs received a BSBA in international business and an MA in philosophy at Georgetown University and, as a Rhodes Scholar, earned a BPhil in philosophy at Oxford. He received his JD from Yale Law School.

Yenny Zanuba Wahid is the Indonesian Co-Chair for the Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism, as well as the Executive Director of Wahid Foundation. She is a social and political activist who works to promote peace and tolerance. Her family's influence within Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), enables her to work effectively on the grassroots level. Her work experiences include working as an Assistant Correspondent for Australian newspaper, The Sydney Morning Herald and the Age Melbourne, working as Special Staff for the 6th President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and working as Secretary-General for the biggest Moslem party in Indonesia, PKB.

She received many awards and accolades such as the Australian Walkley Award, for her coverage of conflict in East Timor and Champion of Children Award from UNICEF for her work promoting children's rights. She was also a class speaker at Harvard Kennedy School of Government. As a member of a prominent political dynasty in Indonesia-her grandfather founded NU and as a minister in President Soeharto's cabinet. Her father, President Wahid, was the 4th President of Indonesia-Yenny is expected to follow on the political footsteps one day. At the moment, she prefers to focus on her work to promote peace on the grassroots by trying to empower many marginalized women through her foundation.

Prof. Dr. Nur Syam is the current Secretary-General for Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. Prior to his current position, he was the Rector for State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya and Director General for Islamic Education, Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. During his tenure as a lecturer, he was the Chairman of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Lab (KPI), and Head of Islamic Community Development (PMI).

He spoke in various national and international seminars. He wrote articles in numerous national media and academic journals. He published several books including, "*Tantangan Multikulturalisme Indonesia* (The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Indonesia)", "*Bukan Dunia Berbeda, Sosiologi Komunitas Islam* (The Sociology of Islamic Community)", and "Integrated Twin Tower". He was the Chair of the National Islamic State University Forum and an activist for the National Islamic Students Association. Prof. Nur received his Bachelor's degree from State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya in Islamic Preaching, and his Master's and Doctoral Degree in Social Sciences from Airlangga University.

Febi Yonesta is the Chairman of SUAKA (the Indonesian Civil Society Network for Refugee Protection), and the Head of Organizational Development of Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI). Prior to that he was the former Director of Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Jakarta), where he started his law career as a lawyer assistant in 2005. Mr. Yonesta has been involved in legal advocacy, research, and strategic litigation, this includes the advocacy and research on freedom of religion or belief, anti-torture, refugee protection, and fair trial. He also has experiences in conducting community legal empowerment and developing paralegal initiatives. He has participated in various domestic and international forums on legal aid and human rights, often as an expert speaker. These have included speaking on migration related topics at the International Law Conference (Jakarta), Pro-bono Conference (Singapore), and Asia Refugee Legal Aid Workshop (Kuala Lumpur).

Currently, he is also serving as part of the Steering Committee of SEALAW (the Southeast Asian Legal Aid Network), an interim secretariat of SEALawyers (the Southeast Asian Lawyers Network), and board of HRWG (the Indonesian Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy). He received his Bachelor's degree in Law from Hasanuddin University in 2002.