**Vigilante Justice Persists Amid the Enforcement of Indonesian Anti-Blasphemy Law's Failure to Preserve Justice[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Research on vigilante justice against blasphemy in different countries has shown that acts of religious violence are a reaction to the inadequate protection of religious values from transgressions, regardless of religious affiliation. A separate study has revealed that conservative religious groups in Indonesia resort to vigilante justice against blasphemy and pressure law enforcement to undermine judicial legitimacy. A socio-legal approach was employed in this study to identify the factors and actors that encourage vigilante justice in cases of alleged blasphemy, assess their impact on judicial independence, and evaluate the courts' failure to uphold justice. The findings suggest that vigilantism against blasphemy in Indonesia is not only perpetuated by fundamentalist religious organizations but also religious institutions and state actors who use structured or state-sponsored action to promote their policies and enforce Indonesia's anti-blasphemy laws. This includes local governments implementing policies based on the ideology of "Godly Nationalism," which leads to the majority religious group monopolizing the truth and rejecting religious minority groups. Hard-line religious organizations use religious hatred to justify mobilizing vigilante justice against those accused of blasphemy and portray themselves as victims of religious hatred. This complexity of state-sponsored vigilantism has threatened the independence of the judiciary, resulting in a failure to dispense justice to the accused.

**Keywords:** vigilante justice, Indonesia’s anti blasphemy law, law enforcement, judicial independency, justice.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia, despite international recognition of allegations of infringement of freedom of religion and expression, retains anti-blasphemy laws. The issue of blasphemy often becomes a weapon against political opponents, resulting in much polemic (Villa, 2022). Scholars argue that the content ambiguity of Indonesia’s Anti-Blasphemy law is a flaw (Bielefeldt, 2012; Marshall, 2018; Menchik, 2014). Pratiwi's (2021) recent research suggests that the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia disregarded the principle of non-discrimination in the right to freedom of religion, rejecting a request for a judicial review to annul the blasphemy law out of concern for the potential for conflict between different religious communities in the event of a legal vacuum. Nonetheless, current reality deviates from the legal philosophy of Constitutional Court, and despite efforts to enforce the Law Against Blasphemy of Religion, vigilante attacks on religious minorities accused of heresy persist.

In Indonesia, blasphemy cases demonstrate that the accused subjected to violent or physical attacks at their places of worship, and the courts have handed down harsh sentences. The Setara Institute reports that 42 of the 97 blasphemy cases between 1965 and 2017 involved vigilante groups. Overall, 76 cases were settled through "pro-justicia," with 47 receiving jail terms ranging from one to 4.5 years, five over 4.5 years, and eight less than a year in prison (Nalle, 2021).

Vigilante actions often arise from community dissatisfaction with law enforcement processes, such as poorly handled criminal cases, instances of protected illegal activities, or perpetrators being allowed to go free without being held accountable. Therefore, communities may take matters into their own hands and punish the perpetrators even without considering the rule of law (Scheuerman, 2022).

In cases of blasphemy, Hassner's (2011) research found that reactive religious violence results from inadequate protection of religious values against transgressive acts, regardless of religious affiliation. Pratiwi and Sunaryo (2021) argue that vigilante violence surrounding blasphemy accusations in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan cannot be separated from State-created structural violence resulting from discriminatory anti-blasphemy laws.

This study complements previous findings by analysing the occurrence of vigilante justice over blasphemy allegations, its impact on judicial independence in blasphemy cases, and why anti-blasphemy laws have failed to preserve justice. The study argues the complexity of state-sponsored vigilantism outside of court creates the pattern, jeopardizes the independence of the judiciary, and prevents the court from delivering justice to the accused.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Numerous studies have analysed the Anti-Blasphemy Law in Indonesia, primarily focusing on normative evaluations of the law's substance and its non-conformity with international human rights standards (Bielefeldt, 2012; Pratiwi, 2021). Other studies have examined public perceptions of the law through empirical legal analysis utilizing a socio-legal approach to explore the gap between ideal legal norms and the reality of law's implementation in society (Banakar, 2019; Bedner & Vel, 2010). This study aims to analyse vigilante justice's occurrence linked to blasphemy allegations regarding its impact on judicial independence and the ineffectiveness of the law at preserving justice. We have gathered a wide array of data, including case studies, statutory analysis, and in-depth interviews with experts, judges, religious followers, members of religious groups, and minority religious groups.

The four cases examined include Ahok, a Christian Chinese Governor of Jakarta, Meiliana, a Buddhist critic of the loudness of the call to prayer, and experiences related to Ahmadiyya and Gafatar groups. The findings are presented in a categorized table, highlighting the form of vigilante action, judicial independence, and public justice in each case. The classified data is further evaluated to address research questions on the effectiveness of the anti-blasphemy law at preserving justice.

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Anti-Blasphemy Law is a remnant of the old order that has been maintained until today (Temperman & Koltay, 2017). Several studies have indicated that the law has two main weaknesses. The lack of alignment with the international human rights standard is the first weakness (Bush, 2015; Fischer, 2021; Telle, 2017). Blasphemy laws are enforced in 40% of countries and territories, criminalizing speech, thoughts, or acts labelled as insulting or degrading to religion, teachings, and sacred symbols (Villa, 2022). The definition of blasphemy in Indonesia lacks clarity and uniformity, and they are often controversially weaponized against political opponents. (Villa, 2022). The law prohibits individuals who hold beliefs or teachings that differ from officially recognized religions in Indonesia. Consequently, minority religious teachings can be deemed heretical, and freedom of religion or belief can be violated. The second weakness is the law's ambiguous normative provisions that allow for subjective interpretation and could lead to the discrimination against religious minority groups. Furthermore, this could result in discriminatory decisions against groups that differ from officially recognized religions in Indonesia.

Hate spin is identified as a contributing factor that supports the enforcement of the blasphemy law. Opportunistic groups utilize sentiments of the dominant religious group to seek extensive support through the dissemination of vilification or anger in the form of manufactured hate spin. Indiscriminate public rage over criminal offenses or immoral behavior caught red-handed causes spontaneous vigilante justice, which is generally regarded as illegal (George, 2017). This tactic of hate spin is disseminated in a way that opportunistic or hardliner groups exploit sentiments of the dominant religious group to seek extensive support, aided by online communication mediums that travel swiftly and unfiltered.

Fischer (2021) stated that out of the 164 observations of anti-blasphemy law enforcement in different countries in 2020, 76 of them were accompanied by mass mobilization activities, threats of violence, and actual violence. Vigilante justice, also known as *Main Hakim Sendiri* in Indonesia, is typically described as the act of trying to convict an accused individual without proper legal proceedings or taking justice into one's own hands. It is generally considered illegal and occurs spontaneously as a result of public anger over criminal offenses or immoral behaviour that is caught red-handed. In the majority of blasphemy cases, vigilante justice occurs because the state does not safeguard sacred values (Hasnerr, 2018).

This study departs from the theories of the rule of law and justice that are essential for creating fair and equitable societies (Bellamy, 2017; Merkel, 2012); Baxi, 2013; Zaidi, 2021). Justice and the rule of law are closely related. Fair and equitable society require both (Kramer, 2017; Merkel, 2013). The rule of law applies to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic class (Baxi, 2013). Justice guides the rule of law and seeks to create a fair and just society where everyone has equal rights and opportunities. Without the rule of law, justice is impossible since an unequal judicial system would violate people's right to justice (Boer, 2020).

To accurately determine whether an action is prohibited in a legal context, judges require clear and unambiguous laws (Beckett et al., 2018). Conversely, ambiguous laws can lead to subjective interpretations, making it difficult for judges to determine if conduct is prohibited, and increasing susceptibility to external factors (Malle & Nelson, 2003). Fair trial is a human right, as highlighted in Articles 9-15 of the ICCPR, and it is the obligation of the state (the judiciary) to ensure it (General Comment No. 3 on Article 10; General Comment No. 13 on Article 14; and the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary 1985). To achieve fair trial, judicial independence are pivotal. In essence, an impartial court must base its decisions on factual evidence without being influenced by any restriction, improper influence, inducements, pressure, threats and interference, direct or indirect, from anywhere or for any reason.

Vigilante justice and government regulations that prevent it can both undermine judicial independence during blasphemy cases. Courts must treat all individuals equally, presume their innocence, and consider their defence evidence. The presence of hate spin often influences court proceedings, leading to the punishment of suspects without proof of intent due to external factors. In practice, judges' subjective considerations and external factors can affect the classification of blasphemy offenses. Despite this, courts must maintain impartiality to ensure a just trial, respecting human rights regardless of the accused crime.

**RESULT, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

**Perpetuation of vigilante justice against blasphemers influenced by the hate spin strategy**

The Constitutional Court's rationale for upholding the Anti-Blasphemy in Indonesia is to prevent conflicts between religious groups by prohibiting one group from insulting another's religion. However, the reality is that it is still easy to falsely accuse religious minorities of blasphemy, making the anti-blasphemy law a weapon against them. If law enforcement authorities do not take these accusations seriously, the accusing groups may take matters into their own hands, leading to physical attacks, property damage, and forced eviction. This phenomenon contravenes the Constitutional Court's argument that the anti-blasphemy law prevents inter-religious conflicts. According to the hate spin theory suggested by Josh Cherian, vigilantism is motivated by hate speech from influential figures within hardcore Islamic groups, perpetrated against minority groups (George, 2017). The SETARA Institute's data illustrates that persecution against religious minorities in Indonesia takes multiple forms, with disturbances of places of worship being a prevalent occurrence. The disturbances of places of worship involve a range of attacks, including the rejection of building or construction disruptions, sealing off worship places, destruction or attacks on individuals in places of worship from non-state and/or state actors. The Anti-Blasphemy Law's ambiguity allows for subjective interpretations and leaves room for discriminatory decisions against religious minority groups. (SETARA Institute, 2022). Table 1 indicates the number of incidents of disturbances to interfaith harmony in Indonesia.

Table 1. Incidents Related to the Interreligious Harmony in Indonesia[[2]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Number of Incidents |
| 2017 | 17 |
| 2018 | 20 |
| 2019 | 31 |
| 2020 | 24 |
| 2021 | 44 |
| 2022 (Jan-Sep) | 32 |

Source:(SETARA Institute, 2022)

This study reveals that vigilantism occurred repeatedly in the four cases examined, as illustrated in Table 2. Ambiguous legal standards might be misinterpreted by society, resulting in accusations of "tarnishing Islam" for criticizing Islamic teachings (the Ahok case), Muslim religious practices (the Meiliana case), or beliefs that vary from orthodox Islamic teachings (the Ahmadiyya and the Gafatar cases). Ministerial circulars, governor's regulations, and regional regulations support this interpretation. Social media also perpetuates slander and accusations of the "true" teachings of Islam to elicit support and outrage. It should be noted that even though legal proceedings were ongoing or had been reported to authorities during vigilantism incidents, they still occurred.

The Hardliner Islamic groups, such as the Front Islamic Defender organized enormous protests to demand justice, which often leads to vigilante punishment. Ahok and Meiliana were convicted for Islam-related charges because hatred was organized. The politicization of religion, through blasphemy laws, has led to the prosecution of political opponents in Indonesia, as seen in Ahok and Meiliana's cases (Mulyartono et al., 2021). While the Ahmadiyya and Gafatar instances were also considered deviations from "true" Islam and violations of Islamic law. Propaganda and vigilante action against these groups resulted from this enmity.

Table 2. Vigilante Justice Against Blasphemy Effects on Law Enforcement Process

| ***Cases*** | ***Vigilante Justice using hate spin strategy*** | | ***Public Policies Support Vigilante Justice Against Blasphemy*** | | ***Vigilantism’s Effects on***  ***Law Enforcement Process*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Ahok Case*** *(George, 2017; Nuryanti, 2020)* | When Ahok made a statement referencing QS. Al-Maida verse 51, a member of Hardlines Islamic Groups, Budi Yani recorded the speech and edited the footage to falsely accuse Ahok of insulting the Quran. This hate spin strategy was used to portray the Ahok protest movement as a defence of Islam, implying that Ahok had attacked the religion and justifying the protests as retribution for his supposed hatred towards Islam. | | Habib Novel Chaidir Hasan and Muhammadiyah Youth's South Sumatra Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) report sparked the Ahok issue. Ahok offended Islam, according to the 2016 MUI fatwa.  During the trial, protesters demanded Ahok's sentencing. Thousands of Islamic groups participated in Action 212 and Action 414. Defending Islam Action 55 rallied to oppose Ahok's court examination of the Law Against Blasphemy. Even though Ahok's blasphemy was unproven, the Police officially called him a suspect. | | Budi Yani spread false information and hate speech during the early stages of Ahok's blasphemy case to rally the masses and secure his conviction.  Security forces hesitated to take action on the spreading of fake news against Ahok and allowed hate speech to spread rapidly. The District Court of Jakarta followed the Prosecutor, adopted the MUI Fatwa, and declared Ahok guilty of insulting Islam and sentenced him to two years in prison. |
| ***Meiliana Case*** *(Madanih, 2019)* | Meiliana complained to a neighbor about the mosque's loud call to prayer, but social media portrayed her as rejecting Islam's call to prayer. A vigilante group labeled Meiliana "the woman who incited the riot." Due to anti-Islamic sentiment, vigilantes burned numerous Buddhist temples, vandalized Meiliana's home, and forced her to flee during the trial. | On August 2, 2016, the MUI Chairman wrote to the Head of Police expressing concern about the arrest of 12 vandals and requesting that Meiliana be charged.  The Alliance of Students and Independent Communities Bersatu conducted many mass protests to encourage law enforcement to arrest and jail Meiliana for religious blasphemy. North Sumatra MUI 001/KF/MUI-SU/I/2017 was issued.  The Tanjung Balai local administration, MUI, and Forum for Inter-Religious Communication decided to demolish a Buddha monument after a vigilante attack on Buddhist property. | | The Panel of Judges exclusively followed the MUI Fatwa of North Sumatra Province during the case, despite it not being legally binding, disregarding several expert testimonies.  The Medan District Court made its ruling based on the MUI Fatwa.  Meiliana received a prison sentence of one year and eight months for insulting Islam when she complained to her neighbor about the overly loud call to prayer. | | |
| ***Gafatar Case***  *(al Mutahar, 2017)* | Opposition to the legal organization with a Ministry of Home Affairs establishment permit called Gafatar in two villages in Kalimantan resulted in its disbandment in 2015, along with the forced displacement of 2,422 families or 7,916 people.  The Gafatar members faced property and worship place destruction, illegal detention in centers, and severe injuries due to the hate spin strategy labeling them as deviant. The label had disastrous consequences for their members, as they faced vigilante acts that deprived them of their rights to basic human dignity. | On January 14, the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs instructed the Regional Government to suspend all Gafatar offices, placing pressure on Gafatar.  On March 24, Attorney General Muhammad Prasetyo warned "former members and administrators of Gafatar" that "spreading, interpreting, and activities that deviate from the main teachings of Islam" could result in five years in prison under article 156a of the 1965 anti-blasphemy law.  Regional government officials, along with the police, military, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Religion, forcibly evicted Gafatar members from Kalimantan and detained thousands of them in various detention centers without trial. Gafatar members are banned by 2016 joint ministerial decrees 043 and 223-865. | | Gafatar leaders G. Mahful Muis and Ahmad Musaddeq were apprehended and detained by police on March 27, 2016.  The justice of Gafatar complied with Supreme Court Circular No.11 of 1964, which orders courts to severely punish those who commit religious blasphemy within their jurisdiction.  According to Mohammad Said, the Chairman of the Gafatar Court Panel, a spokesperson for the Supreme Court stated that the letter had never been canceled.  In March 2017, the East Jakarta District Court adopted the MUI’s fatwa, found the two guilty of denigrating Islam, and sentenced them to five years in prison. | | |
| ***Ahmadiyya Case*** *(M. Crouch, 2009)* | Violent attacks against the Ahmadiyya community have been occurring in Indonesia since 1980, with followers experiencing displacement, injuries, deaths, and damage to their buildings and places of worship. Hard-line Islamic groups use hate spin to label the community as heretical because of their belief in Mirza Gulam Ahmad as the last prophet and the existence of a sacred book besides the Qur'an, resulting in vigilante justice against them. | The MUI released a fatwa that Ahmadiyya teachings deviates from the mainstream Islamic teaching.  There were various local government policies at province and city level that banned the Ahmadiyya community from spreading and promoting their teachings in Indonesia, such as a joint ministerial decree No. 3 of 2008; the regulation No. 12 of 2011 of the Governor of West Java; the regulation No. 17 of 2011 of the Mayor of Pontianak; the decree of the Mayor of Banjar; the Mayor of Bogor's decree No. 300.45-122 of 2011; the decree of the Mayor of Sukabumi No. 25 of 2011; and many others. | | If the faith of Ahmadiyya followers deviates from mainstream Islam, they are banned from preaching in Indonesia.  Even though Ahmadiyya was approved by the Ministry of Law in 1953 as a legal entity founded by the Indonesian Islamic Community, the Indonesian Council of Ulema declared them heretical in 1980 after issuing several fatwas. Both of the court of first instance and the high court ruled that blasphemy against religions other than Indonesia's is illegal. The court specifically targeted Ahmadiyya members who "intentionally committed an act publicly that is basically blasphemy against a religion adhered to in Indonesia." | | |

Source: Summarised by the Author from interviews and al Mutahar, 2017; M. Crouch, 2009; George, 2017; Madanih, 2019; Nuryanti, 2020)

Table 2 displays a consistent pattern regarding the emergence of vigilantism in some stage of the legal process in each examined blasphemy case. In all cases, hate speech was utilized to stir an emotional response from the public, which consequently led to the ease of inciting vigilantism against individuals accused of blasphemy, even without evidence. The validity of these acts is often reinforced by fatwas issued by religious scholars or regional regulations influenced by Shariah law. As such, these Sharia-based regulations reflect societal truth according primarily to the majority religion.

Individuals accused of blasphemy face two punishments: first, through vigilante justice without trial, and second, through the court's verdict. During the trial, the proceedings are likely to be unfair due to pressure from vigilante groups on the court to deliver swift and severe punishment, without regard for a fair process of proof against the accused. The influence of hate speech is also present in the court's proceedings, as seen in the examined cases where the courts were unable to distinguish between false news that had spread widely and actual facts that had occurred or actions committed by the accused, which were rarely proven in the legal process.

The government has maintained the flawed and ambiguous Anti-Blasphemy Law and has issued policies that classify blasphemy cases as insults to Islam or a deviant sect. These policies do not foster interreligious dialogue that respects different religious beliefs and instead provide legitimacy that reinforces intolerance and exclusion.

***Factors Influence Vigilante Justice Against Blasphemy***

Vigilante justice in Indonesia is the result of multiple factors and actors, including hard-line religious groups, state institutions, law enforcement agencies, and the Indonesian Council of Ulama, as shown in Figure 1. These actors play a significant, albeit indirect, role in supporting or at the very least allowing vigilante justice to continue to occur and repeat itself.

Firstly, the ideology factor indicates that the ideology of Godly Nationalism in Indonesia contributes to the prolonged enforcement of the Anti-Blasphemy Law by creating a law enforcement system that imply to glorifies vigilante acts. Scholars suggest that Godly Nationalism leads to religious intolerance by upholding religious values that are seen as contrary to blasphemy (Menchik, 2014; Telle, 2017). The ideology encourages dominant religious groups to monopolize the truth to protect orthodox religions from deviant teachings and intolerant actions. This ideology justifies vigilante acts against those accused of deviating from orthodox teachings, leading to religious intolerance and promoting mob violence.

The legal factor has contributed to the development of vigilante justice in Indonesia, particularly due to the existence of the flawed Anti-Blasphemy Law (Pratiwi, 2021), that only recognizes six major religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (M. A. Crouch, 2012). This has created a subjective interpretation of religious criticism, which is seen as a form of insult against these orthodox religions (Peterson, 2018; Tyson, 2021), that mostly justified with MUI’s recommendations. The reluctance of law enforcement officers to protect minority groups' freedom of religion and accommodating majority groups' demands for religious issues has resulted in widespread vigilante violence against religious minorities. All these regulations have been exploited by hardline Islamic groups to legitimize vigilante justice, as Butt (2018) argues.

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Figure . Factors influencing Vigilante Justice Against Blasphemy

Moreover, hardline Islamic groups use blasphemy lawsuits to gain public support for political purposes (Tyson, 2021). In the cases of Ahok and Meiliana, vigilante justice cannot be separated from the political context surrounding the regional elections in Indonesia at that time. The close connections between state officials and vigilante groups used identity politics to secure electoral victories. In addition, vigilante groups employ hate-mongering strategies (George, 2017) by framing the accused as blasphemers who insulted their religion (Islam), making them undeserving of public support.

According to Asif M and Don Weenink's (2022) study, vigilante justice gains legitimacy because of the public's belief that blasphemy is a violation of public morals. Hence, vigilante groups exploit public fear and anger to legitimize their fight against blasphemers. While the law criminalizes blasphemy, hate speech that incites violence by vigilante groups is not adequately regulated in Indonesia, as Hewson's study found. This connection has allowed vigilante groups to commit violent acts against minority congregations with impunity (Hewson, 2017).

Ultimately, self-proclaimed "justice" undermines Indonesia's rule of law and democracy. To promote tolerance and individual rights, strong legislative frameworks and their enforcement are essential. Allowing extreme Islamic organizations to violate the law in the name of religion will erode Indonesia's national character and democracy.

**Hindering Independency of the Court to Preserve Justice**

Figure 2 depicts the pattern that occurs in cases of blasphemy and its relationship with the frequent emergence of vigilante actions. Vigilante justice towards blasphemy suspects has a significant impact on the failure of judicial justice to achieve fairness. The independence of the judiciary, particularly in cases related to blasphemy, is not realized for five reasons: (a) judges misapply the law; (b) judges fail to prove the defendant's guilt; (c) judges overlook legal facts presented in court; (d) judges disregard the due process of law. For example, in the case studies, suspected cases of blasphemy were categorized as such following demands by MUI, which influenced the court's decision. The fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council and religious figures from the majority group that label suspected individuals as deviant or blasphemous legitimize this injustice. The vigilantes use hate speech and disseminate fake news to manipulate social situations and exert pressure on law enforcement and courts to accelerate legal proceedings, oftentimes resulting in the violation of minority religious groups' rights with the support of local policymakers at the city, regency, and provincial levels.

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Figure . The Pattern of Vigilante Justice Against Blasphemy Weakens the Independence of the Court

The court's failure to establish the defendants' "intention" to blaspheme Islam demonstrates that it disregarded the Anti-Blasphemy Law's significant defects and compelled a social justice-based judgment. The court's independence was compromised due to the lack of a comprehensive investigation and reliance on prejudiced testimony, the court's independence was compromised. Since the defendants' culpability were not established, the court failed to provide procedural justice. Furthermore, the due process of law was violated because there was a procedural flaw in the trial process, such as there was no warrant for an investigation on behalf of the defendant, the defendant was not accompanied by an attorney during the examination process so that it was difficult to testify freely, and the trial was unfair due to the unequal relationship between the defendant and the witness in disclosing false information.

The blasphemy cases analysed in this study show that vigilante groups' extrajudicial trials are taken over by the court, resulting in the accused facing double punishment: social punishment and a much harsher prison sentence than the crime they are accused of. The judiciary's independence has been called into question due to the judges' attitude, who did not fully apply due process laws and failed to demonstrate equal treatment before the law and violated the defendant's rights. Similar cases of blasphemy demonstrate that law enforcement is unable to provide procedural and substantive justice.

**CONCLUSION**

The analysis conducted in this study refutes the Constitutional Court's claim that the elimination of the Anti-Blasphemy Law would threaten society in cases of horizontal religious disputes. However, the cases of Ahok, Meiliana, Gafatar, and Ahmadiyya have all led to vigilante retaliation. Vigilantism in cases of blasphemy is motivated not solely by criminal activities in society, but by various other factors. The study also emphasizes that vigilante justice against blasphemy is not solely conducted by hardline religious organizations (Tyson, 2021), but also receives sponsorship from non-state actors such as the MUI, local policymakers, and law enforcement officers. Sustaining a flawed Anti-Blasphemy Law allows hardline Islamic groups to engage in hate speech and perpetuate structural violence (Galtung, 1969; Pratiwi, 2021) as it encourages policymakers to produce discriminatory policies and prevents courts from delivering just and impartial judgments.

The impartiality of courts is compromised when they are constrained by vigilante justice supported by discriminatory public policies, leading to the reinforcement of such policies. This study highlights the importance of comprehensive investigations and reliance on unbiased testimony to ensure procedural justice, which is compromised in the absence of proof of the accused's culpability. Furthermore, the existence of procedural flaws in the trial process constitutes a violation of due process of law. In other words, the persistence of vigilante justice will ultimately undermine the pursuit of justice. To prevent the violation of religious freedom of minority groups, policymakers and law enforcers must take a critical look at the Anti-Blasphemy Law's shortcomings and halt its implementation.

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1. This study is part of her doctoral dissertation, and she expresses gratitude to her supervisors Dr. Michael G. Hayes, Dr. Sriprapha, and Dr. Amalia, and the Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies for their valuable insights. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. However, it is important to emphasize that the majority of mosques targeted for disruption are Ahmadiyya mosques and other mosques that differ from the mainstream Muslim groups. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)