

Lombok Ahmadis under siege, yet again

Panca Nugraha

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An Ahmadi community has once again been the target of an attack, this time forcing at least 23 followers to take refuge in a police station in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB).

The attack, orchestrated by locals in Greneng village, East Lombok, also saw damage done to the properties of members of the Ahmadi community.

Local police said the weekend's attack began with a neighborhood quarrel, which started over a Koranic recitation lesson involving local children.

"At the time, the children were engaged in a fight among themselves, which they told their respective parents about," NTB Police spokesman Adj. Sr. Comr. I Koman Stuartana said.

Soon after, roughly 30 people showed up and surrounded the Ahmadi's neighborhood and began hurling stones at local homes.

Members of the local Ahmadi community, however, rejected the police's account of the event, saying the conflict between local Sunnis and members of the Ahmadi community had a long history.

An Ahmadi follower, who wished to remain anonymous, said that on May 7, a village head showed up with local community leaders at the Ahmadi neighborhood and began questioning the residents about whether they were members of the now-defunct Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

At other times, Muslim clerics



JPI/Seto Wardhana

Demanding justice: Ahmadiyah spokesperson Yendra Budiana (*center*) speaks during a press conference in Jakarta on Monday, accompanied by National Commission on Violence Against Women commissioners Magdalena Sitorus (*left*) and Khariroh Ali (*second left*), Setara Institute representative Bonar Tigor Naipospos (*second right*) and National Commission on Human Rights commissioner Beka Ulung Hapsara.

reportedly also paid visits to the local Ahmadi community and called on them to repent, as they deemed Ahmadiyah beliefs to be deviant.

"They said there would be problems if we refused to repent," said the Ahmadi.

Four days later, on May 11, several Ahmadis were invited to join a meeting at a village hall, where personnel from the local military command, regional police, village supervisory non-commissioned officers (Babinsa) and community figures, were in attendance.

"They asked members of our community who went to the meeting to repent. If they refused to repent, the village head said he would leave the decision to the villagers," he said. The meeting end-

ed with an altercation that forced the Ahmadis to seek refuge at the Lombok Police headquarters.

Later, the village chief told the Ahmadis at the police station not to return to their neighborhood.

"He [the village chief] told us that villagers would murder or destroy our homes if we returned to our houses," he said.

The latest attacks on the Ahmadis in East Lombok has added to the long list of persecution faced by the Ahmadis in the country in the past several years.

In 1999, a mob of villagers burned down a mosque belonging to the Ahmadis in Bayan, West Lombok, resulting in one casualty.

In 2006, hundreds of Ahmadis were forced to leave their hous-

es in Lingsar, West Lombok, after their homes were burned down by villagers who demanded they follow the teachings of Sunni Islam.

In the wake of the incident, many of the Ahmadis continue to live in a shelter until today.

At least 30 Ahmadi families are now living in poor conditions in the Wisma Transito shelter, more than a decade after they were driven from their homes.

Ahmadiyah Indonesia Congregation (JAI) secretary Yendra Budiana said there had not been enough done to address the plight of local Ahmadis in Lombok.

Yendra said representatives from the Ahmadi community had filed multiple reports to local police in West Nusa Tenggara about threats and attacks targeting Ahmadis, but that the police had failed to make any response beyond organizing dialogues between locals.

He said he expected law enforcement agencies to do more.

"We hope that the perpetrators will receive punishment according to the law," he said.

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has condemned the latest attack against the Ahmadis in Lombok and called on the police to take tough action against vigilante groups targeting Ahmadis.

"The police force has opted to stage mediation over enforcing the law against the perpetrators. We urge the police to take firm action in handling the East Lombok incident," Komnas HAM commissioner Beka Ulung Hapsara said at a press conference on Monday. (dpl)