

# Aceh & islamism: Indonesian province, bans men and women from dining together

Monday 10 September 2018, by [AFP](#) (Date first published: 5 September 2018).

## **Islamic Aceh district rules only married or related couples can eat out at the same table.**

A district in Indonesia's deeply Islamic Aceh province has banned men and women from dining together unless they are married or related, according to an official who said it would help women be "more well behaved".

Aceh is the only region in the world's most populous Muslim majority country that imposes Islamic law and has been criticised in the past for putting moral restrictions on women.

It also attracted global condemnation for publicly whipping people found guilty of a range of offences including homosexuality, gambling and drinking alcohol.

Under the latest regulation, women in Bireuën district on Sumatra island will not be able to share a table with men at restaurants and coffee shops unless they are accompanied by their husband or a close male relative.

Co-workers on their lunch break will also be forbidden from sharing a meal.

"The objective is to protect women's dignity so they will feel more comfortable, more at ease, more well behaved and will not do anything that violates sharia (Islamic law)," the head of the local sharia office, Jufliwani - who like many Indonesians has only one name - told AFP on Wednesday.

Another part of the directive, signed by the district head on 5 August, said women who were alone or without a family member should not be served at restaurants and cafés after 9pm.

Authorities say it will be up to restaurateurs to enforce the regulation, although offenders will not be punished.

Three years ago the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, banned unaccompanied women from entertainment venues including cafes and sports halls after 11pm.

In 2013, Lhokseumawe city in Sumatra's north ordered women to sit "side-saddle" on motorbikes. The mayor at the time said straddling male drivers on motorbikes was "improper".

**AFP** in Banda Aceh

---

---

**P.S.**

- The Guardian, Wed 5 Sep 2018 16.37 BST Last modified on Wed 5 Sep 2018 16.51 BST:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/05/indonesian-province-bans-men-and-women-from-dining-together-islamic-aceh>