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# Indonesia: Supreme Court rejects Buddhist woman's appeal of blasphemy verdict

Wednesday 10 April 2019, by [AFRA SAPIIE Marguerite](#), [GUNAWAN Apriadi](#) (Date first published: 8 April 2019).

**The Supreme Court has upheld a blasphemy verdict against a Buddhist woman convicted for complaining about the volume of *adzan* (call to prayer).**

In a ruling dated March 27 and posted on the court's website on Monday, the panel of justices rejected the appeal by Meiliana, a women of Chinese descent and resident of Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, and upheld her 1.5-year prison sentence.

Supreme Court spokesperson Abdullah confirmed the court's ruling, although he said he did not yet know what the justices' considerations were.

He added that the administrative handling of the case had yet to be completed.

Meiliana's lawyer, Ranto Sibarani, said he was surprised by the court's decision. "We don't know the reasoning because we haven't received a copy," Ranto told *The Jakarta Post* on Monday.

Ranto said he expected the Supreme Court to accept the appeal because he claimed there was not sufficient evidence that Meiliana committed blasphemy. "The evidence was only a statement signed by residents. It's strange that a statement signed by other people could be used as evidence of religious blasphemy," he insisted.

Meiliana's case dates back to 2016 when she reportedly said an *adzan* was "too loud" and "hurt" her ears. She is the first person to be sentenced to prison for complaining about the volume of a mosque's speakers.

Her alleged remarks were believed to have triggered the worst anti-Chinese riot in the country since 1998, with Muslims who claimed to have been offended by her words setting fire to several Buddhist temples.

Executives of the country's two largest Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, criticized the verdict last year, saying that such a complaint should not be considered as blasphemy. (evi)

**Marguerite Afra Sapiie and Apriadi Gunawan**

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