

Indonesian Buddhist woman imprisoned for complaining mosque too loud

From [Sky News](#)

JAKARTA (Reuters) – An Indonesian court sentenced a Buddhist woman to 18 months in prison for blasphemy on Tuesday, after she was accused of insulting Islam for complaining that neighbourhood mosque was too loud.

Meiliana, a 44-year old ethnic Chinese Buddhist had complained the Muslim call to prayer, repeated five times a day, was being played too loudly at the mosque near her house in North Sumatra.

Identified only as Meiliana, she called the mosque “noisy” and complained about the Islamic call to prayer from the mosque’s speakers in the city of Medan.

The 44-year-old, an ethnic Chinese Buddhist, was crying and taken out of the court in handcuffs after being found guilty of insulting Islam.

At least 14 Buddhist temples were burned and ransacked by mobs in Tanjung Balai on the island of Sumatra when Meiliana made her remarks in 2016. Police arrested more than a dozen suspects but only two were charged.

Rantau Sibarani, Meiliana’s lawyer, said there was no clear evidence of blasphemy. Meiliana will appeal against the verdict and Amnesty International has urged a higher court to quash the decision.

Indonesia’s Islamic Community Forum, however, said that the sentence was too light.

Blasphemy cases have become more frequent in the country, which is also the most populous Muslim country in the world. Verdicts have come back overwhelmingly guilty. Political activists have said the country's stringent blasphemy laws are being used to bully minorities and violate religious freedoms.