**Indonesian from Islamic advisory body caned for adultery**

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An Indonesian man who worked for a clerical organization that advises a local government on Islamic law has been caned in public for adultery, an official said.

Mukhlis bin Muhammad, 46, a member of the Aceh Ulema Council (MPU), was caned 28 times on Thursday in a public park by a religious officer, the official said.

The woman he had the sexual relationship with was flogged, also in public, receiving 23 lashes.

The punishments took place in ultra-conservative Aceh, the sole province in Indonesia - the world’s largest Muslim-majority nation - that applies sharia law. It was granted autonomy in 2001.

Public floggings and canings - which many Acehnese support - have become common there since they were introduced in 2005, and are administered for a range of offences also including theft and gambling. The province outlawed homosexuality in 2014.

MPU advised the Aceh government in drafting its current version of sharia. Muhammad’s role in the organization was not disclosed.

Husaini Wahab, a senior official in Aceh Besar district, said canings were meant to serve as a reminder to locals to adhere to the Islamic criminal code.

“It doesn’t matter whether he is an ulema, an imam, or an ordinary citizen, the government does not discriminate,” he said, adding that Muhammad could no longer belong to the MPU.

Rights groups have called for public floggings and canings to be discontinued.

Papang Hidayat, a researcher with Amnesty International, said they violated human rights. “Showing consensual affection should not be criminalized,” he said.

Indonesia is home to a number of religious and ethnic minorities and has been seen as an example of how democracy and Islam can co-exist. But rising conservatism has in recent years spurred religious intolerance there.