

## Couples brutally whipped in front of crowd for having sex

YAHOO! Yahoo News Australia and agencies, Yahoo News Australia ...



A trio of canoodling couples were publicly flogged in Indonesia's Aceh province, charged with breaking local Islamic law.

Despite international condemnation, whipping is a common punishment for a range of offences in the deeply conservative region on Sumatra island, including gambling, drinking alcohol, public displays of affection and having gay or pre-marital sex.

Aceh is the only region in the world's biggest Muslim-majority country that imposes Islamic law.



A woman is caned in public for having sex outside of marriage in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that has implemented Sharia law. Source: AAP/Source: AAP/Getty

On Thursday (local time), a masked sharia officer rained down between 20 and 22 strokes from a rattan cane each on three men and three women caught behaving amorously.

They had all served several months in prison.

One woman winced and fell over from the painful punishment, which was carried out in front of a mosque in the provincial capital Banda Aceh.



A woman collapsed in pain after the painful punishment was carried out in front of a mosque in the provincial capital. Source: AAP

Dozens of onlookers, including some visiting Malaysian students, watched the spectacle.

"I'm nervous because this is the first time I've seen something like this," visitor Muhammad Rushdy said.

"But it can serve as an important lesson for us from other countries to comply with local regulations," he added.



The man was one of six people to be caned in public for breaking Islamic law in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Source: AAP

Banda Aceh's mayor Aminullah Usman repeated his long-held claim that the punishment is a deterrent.

"But we keep telling visitors not to be afraid to visit Banda Aceh... because you won't be flogged if you don't break the law," he said.

Rights groups have slammed public caning as cruel, and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has called for it to end, but the practice has wide support among Aceh's population.

About 98 per cent of the region's five million residents are Muslim subject.

[Indonesia is set to vote on a new plan to outlaw pre-marital sex](#) that could affect millions in the muslim country, including the hordes of Australian tourists who holiday in Bali each year.

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