



Will the US Stop Pushing the LGBT Agenda After Indonesia Rejection to Jessica Stern?

As reported by ABC News and many media, the United States has cancelled a trip to Indonesia by a special envoy on LGBTQ rights after the country's most influential Islamic group objected to the visit. Special envoy Jessica Stern was to have visited Indonesia next week as part of a trip to Southeast Asia. U.S. Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Jessica Stern will travel to three Southeast Asian countries i.e. Vietnam from November 28-December 2; the Philippines from December 3-6; and Indonesia from December 7-9. During her visits, Special Envoy Stern will meet with government officials and representatives from civil society to discuss human rights, including advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued a statement on Friday saying the visit would harm the country's religious and cultural values. "As a religious and civilized nation, we are told to respect guests. But we also cannot accept guests whose purpose of coming here is to damage and mess up the noble values of our nation's religion and culture," the council's vice chairman, Anwar Abbas, said in a statement.

LGBTQ Diplomacy: Soft Power Poisoning the Islamic World

MUI's rejection and so various leading Muslim figures in Indonesia are not without reason. The presence of Jessica Stern is a symbol of US arrogance to impose their values on Muslim countries. US Special Envoy Jessica Stern was originally planned to discuss human rights, including LGBTQ+ human rights. However, regarding this human rights agenda, Muhammadiyah (one of major Islamic organization) - General Secretary Abdul Mu'ti in his written statement responded firmly that the reason for defending human rights behind Jessica Stern's visit was a double standard attitude. According to Mu'ti, human rights issues have clearly occurred in Palestine, but the United States (US) has always been silent.

Behind all the phenomena of the spread of LBGT and campaigns through massive social movements, there is aggressive role and interference of US foreign Human Rights politics. It is undeniable that the US is very active in campaigning for the legalization of LGBT throughout the world, including by hijacking UN policies. In the era of Joe Biden, the LGBTQ+ campaign has become increasingly massive and aggressive throughout the world, even Biden has been named the most pro-LGBTQ+ US President.

For the Southeast Asian region, Biden has sent Jessica Stern and chose 3 Southeast Asian countries i.e., Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia. The choice of these three countries is certainly interesting to examine, apart from having the highest population in Southeast Asia, the three countries have not yet passed same-sex marriage laws like Taiwan and Thailand. But Vietnam recently declared that LGBT is not a mental illness, a decision that brings Vietnam's health policies in line with global health standards desired to serve LGBT people. Likewise, the Philippines has included factors of sexual orientation and gender identity as reasons that are prohibited from being bullied/intimidated in the Anti-Bullying Law, and this point is included in the Rules and Implementing Regulations (IRR) of the Act which was approved by the Philippine Congress in 2013.

Before Jessica Stern, the US also aggressively hijacked UN programs. The US and its USAID have collaborated with UNDP since 2014 in the “Being LGBT in Asia” project examining the lived experiences of LGBT people in eight countries – Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam from a human rights and development perspective. Funds disbursed amounted to US\$ 8 million from 2014 to 2017. This project not only researches but also promotes this deviant lifestyle, even the "Being LGBT in Asia" project has completed its second phase (BLIA-2) in 2019, so it is not surprising that there is a shift in the attitude of Asian countries, such as Taiwan, which took the lead in recognizing same-sex marriage in May 2019, followed by Thailand, which passed the civil partnership bill in July 2020.

Then what about the Muslim countries in Southeast Asia? Brunei Darussalam implements the stoning law for homosexual offenders, while Indonesia and Malaysia are still quite resistant against LGBT. Even though the social shift is becoming increasingly visible, the results of a national survey in Indonesia by SMRC 2018 show that 57.7% of the public think that LGBT has the right to live in Indonesia, 41.1% think otherwise. Muslim countries must be more vigilant, especially the penetration of these liberal ideas in their youth. Moreover, over the past six decades, the promotion of the LGBTQ+ lifestyle has increased to such an extent that it is hard to let go in modern life.

Undeniable, besides being an organized ideological political movement sponsored by the US, the LGBT campaign has been also transformed into an economic force known as “pink capitalism” because this community is a big market for capitalists with billions of dollars in profits. US Assistant Secretary of State (2015) in the Obama era, Tom Malinowski, once emphasized that, *“Giant corporations are asked to promote the Human Rights of LGBT people around the world. In the 21st century, the government needs to be assisted by ideas, energy, and support from business leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs to support LGBT people. We must stand tall against the injustices against LGBT people around the world.”*

Pink Capitalism: “LGBT Enabler” via Popular Culture

The 2010s has been a decade in which LGBTQ+ rights and freedoms have increased significantly on the Western stage. From music to TV, the last 10 years have seen popular culture increasingly engage with the LGBTQ+ community. Ten years ago, Lady Gaga became a star who became a staunch advocate for LGBTQ+ rights both on and off the stage. Young gay pop stars have also emerged from Australia, South Africa, Britain and many parts of Western countries. In Asia, gay artists have also sprung up through the drama series and music industries that have sprung up from China, Japan and recently many from Thailand.

Learning from the China case, digitalization is the enabler of homosexual values entering Chinese traditional society, which was initially very resistant – even LGBT was classified as a crime in China until 1997, and as a mental illness until 2001. In a 2017 Foreign Policy Article, it was revealed that the trillion-dollar LGBT market is young people, where social transformation is moving very quickly, shifting old values along with the openness of technology and information in Chinese society. It also revealed that the main driving force behind the LGBT campaign in China is technology companies because the market is huge. China's leading car-calling app Didi Chuxing, top search engine Baidu, marketplace Alibaba, Chinese smartphone maker Meizu and popular karaoke app Changba are all running pro-LGBT social media campaigns.

As a result, the youth are the first segment to be exposed to these dangerous values, because they are the main users of technology services which are abundant with foreign values. Over time, the LGBT community in China has strong purchasing power; they are able to spend around \$300 billion a year. 56 percent of LGBT men and 62 percent of LGBT women in China say that the most important factor influencing their purchase decision is the company's support of LGBT-friendly policies and regulations.

This is what is called "Pink Money" or "Pink Capitalism" namely the incorporation of the LGBT movement into the dynamics of capitalism, which implies the commercialization of LGBT lifestyle that is poisoning to the younger generation. Pink Capitalism is now becoming increasingly massive because it is supported by capitalist corporations, such as Starbucks, Apple, Facebook, Instagram, and others. The Pink Money for the United States alone, combined with the purchasing power of the US lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) adult population in 2015 was estimated at \$917 billion (Witeck Communications, 2016).

In Asia alone, "Pink Money" is the fastest method absorbed by young people, including Muslim youths in Indonesia and Malaysia. The line of tolerance towards LGBT is getting thinner and looser, because the popular culture industry is getting more and more gripped through this lifestyle. Entertainment products, such as 'fujoshi' anime from Japan and later developed by Thailand with its Boy Love (BL) series industry which is popular with millions of young Asian girls has an income of up to 1 billion Baht per year. In June 2021, Thailand's investment promotion agency helped secure 360 million Baht (\$10.7 million) of foreign investment for Thai BL. Some see BL as Thailand's soft power, doing for the global image of the Southeast Asian nation what the yoga boom has done for India or K-pop for South Korea. As a result, LGBTQ campaigns in Southeast Asia have become more massive and sponsored by Western powers, both formally through the United Nations and informally through the lifestyle industry in the form of films, music, and fashion.

Vigilance with Islamic Political Awareness

At the same time, LGBT has become a socio-political movement as well as a commercial lifestyle industry that aggressively fills public and digital spaces. Inevitably, this current of damage will become a very powerful means of destroying the Muslim society. This phenomenon requires the vigilance of the Ummah leaders and da'wah carriers to the level of Islamic political awareness. At least, Muslims must pay attention to the two axes of the spread of LGBT, namely:

1. The formal realm is through legal and regulatory reform. This first axis is usually driven by the West through diplomacy, UN agencies on an international scale, while on a local scale, the campaign is driven by NGOs and liberal Human Rights activists who continue to fight for legal and regulatory reforms so that LGBT is accommodated in the Islamic World, and they are blindly continuing to struggle. These flawed LGBT ideas are now considered as the yardstick of a civilized society defending Human Rights. Yet, they are silent on Human Rights violations of Palestinian Muslims or Uyghurs.

2. The non-formal realm is through popular culture. This second axes, driven by capitalist corporations, especially technology, social media and entertainment companies which have a large market of young people, are the ones who gain "Pink Money" or big money in line with the original character of capitalism which is shrewd in exploiting human lusts and pleasures. Ironically, these LGBT sponsored capitalists seem blind to the damage

to civilization in their own society due to the epidemic of modern *liwath*, such as AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, mental health epidemics, infidelity, domestic violence, increased divorce and many other social ills. 43 percent of the gay people who were successfully recorded admitted to having more than 500 homosexual people, 28 percent more than 1,000 people. Many of their partners only last night or a few minutes. The aberrant behaviour of modern Sodomites is highly destructive.

The Urgency of Returning the Shield of Human *Fitrah*

From the exposure of this phenomenon, it is clear that the US will never stop promoting LGBT because this is a fundamental part of Western civilization, especially in terms liberal values. In addition to the interests of their immoral ideological values, the US and other Western countries also benefit economically from opening the LGBT market in Muslim countries, especially targeting young people who are the most inclusive with the speed of information and technology.

That's why to stop the LGBT movement certainly requires a large capacity; sporadic rejections are not enough, but a more systematic and organized effort is needed to compensate for this US-sponsored damage. The Islamic Ummah needs a just leader who is strong and visionary to counteract this destruction waves that the US, the West and their capitalist corporations continue to campaign for. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: **«إِنَّمَا «Indeed, *al-imam (caliph) is a shield, where (people) will fight behind him and protect with his (power).*»** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Dawud). Moreover, normatively, Muslims have already understood that homosexuality is a deviance, which is clearly against human nature (*fitrah*). Allah (swt) says: **«نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ»** **“... *Your wives are like farmland for you...*”** [Al-Baqarah [2]: 223].

This verse contains the norm that human nature is heterosexual. Islam provides a complete answer related to one's sexual drive, namely through the institution of marriage. Islam is also very strict in providing sanctions for homosexuals or lesbians as deviant acts, such as the curse of Allah (swt) on the Sodomites who opposed the Prophet Lut. So what is needed now is the return of the protector of the people, the Khalifah *al Junnah*, as the only system sanctioned by the Creator of all humanity which shows the right path to noble morals and human dignity, prosperity in this world and our accountability on the Day of Judgment is only based on orders and prohibitions ordered by Him. Allah (swt) says: **«إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ»** **“*Certainly, Allah's only Way is Islam. Those who were given the Scripture did not dispute among themselves out of mutual envy until knowledge came to them. Whoever denies Allah's signs, then surely Allah is swift in reckoning.*”** [Aali 'Imran: 19].

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