

Headline Indonesian minister jokes about AIDS patients  
Date 05 Oct 2010  
MediaTitle The Star  
Section World  
Journalist N/A  
Frequency Daily  
Circ / Read 304,904 / 1,026,812

Language English  
Page No W34  
Article Size 97 cm<sup>2</sup>  
Color Black/white  
ADValue 1,761  
PRValue 5,283



## Indonesian minister jokes about AIDS patients

**JAKARTA:** An Indonesian government minister who has in the past blamed natural disasters on immorality has caused more controversy by posting anti-gay comments on Twitter and joking about people with AIDS.

Tifatul Sembiring, who is Information Minister and also a member of the National AIDS commission, jumped into a debate about a gay film festival being held in Jakarta, which was protested by Islamic hard-liners and students.

"Behaviours which are potentially carrying the virus must be prevented," he tweeted last week, adding that even the Quran had things to say about homosexuals.

In his most controversial comment, however, he recalled a former health minister's joke about AIDS.

"AIDS -- Akibat Itunya Dipakai Sembarangan," which translates as "because they were reckless about where they put their genitals."

He later said he didn't mean to

**»Behaviours potentially carrying the virus must be prevented«**

TIFATUL SEMBIRING

offend anyone, adding: "But everyone has the right to voice their opinion."

Ricky Gunawan, the programme director of the Legal Aid Foundation, was quoted as saying by *The Globe* newspaper that, as a public figure and member of the AIDS commission, Sembiring should be more responsible.

The comments are "misleading" and further stigmatise those living with the disease, said Gunawan.

— AP