

TikTok Star Sentenced to Prison After Eating Pork on Camera

Lina Lutfiawati, an influencer from Indonesia, received a two-year sentence after a video of her eating pork rinds angered the nation's top Muslim clerics.



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Reporting from Seoul and Bangkok

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Lina Lutfiawati's videos of eating delectable meals — featuring fish, crab, clams, prawns and ribs — have earned the Indonesian influencer millions of fans on TikTok.

But when Ms. Lina, 33, ate pork rinds on camera in March, her TikTok video of the meal drew the attention of a different audience: Indonesia's top Muslim clerical body, the Ulema Council. On Tuesday, she was sentenced to two years in prison and fined the equivalent of \$16,269 for blasphemy.

Ms. Lina's video was sensitive not only because eating or even touching pigs is considered forbidden for Muslims in Indonesia. Before she began eating, she said "Bismillah" — Arabic for "in the name of Allah." Posting the video in a country with the world's largest Muslim population — nearly 90 percent of Indonesia's 275 million people are Muslim — made her stunt even more contentious.

Although Ms. Lina's video performance was unusual in Indonesia, a secular democracy, the blasphemy laws she was convicted under have been used for decades.

The laws were adapted from Dutch colonial-era statutes and apply to those who deviate from the central tenets of the country's six official religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Blasphemy convictions rose in the early 2000s and have continued under President Joko Widodo, who took office in 2014 as ascendant Islamic conservatives were pushing hard-line policies.

In one high-profile case, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian who at the time was governor of Jakarta, the capital, was sentenced to two years in 2017 for blasphemy after critics accused him of insulting the Quran on the campaign trail. A year later, a Buddhist woman who had complained about the volume of a mosque loudspeaker near her home was sentenced to 18 months.

After Ms. Lina was sentenced this week, Sapriadi Samsudin, the lawyer for the cleric who reported her to the police, thanked the judges at her trial in the city of Palembang, northwest of Jakarta on the island of Sumatra.

"This is not retaliatory," Mr. Sapriadi said after the verdict. "This is simply a lesson to a citizen to protect this country, to not provoke a hubbub and to respect each of its religious communities."

Ms. Lina told reporters after the trial that she had apologized many times for her behavior. "I know what I did was wrong, but I did not expect this punishment to be two years," she said.

The Ulema Council did not respond to a request for comment on Thursday.

Ms. Lina did not appear to have a lawyer at her trial. Neither her representatives nor her family could be reached for comment on Thursday. News of her sentence was reported earlier by the BBC and other news outlets.

On TikTok, Ms. Lina, who lives in Jakarta and has business ties in India, posts under the name Lina Mukherjee. In the video of her eating pork rinds, which was not posted on her official account but can be seen on another account, she is in Bali, an Indonesian resort island where most residents practice a local form of Hinduism.

Before she tries the pork rinds with rice, she says in the video that she has eaten pork twice before and is curious to try pork skin after watching others talk about it in TikTok videos.

After taking her first bite, she grimaces.

"Not as yummy as what they said on TikTok," she says. "For me, it's not so special."

Mike Ives is a reporter for The Times based in Seoul, covering breaking news around the world. More about Mike Ives