

11 March 2015, Wednesday ✦ 6.00pm – 8.00pm ✦
Moot Court, Next to the Summit Cafeteria, NUS Faculty of Law

CALS Distinguished Visitor Lecture
Sharia and National Law in Asia – A View from the Southeast
by Professor Jan-Michiel Otto

Chairperson: Assistant Professor Arif Jamal

ABSTRACT

The Arab spring has focused the world's attention on Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia as places where Islamic Sharia competes with Western ideas on democracy and human rights. However, Asia easily has more Muslims than any other continent, and Indonesia has more Muslims than all countries of North Africa together.

Asia is of course diverse. The relationship between Sharia and national law passed through different trajectories in each of its fifty states. This lecture, taking a view from the Southeast, will first look at how Indonesia has managed to incorporate Sharia in its legal system. From there it will look at other countries of the continent, in search of similarities and differences. In doing so, it will discuss concerns regarding the law of marriage and divorce, of corporal punishments, of constitutional supremacy of Sharia, and of human rights.

Finally, it will also compare Indonesia with countries in Asia and beyond which seem to be in turmoil precisely because the relationship between Sharia and national law has divided the population in warring factions.

Has Indonesia, as a young Asian democracy, as an emerging Asian market, as a state capable of steering the legal middle ground between the models of 'secular' Turkey and 'orthodox' Saudi Arabia, captured the imagination of those who are struggling elsewhere to find a peaceful balance?



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Jan-Michiel Otto (1952) has held the chair of Law and Governance in Developing Countries at Leiden University since 1998. He is director of the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance, and Development (VVI) at the Faculty of Law.

After his law degree he specialized in development administration, and did extensive fieldwork in a village in Middle Egypt on interaction between government institutions and villagers for rural development.

Over the past decades professor Otto initiated and directed many socio-legal research projects and teaching & training projects in Asia and Africa. He wrote numerous articles and book chapters. In 2010 he published *Sharia Incorporated* (2010), an edited volume on twelve Muslim countries, combining a historical country-by-country approach with an analysis of present-day legal systems in their socio-political context. In 2013 he co-published '*Searching for Justice in Post-Gaddafi Libya*'.

He teaches courses on *Law, Governance and Development*, and on *Law, Sharia and Governance in the Muslim world*. He is vice-chair of the Board of Advisers of IDLO (International Development Law Organization, Rome), one of the chief-editors of the *Asian Journal for Law and Society*, and member of the Steering Committee of LUCIS (Leiden University Center for the Study of Islam and Society).

Admission is free but seats are limited.
Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

Please RSVP via email at cals@nus.edu.sg or click [Here](#) to register.

Closing Date of Registration : 6 Mar 2015, Friday, 5pm