

NU Offers Archipelagic Islam to the World

May 11, 2016 08:10 GMT+7

JAKARTA, KOMPAS — Islam Nusantara or Archipelagic Islam, a manifestation of a peaceful and tolerant Islam that accommodates culture and local wisdom, is being offered as a new concept in the world of Islam. Archipelagic Islam can be the solution to conflict or a reference for the Islamic world to realize a world order that is peaceful and tolerant.



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Dari kiri, Wakil Presiden Jusuf Kalla, Ketua Panitia ISOMIL Imam Aziz, Ketua PB Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) KH Said Aqil Siraj, dan Rais Aam Syuriah PBNU KH Maruf Amin dalam acara pembukaan Pertemuan Tingkat Internasional Pemimpin Islam Moderat di Jakarta, Senin (9/5). Acara yang mempertemukan ulama-ulama dari berbagai negara itu diharapkan dapat berperan untuk menyelesaikan konflik antar negara Islam dan mengembalikan wajah Islam yang penuh kedamaian.

The point regarding Archipelagic Islam and Nahdlatul Ulama's determination to present a peaceful Islam to the world was made during the Nahdlatul Ulama Jakarta Declaration on Tuesday (10/5/2016) at the International Summit of Moderate Islamic Leaders. The declaration is also the result of a two-day conference that ended yesterday and saw the participation of 400 participants, including 25 country delegates.

Nahdlatul Ulama National Board (PBNU) chairman KH Said Aqil Siroj, who closed the conference, said he hoped that the event would be followed up by real action by NU and conference participants.

The PBNU formulated the Nahdlatul Ulama Jakarta Declaration, which is divided into two main ideas: on Archipelagic Islam and NU's stance on developments in the Islamic world.

The first main idea emphasizes that Archipelagic Islam is not a school of thought or new sect in Islam. Archipelagic Islam is Islam that has grown naturally in Indonesia by prioritizing harmony and peace, as well as accommodating local wisdom and culture.

The concept of Archipelagic Islam is not meant to dictate the understanding of Islam in other countries, but is more an offer of concept and experience from the Islamic world in Indonesia. Archipelagic Islam is proposed to be a paradigm that should be made an example of as it teaches *tawassuth* (a moderate way), *tawaazun* (harmony), *tasaamuh* (gentleness), and *l'tidaal* (fairness). From a state point of view, Archipelagic Islam does not contradict religion and nationalism, and does not encourage its followers to conquer the world, but instead materialize a religion that is a mercy to the universe.

Stance

The second main idea resulting from the conference concerns NU's position in relation to the Islamic world. NU shares its concerns with most of the people of the world because of the rampant religious extremism, terror and the wave of Islamophobia in the Western world. NU believes that certain ways of interpreting Islam have triggered the spread of extremism among Muslims, including the stance of the governments of Middle Eastern countries that exploit religious and sectarian differences and give rise to religious extremism and Islamophobia.

"Archipelagic Islam merges with culture and traditions in the archipelago, and synergize with nationalism. Archipelagic Islam has actually received a positive welcome from the participants of the conference, even though yesterday [in the opening speech] I strongly stated that the main problem in conflicting Middle Eastern countries was down to a lack of compromise between Islam and nationalism," said Said.

The positive response to the conference will, according to Said, be followed up by a meeting with delegates from other countries. A number of other countries have stated their readiness to establish an NU branch in their country, such as Afghanistan, Tunisia and Sudan. It is hoped that by having an NU branch in their countries, they will be able to spread a peaceful and tolerant understanding of Islam.

NU not only focuses on the harmony among followers of Islam, but also on reaching unity and harmony with other religions. The process of improvement among the followers of Islam continues to be carried out to further erase radical and terrorist ideologies.

"The first thing that must be done in order to overcome radicalism and terrorism is to be honest. There may be elements from Islam that are used as a basis or justification for hardline groups to carry out their actions," said Yahya Cholil Staquf of the PBNU.

PBNU general secretary Helmy Faishal Zaini said that the cases of intolerance that happen in Indonesia must be given strong sanctions by the government. "We stress one more time, if these anti-Pancasila groups are let off, they could one day be a big threat to the nation," Helmy said.

The spread of radicalism

From the last discussion in the conference it is revealed that the spread of radical ideologies is rife on social media, like Youtube. The acts of violence, torture and murder are displayed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). All the videos include verses of the Koran as a justification for their actions, says Nico Prucha, a researcher in Islam from the University of Vienna, Austria.

Lauren Booth, an Islamic activist and a former journalist in England, said that the brutal incidents of late had reignited dark memories in the minds of the Western public. Muslims in Western countries often become the target of prejudice because of their religion, she said.

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