

## Hundreds of Indonesian Muslims Demand Punishment for Burning of Flag Bearing Islamic Tenet



by Edwin Mora | 26 Oct 2018

*Up to 1,000 Muslims in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, took to the streets Friday to "demand justice" for the burning of a flag bearing the Tauhid, an Islamic concept affirming that there is only one God.*

Reuters reports that Muslims came together to rally against the burning of the flag by members of the youth wing of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic organization in the country.

At the “peaceful” demonstration, leaders of the rally reportedly urged people to defend Islam as protestors chanted “There is no God but Allah.”

“We want justice for the burning of the flag, for those who are responsible,” Fahruh Rozi, 47, a member of Forum Masjid Al Falah, one of several groups at the rally, told Reuters.

“We want to raise awareness for respect for Islam. It’s not to do with politics or elections,” Rozi added.

The demonstration took place in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

“Demonstrators in white Islamic robes snarled traffic outside the security ministry in Jakarta, waving flags with Arabic text professing belief in one God and chanting ‘God is great’ and ‘No God except Allah,’” the Associated Press (AP) reports.

Ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections next April, there have been “sporadic tensions” between the NU, considered a moderate organization, and more hardline groups, Reuters pointed out.

Angered by the flag’s affiliation to the banned Hizb-ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) group that is allegedly seeking to establish an Islamic caliphate in the country, NU members decided to set the flag ablaze.

AP notes:

Video of members of Nahdlatul Ulama’s youth arm burning the flag of the outlawed group, Hizbut Tahrir, has stirred controversy in Indonesia because the flag is also emblazoned with the Islamic declaration of faith. Their uniforms indicated they’re part of the youth organization’s militia.

The flag burning reportedly prompted NU to cancel a mass rally to promote a moderate brand of Islam that was predicted to draw 10,000 supporters.

NU accused HTI of inciting violence that drove its young members to burn the flag.

Yahya Cholil Staquf, the NU’s secretary general, told AP that HTI “operatives” exploited religious symbols, which led to the flag burning incident.

“Further incidents of provocation were planned. Our members would find it difficult to control their anger in the face of such flagrant exploitation of our religious symbols,” he said.

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