

## Muslim leaders try to ease tensions after Islamic flag burning protests

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A screen grab of a video depicting the burning of what was believed to be a Hizbut Tahrir flag. (kompas.com/-)

Following the Islamic flag burning incident that has led to protests by thousands of people around the country, Muslim leaders assembled on Friday night to settle their differences and agreed to put the issue behind them.

Muslims were outraged after the burning of a flag bearing Islamic script by members of the Guardian Troops of Ansor (Banser) in Garut, West Java, who were celebrating National Santri Day on Monday.

The video, which went viral, shows members of Banser, which is part of the Nahdlatul Ulama's youth wing, burned the flag that they think is a symbol of the outlawed organization Hizbut

Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). Thousands of Muslims and Islamic organizations took to the streets to condemn Banser and demand justice.

Members of the National Movement to Safeguard Fatwas (GNPF), that had called for the prosecution of former Jakarta governor Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama, joined the protests against Banser, along with members of Muhammadiyah, the second largest Muslim organization after the NU.

Banser has been guarding their headquarters in anticipation of attacks by protesters. As of Friday, no attacks are reported. A plan to protest at Banser’s headquarters on Jl. Kramat Raya, Jakarta, by the Islamic Students Association (HMI) was canceled after senior members of the group had called on their members to stay calm.

During Friday's gathering at the residence of Vice President Jusuf Kalla, a former HMI activist and current chairman of the Indonesia Mosques Council (DMI), leaders of several Islamic organizations, including the NU and Muhammadiyah, met with the government to address the issue.

The meeting was reportedly inconclusive on whether the flag was an Islamic or HTI flag, but all agreed that any crimes committed during the incident should be handled by the police.

“The Islamic organization leaders regret the flag burning incident in Limbangan, Garut, and agree to maintain peace and efforts to reduce conflicts,” the leaders said in a statement that was read out by Kalla after the meeting.

Among those who signed the agreement were Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) chairman Ma’ruf Amin, Muhammadiyah chairman Haedar Nasir, NU chairman Said Aqil Siradj and Islamic Union (PERSIS) advisory council chairman Maman Abdurahman.

The NU and GP Ansor said they regretted the incident and had sanctioned the perpetrators.

The police have questioned and then released three Banser members who were allegedly involved in the incident.

Uus Sukmana, who allegedly raised the flag in Garut on Santri Day, is named suspect in the case. He is accused of violating Article 174 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) on inciting commotion at a gathering. He was not detained.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/10/27/muslim-leaders-try-to-ease-tensions-after-islamic-flag-burning-protests.html>