



2019_01_25_Nobel Peace Prize Nomination Recognizes the Contribution of Indonesian Islam to Peace and Democracy

“A Worthy Model for the World to Emulate”

Former Muhammadiyah Chairman, Dr. Syafii Maarif:

“An Antidote to the Disease, and Civilizational Decay, Afflicting the Middle East”

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia: On January 17 and 25, 2019, Gadjah Mada University (UGM)—Indonesia’s preeminent institution of higher learning—held a pair of high-profile events to accompany the launch of a global campaign to nominate the world’s largest Muslim organizations for the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of their unique contributions to Islamic democracy and global conflict resolution.

H.E. José Ramos-Horta—who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996; led East Timor’s independence movement; and served as its president from 2007 – 2012—joined UGM and an international assembly of scholars to discuss Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah’s historic achievements and their nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Both groups’ contributions to Indonesian democracy played an essential role in granting independence to East Timor in 1999, following 24 years of Indonesian military occupation.

A friend of Indonesia’s first democratically-elected president and former NU Chairman H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid (“[Gus Dur](#),” 1940 – 2009), President Ramos-Horta delivered a keynote address to a packed audience at the UGM Faculty Senate auditorium, at which he declared: “Having visited 134 nations during the course of my lifetime, I can state with certainty that I have never found a single model like that which you have in Indonesia. Indonesia deserves to become a model for the world to emulate.”

Former Muhammadiyah Chairman and senior LibForAll advisor Dr. Syafii Maarif told the audience that “The Middle East is plunging headlong into civilizational decay. There is no future for Islam without Indonesia, because [only] Indonesia can provide the antidote to the disease afflicting Arab Islam, which has infected the rest of the Muslim world, bringing violence and chaos in its wake....

“Indonesian Islam does not carry the historical burden that weighs down Arab Islam. Muslims must understand the difference between Islam and a misguided Arabism.... If [the NU and Muhammadiyah] receive the Nobel Peace Prize, it will trigger a global uproar, with enormous positive consequences [for humanity at large].”

NU General Secretary and [Bayt ar-Rahmah](#) Director of Religious Affairs Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf (“Gus Yahya”), concurred with Dr. Maarif’s analysis, adding that “The Islamic world desperately needs new *ijtihad* [interpretations of Islamic law, to replace obsolete and problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy], but the Middle East lacks the [religious and spiritual] vitality required to conduct this *ijtihad*, due to the historical burden under which it labors. Indonesia—and especially the NU and Muhammadiyah—have the requisite vitality, and the practice of *ijtihad* has long been a *de facto* tradition within both organizations. The NU and Muhammadiyah are grassroots movements, whose daily business requires that they identify practical solutions to whatever problems their respective communities encounter.

Both have succeeded in developing their own religious authority. As a result, any fatwa they issue concerning Islam may be promulgated without seeking authority from the Middle East, for the NU and Muhammadiyah both possess the independent religious authority, and legitimacy, necessary to do so.

UGM Rector Dr. Panut Mulyono said that “UGM will officially nominate Muhammadiyah and NU as recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize... to acknowledge their contributions to humanity and spread the message of a peaceful and democratic Islam throughout the world.”

The January 17 and 25 events both featured Dr. M. Najib Azca, the director of UGM’s Center for Security and Peace Studies (PSKP), who announced the launch of a book entitled *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama dalam Perdamaian dan Demokrasi (Two Peacemakers: The Role and Contributions of the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama to Peace and Democracy)*, which was written by PSKP’s research team.

Gus Dur’s enduring contribution to democracy and world peace is a major theme of the book, which demonstrates how the visionary Indonesian president’s legacy has continued to grow even after his death, inspiring a burgeoning global movement for Humanitarian Islam. This movement aims to reform obsolete tenets of Islamic orthodoxy that enjoin religious hatred, supremacy and violence, by restoring *rahmah* (universal love and compassion) to its rightful place as the primary message of Islam. LibForAll Foundation—which Gus Dur co-founded in 2003—and its sister organization, Bayt ar-Rahmah, joined Gerakan Pemuda Ansor (the 5-million-member NU young adults organization) to establish the Humanitarian Islam movement, and their continuation of Gus Dur’s work is extensively referenced in conjunction with the 2019 nomination of the Nahdlatul Ulama for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Two Peacemakers documents the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah’s essential role in mobilizing strong and broad support among Indonesian Muslims for that nation’s transition from authoritarian rule to democracy; strengthening and ensuring the success of Indonesia’s nascent democracy; and their efforts to promote conflict resolution and human rights on the global stage.

LibForAll/Bayt ar-Rahmah achievements hailed by *Two Peacemakers* include: [*Illusion of an Islamic State*](#), a book that derailed the political aspirations of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated party PKS and other transnational Islamist groups hostile to Indonesia’s tradition of religious pluralism and tolerance (pp. 213 – 214); the [*Islam Nusantara*](#) (East Indies Islam) campaign (pp. 145 – 147); [*Middle East peace efforts*](#) (pp. viii; 198 – 203; 206); the [*ISOMIL Nahdlatul Ulama Declaration*](#) (pp. 147 – 151; 204); [*Humanitarian Islam*](#) (p. 151); the [*Second Global Unity Forum*](#) and the [*Nusantara Manifesto*](#) (p. 151). The book also details the NU and Gerakan Pemuda Ansor’s principled [*defense of religious minorities*](#), both in Indonesia and internationally (pp. 167; 177; 186 – 193).

“A peaceful Islamic narrative amidst... the fratricidal chaos of the Arab world.”

~ *Two Peacemakers*

NOTE: The statutes of the Nobel Foundation prohibit it from divulging the names of nominators or of nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize, until 50 years have elapsed from the time of nomination. However, the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah’s nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize has been extensively covered in Indonesian media, citing well-placed sources.