

## EDITORIAL: RI Sets Example of Peaceful Religious Life

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Indonesia can serve as a prime example on religious tolerance and how to see differences as a blessing for global citizens.



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Ulemas from various countries attend an international meeting of moderate Islamic leaders in Jakarta on Monday (9/5/2016). The event gathers ulemas from various countries who are expected to help settle conflicts among Islamic countries and promote Islam as a religion of peace.

In the International Summit of the Moderate Islamic Leaders, which was held by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Jakarta on Monday (9/5/2016) and Tuesday, the tolerance of Indonesian Muslims obtained widespread praise from representatives of various countries.

Nahdlatul Ulama, a 90-year-old civil society organization, has provided a good example for this tolerance. What is clearest is the accommodation of local wisdom and cultures that lends harmony amid the diverse faiths of the Indonesian people.

NU's determination to promote a tolerant and peaceful Islam must be placed in a global context. In a number of Middle Eastern countries, conflicts arise triggered by differences between religious adherents.

This difference, as mentioned by NU's *rais aam syuriah* (supreme leader) KH Ma'ruf Amin in his opening speech, was due to the religious adherents' extremist attitudes. On one end of the spectrum, there are the rigid hardliners who bring nothing but hardship to people in their understanding of religion. On the other end, there are those who oversimplify matters and see that there is no certainty in religion as everything can be reassessed and reevaluated.

It is interesting that NU, as the biggest civil society organization in Indonesia, offered the Islam Nusantara movement at the international conference as a manifestation of a tolerant and peaceful Islam that can accommodate local cultures. This accommodative attitude also arises in the adoption of nationalistic views by the NU so that the concept of a unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia is not a problem. In practice, these accommodative approaches have been practiced and widely accepted ever since Islam first came to the archipelago.

Islam Nusantara (Archipelagic Islam) in this context is seen as a paradigm or worldview, instead of as a new school of thought (*mazhab*) in Islam. Moderate views, harmony, gentleness and justice are the emphasized foundations.

These attitudes are important amid globalization that weakens the state through the flow of capital and ideology that know no national borders. This has triggered negative prejudice against Islam in a number of Western countries.

Potential friction in society needs to be channeled peacefully and productively. We hope the attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama that emphasizes tolerance and harmony can maintain peace in Indonesia and be an example for other countries.

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