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## White House Declares Support for @NahdlatulUlama

WASHINGTON, DC: On Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Vice President of the United States (VPOTUS), Michael R. Pence, invited NU General Secretary [KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf](#) to the White House, where they discussed the pressing need for religious freedom and for decisive action to bring this about. VPOTUS was accompanied by a senior advisor and by Reverend Johnnie Moore, who was recently appointed to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Immediately after their meeting the Vice President [tweeted](#): “Honored to welcome the @NahdlatulUlama Secretary General to the @WhiteHouse today. Their efforts opposing radical Islam are critical in Indonesia—where we saw despicable attacks on Christians. @POTUS Trump’s admin stands with NU in its fight for religious freedom and against jihad.” News of the meeting quickly spread to major media outlets in the U.S. and Indonesia. [Christianity Today](#) reported, “US supports major Sunni group’s efforts to fight radicalization... [The NU] has been championed as a model of ‘moderate Islam’” and quoted Pence saying, “As the largest Muslim majority nation, Indonesia’s tradition of modern Islam, frankly, is the inspiration to the world.”

“The Vice President found out he [Staquf] was in town and asked to see him,” Reverend Moore told [The Christian Post](#). “You can tell when a meeting is warm and a meeting is cordial. This was a very warm conversation... And it was substantive, I would say.” In an article titled “Supporting Indonesia’s Religious Freedom-Loving Muslims,” Tony Perkins of the [Family Research Council](#) wrote of Mr. Staquf: “[S]uch a clear-eyed partner is just the type that religious freedom advocates need.... We must continue to encourage and come alongside people like Mr. Staquf and organizations like NU... Our desire is for governments worldwide to protect the ability of everyone to choose their faith, and to live out that faith. We should invite everyone who shares this desire to join in achieving it.”

Mr. Staquf was accompanied on his visit to the U.S. by [C. Holland Taylor](#), Chairman & CEO of [LibForAll Foundation](#) and Deputy Chairman/COO of [Bayt ar-Rahmah](#), an organization they co-founded with [KH. Mustofa Bisri](#) and F. Borden Hanes, Jr. In addition to VPOTUS, they met with Rep. Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee and his senior Democrat colleague, Rep. Eliot Engel; Ambassador Nathan Sachs, the State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism; Sam Brownback, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom; and Archbishop Warda of Iraq’s Chaldean Catholic community, who was accompanied by Andrew Walther of the Knights of Columbus.

In San Francisco, Mr. Staquf delivered a speech to the [Muslim – Jewish Advisory Council](#) of the American Jewish Committee and renewed his friendship with Rabbi David Saperstein, a close advisor to the Obama administration and former U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom. In Texas, Mr. Staquf and Taylor held an extensive discussion with Dr. Bob Roberts of Northwood Church, a prominent interfaith activist with extensive ties to governments and civil society in the Middle East and Asia.