



2018_11_22_Blocking the Political Weaponization of Islam

President Joko Widodo of Indonesia celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad with 100,000 Ansor Cadres

Ansor promulgates the [Nusantara Statement](#)—calling for an end to the political weaponization of Islam—at a mass gathering heavily covered by the nation’s print, broadcast and internet media

PEKALONGAN, Indonesia: November 22, 2018. One month after Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and its international affiliate, Bayt ar-Rahmah, hosted the [Second Global Unity Forum](#) in Yogyakarta, Ansor Chairman H. Yaqut Qoumas announced the adoption of the [Nusantara Statement](#) at a mass rally of over 100,000 Ansor members, and presented a commemorative steel plaque engraved with the *Statement* to Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi).

In his [speech](#) at an event commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and National Heroes’ Day, President Jokowi praised Ansor for providing “living proof that our nation stands heir to the courage of warriors and the sincerity of heroes. GP Ansor is not easily intimidated; that is the true spirit of Indonesia. [Like Ansor,] we must all bravely demonstrate that Pancasila is the foundational ideology of the Indonesian nation state and cannot be replaced by other ideologies, including imported ideologies [propagated by transnational Islamist movements].”

The President thanked Ansor for “safeguarding Pancasila; preserving the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (“Unity Amid Diversity”); guarding the Republic of Indonesia and its 1945 Constitution; and protecting Indonesia from separatism and terrorist acts.” He also advised Ansor cadres “to remain patient in facing every challenge”: a veiled reference to [recent provocations](#) by Islamist radicals and their political allies. The mass rally in Pekalongan—which was originally scheduled to occur on October 26 in Yogyakarta, as the culminating event in Ansor’s *Kirab Satu Negeri* (One Nation Parade)—was [postponed](#) to avoid physical violence with extremists, who are widely believed to be supported by rogue elements within Indonesia’s military. President Jokowi appointed a [new Army Chief of Staff](#) on November 22, who stated that he will work to ensure [the Army’s neutrality](#) in the 2019 national election campaign.

“On this auspicious occasion, while commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad and beseeching the assistance of God and the intercession of His messenger,” said Mr. Qoumas, in a frank and [deeply moving speech](#), “Gerakan Pemuda Ansor reminds all of us that it is vital to restore the core function of religion as a spiritual path and a source of universal love and compassion. And on this evening full of divine blessings Gerakan Pemuda Ansor wishes to repeat our invitation to the people of Indonesia and the world, as contained in the *Nusantara Statement*:

“We call upon people of goodwill of every faith and nation to join in building a global consensus to prevent the political weaponization of Islam, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims, and to curtail the spread of communal hatred by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.”

“As the people of the Prophet Muhammad, it is fitting that we follow his example,” said President Jokowi, in a speech that followed his acceptance of the *Nusantara Statement*. “This includes developing noble character, fulfilling the mission of *rahmatan lil alamin* (“a blessing for all creation”) and safeguarding the spirit of brotherhood among all elements of society. A fellowship that does not discriminate on the basis of religion, social status or political views.”