



Independence (Day) Prayer

Indonesians reaffirm shared moral and spiritual values in nationwide ceremony

**Minister of Religious Affairs delivers prayer composed
by KH. A. Mustofa Bisri:**

*“Illuminate us with Your Light, oh Light of Lights,
that we may perceive the beauty of truth
and follow it.*

*That we may perceive the ugliness of falsehood
and distance ourselves from it.*

*That we may perceive the beauty of honesty
and fully embrace it.*

*That we may perceive the evil of lies
and guard against them.”*

JAKARTA, Indonesia, August 17, 2021: During a ceremony broadcast throughout the Indonesian Archipelago, Minister of Religious Affairs H. Yaqut Cholil Qoumas read a prayer composed by Nahdlatul Ulama spiritual leader and Humanitarian Islam co-founder Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri.

In the midst of the COVID pandemic, tens of millions of Indonesian school children, parents and other adults stood to attention in their homes as they watched an elaborately staged celebration of the nation’s independence broadcast from *Istana Merdeka* (Independence Palace) in downtown Jakarta. President Joko Widodo and his cabinet ministers, wearing traditional attire, solemnly presided over the ceremonial raising of Indonesia’s red-and-white flag. From 1945 – 1949, Indonesian Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists alike waged a bloody four-year struggle to prevent the re-imposition of Dutch colonialism following Imperial Japan’s surrender at the end of World War II.

The *Merah Putih* (Red-and-White banner) symbolizes the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, whose 1945 Constitution proclaims equality for all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Nahdlatul Ulama has served as a primary pillar of support for Indonesia as a *Pancasila* (multi-religious and pluralistic) nation state since its founding. NU's contributions include helping to defeat the *Darul Islam* (Islamic State) guerrilla movement, which sought to overthrow the Indonesian government in the 1950s; preventing the world's third-largest Communist party from seizing control of Indonesia in 1965/66; and establishing Indonesia as the world's most successful Muslim-majority democracy following the overthrow of the Suharto regime in 1998.

A majority of Indonesians of all faiths regard Nahdlatul Ulama's religious nationalism as a firewall against Islamist extremism and terror.

Independence (Day) Prayer, by KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, embodies a profoundly spiritual understanding of religious faith, which NU leaders regard as essential to liberate human beings from every form of bondage, "including the tyranny of our own ego and passions." As the prayer concludes:

Illuminate us with Your Light, oh Light of Lights!
 Destroy the darkness within us and leave not a single trace!
 Oh Light of Lights, above every light,
 do not allow
 false worship and envy
 hatred and the desire to harm others
 conceit and arrogance
 greed and cruelty
 spite and revenge
 falsehood and hypocrisy
 self-praise and excessive love for this world
 forgetfulness of the Day of Judgment and fear of death
 or any other dark shadows
 to cast a veil upon the vision of our hearts
 and thus prevent us from beholding
 the Infinite Beauty of Your Face
 and receiving Your Love,
 by seeking and attaining Your Presence.

Oh God, Our God, the All-Merciful One!
 Forgive us our sins
 and those of our leaders and people.
 Oh God, Our God,
 the Beneficent, the Compassionate!
 Bless our nation and its people.
 Liberate us (from spiritual ignorance) and fulfill our prayer.

Amen.

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