



## Deepening Ties Between Indonesian and African American Muslims

### Senior Indonesian politicians visit The Nation's Mosque:

**“the blessed place where Islamic proselytism began in Washington, DC”**

**“An example of the ‘indigenization of Islam’ in the world’s most powerful nation”**

WASHINGTON, DC: On November 16, 2021 a delegation of senior Indonesian politicians affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama visited the first mosque in the United States built by descendants of enslaved African Americans, and paid their respects to leaders of the Imam W. Deen Mohammed Community, which operates hundreds of mosques and Islamic centers nationwide.

The delegation was led by the Honorable H. Muhaimin Iskandar (“Gus Imin”), who is Chairman of Indonesia’s largest Islamic political party, PKB; Deputy Speaker of the People’s Representative Assembly in Indonesia (DPR); and Vice President of the world’s largest political network, Centrist Democrat International (CDI), whose headquarters are in Brussels at the heart of the European Union.

Gus Imin’s meeting followed just one week on the heels of another Indonesian delegation’s visit to The Nation’s Mosque led by PKB Deputy Chairman and Deputy Speaker of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR), Dr. Jazilul Fawaid.

In July of 2021, leaders of the world’s largest Muslim and Protestant organizations joined Imam Talib Shareef at The Nation’s Mosque to [inaugurate](#) the Movement for Shared Civilizational Values and launch a book titled [God Needs No Defense: Reimagining Muslim-Christian Relations in the 21st Century](#). News of that event attracted [global attention](#) and went viral in Indonesia.

The Nation’s Mosque was dedicated on December 10, 1960, and deliberately timed to coincide with the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly. One of its early leaders was Malcolm X, a vocal advocate for black empowerment and the promotion of Islam within the African American community.

Under the leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, his community embraced the Islamic virtues of *tawadu’* (humility), *shukr* (gratitude), and *rahmah* (universal love and compassion), displaying these qualities in their daily lives, including interactions with those whose ancestors subjected African Americans to centuries of slavery and segregation. Members of the W. Deen Mohammed Community tend to be highly patriotic and seek to cooperate with people of goodwill of every faith and nation for the betterment of humanity.

“We are united by the most powerful bond of all, our common human origin.”

~ Imam W. Deen Mohammed

“As the descendants of enslaved Africans who arrived in America centuries ago, our brothers and sisters from the W. Deen Mohammed Community are uniquely positioned to help ‘indigenize’ — that is, contextualize — Islamic teachings and adapt these to the ever changing realities of space and time, while presenting Islam as a source of *rahmah* (universal love and compassion).”

~Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf