President Jokowi Honors NU

Indonesian President Joko Widodo:
"Everyone already knows, full well, Nahdlatul Ulama's enormous contribution to the well-being of our nation."

"In sixteen days Nahdlatul Ulama will celebrate its centennial. We invite all NU followers, and all Indonesian citizens, to join in this celebration, as together we strive to create a more noble future for humanity"

~ NU Chairman KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf

SURAKARTA, Indonesia, 22 January 2023 — On an early Sunday morning, tens of thousands of Nahdlatul Ulama followers joined Indonesian President Joko Widodo and NU Chairman KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf in a 3.5 kilometer "Healthy Walk Towards the NU Centennial" in downtown Surakarta ("Solo"), former capital of the Mataram Sultanate and birthplace of President Jokowi. The event is one of hundreds being held nationwide, in honor of Nahdlatul Ulama's centennial (1344 – 1444 in the Islamic calendar).

Accompanying President Jokowi were First Lady Iriana and their grandson, Jan Ethes Srinarendra; Mr. Staquf; KH. Ahmad Said Asrori, General Secretary of the NU Supreme Council; C. Holland Taylor, Special Advisor for International Affairs to Mr. Staquf; Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives and granddaughter of former president Sukarno; Mahfud MD, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs; Erick Thohir, Minister of State Owned Enterprises; Zianudin Amali, Minister of Youth and Sport; Ganjar Pranowo, Governor of Central Java; General Listyo Sigit, Chief of the National Police; and Yenny Wahid, the daughter of former Indonesian president KH. Abdurrahman Wahid.

The heavily attended event opened with Indonesia's national anthem and the NU March, *Hubul Wathon Minal Iman* (*Love of Nation is Integral to Faith*), which inspired NU followers fighting Dutch colonialism during Indonesia's bitter war for independence (1945 – '49).

The song, which many *nahdliyyin* (NU followers) memorize from childhood, continues to animate Nahdlatul Ulama's beneficent religious nationalism.

NU's commitment to the Republic of Indonesia and its 1945 Constitution — which established Indonesia as a multi-religious and pluralistic nation state — has enabled the country to overcome numerous threats including, most recently, that posed by ISIS and other forms of Islamist extremism.

Composed in 1934 by NU co-founder KH. Wahab Chasbullah, who also established NU's 8-million-member young adults organization, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, the song proclaims that:

Indonesia is my nation and my homeland
My sacred heritage and source of pride
Whoever comes to threaten you
Shall certainly perish beneath your thorns

Nearing the end of the walk, the presidential party paused to enjoy a dance performance held in honor of Chinese New Year, whose celebration was forbidden by the Suharto regime (1967 – 1998). Indonesia's first democratically-elected president and former NU Chairman, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, restored civil rights to Indonesia's Chinese minority as one of the extensive reforms enacted during his presidential tenure.

The "Healthy Walk Towards the NU Centennial" was Indonesia's leading news story on Sunday the 22nd of January. The event concluded with a press conference held at the gates of Mangkunegaran Palace in downtown Solo.

Following the press conference, the newly enthroned ruler of the Mangkunegaran Sultanate, GPH Bhre Chakrahutomo Wira Sudjiwo, hosted the presidential party for refreshments and breakfast in the "Glass House" situated in his palace garden.