

# RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN INDONESIA

## Curious Cases of Dialogues, *Fatwās* and Laws

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**Abstract:** Religious freedom is one of the most pressing issues in contemporary Indonesia. Over recent years, the Ahmadiyah sect has become increasingly targeted by violent and conservative groups within mainstream Indonesian society. Semi-official organisations such as the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) and community-based groups such as Front Pembela Islam have sought to isolate Ahmadis within Indonesian society. Ahmadis have had their homes attacked, their mosques closed, and in the most grievous instance, three Ahmadis have been killed. The state has been both present and absent throughout the recent rise in attacks made against Ahmadis. The state has proved to be a particularly ambivalent force. This article argues that calls for dialogues have failed to produce a necessary and positive outcome for Ahmadis. The article also shows how the 2005 *fatwā* issued by the MUI and the SKB of 2008 have been used to further marginalise the Ahmadiyah movement. Despite the significant work of many intellectuals and activists being done in many sections of society, the author is not optimistic in contemplating future trends.

**Keywords:** Religious freedom, *fatwā*, dialogue, Ahmadiyah.

### Introduction

This article looks at three main issues: dialogue, law and negotiation. These issues are related back to ideas of ‘religious

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pluralism' and 'religious freedom'. These issues, in turn, are related to ideas of 'tolerance' and 'intolerance'.<sup>2</sup> The starting point for this article is the growing tensions within some sections of Indonesian society between members of various conservative (and sometimes violent) groups and members or followers of the Ahmadiyah sect. Although Ahmadiyah has two branches—Qadian and Lahore—commonly in Indonesia, little emphasis is given to the differences between these two groups of Ahmadiyah. Most often, the term 'Ahmadiyah' is used to refer to all-Ahmadis as if they all believe in the same matters; as if they are a monolithic group. Similar, acts of generalisation, are also made against Muslims in general.

Indonesian society has undergone a rapid process of democratisation and decentralisation in the post-Suharto era. The impulse towards democratisation and decentralisation are efforts against countering the highly authoritarian and highly centralised governmental system of the New Order era. Moreover, this was a government that was particularly strict in enforcing rigid interpretations of national ideologies, such as the Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and also the primacy of *pembangunan* (or, development). Although, *reformasi* (the student-led movement that helped bring about Suharto's resignation in May 1998) has had mixed successes, one of the generally acknowledged achievements has been a climate of greater freedom of expression—indeed, this covers expression of one's religious identity.

Islamic identity, for example, was largely silenced throughout the New Order era, for, Islamism was considered as a possible threat to the national ideology of Pancasila—an ideology that acknowledges the importance of religious belief, but asserts that Indonesia is not beholden to a direct relationship between Islam and the State. Nonetheless, Indonesia's national politics is tightly linked to issues of Islamic expression and identity. In the post-New Order era there has been a strong emergence of many kinds of Islamic voices: whether it be in mainstream politics, social groups that claim to be acting in the

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<sup>2</sup> A recent ICG report writes of the rise of 'intolerance' – see ICG, *Indonesia: Christianisation and Intolerance* (Jakarta/Brussels, November 2010). Melissa Crouch's article also positions recent developments in regards to 'intolerance'. See, Melissa Crouch, "Ahmadiyah in Indonesia: A History of Religious Tolerance Under Threat?" in *AhLJ*, vol.36, no.1 (2011): pp. 56-57.

name of Islam, and also, a rise in the popularity of Muslim fashion and popular culture.

This article, therefore, looks at the different ways in which Islam and the state rub up against one another. Islamist forces (or impulses) and ‘the state’ are not necessarily two distinct groups, but have elements of crossover, as well as points of divergence. Two points of convergence and divergence can be found in that of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulama Council) and the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Defenders’ of Islam Front). For example, the MUI is increasingly endorsed by the government and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, while the FPI, which generally acts outside the law (beyond the state), is to varying degrees receiving implicit support from the government. That is, little has been done to reign in their extra-legal activities. Moreover, their demands for banning Ahmadiyah have been accepted by various regional governments, such as East Java.

While the FPI is not the only hard-line and vocal organisation that has spoken out against Ahmadiyah—and in some cases acted violently against its members—it perhaps is the most ‘popular’ of conservative movements, which can mobilise its supporters as well as capture headlines in national newspapers. The FPI also enjoys some degree of interaction with governmental representatives and the police.<sup>3</sup> Both Jakarta’s governor, Fauzi Bowo and the chief of Jakarta’s police, Gen. Timur Pradopo attended the FPI’s ‘celebration’ of the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FPI’s founding.<sup>4</sup> At this occasion, FPI’s leader, Habib Rizieq asserted that the ‘the state’ and the FPI were not enemies. Instead, the enemy of the FPI is ‘sin’. The closeness between the state and societal organisations (*organisasi massa; ormas*) is a relationship that is shifting and with unclear borders. Societal organisations, such as FPI, moreover, at times claim to be acting out the state’s demands, while, at other times, they can be seen to be threatening and challenging to the state.

### ‘Indonesian Islam’

Indonesia is widely known to be a ‘tolerant’ and ‘pluralist’ society. Another statement made about Indonesia is that it is ‘the world’s most

<sup>3</sup> ICG, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree* (Jakarta/Brussels, 2008), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> “Fauzi, Police Chief, Hobnob with FPI,” *The Jakarta Post*, 8 October, 2010.

populous Muslim country'. The differences between Muslims within Indonesia are often glossed over. Such a statement also allows for little ability to 'measure' the degree of religiosity amongst Indonesia's Muslims. It is often a point of curiosity for some commentators that the high-percentage of Indonesia's Muslim population does not necessarily correlate to the success or otherwise of Islamist political parties in Indonesia. That is, political parties that espouse strongly Islamist ideologies have generally not succeeded. Perhaps, however, perceptions of Indonesia are changing—as indeed, Indonesian society is changing. Perceptions of whether Indonesia is a 'tolerant' or 'conservative' or 'intolerant' or 'liberal' Muslim society, however, depend on what one chooses to look at. If one looks at the statements of representatives of the MUI or the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it seems that there is an increasing degree of aggression towards groups that are considered to be 'deviant'. On the other hand, if one reads the views of scholars and intellectuals in large volumes such as Budhy Munawar-Rachman's book, *Membela Kebebasan Beragama* (Defending Religious Freedom)<sup>5</sup>, it seems that there remains a high degree of advocacy for religious pluralism. What 'Islam' is in Indonesia and whether or not it 'is' something in particular, is subject to much contestation.

Formulations of 'Indonesian Islam' or 'Muslims in Indonesia' are very much contingent upon which kind of 'Indonesian Islam' one considers, or who are the 'Muslims in Indonesia' one chooses to engage with. In the wake of anti-Ahmadiyah violence in Banten, and attacks on churches in Temanggung, Tim Lindsey states that

Islam in Indonesia is still overwhelmingly extraordinarily tolerant. Extraordinarily moderate and very open. But you wouldn't know it, reading the newspapers, not just internationally, but in Indonesia as well.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Budhy Munawar-Rachman (ed.), *Membela Kebebasan Beragama: Percakapan tentang Sekularisme, Liberalisme, Pluralisme* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> "Interview with Prof. Tim Lindsey," Up Close, The University of Melbourne (See <http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au/episode/episode-139-muslim-publics-divided-encounters-anti-pluralism-democratic-indonesia#transcription>).

Organisations such as the *Setara Institute*<sup>7</sup> and *The Wahid Institute*, however, in their recent yearly reports, have shown the rapid and strong increase in acts of intolerance and violence towards religious minorities. Moreover, these acts made against religious freedom have also been performed by the state, or received the implicit support of the state.<sup>8</sup>

### Killings and Dialogues

In the wake of the February 2011 attacks against Ahmadis, many intellectuals have called for a dialogue (*dialog*) between the members of Ahmadiyah and groups—such as Front Pembela Islam. Attacks have been made against the property of Ahmadis, their mosques, their houses, and most seriously against individuals. The killings of three Ahmadis in Cikeusik (Banten province in western Java) is one of the moments that has caused much controversy between advocates of religious pluralism and those who advocate the authenticity and truthfulness of a particular interpretation of Islamic doctrines. The discourses as carried out in the mainstream press in Indonesia represents a significant moment in a negotiation between ‘the state’ and ‘society’, between ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘deviancy’ and between ‘religious authorities’ and ‘the laity’. The contestation of ‘Islam’ is also one of competing ‘orthodoxies’—just as the MUI reject Ahmadiyah for its ‘divergence’, an Ahmadiyah practice rejects mainstream Sunni Islam.<sup>9</sup>

In other instances, some commentators have emphasised the legality of citizens to practice their religion in the manner that they choose.<sup>10</sup> The practice of dialogue and the enforcement of particular

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, their reports on the ‘conditions of religious freedom’ in Indonesia; the radicalisation of religion in Jabodetabek and West Java as well as in urban regions: <http://www.setara-institute.org/category/category/reports>

<sup>8</sup> The Wahid Institute, *Laporan Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan dan Toleransi 2010* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Lilik Rofiqoh, “The Fatwas of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia on the Ahmadiyah Doctrines: The Problems of Religious Authority and Tolerance” (Leiden University, Unpublished MA Thesis, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Bonar Tigor Naipospos and Robertus Robert (eds), *Beragama, Berkeyakinan & Berkonstitusi; Tinjauan Konstitusional Praktik Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia* (Jakarta: The Setara Institute, 2009); Ahmad Suaedy, Rumadi, M. Subhi Azhari and Badrus Samsul Fata, *Islam, Konstitusi dan Hak Asasi Manusia: Problematika Hak Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan di Indonesia* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2009).

laws, however, will not necessarily bring about the easy resolution to conflicts between groups such as FPI and a religious minority such as Ahmadiyah. Dialogues and laws also offer the opportunity for some to further their will upon others. These are also kinds of violence – that operate in the realms of discourse and legality. The close relationship between acts of discourse and acts of violence is something that has been argued by Luthfi Assyaukanie in his article, “Fatwa and Violence in Indonesia”.<sup>11</sup>

Dialogue is a kind of discourse in which an exchange of ideas, feelings, beliefs and perspectives can be shared. A dialogue is opposed to that of a monologue: in which there is only one active voice, or speaker. Dialogues are seemingly egalitarian and provide opportunities for different interest groups to be heard and to represent themselves. Dialogue is also being used in Indonesian language newspapers. Although a ‘dialogue’ is a welcomed alternative to physical violence, a dialogue is not without its own pitfalls and needs to be judged on its own merits. It is worth questioning, for example, as to who participates in the dialogue and for what ends. A dialogue is not something that can be forced to take place. Dialogues also present an opportunity to perform a kind of discursive violence: a violence, which even if only spoken, still rejects the other participants in the dialogue.

Franz Magnis-Suseno provides an overview of the ‘dialogue’ experience in Indonesia in the following way:

There are a great number of dialogues going on among Indonesian intellectuals about moral-political questions. Indonesia has travelled through a history full of ups and downs, facing great problems, and always coming out a little better. Thus things to talk about abound: national identity, the crucial, partly tragic points in the nations [sic] history, including terrible violations of human rights, the questions of Islam (brought up by Muslims), democracy, liberalism, social justice, humanism, revolution and legality, state and religions, the question of the Islamic state, republicanism, amendments of the constitution, neo-liberalism, globalisation, socialism, national sovereignty versus internationalization, Indonesian versus local culture, position of the Javanese (who are politically and cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Luthfi Assyaukanie, “Fatwa and Violence in Indonesia,” *Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 11 (2009): pp. 1-29.

dominant) in Indonesia, religious freedom, proselytism (“*kristianisas?*”).<sup>12</sup>

As Magnis-Suseno writes, dialogues, discussions and debates abound. There is a lively discussion of a range of issues on television stations, in newspapers and magazines, on websites, in universities, in public forums. The question of who is participating and which questions are being asked, however, are the measuring stick of whether or not a dialogue is successful. Magnis-Suseno, however, is an optimist, for he sees hope in *silaturahmi* (“making acquaintance”) even with ‘unbending hardliners’ as they may have ‘long term positive effects’.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, Fatimah Husein has criticised the Indonesian government’s attempts at implementing inter-religious dialogue. Husein acknowledges that the government has held dialogues, but that these have mainly been responses to conflicts.<sup>14</sup> As such, this point corresponds to what has happened in the wake of the violent acts against Ahmadis. In making an argument for how the government can implement more successful dialogues, Husein argues as follows:

First, rather than emphasizing the “unity” and pretending that there is no conflict between religious believers, the government should address the root causes of disharmony faced by those religious communities...Second, the government itself should “refrain from becoming the perpetrator of violence (or escalation of conflicts) either by making official statements or policies that would be counter-productive to the dialogue’s aims or through weak law enforcements.”<sup>15</sup>

Many commentators emphasise the difference between orthodox Sunni belief and that of the Ahmadis, while there is little acknowledgment of commonality and sources for potential ‘unity’

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<sup>12</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, “Interreligious Dialog: Indonesian Experiences,” in Richard Potz, Sabine Kroissenbrunner and Astrid Hafner (eds), *State, Law and Religion in Pluralistic Societies – Austrian and Indonesian Experiences* (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2010), p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Magnis-Suseno, “Interreligious Dialog,” p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Fatimah Husein, “State and Religion in Indonesia: The Case of Inter-religious Dialogue,” in Richard Potz, Sabine Kroissenbrunner and Astrid Hafner (eds), *State, Law and Religion in Pluralistic Societies – Austrian and Indonesian Experiences* (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2010), p. 90.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

between ‘mainstream’ Muslims and Ahmadis. The difference in doctrine is offensive enough for some Muslims for it to be described as blasphemy and an insult to mainstream Islam – this view is also held by the semi-official *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*. M. Amin Djamaluddin of the Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam has also been active in authoring anti-Ahmadiyah texts such as *Ahmadiyah dan Pembajakan Al-Qur’an*<sup>16</sup> and *Ahmadiyah Menodai Islam*.<sup>17</sup>

In the days after the attacks on Ahmadis in Cikeusik, some leaders referred to the belief of Ahmadis as being blasphemous of Islam. (This is little debated, for Qadian Ahmadiyah is distinct for its belief in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.) Elsewhere, in *Sabili* a conservative (and popular) magazine, Ahmadi members are blamed for inciting the violence against them. Moreover, they are referred to as being intolerant of non-Ahmadis. There has been a rush to be considered as ‘tolerant’, as well as a claim to being ‘offended’. Discourses regarding religious orthodoxy and deviancy somehow become more important than the criminality of three killings performed in broad daylight.

Dialogue, however, might be more useful as a tool to prevent violence, rather than to solve cases or ease tensions after grave violations of one’s rights has already taken place. Since the killings and other attacks, no one has volunteered a statement in which he or she acknowledges a kind of complicity in sharpening attitudes against Ahmadis. Calls for dialogue, thus, become an effort to avoid accountability. Groups that have participated in discursive and physical violence against others, should not participate in public ‘dialogues’ unless they are willing to acknowledge the violence of their actions and words. Ahmadis or others, do not need to validate such calls for dialogues, until those who are guilty have faced public and criminal censure.

A *Kompas* report of 9 March 2011, titled “Segera Gelar Dialog” (Quickly Hold a Dialogue) is one such article in which the importance of a ‘dialogue’ is emphasised. In this case, the report is covering the demands of various religious leaders –Franz Magnis-Suseno, Gomar

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<sup>16</sup> M. Amin Djamaluddin, *Ahmadiyah dan Pembajakan Al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> M. Amin Djamaluddin, *Ahmadiyah Menodai Islam* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam, 2000).



Gultom, Salahuddin Wahid and Benny Susetyo. In this article Salahuddin Wahid ‘reminds’ the Minister for Religious Affairs (Suryadharma Ali) of his promise to hold a dialogue after the killings in Cikeusik. Wahid stated that

Hopefully that dialogue will be implemented. There are many accusations being made against the Ahmadiyah that need to be confirmed so that there are no misunderstandings.<sup>18</sup>

A report in *Kompas* on 19 March 2011 also re-iterated the importance of a dialogue between Muslims and non-Ahmadiyah Muslims. The report is titled “Pemerintah Perlu Fasilitas Dialog” (The Government Needs to Facilitate a Dialogue). This report covered comments made by Bahtiar Effendy, an academic based at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. On this occasion, Effendy cautioned the government against issuing new laws and that the government should reject all forms of violence by holding to the laws that are already in existence.

Nonetheless, the calls for Ahmadiyah representatives to participate in a dialogue were unheeded. The representatives of Ahmadiyah did not attend the ‘dialogue’ that was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011. They rejected the invitation based on their opinion that it would be aimed at ‘discrediting their beliefs’.<sup>19</sup> In rejecting the dialogue, a representative from the Legal Aid Foundation, Erna Ratnaningsih stated as follows:

Even though members of civil society groups were there, the Ahmadiis fear they would be cornered, as happened in a 2007 dialogue. Many of the people participating in the dialogue are in favour of those who want Ahmadiyah to be disbanded.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, Ratnaningsih also stated their rejection was also related to the terms and framing of the proposed dialogue:

We want a neutral mediator and participants. [The current] composition, regardless of NGOs, would only bring the

<sup>18</sup> The above is my translation. The original is as follows: “*Semoga dialog itu bisa dilaksanakan. Banyak tuduhan terhadap Jemaat Ahmadiyah yang perlu dikonfirmasi agar tidak terjadi kesalahpahaman.*”

<sup>19</sup> See “Ahmadiyah Skips ‘Biased, Unfair’ Govt-initiated Dialogue,” *The Jakarta Post*, 23 March, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> As quoted in “Ahmadiyah Skips.”

matter into the perspective of religion...What we want is a dialogue about Ahmadiyah congregations' constitutional rights as citizens. Don't judge them on their faith.<sup>21</sup>

Ratnaningsih's point is important as it is an attempt to shift the terms of 'dialogue' away from 'belief' and 'faith' to matters of citizenship. Those against Ahmadiyah are arguing against their right to believe in particular ideas while Ahmadis and those who defend them argue that they have a right to believe in their religion. Dialogue has not represented an opportunity for a solving or overcoming of a mutual misunderstanding, but has represented an opportunity for further marginalisation of a minority religious group.

### The MUI and Ahmadiyah

As well as dialogues, 'the law' has also represented an opportunity to further marginalise a minority group: in this case, the Ahmadis (whether they be of the Qadian or Lahore schools). A *fatwā*, a non-binding legal opinion, was issued by the MUI against Ahmadiyah belief. Secondly, the *Surat Keputusan Bersama* (SKB, Joint Ministerial Decree) of 2008 also targeted Ahmadiyah. The *fatwās* issued against Ahmadis have been documented in Rofiqoh<sup>22</sup>, while ICG<sup>23</sup> and Crouch<sup>24</sup> have looked at the different laws that have targeted Ahmadiyah. A study that looks at the intersection of law with freedom of religion can be found in Al-Khanif's book, *Hukum dan Kebebasan Beragama*.<sup>25</sup> Lindsey has also spoken of how the law is being used to marginalise Ahmadiyah.<sup>26</sup> Al Khanif's book includes a short chapter on the SKB.<sup>27</sup> This SKB has been used widely by conservative groups as a legitimising tool for their actions, threats, or violence against Ahmadis.

The MUI issued a *fatwā* against Ahmadiyah in July 2005. The *fatwā* from the MUI is (1) The Ahmadiyah sect is a group that is outside Islam. It is mislead and is misleading. The people who follow it are

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Rofiqoh, "The Fatwas of the Majelis Ulama."

<sup>23</sup> ICG, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah*.

<sup>24</sup> Crouch, "Ahmadiyah in Indonesia," pp. 56-57.

<sup>25</sup> Al Khanif, *Hukum dan Kebebasan Beragama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: LaksBang Mediatama, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> See "Interview with Tim Lindsey."

<sup>27</sup> Al Khanif, *Hukum*, pp. 260-265.

*murtads* (apostates)—they have left Islam, (2) As such, with the law regarding apostasy (*murtad*), the MUI implores those who follow the Ahmadiyah sect to return to Islamic teachings in accordance with the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth (*al-rujūʾ ilā al-ḥaqq*), (3) The implementation of the relevant points of the *fatwā* in regards to the banning of Ahmadiyah in the Republic of Indonesia must be co-ordinated with the relevant parties. The government as the *ulī al-amr* has the responsibility to implement the *fatwā*. The MUI does not condone any action that damages another, or ‘anarchist’ actions towards others, property or activities that are not in accordance with this MUI’s *fatwā*.<sup>28</sup>

Assyaukanie regards this *fatwā* as one that may generate “intolerant actions or violent attitudes”.<sup>29</sup> He also asserts that “the MUI’s *fatwā* has been a powerful tool to discredit Ahmadiyah members and their activities in Indonesia.”<sup>30</sup>

As Rofiqoh has argued, this *fatwā* is in opposition to the Indonesian constitution, which guarantees freedom of belief. Rofiqoh writes that “[this *fatwā*] clearly shows intolerance towards the Ahmadis, since it entails that the Ahmadis have no right to live in any part of Indonesia as long as they consider themselves to be followers of either the Qadian or Lahore branch”.<sup>31</sup> Rofiqoh asserts that the *fatwā* ‘violates the Constitution article no.28e point 2 which admits the freedom of each citizen to adhere to a certain belief, to express his/her thoughts in accordance with his/her conscience’.<sup>32</sup> As such, this is an example of where a semi-official organisation such as the MUI interfered with matters that should be protected by the state.

### The SKB and Restrictions of Religious Freedom

The SKB has also been used against the Ahmadis. At a presentation at the Asian Law Centre at The University of Melbourne, Adnan Buyung Nasution told how he was one of the formulators of the SKB.<sup>33</sup> He narrated that issuing the SKB in which Ahmadiyah is

<sup>28</sup> This is my translation that comes from the document, ‘Penjelasan tentang Fatwa Aliran Ahmadiyah’. This is available from the MUI website at: [www.mui.or.id](http://www.mui.or.id)

<sup>29</sup> Assyaukanie, “Fatwa,” p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Rofiqoh, “The Fatwas of the Majelis Ulama,” p. 72.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> This event was held at the Asian Law Centre, on April 5, 2011.

not banned, but, has its practices restricted was the compromise he could make with the Minister of Religious Affairs, Justice Minister, and the Interior Minister. Throughout the course of the discussion, Nasution stated that representatives of Ahmadiyah had not been consulted prior to the release of the SKB. Nasution has recently been active in defending members of Ahmadiyah against their persecution. He has argued that the ‘intention’ of the SKB was to prevent further acts of violence against Ahmadis. Crouch also refers to the justification for the SKB in similar terms.<sup>34</sup> The intention, however, is irrelevant, for it restricts the freedom of Ahmadis to practice their religion as they wish (which is guaranteed by the Indonesian constitution). Moreover, the government is forbidden to intervene in a manner that is discriminatory, as such actions are illegal under international law.<sup>35</sup> Al Khanif describes the SKB as follows:

[it bans all] manifestations and Ahmadiyah teachings. It warns and orders citizens to not talk about, promote or seek support to perform interpretations of a religion that is followed in Indonesia, or to perform religious activities that are similar to that religion.<sup>36</sup>

The issuing of the decree was met with muted criticism from various Islamic organisations. Indeed, it was supported by many of the hardline groups such as FPI, Forum Umat Islam (Forum of Muslim Communities), Hizb Ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, The Indonesian Liberty Party), Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam (LPPI, The Institute for the Study and Research of Islam) and Forum Umat Ulama Indonesia (FUUI, Forum of Indonesian Muslim Communities and Scholars). These groups all played a role in pressing the government and the MUI to issue the SKB. Some members of the Indonesian parliament and legislature also supported the decree and called for its socialisation.<sup>37</sup> The ICG points out that although most Muslim leaders are very quick to condemn acts of violence, there is greater difficulty, or indeed, reluctance to challenge ‘radical positions’ through mobilising their masses. The ICG report ends optimistically:

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<sup>34</sup> Crouch, “Ahmadiyah in Indonesia,” p. 57.

<sup>35</sup> Al Khanif, *Hukum*, p. 260.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

The decree on Ahmadiyah is a step backward for Indonesia, but if it galvanises pro-democracy activists and constitutional defenders into action, there may yet be some positive outcome.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly to Husein's optimism regarding possibilities for 'deep dialogue', there seems to be little positive outcome from the SKB. It has received much criticism in interviews conducted by Budhy Munawar-Rachman and his team,<sup>39</sup> yet, the violence and efforts of radical groups have given little consolation to those who are relying on 'moderate' and 'tolerant' Muslim discourses to prevail. It is also worth considering to what degree liberal Muslim discourse has an effect in countering conservative and antagonistic discourse that may have greater popular appeal.

### Uncertain Directions

In the wake of the killings in Cikeusik, the provinces of East Java, West Java and South Sulawesi have banned the practice of Ahmadi. These laws are curious as they seemingly go against the laws that are part of the UUD 1945 that state that each citizen is able to hold his or her belief in accordance with their wishes. It seems that these governors, however susceptible they are to different political interests, are willing to give in to the demands of different radical groups. Sultan Hamengkubuwono of Yogyakarta, however, has rejected the calls for such a ban. Fauzi Bowo, after earlier saying that "whatever happens to Ahmadi is up to God" and that he was considering such a ban, has also not followed the proscriptive decrees of other governors.

Instead of moving to protect Ahmadi from further discrimination and violent attacks, the state through laws issued at the provincial level have provided more room for discrimination against Ahmadi. Groups such as FPI and FUUI have not been held accountable either for their roles in attacks on Ahmadi or for their violently discriminatory discourse against other citizens. Hate-speech is normal when talking about Ahmadiyah. So, the state is present and laws are being created. These laws, however, have followed the demands of 'the mob', rather than referring back to the authority of the UUD 1945 and the other national ideologies, which state 'unity in diversity' and 'social justice for all'.

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<sup>38</sup> ICG, *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah*, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> See Munawar-Rachman (ed.), *Membela Kebebasan Beragama*.

The clashes between a self-proclaimed mainstream Muslim majority and that of a minority Muslim sect (Ahmadiyah) are representative of a conflict between 'the orthodox' and 'un-orthodox'. The orthodox and those who claim to be so are unwilling to accept those who divert from what is considered to be 'the true' or 'the real' Islam. This is seen clearly in recent attempts to re-convert Ahmadis away from their chosen faith and back to 'the real', 'the right' and 'the true' Islam. In such an instance, the orthodox clearly consider themselves to be the paternal representatives who know what is best for the infantile 'other' who has strayed from 'the straight path'.

More generally, this clash between orthodox and un-orthodox is seen in the broad division between Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). As a modernist organisation, Muhammadiyah has been responsible for much social change and reform. Nonetheless, a modernist bent also lends itself to a strict interpretation of what is logical, linear, right and true. As such, there is little tolerance of those practices that are part of tradition, or, of a society's pre-Islamic practices.

NU, generally described as a 'traditionalist' organisation, however, has more room to accept practices long accepted into local custom. Whether it is acts of pilgrimage to the graves of the Sembilan Wali, or a strong study of the Kitab Kuning, NU is seen as representing an Islam that is somewhat between Islamic and Indonesian traditions; or in the words of the late Abdurrahman Wahid, an Indonesian-isation of Islam. Wahid's emphasis on and the practice of visiting others from other social groups—*bersilabturrahmi*—is a legacy of great example. Here, Wahid's practice created a kind of Islamic pluralism, without having to express it in terms considered to have come from a 'western' discourse.

## Conclusion

A negotiation of values between what is considered 'Islamic' and 'Indonesian' or between what is 'orthodox' and 'un-orthodox' was strikingly absent on that morning of February 6, 2011. It was a moment when 'dialogue' was no longer possible. It was a moment for violence and rejection of the other. Decrees at the provincial level have further normalised violence against Ahmadis. A dialogue 'after the fact' will not solve anything until the injustices against this particular minority are recognised. It is not the time for a dialogue, but the time for openness and arguments: where people are willing to accept the

legitimacy of others to hold their beliefs. Until guilt and culpability is established, a monologue of violence – both physical and discursive – will persist. []

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