

## **Religious Violence, Islamic Militancy, and Conflict Transformation in Contemporary Indonesia**

Chusnunia<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Fakulti Sastra dan Sain Sosial, University of Malaya, Malaysia)  
University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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**Abstract :** This piece discusses acts of religious-based violence committed by radical Muslim groups in the post-Soeharto Indonesia and how to deal with it by applying models and approaches of conflict transformation and peacebuilding relevant for local context of the country. Since reformation in 1998, acts of ethno-religious-political violence broke out across the country scattered from the western areas to the eastern part of Indonesia. Each violent act in the nation has no doubt different roots, objectives, and histories from one to another. However, the focus of this paper will be limited only on religious-based violence committed by militant Muslim groups, and then try to apply approaches and methods of conflict transformation and peacebuilding by emphasizing legal-justice aspects, utilizing local potential powers, and the role of religion, local tradition, culture, and wisdom as focal resources for building peace and resolving violent conflicts in the country.

**Keywords :** muslim, violence, transformation, wahabism, indonesia

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### **I. RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in the world with some 88.7% of its 240 million professing Islam, witnessed “the formation of a movement for democratic Muslim politics that was second only to post-Khomeini Iran in scale and intellectual vigor” (Hefner, 2005, 272) in the final years of the authoritarian Soeharto regime. Just as the Iranian Islamic Revolution that toppled Syah Pahlevi in 1979, the coalition that united to overthrow Soeharto in May 1998 included Indonesians from varied religious backgrounds with its key role played by a new class of Muslim intellectual’s intent on providing solid Islamic bases for democracy, pluralism, egalitarianism, liberalism, and civil society.

This new class of Muslim intellectuals, scholars, and activists emerged since the 1990s when Soeharto began to give fresh wind to them by establishing state-sponsored the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals. Since then, Indonesia has had a wealth of activists and intellectuals involved in the engagement of religious discourses to affect a foundational reorientation of Muslim politics (Hefner 2000; Bruinessen 2002). If we use analyses of theorists Guillermo O’Donnell and Philip Schmitter, who identify a coalitional structure linking “exemplary individuals” and intellectuals to mass-based organizations in society as most pivotal for a successful transition to democracy (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986), Indonesia in the late 1990s probably was one of the most important centers of Muslim reformation in this planet.

The world witnessed the collaboration among those middle class intellectuals and activists who succeeded in driving people-power to topple the dictatorial Soeharto regime from his throne in May 1998. Since people power took over and the reformation “opened the door” for Indonesia, freedom has become a cheap thing. People can express their political wants and desires freely. Since then, political parties, NGOs and other organizations have mushroomed because freedom of expression, speech, and association was guaranteed by the law and constitution, an impossible feat in the past Indonesia, when this country was governed by military dictatorial regime. On one hand, this is good news for Indonesian society, who had lived over 32 years (1966-1998) under brutal state intelligence agencies. Freedom is an “inborn right” for human beings that should be maintained. But, on the other hand, as an outcome of this freedom and of celebration of political liberalism, Islamic conservatives and radical Muslim groups<sup>1</sup> have been growing rapidly across the country (Ross 2001,

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<sup>1</sup> The term radical/militant Muslim group refers to any Muslim group that uses violent ways and undemocratic manners to achieve their objectives. These radical Muslim groups, among others, include the Laskar Jihad, formed by the Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunah wal Jama’ah under the leadership of Ja’far Umar Thalib, the Front Pembela Islam (FPI/Islam Defenders Front) led by Habib Rizq Shihab, the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI/Council of Indonesian Jihadi Fighters) led by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, the Jamaah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia (JAMI/Association of Indonesian Muslims Brotherhood) led by Habib Husain al-Habsyi, and the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI/Indonesian Party of Liberation), the Jamaah Islamiyah (Abdullah Sunkar & Abu Bakar Ba’syir). Azyumardi Azra,

Galvan 2001; Noorheidi 2006). The problem does not lie in the growth itself of Islamic militant groups, but on what these groups have done in the pursuit of their objectives by committing violence and utilizing coercive ways to attack religious minority group that directly oppose the principles of human rights and human's universal values.

There is a great deal of evidence of ethno-religious violent conflicts and other human rights violations committed by those militant groups in the post-Soeharto Indonesia scattering from Aceh to Papua (Bertrand 2004; Klinken 2007). Wars between Christians and Muslim militants in the eastern province of Maluku, for instance, took some eight thousand lives. The Battles began in January 1999 and escalated during the following three years (ICG 2002). In addition, located in the central part of Indonesia, Poso, the city in the Central Sulawesi province has been wracked by lengthy religious violent conflicts and *jihadi* attacks, causing a thousand deaths (HRW 2002, ICG 2007).

Still, in the months following Soeharto's fall in May 1998, radical Islamist paramilitaries sprang up in major cities across Indonesia to destroy bars, discotheques, and stores that sell alcohol, to close (some) churches, and other alleged centers, as well as to sweep western people. On other occasions, these radical Islamist paramilitaries raided bookstores for left-wing and liberal literature, intimidated unveiled women, arrested an unmarried couple found sleeping in a hotel, and used machetes and cudgels to break up pro-democracy meetings and gatherings. Their violent and vandalizing acts continue.

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 2002, a bomb exploded in the popular tourist resort of Kuta, Bali, in which almost two hundred people died, mostly foreigners and Australians. This terrorist attack was the largest in scale after those in New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001. Investigations blamed the Jamaah Islamiyah, an obscure radical Islamic group that was unknown only a few months before the attacks. This group was suspected of having links to the al-Qa'ida terrorist network (Bertrand 2004, Abuza 2002). Less than one year after the tragedy, a bomb re-exploded at the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in August 2005, in which thirteen more were killed.

Besides blasting hotels and committing other deadly attacks, the radical Muslim groups had destroyed churches and closed others in West Java (the churches belonged to *Gereja Kristen Pasundan*—the Pasundan Christian Churches). Likewise those radical Muslim groups devastated Ahmadiyah<sup>2</sup> sect properties, such as Mosques, schools, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), offices, etc. in Parung-Bogor and Kuningan (West Java), Jakarta, NTB and other places. Moreover, they attacked and prohibited the *pesantren* (residential boarding school) of *I'tikaf Ngaji Lelaku* led by Yusman Roy<sup>3</sup>, the Cancer and Drug Rehabilitation Center under leadership Ardy Hussein<sup>4</sup>, *Salamullah* sect led by Lia Aminuddin<sup>5</sup>, and most recently *al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah* led by Ahmad Mushaddeq. Not only that, they provoked, intimidated, and attacked Liberal Islam Network<sup>6</sup> activists, and the Institute People Children for Education and Advocacy office—an Islam-based NGO that counters the ideas of Syari'ah law application in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, and so forth. Likewise hard-line Muslim groups always seed terror, hatred, and fear to ones outside their groups, and commit violence and restriction by bombing and sweeping some Western people. The most recent data shows that these hard-line Muslims had taken over local mosques, mostly in the cities in the northern part of the island of Java. After

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“Islamic Radical Movements in Indonesia.” *The Jakarta Post*, February 15, 2006. Robert Hefner, “Islam Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia,” in Robert W Hefner (ed.), *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Ahmadiyah was founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908), who was born in the small village of Qadian in Punjab, India. In 1889, he declared that he had received divine revelation authorizing him to accept allegiance of the faithful (called *bay'ah*). There are two streams of Ahmadiyah, namely, Qadian and Lahore. The persecution of Ahmadiyah is not only in Indonesia but also in worldwide of Islamic regions, for example in Bangladesh. See Ali Dayan Hasan, “Breach of Faith: Prosecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Bangladesh”, Human Rights Watch, June 2005 Vol. 17, No. 6 (C). Actually, in Indonesia, both Ahmadiyah sects (Qadian and Lahore), called Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI), are the “legal Islamic sects” protected by the law since “colonial era”. By Indonesian government, Ahmadiyah had received “legal status” based on decree of the Ministry of Justice No. JA 5/23/13 on March 13 1953. Thus, the existence of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia is “legal”, not an “unlawful organization” (Rahardjo 2005). To know more about this Ahmadiyah in Indonesia case see The Wahid Institute reports at <http://www.gatra.com>

<sup>3</sup> Yusman Roy, the leader of the *pesantren* of *I'tikaf Ngaji Lelaku*, an Islamic boarding school based in Malang, East Java, has taught using two languages (Arabic and Indonesian) in the shalat prayer. Roy, who was only trying to teach his followers a good way of praying was arrested and was charged with committing blasphemy. His use of the languages in the shalat was considered a criminal act, and brought him to the jail.

<sup>4</sup> Another case involving blasphemy accusations occurred in Probolinggo, East Java This time it was the ideas coming from a drug counselor at the Cancer and Drugs Rehabilitation Center (YNKCA) led by Ardhi Hussein. Thousands of people ransacked the complex because of what had been written in the book aiming to help addicts, *From Darkness toward Brightness* (the title derived from the Qur'an *Min al-Dlulumat ila al-Nuur*). The foundation was closed and he and his assistants were arrested. Ironically, his followers, including small children, were evicted from their premises and are now virtual refugees. The children were also accused of blasphemy and shunned!

<sup>5</sup> Lia Aminuddin or Lia Eden is a woman leader of the West Java-based Salamullah cult. She has admitted to receiving “enlightenment” and a “mandate” from an angel and God through a dream as *mahdi* (messiah) to teach/guide people to the right path.

<sup>6</sup> Liberal Islam Network is the Jakarta based NGO that focuses on and promotes the ideas of Islamic liberalism, pluralism, tolerance, democracy, feminism and other universal values / principles, as well as counters Islamic fundamentalist movements. Founded by young intellectuals and activists, this NGO has become one of Islamic militant groups' target particularly in Indonesia.

taking over mosques and building *madrasah* and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), they use such places as a way to provoke hatred and enmity toward non-Muslims, especially Christians and Jews, as well as local Muslims who are considered “less-Islamic.”

Based upon the above explanation, religious freedom, democracy, civil society, and civic pluralism are under serious threat in today’s Indonesia. Such a threat basically comes from two flows: (1) a strong wave of islamization as manifested by the formalization (and imposition) of Islamic law in several regions of the country<sup>7</sup>, and (2) a widespread of anti-pluralist movements and vandalistic, violent, and discriminatory acts against groups that implement religious forms different from the mainstream Islam. The latter cases are serious violations of human rights and threaten the very foundation of the nation and the pivotal strength of the state of Indonesia. Moreover, the outbursts of ethno-religious violence, some of which showed the telltale signs of old regime provocation (Hefner 2000, 2005) and other violent acts were linked to independent extremists, including one group with ties to al-Qai’da (Abuza 2002, ICG 2005), have slowed the reform movement mentored by Muslim intellectuals and activists and put the Muslim community’s pluralist experiment and democratic Muslim politics in question.

The problem becomes more complicated, since the previous central government did not show a firm attitude and resolute steps against the violators. The government seems hesitant to protect religious freedom. This can be seen from the hands-off way the state has dealt with those cases. Indeed, they have arrested “terrorist syndicates” who exploded the Bali hotels, the Marriot hotel, and the Australian embassy. Additionally, the government has captured those who are suspected by CIA as “al-Qa’ida linkage.” However, the government and the security forces did not prevent attacks committed by radical Muslims on certain targeted groups (e.g. Ahmadiyah, Syiite’s, and other local sects).

What has happened in Indonesia since the reformation in 1998 is a clear example of what Johan Galtung calls direct, cultural, and structural violence<sup>8</sup>. Structural violence is built based on the assumption that some groups, classes, sexes/genders, and nationalities should have more access to goods, resources (economical, cultural, and socio-political), and opportunities than other groups; then this assumption is brought to social, political, and economic systems that govern societies, states, and the world (Slattery, et. al. 2005). The term structural violence, according to peace researcher Johan Galtung, refers to any form of injustice and inequality which is “internalized” by dictatorial regimes into socio-economic-political systems. Galtung uses the term “structural violence” because these structures of injustice and inequality can create direct or physical violence.

Galtung (1996, 2005) argues that “direct violence,” that is, physical/verbal violence against body, mind, and spirit of human beings, is mainly rooted in “structural violence” (sometimes called oppression) and “cultural violence,” which is violence rooted in language, religion, art, and other primordial identities.<sup>9</sup> Although direct violence, which involves physical, verbal, and psychological violence, is the most evident, it is only the tip of iceberg; the main roots of “direct violence” are structures and cultures which maintain discrimination, inequality, and injustice. These three kinds of violence are closely related to each other, as Galtung points out, “...direct violence is an event; structural violence, a process with ups and downs; cultural violence is stable, remaining practically unchanged for long periods due to the slow transformation of the original culture.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> With regional autonomy, some provinces such as Aceh have begun to implement Syari’ah law. Others, such as South Sulawesi and Banten have attempted to follow suit. Some regencies, including Bulukumba in South Sulawesi, launched in 2003 a bylaw implementing civil Islamic law there for all Muslims. The regent of Cianjur (West Java) required all government workers to wear Islamic clothing every day, and some men and women were afraid not to comply. Muhammad Ali, “Muslims, Minorities and the State in Indonesia”, *The Jakarta Post*, February 15, 2006. In Padang (West Sumatra), the regent has obligated the citizens to wear *jilbab* (women’s headscarves) and suggested to non Muslims to wear it.

<sup>8</sup>Violence can be defined as “any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural, or spiritual behavior, attitude, policy, or condition that diminishes, dominates, or destroys ourselves or the others” (Slattery, et. al. 2005, 33). It is important to know that violence is conceptually different from conflict. Conflict is normal, natural, ubiquitous, and forever while violence is not. Violence, unlike conflict, is related to behavior, and can be easily observed whereas conflict is more abstract so that it is difficult to detect. Violence is caused by unresolved conflict and polarization. Galtung defines polarization as “dehumanization of human being and social relations” (2005, 4). In addition, he says that conflict is “evident” in society, but this is not the case with violence. Hence, a conflict does not necessarily end in violence. What leads to violence is the failure to transform the conflict. The types of violent conflict can be varied. Riots are one of the most common forms, in which groups react and respond to an event that provokes violence when tensions are running high. Some scholars argue that cases of ethnic violence worldwide can be both defensive or offensive responses to changing opportunity structures, while others places more emphasis on the psychological responses that modify groups’ perceptions of events and cast them as threatening, insulting, degrading, or inhuman (Bertrand 2004: 13).

<sup>9</sup> For further explanation about the terms of direct, structural, and cultural violence, see the works of Johan Galtung, among others, *Essays in Peace Research* (Copenhagen, 1975); *Peace by Peaceful Means* (International Peace Research Organization: Sage Publications, 1996); “Peace Studies: A Ten Points Primer,” paper presented at Nanjing University, China, 4-6 March 2005. Also visit Galtung’s website at <http://www.transcend.org/>

<sup>10</sup> See at <http://cgi.stanford.edu/group/wais/cgi-bin/index.php?p=2510>

## II. THE RISE OF ISLAMIC MILITANCY

As noted earlier, the term violence, to borrow Galtung's term, does not only refer to "physical violence" (e.g. battles, riots, attacks, terrorism, disturbances, etc.) but also "cultural violence" (e.g. insulting, mocking, instigating, etc.). In addition, the term refers to any form of violence that is supported or inspired by religion, either in the form of religious teachings, doctrines or institutions. Due to some limitations this paper will only focus on this religious-based violence. However, this does not mean that such religious violence occurred in Indonesia has no links with politics, government, and security forces in the country. Some studies clearly show that such religious violence is often backed or supported by some local political elites, government officials, and security personnel (Hefner 2005; Noorheidi 2006).

Talking about religious-based violence in post-Soeharto Indonesia, scholars draw their attention to the particular religious groups which are connected to schools and ideologies of Wahabism<sup>11</sup>, Salafism<sup>12</sup>, and Islamism<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, although their organizations and religious affiliations vary, the radical Muslim groups supported any form of violence and global terrorism in the country and identified themselves of having linkage to these schools and ideologies. Co-founder of the Southeast Asian Jama'ah Islamiyah Abu Bakar Ba'asyir once said that the most influential books in his life are *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an (In the Shade of the Qur'an)* and *al-Adalat al-Ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam (Social Justice in Islam)*. The two books were written by Sayyid Qutub, one of the most influential Muslim thinkers who was considered by Esposito (2002, 56) to be godfather of modern Islamic radicalism (see also footnote no. 14).

Linking religious violence and global terrorism to Islamism, salafism (Salafiyah) and Wahabi teachings, basically, is not so strange in the history of Islam (Abou El-Fadl 2005, Gold 2003, Aslan 2005). As we know most today's radical Islamists worldwide justify their violent actions with reference to the ideas of a few seminal Muslim thinkers who rose to international prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. The most influential of these are, among others, the Egyptian radical activist and ideologue Sayyid Qutb (Mousalli 1992) and the Indo-Pakistani theorist Abu al-'A'la al-Maududi (Esposito 2002). Both of these figures were in turn influenced by the earlier, ultraconservative reformism of Muhammad Ibnu Abd al-Wahhab (known later as Wahabism) in what is today Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Ibnu Abd al-Wahhab was strongly influenced by teachings and (some) writings of the 14<sup>th</sup> C. reformer Ibnu Taimiyyah (and his disciple Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyah), and Ibnu Taimiyyah himself was influenced by the "founding father of Islamic fundamentalism" Muhammad Ibnu Hanbal, the founder of Hanbali school (Alghar 2002, Abou El-Fadl 2005, 2001, Esposito 2002).

However, it is crucial to understand that not all followers and supporters of these schools and ideologies in Indonesia commit physical violence and seed global terrorism. A research report of the International Crisis Group (ICG, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004) under the title of "Indonesia Background: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix," concludes that most Indonesian salafis find organization like Jama'ah Islamiyah (JI), the group responsible for the Bali bombings and the Australian embassy, anathema. The report examines the emergence of salafism in Indonesia and looks at the role of Saudi funding in its expansion in the 1980s and 1990s. As important as funding is the close communication between Indonesian salafis and their Arab-Middle eastern mentors, most but not all of them Saudis. While some involved in terrorism in

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<sup>11</sup> Wahabism was founded by Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in collaboration with Muhammad Ibnu Sa'ud, the ruler of Diriyah (near Riyadh). They then established a covenant (Arabic: *mithaq*), under which Ibnu Saud established the first Saudi state and Ibnu Abdul Wahab determined its official creed. The name of Saudi (Arabia) refers to his name. In short, it was a political bargain: Ibnu Saud would protect Ibnu Abdul Wahab and spread his creeds, while Ibnu Abdul Wahab would legitimize Saudi rule. To make stronger their collaboration, Ibnu Saud married Ibnu Abdul Wahab's daughter. And then history accounts, the descendents of these two families would serve as the leaders of the Saudi state for generations. This new community called its movement "*al-da'wa ila al-tauhid*" ("the call to the doctrine of the Oneness of God"). But in the West the movement was named Wahabism and its adherents were called Wahabis. The Wahabi's influence currently is spread out around the Muslim world. For more information about this movement see Hamid Algar, *Wahabism: A Critical Essay* (New York, 2002) and Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington, DC, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Salafism refers to a school or movement seeking to return to what its adherents see as the purest form of Islam, practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the early Muslim generations (known as *salaf-al-salih*). In practice, it means the refusal of unwarranted innovations (*bid'ah*) brought to the religion in later years. There are some various types of salafi organizations in Indonesia, ranging from "radical-conservative" to somewhat "moderate" ones. From this point of view, Wahabism is part of radical salafi movement. Noorheidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest of Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Islamism is the modern radical Muslim movement tied to the ideas and movements of Sayyid Qutub (d. 1966), a poet, novelist, journalist, critic, and ideologist of Ikhwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt. He, widely known as the father of modern Islamic radicalism, is the one who argued Islam as a comprehensive ideology that governs all aspects of the believer's life, Islam as a complete social, political, and economic system, endorsed the establishment of a worldwide Islamic state as a means of pursuing social justice and welfare, and interpreted the term jihad as an offensive teaching, by fighting, war, bombings, etc., not a defensive one (Arabic: *jihad difa'i*). Qutub had written numerous books including *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an* which had been used by worldwide radical Muslims today from Ben Laden to Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, as a "guide-line" as well as a justification for terrorism. He was murdered by the Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser in 1966. Ahmad S. Mousalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: the Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutub* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992).

Indonesia, such as Ali Gufron (Mukhlas), a Bali bomber, claim to be salafis, the radical fringe that Gufron represents (sometime called “salafi jihadism”) is not representative of the movement more broadly.

Nevertheless, it is also essential to note that although they reject deadly acts of terrorism such as bombings, they do agree or at least support other forms of religious violence committed by some radical-fundamentalist groups, mostly supporters of Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front) such as closing some churches in several areas of the country, destroying properties that belonged to Ahmadiyah, Syi’ah, and other local Islamic sects which are considered as apostates (*murtad*). From this point of view, we can conclude that their rejection of terrorist acts does not mean that they are tolerant and conduct in pluralistic ways toward “outsiders” (non-salafis) in particular and non-Muslims in general, and live peacefully and nonviolently with them. In other words, they reject terrorism but they commit or at least support other forms of terrorism. Their support for some Muslim radicals, although they themselves had not been involved in violent acts, for instance, can be seen from their thoughts and opinions toward such certain physical and cultural violence, as well as their support of *fatwa* of “incitement of religious hatred” issued by the Indonesia Ulama Council, which regard some Islamic sects and schools, local beliefs, and so forth as deviated and deviating groups.

Thus, fundamentally, what they reject is the ways of some terrorist groups in sending “Islamic messages” (e.g. by bombings) and not their goals. In general, the goals of groups of so-called radical-fundamentalists worldwide are the same, namely first, they claim to be restoring the perfection of early Islam practiced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions, known in Arabic as *al-salaf al-shalih* or Salafi (“the righteous ancestors”). Second, they are establishing a utopian society based on these Salafi principles. Third, they are annihilating local variants of Islam in the name of authenticity and purity. Fourth, they are transforming Islam from personal faith into an authoritarian political system. Fifth, they are establishing a Pan-Islamic Caliphate governed according to the strict tenets of Salafi Islam, and often conceived as stretching from Morocco to Indonesia and the Philippines. And sixth, they are bringing the entire world under the sway of their extremist ideology (Wahid, *The Wall Street Journal*, 30/12/2005).

Talking about religious extremism in post-Soeharto Indonesia cannot be separated from the role and influence of Arab and the Middle Eastern Islam, the places where ideologies and movements of Wahabism, Salafism, and Islamism emerged. In the contemporary Indonesian context<sup>14</sup>, the main channel for Salafi ideas came from Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII—the Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication) since the early years of the Soeharto regime. Soon after its establishment in 1967, the DDII built close relationships with the Rabitah al-‘Alam al-Islami (Islamic World League). Already in the 1970s, the DDII had begun to translate and publish Saudi-Salafiyah tracts, some of which were notable for their anti-Christian and anti-Jewish diatribes (Hefner 2000, Bruinessen 2002). In addition, a Saudi-backed Islamic college by the name of LIPIA (the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies, based in Jakarta), which offers scholarships to top Muslim students, had become the pivotal conduit for transferring Wahabi-Salafiyah teachings to Indonesia. LIPIA was designed to create militant cadres of Wahabism-Salafiyah schools. It is important to note that most Indonesian radical Muslim leaders and activists have been trained in this institution. After reformation in 1998 as Indonesian people gained more freedom, such radical institutions have mushroomed throughout the country. In his interview with *TEMPO* magazine (25 June-1 July, 2007), historian M.C. Ricklefs notes that in Solo (Central Java) itself there has been more than twenty Islamic militant organizations.

Angel Rabasa of the RAND Corporation who has written numerous works on Islam and fundamentalist movements in Southeast Asia and the globe, notes that Saudi Kingdom has spent more than \$70 billion for the last thirty years for funding the spread of Wahabism throughout the world (Rabasa 2003, 2007). As the largest Muslim country, Indonesia definitely becomes one of the main targets of global Wahabism projects (see Bret Stephens, “The Arab Invasion,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 2007). Based in Mecca, Muslim World League regularly sends Arabs to fund Wahabism projects by building madrasah (Islamic schools), mosques, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and other Islamic centers which are affiliated with Wahabism and Salafiyah teachings and doctrines (Stephens 2007). The problem is that these Islamic groups do not use the institutions to discuss Islamic discourses, texts, and traditions fairly, intellectually, respectively, and comprehensively by using internationally standard academic approaches. Otherwise such places have been used as a base of propaganda for certain Islamic doctrines and schools, and as “a nest of provocation” toward other

<sup>14</sup> The relationship between Indonesia and Arab historically and culturally had been found since the first centuries of the Islamic development. The establishment of the first Islamic kingdoms such as Peurlak and Samudra Pasai (both located in today Aceh, Sumatra) in 8/9 C showing that the influence of Arab-Islam was since the beginnings of Islamic spread (Ali 1970, Azra 1999). According to Van den Berg, who had researched Hadrami-Arab communities in Indonesia, the massive advent of these groups to Nusantara (today Indonesia), particularly to Aceh, Palembang, Pontianak, and Java, was since 18<sup>th</sup> C. when the Suez Canal was opened and the steamship technology was found. Since then there were many Indonesian Muslims came to Arabia either to do *hajj* (pilgrimage) or to study at the Arabian Islamic schools (Berg 1989). Later, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> C and early 20<sup>th</sup> C, alumni of these schools established major Islamic organizations in Indonesia, some of which continued and evoked Salafism while others criticized it. These organizations include Muhammadiyah (built in Yogyakarta), Nahdlatul Ulama (established in Jombang, in East Java), Persatuan Islam (the Islamic Union, in West Java), Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (the Association of Islamic Education, in Sumatra), etc.

religious communities and Islamic groupings outside their mainstreams. As a result, there have been tensions and violent conflicts between these militant groups and local Muslims especially in northern part of Java and other areas (Ghazali 2007).

Not only having built *madrasah*, *pesantren*, mosques and other Islamic centers, the Saudi religious affairs office in Jakarta financed the publication of a million books a year translated from Arabic into Indonesian (Rabasa 2007, Wahid 2005). Certainly books translated into Indonesian are not the books which support the creation of cultures of peace, tolerance, pluralism, democracy, feminism and so forth; rather they were textbooks which contained Wahabi doctrines and Salafiyah/puritanical teachings. The problem of course does not lie in the “Wahabism” itself, but rather the contents of such teachings which are intolerant and undemocratic. As we know, many textbooks in Arabia and the Middle East are biased toward non-Muslims (particularly Jews and Christians), local beliefs, minority Islamic sects, etc. (*Time*, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003). Accordingly, as Wahid reminds, “no effort to defeat religious extremism can succeed without ultimately cutting off the flow of petrodollars used to finance that extremism” (Wahid, *The Wall Street Journal*, 30/12/2005), from New York, London, Madrid, to Jakarta and Bali.

The Center for Religious Freedom in the U.S. issued a research report about curricula and textbooks taught at the Saudi Arabia’s schools. One of the significant findings of the research was that curricula and textbooks taught in the country contain agitation of religious hatred and enmity toward Jews, Christians, Muslim communities outside Sunni-Wahabi, and women. We know that besides hating Jews and Christians, the Wahabis hold antipathy toward Shiites, Sufism, and women. Likewise, the Wahabi-Salafiyah doctrines insisted that Islam is a total and complete/comprehensive system (*kaffah*), alone capable of resolving the modern world’s problems (Abou El-Fadl 2005, Algar 2002). This claim effectively denies the relevance of other forms of knowledge for resolving social problems. Not coincidentally, the claim also legitimates patriarchal and authoritarian arrangements antithetical to democratic citizenship (Hefner 2005, 296) and civic pluralism.<sup>15</sup> Such teachings definitely contradict the facts of religious plurality in Indonesia, so it makes sense if the teachings fueled tensions and violent conflicts between these conservative-militant groups with local Muslim communities.

It is important to note that the tensions between Arab-influenced radical Muslims with local Muslims are not new phenomena in the history of Indonesia. Since the 1850s, the years when the massive and intense relationship between Hadrami-Arabs and Indonesians began (Berg 1989, see footnote no. 15), such tension had already happened in the country. Since then the term “*abangan*” (Javanese, lit. means “red” but in general the term is a symbol for folk traditions) emerged in the anthropological discourse.

The term initially was created by the “white groups” (fundamentalist-conservative groups, either Indonesian Muslims or Arabs) as a derogatory term to the local Muslim communities, mostly Javanese Muslims (Rickelofs 2006, 2007). In Indonesian context, white color symbolizes pure, pristine, clean, unpolluted, while red is a symbol of impure and polluted. By using the word “*abangan*” it means that local Muslims are less Islamic and then need to be Islamized (and “Arabianized”!). Since then Javanese Muslims conducted cultural resistance and religious disobedience and preferred to practice “Javanism” (known *kejawen*) rather than (Arab) Islam. Javanism is a syncretism between spiritual/sufistic Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Javanese spiritual values (Rickelofs 2006, Woodward 1989, Hefner 1990). The classical study of the tension between Javanism and Islam had been conducted by the prominent American anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his classic book *The Religion of Java*.

Indeed, history repeats itself. Today’s Indonesian Muslim societies have been facing the same problems: tensions between local Muslims versus Saudi-Salafiyah-influenced conservative Indonesian Muslim groups. Interestingly, most leaders of Indonesia’s radical Muslim groups have Arab backgrounds. The leader of the Jamaah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia (JAMI—the Association of Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood), Al-Habib Hussein al-Habsyi is an Arab cleric. The founder of the Front Pembela Islam (Islam Defenders Front), Al-Habib Muhammad Rizieq bin Hussein Syihab, is a Hadrami-Arab, as are his lieutenants. Even he once admitted that he is descended from the Quraishi tribe—the Prophet Muhammad’s tribe (Stephens 2007). The supreme commanders of the other two large paramilitaries, the *Laskar Jihad* (jihad militia) and the *Laskar Mujahidin* (mujahidin militia), are also Hadrami Indonesians. However, unlike the Islam Defenders Front, these organizations recruit most of their officers from among people of non-Arab background (Hefner 2005, 285). The founder of the Yogyakarta-based Laskar Jihad, the organization that had sent Muslim militants during the Ambon Wars between Muslim and Christians, was a young Arab Indonesian by the name of Jafar Umar Thalib.

Other crucial religious leaders who have Hadrami-Arab descent are Abu Bakar Ba’asyir and Abdullah Sungkar. The former is the co-founder of Ngruki-based *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school, located in Solo, Central Java province) by the name of the pesantren of *al-Mu’im*, which is dubbed by Sidney Jones as the “Ivy

<sup>15</sup> Civic pluralism, according to Robert Hefner, refers to “a public cultures and social organization premised on equal rights, tolerance-in-pluralism, and a legally recognized differentiation of state and religious authority” (Hefner 2005, 28)

League” of the Jamaah Islamiyah members who are recruited clandestinely. It is also important to note that some of the terrorists who committed bombings in areas of Indonesia such as Bali Blast, the Marriott Hotel, the Australian Embassy, etc. were alumni of this Ngruki *pesantren* based in Solo (Ismail 2005). Besides co-founder of Ngruki *pesantren*, Ba’asyir is also *amir* (leader) of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (the Indonesian Mujahidin Council).

Founded in Yogyakarta in 2000, the council is dedicated to the implementation of Islamic law and the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. Moreover, Abdullah Sungkar was co-founder of Jama’ah Islamiyah (JI), a group with ties to al-Qa’ida and blamed for the several bombings in Indonesia. Both Ba’asyir and Sungkar have the movement’s ambition of replacing Indonesia’s existing government with an Islamic state. During Soeharto regime, both men were arrested and accused of involvement in Komando Jihad (jihad command) violence in late 1978. The foundation of the Southeast Asian Jama’ah Islamiyah, as admitted by Sungkar and Ba’asyir, had come under the influence of the Egyptian al-Jama’ah al-Islamiyah, a breakaway faction of the Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood committed to armed struggle.

During the late 1990s, several hundred Indonesian militants were either connected to Jama’ah Islamiyah or other right wings of Islamic radicalism, traveled to camps in Afghanistan and Moro, the Philippines, such as the Dar al Ittihad al-Islamy and the Hudaibiyah, to receive military academy and guerilla trainings with internationalist *jihadis* supporting the Afghan and Moro mujahidin. In his *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia*, Zachary Abuza makes the prescient observation that these years (since the late 1990s) happened to coincide with the expansion of the al-Qa’ida into Southeast Asia. In addition, Angel Rabasa of the RAND Corporation in his *Beyond Al-Qaeda: Countering Terrorist and Other Non-Traditional Threats* (2007) claims that Indonesian radical Muslim groups have strong connection to al-Qaeda and other Arab-extremist groups.

It is also crucial to note that most suicide bombers, terrorists, and other radical-militant Muslims, some of whom are Malaysians such as Dr. Azhari and Noordin M. Thop, in today’s Indonesia are alumni and retired Afghan and Moro fighters who traveled to Afghanistan and Mindanao since the late 1990s to fight with invaders or what they called “crusaders” (ICG 2002, Rabasa 2003, Barton 2004). Upon returning their home country, Indonesia, supported by al-Qa’ida networks, they continued to fight against non-Muslims who are considered infidels as well as certain Muslim communities who are accused to be apostates. Thus, it can be said that the terrorist groups are war addicts!

Al-Qa’ida, an internationalist organization led by well-heeled dissidents from the ranks of the Muslim upper-middle class, along with like-minded groupings such as the Southeast Asian Jama’ah Islamiyah, the Indonesian Islamic Defenders Front, etc seem to aim at enlarging odd-couple collaborations in other parts of the world. They channel transnational flows of money, arms, guns, and fighters into local conflicts. In so doing, they portray the violent conflicts not as local, but as part of a global “clash of civilizations” pitting Christians, Jews, Hindus and other “crusaders” against Muslims (Hefner 2005, 24). In short, the radicals provide a moral rationale and religious legitimacy for attacking ones or groups who are considered “the foes of Islam.” It is crucial to realize that the target of religious violence is not only Western-related interests, but also pluralist and moderate Muslims.

### III. APPROACHES FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACEBUILDING

The above explanation clearly shows that religion, including Islam, besides has provided laws, values, ideas and civilization with cultural commitments to critical peace-related issues, including empathy, humility, social justice, responsibility, care, humanity, etc., it also has been a major inspiration for battles, bloodshed, terrorism, wars, hatred, enmity, intolerance, and the like. As Jewish scholar Marc Gopin once affirmed, “some believers creatively integrate their spiritual tradition and peacemaking, (but) many others engage in some of the most destabilizing violence confronting the global community today” (Gopin 2000, 13). Religion is essential for the acts of terrorism, since it gives moral justifications and religious legitimacy for killing and provides images of cosmic war that allow radical activists to believe that they are waging spiritual scenarios.

However, it should be noted, this does not mean that religion causes violence, nor does it mean that religious violence cannot, in some cases, be justified by other means. But it does mean that religion often provides the mores and symbols that make possible war, battles, bloodshed and other catastrophic acts of terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2003). This is the religious ambivalence: on one hand, religion can be used as powerful and potential resources for conflict transformation, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. On the other hand, it also can be used (abused?) as a religious basis and moral foundation for destabilizing the world order through global terrorism and transnational violent conflicts. Historian Scott Appleby has discussed well the complexity (“two faces”) of this religion in his *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (2000).

Religious-based violent conflicts in post-Soeharto Indonesia have added to a lengthy list of the role of religion for violent conflicts, terrorism, hostility, hatred, intolerance, bloodshed and other uncivilized actions. Moreover, Indonesia’s religious violence has deep and complicated roots involving wide various actors,

including religious leaders, and (some) Islamic extremist schools. Hence to resolve such violent conflicts and to achieve global just peace will be neither quick nor easy. In recent decades, Wahabi/Salafi ideology has made significant inroads throughout the Muslim worlds from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan, Southern Thailand, Mindanao, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Rabasa 2007, 2003).

Islamic radicalism has become a well-financed, multifaceted global movement that operates like a juggernaut, to borrow Wahid's term (2005), in much of the developing world, and even among immigrant Muslim communities in the West. Therefore to neutralize the virulent ideology that underlies fundamentalist terrorism and extremist movement and threatens the pivotal strengths of modern civilization and nation-state, the concerned people toward global peace, including peacebuilders, conflict resolution practitioners, human rights activists, moderate and pluralist groups, etc. have to identify its advocates, understand their goals and strategies, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and effectively counter their every move. Peacebuilding and conflict transformation practitioners need to employ effective strategies to counter each of the fundamentalist strengths.<sup>16</sup> The strategies can be accomplished, Wahid asserts (2005), "by bringing the combined-weight of the vast majority of peace-loving Muslims and non-Muslims, to bear in a coordinated global campaign whose goal is to resolve the crisis of misunderstanding that threatens to engulf our entire world."

**Legal-justice approaches.** Moreover, the challenge for human rights activists, conflict resolvers, conflict transformers, and peacebuilding practitioners, particularly in Indonesia, is to build global peace and resolve religious violent conflicts on the one hand and protect human rights and erect the law and constitution on the other hand. To reach these goals, they should combine two complementary strategies of peacebuilding. These are "coercive strategy" as promoted by human rights activists such as legal-justice approaches, and persuasive and cultural strategies as advanced by conflict resolution/transformation practitioners (Schirch 2005, Lederach 1995). There are many tactics, including protests, demonstrations, smart sanctions, threats of the international community, and so on (Sharp 2005), that are in line with coercive strategy to pressure decision and policy makers in order to persecute human rights violators including some radical Muslim groups and provide people's basic needs. Providing for human needs is part of the essential efforts for peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Many unmet human needs become active elements in causing religious conflict. The needs include basic issues of material resources, issues of psychological trauma, issues of humiliation and shame, issues of empowerment, and needs for integration and uniqueness (Gopin 2000, 5-6).

To get maximum impacts, peacebuilders should coordinate with concerned people, especially key people (influential and charismatic figures, stakeholders, power holders, etc.), mass media, business communities, scholars, religious leaders, youth, women's groups, students, and so forth. There are several documented examples of nonviolent campaigns and peaceful protest movements in the Muslim world throughout Islamic history that can be used as historical bases for such movements, such as mass protest against the British in Egypt in 1919, the revolt of Muslims of Peashwar Pathans in Indo-Pakistan in 1930, the Palestinian general strike of 1936, the Sudanese insurrection of 1985, the first Palestinian *Intifadah* (Abu-Nimer 2000, 87-88), Muslim Patani protests in Southern Thailand (Satha-Anand 1993), and Nahdlatul Ulama's movements of the 2000s in Indonesia (Barton 2002).

In the Indonesian context, there are several major strategies to accomplish peacebuilding (long-term goal) and to reduce/stop violence (short-term objective) committed by some radical Muslim groups. The strategies include, first, raise/create public awareness of the danger of violence as a common enemy. Raising awareness and increasing understanding that groups in conflict are interdependent are important things in social movements (Lederach 1995); at the same time, these are also difficult parts of the movements. Many people assume and think that violence committed by radical Muslim groups is only addressed to specific groups (i.e. Christians, Ahmadiyah, or moderate/liberal Muslims), not all people. They think that such violence is only the problem and threat of such groups and communities. They do not yet realize that violence becomes a global threat for all people including business communities, small traders, laborers, ordinary people/Muslims, etc. Therefore, alerting people for collective awareness toward *violence as common enemy* becomes an essential strategy. In dealing with this issue, the critical question would be: how to raise people's awareness. Of course there are many ways to increase public consciousness. Quaker conciliator Adam Curle, for instance, suggests

<sup>16</sup> According to the prominent Indonesian Muslim scholar and influential cleric Abdurrahman Wahid (known Gus Dur) the formidable strengths of fundamentalist movement are as follows: 1) an aggressive program with clear ideological and political goals; 2) immense funding from oil-rich Wahabi sponsors; 3) the ability to distribute funds in impoverished areas to buy loyalty and power; 4) a claim to and aura of religious authenticity and Arab prestige; 5) an appeal to Islamic identity, pride and history; 6) an ability to blend into the much larger traditionalist masses and blur the distinction between moderate Islam and their brand of religious extremism; 7) full-time commitment by its agents/leaderships; 8) networks of Islamic schools that propagate extremism; 9) the absence of organized opposition in the Islamic world; 10) a global network of fundamentalist imams who guide their flocks to extremism; 11) a well-oiled "machine" established to translate, publish and distribute Wahabi/Salafi propaganda and disseminate its ideology throughout the world; 12) scholarships for local to study in Saudi Arabia and return with degrees and indoctrination, to serve as future leaders; 13) the ability to cross national and cultural borders in the name of Islamic religion; 14) Internet communication; and 15) the reluctance of many national governments to supervise or control this entire process (Wahid, "Rights Islam vs. Wrong Islam," *The Wall Street Journal*, 30/12/2005).



the application of “three key peacemaking efforts”, that is, education, advocacy, and mediation. In his *Making Peace*, Curle says that education or conscientization is needed when the conflict is hidden and people are unaware of imbalance and injustices (Curle 1971).

Second, organize and mobilize people that have similar concerns and objectives to take nonviolent actions toward ceasing vandalistic and violent acts. The purpose of this strategy is to create people power and finally to balance the power. Within socio-political movements, people-power has become a key for change and reformation throughout the world from South Africa, India, the U.S., and Latin America (see, for example, Sharp 2005, Lynd 1966, Bondurant 1988). It is important to organize and mobilize the moderate majority of people, including Muslim societies, because they take a silent attitude against such violence although they denounce acts of terrorism as committed by radical Muslim groups as contemptible actions. A recent survey of Indo Barometer, a Jakarta-based leading research center, shows that 88.88% of respondents of the survey disagree with the use of violence to battle “immoral behavior,” and only 7.4% support it. The results also indicate that 96.2% of the respondents reject the use of violence toward people of other religions (non-Muslims) and only 1.3% agree with it. Another significant finding of the survey was 95.4% of respondents agree that tolerance between all religions is vital, with only 3.5% considering it unimportant. In addition, most respondents reject the imposition of religious bylaws (63.3%), while 27.9% agree.<sup>17</sup> The question is: why do they remain silent? It is because they are afraid of militant Muslim movements, or they just wait and see the right momentum, or they have a lack of awareness of the threat and danger of violence. As a majority, they are also not solid (liquid?), which is different from hard-line Muslims groups. Although they are a minority, they are solid. Unlike former strategies, the second one needs endeavors, actions, and movements to convince and awake “the silent majority” in order to oppose radicalism, certainly peacefully and nonviolently.

Third, persuade and lobby potential and current influential figures or key people.<sup>18</sup> These figures are essential for two reasons. First, they hold power to influence and pressure the government/policy makers in order to take firm attitudes and resolute steps, by bringing radical Muslim groups as human rights violators to court and providing people basic needs (freedom, safety, etc). Second, they can create public opinions and a critical mass when many people have a lack of awareness and are passive and apathetic. The potential and current influential figures include stake holders, charismatic leaders who have, in the sociological term, “traditional authority” (such as *habaib*—ones who have blood-line with the Prophet Muhammad), power holders (i.e. influential political figures), Islamic religious leaders (*ulama*, *kiai*), *sultan* and *sunan* (Islamic kings), elders, chiefs, and ones who are respected by the Indonesian president and other policy makers. These can be their parents and wives, former teachers/professors, former bosses and so on. Peacebuilders need to use these influential figures because they are able to directly communicate face-to-face with policy makers. Likewise, in the stratified and ranked societies like those of Indonesia, these figures have a tremendous role in influencing decision and policy-makers and in awakening people-power. The role of the charismatic religious figures in Indonesia (such as *habaib*, *kiai*, *ajengan*, *tuan guru*, etc.) in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding process is as important as that of local *imam* (the prayer leaders), *mukhtar* (lit. “the chosen people” it refers to community leaders who are often the heads of the largest clan in the community usually in Syria, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine), and ‘*umda*h (the Egyptian equivalent of *mukhtar*) in the Arab and the Middle East (Abu-Nimer 2003, 87).

Moreover, the basis of the legal-justice approach is that radical Muslim groups had blatantly violated human rights as well as had clearly broken the Indonesian Constitution UUD 1945 and the Philosophy of Indonesia (Pancasila). Article 28 of the Constitution states (1) Every citizen has the right to hold religious beliefs and pray according to these beliefs, choose his/her education and form of teaching, choose his/her job, choose his/her citizenship, and live in this country, leave and return to the country; and (2) Every citizen has the right to hold personal beliefs and express his/her thoughts and attitudes according to what he/she believes is right. In addition, the radical Muslims actions above were opposite the International human rights laws and conventions. For instance, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or

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<sup>17</sup> The survey was distributed in 33 provinces using multi-stage random sampling and face-to-face interviews with 1,200 respondents of all religions. Respondents were selected to reflect as closely as possible Central Statistics Agency demographic data. Pollster Indo Barometer conducted the survey in May 2007, to determine Indonesian Muslims opinions on terrorism and religious tolerance in their own country (“RI Muslims Remain Tolerant: Poll,” *The Jakarta Post*, June 22, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Key people are very important for peacebuilding processes. The metaphor of key people is like the locomotive of a train. Just as a locomotive that is able to move a railway coach, key people can influence and mobilize people and create public opinion in order to take in the same line with their objectives. Therefore, it is exactly correct when Lisa Schirch mentions key people as “opinion makers” because they are able to shape the opinion of their followers (Schirch 2004, 70).

belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”<sup>19</sup> So far, Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (1981) in chapter XIII (“Right to Freedom of Religion”) also states: “Every person has the right to freedom of conscience and worship in accordance with his religious beliefs.” Article 8 of Human Rights Law No. 39/1999 firmly states: “Protection, development, enforcement, and fulfillment of the rights (including religious freedom) are the obligation of the government.”

According to these laws, the government cannot escape responsibility for protecting and guarantying religious rights. This includes not only the freedom to have a religion, but the freedom to practice it as well. In international law, religious freedoms are protected as freedom of thought, conscience and religion. It is important to note that freedom of religion is not to be interpreted narrowly to mean traditional world religions only. New religious movements, religious minorities, local/indigenous religions, sects or even cults, are entitled to equal protection. Accordingly, the government must act firmly against all those that violate and transgress these principles. What has been done by Muslim militant groups is not only the shape of criminal actions, but also is a violation of the Constitution and human rights laws. If the government tolerates such abuse of religious freedom or fails to punish the perpetrators and main actors, attacks and violence will continue to occur. Accordingly, legal-justice approaches as supported by human rights activist are very significant and essential to stop such violence and establish peace at once.

The governments’ actions against violators of human rights, however, should be by nonviolent ways, not by deploying military forces. Fighting Muslims terrorists through military forces and violence is counterproductive and is bound to fail. Terrorism and other vandalistic movements committed by radical Muslim groups cannot be defeated by militaristic approaches but can only be defeated through peaceful measures. If the government uses violence against them, there is no difference between the government and terrorists. “Just as religion may wrongly be used to justify terrorism, so can anti-terrorism actions of governments wrongly be used to justify actions that undermine human rights and freedom of religion or belief” (Osce-Baku, *Conference on Religious Freedom and Combating Terrorism*, October 2002). During Soeharto’s regime (1966-1998), he used militaristic approaches to demolish the hard-line Muslims, including those of Jama’ah Islamiyah, Darul Arqam, etc. However, the radical Muslim groups did not disappear from the country! It means that violent approaches are not the answer for dealing with radical groups!

**Cultural approaches.** Besides through legal justice approaches, establishing global peace and resolving conflicts also can be achieved through cultural approaches. Cultural approach means the peacebuilding approach of strengthening the application of religious-cultural values, local traditions, rituals, local wisdom, myths, religious symbols, etc. As the largest archipelago country in the world consisting of more than 13,000 islands and hundreds of tribal societies and ethnic groups, Indonesia has plentiful local values, cultures, and traditions that can be applied for conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Take for example, the traditional Javanese perspective on harmony. In the Javanese society, life is characterized by harmonious unity, quite peaceful helping of each other, soothing over the differences, cooperation and mutual acceptance. Like the concept of *yin-yang* in the Chinese tradition, the Javanese society also recognizes the principle (myth?) of *dewa-dewi*, a balancing concept of nature and vernacular life of human beings. This is one of the *weltanschauung* (worldviews) of the Javanese society. The Javanese harmonious concept is rooted in this principle of *dewa-dewi* (*dewa* symbolizes “masculinity” and *dewi* is a symbol of “femininity”). In relation to superiors and supernatural beings, one should be respectful, polite, obedient, balanced, and distant. To family one should be close with a feeling of belonging (Augsburger 1992, 99-100). Influenced by such traditional values, most Javanese Muslims who strongly hold values of Javanese cultures, especially those who live in rural areas/villages, prefer to live peacefully and nonviolently with their neighboring religions.

Another traditional value for conflict transformation, dispute resolution, and peacebuilding (see the definition of these terms in Lederach 2003), is *musyawarah*, a peaceful indigenous conflict transformation and dispute resolution process in the Indonesian societies. As tribal and ethnic groups-based country, Indonesia has a number of traditional/indigenous approaches of decision-making and dispute resolution. For many years, ethnic groups and tribal societies in the country have had consensually-based deliberative procedures for handling a variety of issues that emerge in the process of living together in a community. These consensually-based approaches have their roots in self-governing systems of deliberation and village justice found on most islands throughout the country. Examples of these deliberative procedures include the *runggun* process of Batak, North Sumatra, the deliberations of Minangkabau, West Sumatra, councils of elders meetings of Javanese villages,

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<sup>19</sup> Religion, etymologically, refers to the Latin word *religare* (“binding”). So, religion is that which binds the believer to what theologian John Shelby Spong calls “Natural God”, “Absolute” (Paul Knitter) “Supernatural Being” (John Titaley), “Supreme Absolute” (John Cobb), “Eternal One” (John Hick). Belief is a broader concept than religion. Belief means to trust in the Supreme, Holy, Absolute or Transcendent. In international documents, the term belief has also been adopted to cover the rights of non religious persons such as atheists (who believe in no deity) and agnostics (who are uncertain about the existence of a “God”). Wolfgang Benedek and Minna Nikolova (eds.), *Understanding Human Rights Manual on Human Rights Education*, (Graz-Austria: Human Security Network, 2003) especially the chapter “Religious Freedom”, pp. 157-171.

discussion groups of the Bukat and Kereho in Kalimantan, or clan procedures in Papua (Moore, et. al. 1995, 2). The term used to describe this form of decision-making is called *musyawarah*, which is derived from Arabic. In the Indonesian societies, this term refers to a group deliberative process, whose goal is to achieve *mufakat* (“consensus”). The word *mufakat* is generally seen by Indonesians as a solution which all concerned parties find acceptable; and ideally which can be supported by all concerned parties with unanimous acclaim. In short, a “win-win solution” is the main objective of the *musyawarah*. Because of a tight connection between *musyawarah* and *mufakat*, these terms, then, were united to become *musyawarah untuk mufakat* (“group deliberation toward consensus”).

In Maluku, where communal violence involving radical Muslims and Christian gangs, fueled by “Jakarta regime,” broke out for several years from 1999 to 2004 (Bertrand 2004: 114-34; Klinken 2007: 89-106), local societies recognize the concept of *Baku Bae* (lit. “reconciliation”), which is Moluccan culture to describe the peaceful spirit used in children’s games to restore friendships after a quarrel. This indigenous culture for dispute resolution has been used by local peacebuilders and conflict resolution practitioners to settle violent conflicts in the region. In fact, the *Baku Bae* movement helped reduced violence in Maluku and paved the way for the signing of a peace accord brokered by the central government, the Malino Declaration of 2002, signed by more than twenty Christian and Muslim leaders (van Tongoren, Brenk, Hellema, and Verhoeven (eds.) 2005, 667-672). Thus the *Baku Bae* can be seen as an indigenous way of rebuilding social capital and restoring trust through dialogue and community focus.

Besides the *Baku Bae*, Moluccan societies acknowledge the *Pela Gadong*, that is, an indigenous cultural and social cohesion based on traditional kinship system. Prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity in the region, local societies in building relationships and communication among them were based on this traditional principle. In the socio-historical process, as an impact of Christian and Muslim migrations, the societies were divided into religious-based “primordial”/exclusive groups. As a result, two clusters of religious-based societies emerged/existed which are known as *Sarane* (refers to the “Christian groups”) and *Salam* (refers to the “Muslim groups”). Such groupings are susceptible to violence and are easy to be driven into violent conflicts, so that, the *Pela Gadong* culture becomes meaningful as a cultural and traditional way of building peace and resolving conflicts (Tulalessy 2005).

In addition, rituals and Islamic local traditions can be used as culturally powerful resources for peacebuilding and conflict transformation (Abu-Nimer 2003, see also Schirch’s *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*) in Indonesia. Local Islamic rituals like *istighotsah* (“public ritual sermons”) has been used by many local *imam* (the prayer leaders), *modin* (rural/local religious authority), *ustad* (teachers), *kiai*, *ajengan*, *guru*, etc. (the names of local ulama or clerics), *habib* (ones who have blood-line with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and so on. The term *istighotsah* refers to public gatherings that involves Muslims in huge numbers at special places (i.e. field soccer, stadion, or big mosques), and then a number of Islamic clerics take turns leading the sermons by reciting verses of Al-Qur’an, *istighfar* (ask amnesty of sins to God), etc., and preaching. This Islamic cultural instrument is very important and essential, especially from the Indonesian Muslims’ perspective, as a way of peacebuilding and resisting violence. Only clerics and charismatic leaders are capable of carrying out such traditions.

As part of cultural approaches for building enduring peace is dissemination of universal human values such as pluralism, tolerance, democracy, harmony, etc. to the Muslim societies. Such efforts can be achieved through culture means/instruments that are available in the Indonesian societies, such as universities/colleges, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), Islamic schools (*madrasah*), organizations/NGOs, public forums, mass media, moots (informal meeting forums), mosques<sup>20</sup>, and so forth. Basically, this is a long term strategy of peacebuilding that the main objectives are to create mutual-understanding and trust among people, to create a culture of tolerance and pluralism, to strengthen capacity building, to create collective awareness, and finally to build a strong civil society.

**Education and learning.** The core of this culture approach lies in education and learning. Human rights education and learning are among key words of the respect to others’ thoughts and religious beliefs and the foundation of a culture of tolerance and pluralism. Education has a greater democratic benefit when it conveys a spirit of intellectual “bridging” rather than exclusive “bonding.” Likewise, education becomes powerful social capital (see the definition of “social capital” in Halpern 2005) in creating such cultures as cultural bases for peacebuilding. It is because lack of understanding of other religions and communities often becomes the root and partial cause of the conflicts and religious-based violence. However, the learning of respect, tolerance, pluralism, and human dignity cannot be reached or imposed by military forces, violence and confrontation.

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<sup>20</sup> Mosques (*masjid*) become one of the most effective places to convey messages in the worldwide Islamic societies. In the Indonesian Muslims’ contexts, mosques are not only used for prayer, Qur’anic recitations, holding rituals, but also to conduct Islamic events, such as *tahlilan* (ritual-ceremonial meeting), and *pengajian* (Islamic preaching). Sadly radical Muslims groups also use mosques as the main instrument of movements, to deliver their messages and provoke Muslims.

I imagine, if education and its curricula in Indonesia are based on cross-cultural understanding (CCU), heterogeneous or pluralistic concepts, and interfaith principles, mutual understanding among religions/beliefs and pluralism as a way to respond to plurality would be achieved. Recently, education institutions in Indonesia are too exclusive; they do not teach religious understanding comprehensively and inclusively by involving other religious authorities. The effect of such education produces narrow-minded disciples, who are exclusive and conservative. On the contrary, cross cultural understanding-based education will open the minds of students about the importance and the meaning of heterogeneity or plurality so that they will respect and appreciate other religions, Islamic sects, and local beliefs as part of universal wisdom.

Inter-religious education encourages respect and tolerance for people of other faiths and prepares students to cast aside barriers of prejudice and intolerance.<sup>21</sup> In peacebuilding work, diversity and tolerance of differences are focal principles. Even Islam, as asserted by leading Muslim peace scholar Mohammed Abu-Nimer (2003, 82), underlies principles of pluralism, tolerance of differences, and unity in diversity as God's wish, since he created a diverse rather than a uniform human race (see, for example, Q. 11:118, Q. 5:48). Moreover, Al-Qur'an grants diversity and tolerance of differences based on gender (Q. 53:45), skin color, language (Q.30:23), belief and rank (Q.64:2). If such values are taught to students since the beginnings of their educations and they are introduced to abundant Islamic resources/books which evoke pluralism, democracy, tolerance, etc., they will become powerful resources for peacebuilding work.

There are two additional reasons for stressing investments in education. First and foremost, education is what the great majority of modern Muslims yearn for. Studies of the *Arab Human Development Report 2003* provide vivid demonstrations of the depth of this desire (toward education) (UNDP 2003). Second, education is the most paradigmatic of modern cultural institutions. Today, as noted by Boston University anthropologist Robert Hefner, "no society can compete even in the lower rungs of the global order without a well-run educational system." Hefner adds, "in its diverse specializations, its encouragement of innovation, its gender equality, and its culture of civility-in-plurality (emphasis added), higher education is a shimmering example of all that is best about modern freedom and civic decency" (Hefner 2005, 27).

As the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia has about 10,000 Islamic boarding schools (known *pesantren*) and 37,000 Islamic schools (*madrasah*) (Hefner & Zaman (eds.) 2007, 173). Most the schools (*pesantren* and *madrasah*) belong to local Muslim communities particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia whose membership is more than 45 million people, and Muhammadiyah, the second largest Muslim organization in the country. Both NU and Muhammadiyah are essential elements for peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the region due to their religious commitments toward pluralism, moderatism, democracy, tolerance, and other basic human values. If designed properly, these Islamic academic institutions can be used as potential cultural resources for seeding Islamic teachings of tolerance, pluralism, democracy, feminism, and other Islamic universal values (Sachedina 2001, Abu-Nimer 2003).

In the future, such institutions will be able to create cadres of pluralist and moderate Muslims to block the movement of radical-fundamentalist groups especially in Indonesia. As I described in the earlier paragraphs, radical Muslim groups in the country also have used academic institutions to disseminate puritanical teachings, to breed doctrines of Wahabism, salafism, and Islamism, to brainwash local Indonesian Muslims, and to provoke religious hatred toward "outside mainstreams." From this point of view, peacebuilders and concerned people need to revive the importance of Islamic academic institutions as invaluable and cultural resources for building lasting peace in the country.

Besides through formal academic institutions (from elementary schools, *madrasah*, to higher institutions/colleges), education and learning processes to plant and disseminate values of pluralism, tolerance, mutual understanding, etc., can be reached through traditional Islamic institutions or worship places available in the country. Indonesia has abundant worship places and traditional Islamic institutions<sup>22</sup>, which are considered

<sup>21</sup> An example of countries that conducted education based on cross-cultural understanding and interfaith principles is the US. Lots of universities/colleges in the U.S. have inter-religious programs/faculties, cross cultural understanding centers, or territory studies that focus on religious and cultural studies worldwide. They have a global vision to create mutual understanding among others. In addition interfaith nongovernmental organizations and inter-religious institutions also have mushroomed across the country. Although conservative "Christian Rights Wings" are growing, the U.S. is still considered the home of democracy, liberalism, and pluralism. Another example is in Israel through a project called "Common Values/Different Sources." This project brought Jews, Muslims and Christians to study sacred texts together in search of valuable teachings and universal values that can later be shared in building peace. In Palestine, what Abuna Elias Chacour has done by establishing Mar Elias Educational Institutions (MEEI, former: the Prophet Elias High School) which been involving Muslims, Jews, and Christians, can be seen as part of the excellent endeavors for creating cultures of tolerance and pluralism (Little 2007, 321-341).

<sup>22</sup> What made all these institutions "traditionalist" was that, until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> C., their curricula consisted almost entirely of instruction in classical Islamic traditions of knowledge. Dedicated to the transmission of the classical Islamic sciences, including study of Al-Qur'an and Hadith, along with its exegeses, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Islamic legal theory (*ushul fiqh*), Arabic grammar (*sharaf, nahwu*, etc.), mysticism (*tasawuf*), the Arab sciences (*alat*), and so forth, the *pesantren* is an Islamic residential school which is lead by local ulama (*kiai, tuan guru, ajengan*, etc). Among these traditional schools, the Java-based *pesantren* is still the largest and the best known, and

by local Muslims as sacred and meaningful places, that can be used for such purposes, such as the *masjid* (mosques), the *mushalla* or *langgar* (smaller prayer places), the *pesanggrahan* (the meeting rooms of local Islamic kingdoms), the *pesantren* (traditionalist academic institutions or residential boarding schools, based in Java), the *pondok* (the name of Islamic boarding school in Kalimantan, South Sulawesi), the *surau* (the name of Islamic boarding school in West Sumatra), and the *dayah* (the name of traditional school in Aceh), to name a few places. In addition, peacebuilders and conflict transformation practitioners can utilize nongovernmental public cultural spheres and informal meeting forums (moots) to address issues of peacebuilding, peacemaking, and conflict resolution/transformation.

**Dialogue.** Another significant cultural approach includes dialogue.<sup>23</sup> Dialogue in this context does not mean “face-to-face conversations” in the seminars, discussion, workshops or other public debates forums that were conducted formally; instead it is an ongoing communication process to understand thoughts, minds, worldviews, teachings, systems of belief, and philosophies of life of other communities (see the difference between dialogue and debate at Mennonite Conciliation Service 2000, 206-208). Dialogue can be reached through negotiation, mediation, facilitation and so on by involving go-betweens and persons/groups from heterogeneous backgrounds as networks. These people should have similar concerns and objectives, including building peace and resolving the conflicts. They can be human rights’ activists, NGOs, interfaith communities, experts, Muslim militants groups, governments, stakeholders, educators, etc. Coordination among networks can strengthen and sharpen dialogue processes to seek common grounds and to get maximum outcomes such as what has been done by the West African Networks of Peacebuilding (WANEP) by involving a wide variety of actors who are concerned about inter-religious violent issues (Schirch 2006: 68).

Likewise, dialogue can be achieved through informal ways. Dialogue is the cultural bridge to air deadlock. Dialogue is an effective communication tool to create mutual understanding and mutual trust among parties. Many times tensions, disturbances, and conflicts often happened because of lack of communication. Human rights’ violations occur because of lack of dialogue. The Indonesian Ulama Council had issued *fatwa* as deviated and unlawful toward Ahmadiyah, Yusman Roy’s Islamic Boarding Schools, Ardhi Hussain’s Cancer and Drug Rehabilitation Center, Lia Eden of Salamullah, and condemned pluralism, secularism and liberalism as deviated and deviating schools of thought, from their own perspectives. They had no willingness to communicate with the targets (subjects of *fatwa*). Therefore, dialogue requires commitment and willingness to seek “other truths”. Additionally, in the interfaith dialogue process, the dialoguers need to address not only the similarities of each religion but the differences as well.

Moreover, ongoing, healthy and constructive dialogue can function as a way to move from the perspective of ethnocentrism (“inward-looking”?) to ethnorelativism (“outward-looking”?), to borrow the terms of Milton Bennett. Bennett defines the term “ethnocentric” as “assuming that the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality,” while fundamental to ethnorelativism is “the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context” (Bennett 1993, 1-51). Those who actively engage in interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural encounters realize that moving from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelative one is a lengthy journey and it is tiring. Here, those who are involved in the dialogue process, either peacebuilders or conflict transformation practitioners, need a strong commitment, significant motivation, and sincere intention to fully and totally engage with “outsiders” for the sake of peacebuilding and the creation of global justice.

The importance of interfaith dialogue also has been asserted by Hans Kung, president of the Foundation for a Global Ethic, one of international NGOs promoting religious dialogue and peace. He says, “No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions” (Kung 1998).

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its features shed light on traditionalist education as a whole. According to Indonesianist Michael Laffan, small *pesantren* had existed in Java since the 16<sup>th</sup> C., especially in the northern coastal regions which were first to convert to Islam (Laffan 2003). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> C., the *pesantren* spread into interior Java (*Jawa Pedalaman*), as a fast-growing community of returning pilgrims (*haji*) and students trained in Mecca and Medina took advantage of the colonial peace to establish schools in territories which prior to this time had been only nominally Muslim. See Azyumardi Azra, Dina Afrianty, and Robert W. Hefner, “Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia,” in Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds.), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 172-98

<sup>23</sup> Examples of countries that use dialogue instruments to resolve conflicts are: the (1) Southern India. *The Council of Grace* brings together Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Sikhs in an endeavor to resolve conflicts. (2) The Middle East. *Clergy for Peace* brings together rabbis, priests, pastors, and imams in Israel and in the West Bank for pursuing peace and justice in the region. (3) The Pacific. *Interfaith Search* brings together representatives of many religions in Fiji in order to handle prejudices and misunderstanding as well as to promote mutual understanding, respect and appreciation for one another; and (4) Europe, the “Project: Interfaith Europe” is the “first undertaking of its kind to invite urban politicians and representatives of different religions from all over Europe in the cities of Graz and Sarajevo”. Wolfgang Benedek and Minna Nikolova (eds.), *Understanding Human Rights Manual on Human Rights Education*, (Graz-Austria: Human Security Network, 2003) especially the chapter “Religious Freedom”, p. 166.

What can be inferred from Galtung's statement? Undeniably that investigation of the foundation of religions by cross-cultural understanding, education, interfaith encounters, and inter-religious dialogue, is the basis of sustainable peacebuilding worldwide, including in Indonesia. In the words of prominent Muslim peace scholar Mohammed Abu-Nimer (2002), interfaith dialogue or interreligious encounters is the miraculous way of transforming conflict and building enduring peace.

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