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**Pluralism Collapses:
A Study of the *Jama'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia*
and its Persecution**

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INTRODUCTION

The reality of inter-faith conflict in Indonesia does not only involve groups of people coming from different religious affiliations and backgrounds like in the case of Poso in South Sulawesi, and Maluku, but also occur between those embracing a common belief marked with different religious understandings. The conflict between the Sunni and the Syiah, the Ahmadis¹ and non-Ahmadis for example, sparking violence and hostilities, reflects the pluralistic nature of Indonesian Muslims. Different understandings upon certain laws and regulations stipulated by the Qur'an and hadith have produced different ideological streams and the growth of sectarian teachings in Islam. This also significantly indicates that there is no single interpretation upon scriptural teachings and therefore emphasizes the fundamental need for *ijtihad* (renewed interpretation) upon sacred texts according to the dynamics of socio-cultural settings. The multiple faces of Indonesian Muslims, marked by various interpretative meanings on sacred texts are divided along the line of radicalism, conservatism, moderation, and liberalism. Islamic mass organizations represent the multiple characteristics of Indonesian Muslims.

Divergent comprehension on scriptural texts could create a situation where they are contested and become the source of conflicting thoughts. In other words, no unitary or monolithic understanding upon verses and hadith has potentially brought the believers in a circumstance where convergent thoughts and interpretations are challenged and disputed against one another and eventually brought them into ideological clashes. One instance is the verse stating *laa nabiya ba'da* (there is no other Prophet after Muhammad). This verse, to most Indonesian Muslims clarifies the finality of the Prophet Muhammad, meaning that there cannot be another God's messenger after him since he is believed to be the last. Consequently, those who claim that Mirza Gulam Ahmad (MGA), is the promised advent of prophet Isa as the Ahmadiyah followers mostly believe, have instigated tension between them and those claiming Muhammad as the seal of all prophets. The dispute on maintaining the right prophethood sees the more radical Islamic groups assaulting the other in order to eliminate beliefs on a so called "false prophet". In some areas of Indonesia and during a number of occasions, one's truth claim is even severely manifested in the forms of coarse language containing stigmatization and labeling imbued with vandalism to those who allegedly hold a "deviant, heretical" belief in their promotion of a false prophet. This tension is quite often exacerbated by damaging the resources of the persecuted religious group²

This paper intends to study the Ahmadiyah sect not merely because this movement has brought upon a controversy on the prophethood role of M.G A. The intention of studying the Jama'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) is also underlined by the government's severe interference that heightens the atmosphere of the conflict. And as far as human safety and minority rights are concerned, the research here also proposes to reveal the way government copes with the Ahmadiyah refugees who for so long have become the victims or the silent majority of this conflict.

¹ Ahmadis refers to people who follow the teachings of Ahmadiyah. The adherents of Ahmadiyah are called Ahmadis

² These among others are dwelling sites, housing compound equipped with schools, place of worships, orphanage home, and plots of cultivated land and dairy farm.

INNER UNDERSTANDINGS OF AHMADIYAH

The Role of Imam Mahdi (Messiah)

In this section I would like to figure out the Ahmadis' belief system based on their own understanding which is starkly different from the view held by outsiders. Referring to the explanation of the JAI Leader of the NTB Province (*Mubaligh Wilayah*), H. Saeful Uyun, the focal point of Ahmadiyah belief lays the claim that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (MGA) is *nabi zili* (a shadowy manifestation of the real prophet). Saeful Uyun explained that *nabi zili* means that the prophethood of MGA is symbolic. The word *zili* literally means a silhouette, and this marks that MGA is a prophet in the allegorical sense as he explained:

It is like when we see ourselves on the mirror, the picture that reflects on the glass is not us. It is a reflection of the real one standing in front of the mirror. And so the Ahmadis see MGA as a prophet in metaphorical sense, like the reflected body on the mirror. As a prophet in metaphorical sense he is acting as the silhouette of the final prophet. This means that the main role of MGA does not at all replace Muhammad as the final messenger, but rather passing on Muhammad's teachings to the generation during and after his life. As the silhouette of the final prophet, he does not bring new Syariah. Instead, he carries on Islamic teachings brought by Muhammad.

If *dakwah* - as an everlasting effort to proliferate the true messages of holy Qur'an - is symbolically seen as a continuous chain, so that the role of MGA in this case is seen by his followers as an important part of the unbroken chain. This notion is also well expressed by Khalifah Mirza Bashir ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, sought to justify his father's claim on prophethood:

that the expression 'the last prophet' does not prohibit the coming of prophets who imitate the life and example of the Holy Prophet, teach nothing new, and only follow him and his teaching; who are charged with the duty of spreading the Holy Prophet's teaching, who attribute their spiritual acquisitions including prophethood to the spiritual example and influence of their preceptor and master, the Holy Prophet³.

The above view has basically offended the outsiders' fundamental belief who comprise of the majority of mainstream Sunnite Muslims confessing the finality of Prophet Muhammad. Any group claiming prophethood after him is therefore conceived to be against and offending the Sunnite mainstream Muslims' belief. The recognition of the MGA's prophethood had made some of them to perceive that Ahmadis treat MGA as the 26th⁴ prophet, while some others judge that the Ahmadis have substituted Muhammad with MGA. The latter perception has further led them to allegedly view that Ahmadiyah members have also changed the content of the second verse of *syahadat* i.e. instead of Muhammdarasullulah they utter MGA rasulullah. The thing that mostly stunt the majority of mainstream Muslims is the fact that Ahmadis treat MGA simultaneously as the *Masih Mau'ud* (promised second advent of Isa or the Al-Masih), the *Mahdi Mau'ud* (promised Messiah), and the *Mujadid abad 14* (religious reformer for the

³ "Advice to a Missionary". <http://www.alislam.org/library/links/advice.html>

⁴ Muslims believe that the total number of main messengers of Allah are 25. Prophet Muhammad is conceived to be the last one of the 25 prophets, with Adam as the first.

14th century), with the prophet not revealing any new syari'ah⁵, but revitalizing the everlasting teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

If the majority of Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified and then ascended to heaven physically, the Ahmadis on the contrary believe that Jesus was crucified and survived from crucifixion. After he was healed from all wounds caused by crucifixion, he travelled to India to find the lost tribe of Israel. His journey finally brought him to Kashmir where he eventually settled there for good until his death. He died naturally and his tomb was found in Sri Nagar located in Kashmir. Holding on to this belief means that Ahmadiyah has offended the mainstream Muslims who believe that Jesus or the prophet Isa had ascended to heaven while alive but without being crucified. It also goes against Christians who believe in the death, the resurrection, and the second coming of Jesus. Based on this finding MGA after receiving a calling from God, claimed himself to be the Second Advent of prophet Isa (Al-Masih). The belief in Masih Mau'ud (promised Al-Masih) embodied in the MGA figure is affirmed by his followers up to present time. If the majority of Muslims believe that Prophet Isa was assumed into heaven and that someday he will descend down to the earth at a time when most Muslims have abandoned the teaching of Muhammad, the Ahmadis believe that references to the second coming of Jesus (al-Masih) is allegorical. The prophecy of the second coming was symbolically fulfilled in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Besides this claim, MGA is also recognised by his followers to be the Awaited One of the promised world community of religions (the Mahdi Mau'ud), and the reformer of the 14th century (*Mujaddid*). An Ahmadi believes that in every century God would send down a mujadid – a religious reformer with religious knowledge and understanding capable of producing renewed interpretation of religious creeds. To his followers MGA is admitted to be the Mujadid of the 14th⁶ century who also bear the title as the promised Messiah and the second advent of Al-Masih. Every Ahmadi Muslim shares the belief that MGA, the founder of the Ahmadiyah Community is the Messiah and Mahdi whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet of Islam. This belief was clearly described by Abid Khan:

⁵ Bringing in no new syari'ah supposedly strengthens the notion of the essential religious role of MGA as conveying the Prophet Muhammad's original messages of Islam. MGA had merely passed on further Qur'anic teachings revealed to Muhammad to the ummah during his life and after his life time. Khalifah (World leader of Ahmadiyah Muslims jama'ah) was said to be continuing MGA's role after he had passed on.

⁶ The Islamic calendar was first introduced by the close companion of the Prophet, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. During his leadership of the Muslim community, in approximately 638 A.D., he consulted with his advisors in order to come to a decision regarding the various dating systems used at that time. It was agreed that the most appropriate reference point for the Islamic calendar was the *Hijrah*, since it was an important turning point for the Muslim community. After the emigration to Madinah (formerly known as Yathrib), the Muslims were able to organize and establish the first real Muslim "community," with social, political, and economic independence. Life in Madinah allowed the Muslim community to mature and strengthen, and the people developed an entire society based on Islamic principles. Muslims measure the passage of time using the Islamic (*Hijrah*) calendar. This calendar has twelve lunar months, the beginnings and endings of which are determined by the sighting of the crescent moon. Years are counted since the *Hijrah*, which is when the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Madinah (approximately July 622 A.D.).

“Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the true Promised Messiah and Mahdi, who came to rejuvenate the message of Islam and therefore we most certainly recognize and accept him as a true Prophet of God Almighty. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was the final law bearing Prophet and he brought a complete and perfect teaching”⁷.

The spiritual markers of Al-Masih, Al-Mahdi, Mujadid, and Prophet were all embodied together in MGA figure bearing religious tasks that should normatively be carried out by those following his path. According to one adherent of Ahmadiyah in West Nusatenggara (NTB-Nusa Tenggara Barat), among these tasks are i) breaking the sacred wooden cross (*mematahkan kayu salib*) and ii) slaughtering the pig (*menyembelih babi*). These tasks are metaphoric in their meaning. Breaking the cross means to destroy the trinity. Since monotheism (*tauhid*) i.e. the belief in the oneness of God is the core of Islam, thus Imam Mahdi and his devotee should convert the trinity adherents to Islam. The pig represents dirt and disgust; it is used to represent humanity’s negative attitude of dishonour, lax, and disrespect. In the era nearing doomsday (*era akhir zaman*) it is said that people who believe in Islam will increase in terms of numbers, but not in terms of piousness. In other words, there will be more and more Muslims who no longer abide by the Syari’ah. The violation over Syariah (Islamic law) is said to be blatant and widespread. Muslims, according to the Ahmadiis will become more and more permissive, showing less attachment to Islamic ethics and moral codes. The increasing numbers of Muslims are said to be meaningless as most of them have begun to abandon ethical conduct as good Muslims. For this reason, Imam Mahdi would be coming to re-guide and redirect Muslims to their right path in Islam. In this respect, the re-strengthening mission, long after the era of prophet Muhammad and the *kulafaur rasyidin*⁸ will be carried out continuously along the history of mankind.

Role of Khalifah

As Islam recognises the role of Khalifah to lead the ummah after the death of Rasulullah, and so too in the case of Ahmadiyah. After Mirza Gulam Ahmad passed away, leadership of the Ahmadiyah Muslim Jamma’ah was taken over by *Khalitullah Masih*. Khalifatullah Masih, also referred to as Khalifah is part of the Ahmadiyah’s leadership tradition borrowed from the period after Rasulullah lifetime. It also introduced the idea of Rasulullah’s four best friends (*sahabah*) known as *Khulafaur Rasyidin*, namely Abu Bakar as the first, Umar as the second, Ustman as the third, and Ali as the fourth Khalifah. Within the Ahmadiyah world community, this leadership style, adopted from the period of the *sahabah*, is embodied in Khalifatullah Masih or the Khalifah. He was actually selected by the Ahmadiyah’s prominent central figures to unanimously lead the Ahmadiyah community whose members are widely spread over different countries. As a central, worldwide figure of the Ahmadiyah global community, he leads every Amir or the national leader of Ahmadiyah in each country. Consequently the Amir has to abide by Khalifah’s orders and instructions, and executes his policies. The Khalifah of Ahmadiyah is the extended hand of Imam Mahdi who is responsible for the prolongation of Ahmadiyah teaching tradition as well as securing the establishment of the increasing members of Jama’ah Ahmadiyah world community. The Ahmadiyah worldly ummah recognizes its Khalifatullah Masih as a world leader surpassing the geographical

⁷ Abid Khan is the official of International Press and Media Desk of Ahmadiyyah Muslim Association. See also http://www.ahmadiyya.ca/press/Jakarta_press_release20080121.pdf

⁸ Kulafaur Rasyidin is the four major companions of the prophet. They are: Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman, and Ali. Every one of them had a substantial period of time to govern the Muslims world on his era.

entity as well as national identity and is obliged to abide by his words and messages. He is considered to be part of the continuing chain of the prophet Muhammad's teaching tradition as well as Imam Mahdi and Masih Mau'ud. The teachings of Imam Mahdi inherited from Prophet Muhammad are believed to be enlivened by the constituting role of Khalifatullah as the successors of MGA.

There are five Ahmadiyah's Khalifah that have successively continued to spread the teachings of Mahdi over a period of nearly 100 years after the passing of Imam Mahdi. They are:

- Hadhrat Hakim Maulana Nur-ud-Din, Khalifatul Masih I, May 27, 1908- March 13, 1914.
- Hadhrat Alhaj Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, March 14, 1914- November 7, 1965.
- Hadhrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III, November 8, 1965-June 9, 1982.
- Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, June 10, 1982- April 19, 2003.
- Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V, April 22, 2003-up to now

Hadrat Maulana Nurudin was recognised as the first Khalifah of Ahmadiyah. He strongly believed that Allah had made him the Khalifatul Masih I, and his position was predestined and agreed by the British colonial government at that time. The second Khalifah, Mahmud Ahmad was actually MGA's son. He declared himself not only as the Ahmadiyah's Caliphate but also for the world community of believers. The third Caliphate was Nasir Ahmad. Important resources within the Jama'ah Ahmadiyah circles admitted that the third Caliphate obtained his religious learning from India, Pakistan, and Britain. He was able to memorize the whole of the Qur'an. He was the only Caliphate so far that had ever visited Indonesia. In June 2000 he was welcomed by Gus Dur, the then incumbent President of Indonesia, and Amin Rais, the head of the National Parliamentary Council. The fifth Khalifah is Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. It was during his incumbency in 2008, that the bicentenary 100-year leadership of the Khalifatullah Masih (*Seabad Kekhalifahan*) was world-widely celebrated. *Seabad kekhalifahan* was also celebrated in Nusa Tenggara Barat-NTB province at the Asrama Transito⁹.

OUTER UNDERSTANDINGS OF AHMADIYAH'S BELIEF: STIGMATIZATION AND ANTI-HERETICAL CAMPAIGN

With the declaration that MGA was Masih Mau'ud (the Promised Messiah), Mahdi of the Muslims and that he had appeared in the likeness of Jesus who had died in Kashmir and was no longer in heaven, he committed himself to a renewed understanding of Islam in a way which to most Muslims would be considered heretical. Lavan¹⁰ mentioned that along the history of prophethood, it was considered absurd for a prophet to gradually gain his status as the messenger of God. Normally what had happened was that a prophet would be directly attributed by God through revelation, since a prophet is not a rank that can be conferred in a

⁹ This place is located in Mataram- capital city of NTB Province – and used to be a transit for local transmigrants prior to their embarkation to their new land of settlement. Since 2006 it has been used as the temporary settlement for 138 refugees of Ahmadiyah – the main victims of consecutive persecutions in 2002 coming from Eastern Lombok, and in 2006 from Dusun (sub-Village) of Ketapang, Desa (village) of Gegerung, West Lombok

¹⁰ Spencer Lavan. 1974. *The Ahmadiyah Movement*. Delhi: Manohar Book Service, p.38.

progressive mannert. The revelations of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Noh, Prophet Isa, and Muhammad were attributed to be coming directly from God once for a life time. On the other hand, Mirza Gulam Ahmad claimed himself to be a prophet after investigating the development among his followers. His claim, as stated by Lavan, was gradually built upon – starting from his claim of being the mujadid and then elevating himself as the Imam Mahdi, and finally declaring himself as the prophet.

For the majority of mainstream Sunnite Muslims the Ahmadis recognition that MGA was (another) prophet combined with their confession on the finality of Prophet Muhammad was considered to be confusing, inconsistent, and in opposition to one another. As they believe in the holy Qur'an explaining that "Muhammad is not a father of a man amidst you, but he is a messenger of Allah and the conceal of all prophets", they finally came to the conclusion that the claim over MGA's prophethood was illegitimate, offensive, and misleading. Radical section of the Sunnite Muslims had even said that the escalated spiritual rank of prophethood attributed to MGA was a false interpretation and understanding, and thus should be strongly condemned. This was a false teaching (*ajaran palsu*) that had attempted to promote a fake prophet (*nabi palsu*).

The allegedly false view that was conceived by MGA was the promised second advent of prophet Isa (Al-Masih) as well as the Imam Mahdi (Messiah) created ideological warfare. It had eventually also triggered a situation where the followers of Ahmadiyah was persecuted for merely adopting and promoting this new form of prophethood who had admitted to be a "Mahdi", "Messiah", and "Mujadid of the 14th century"¹¹. All of these attributions were considered to be "over-confident and highly exaggerated". Ahmadiyah's teaching was regarded as inappropriate as it did not comply with the Qur'an as the ultimate source. It was "outside of Islam" (*keluar dari Islam*), and a deviation from Islam (*meyimpang dari Islam*). This deviation had led the critics to suggest that it was much better for the Ahmadis to detach themselves from Islam, and urged them to remove Islam as the main label of their community's identity. They said that "if only that Ahmadis had called their belief as "*agama Ahmadiyah*" (Ahmadiyah religion), it would be better since other Muslims would not get offended by them". In other words, according to the critics, Ahmadis did not deserve to be called Muslims since their basis of teaching revolves around a new prophet, which was not Islamic.

The more radical section of the mainstream Sunnite Muslims even said that what the Ahmadiyah did was to entangle the issue by contaminating the original teaching of Islam (*isu penodaan agama*), inviting blasphemy and apostasy, as well as damaging the original teaching of the Qur'an (*merusak ajaran*). As one of them clarified Ahmadiyah is something that looks like Islam in its "outer" appearance, but in the internal side it might not be Islam at all. This statement was strengthened by a member of MUI (*Majlis Ulama Indonesia* – Indonesian Ulama Council) using a metaphorical sense: "if their spare-parts are not "*Honda*"¹², then consequently they are not entitled to use "*Honda*" as their trademark".

¹¹ Based on its own historical fact findings, the FPI publicly declared on the heresy of Ahmadiyah (*Maklumat FPI tentang Bukti Kekafiran Ahmadiyah*). Some of the Ahmadiyah's apostasy mentioned in its declaration was that MGA claim himself consecutively as Mujadid (Reformer) in 1885, and then "Imam Mahdi in 1891, and finally as prophet and God's messenger in 1901. See also Tabloid of "*Suara Islam (Islamic Voice)*, July 18-31, 2008, p. 16

¹² Honda is a trademark of motorcycle widely used in Indonesia. This trademark is used as a metaphor of Sunnite Islam.

Honda is one among many brands of motorcycle offered by the market. Sunnite Islam is also one out of divergent religious thoughts and understandings that exists in the society. There are various types of beliefs and various models of religious practices adopted by different groups of Muslims. If the Ahmadi's belief does not abide by the Qur'an as the absolute source of Muslims belief and practice, the Ahmadi's would be better off finding another religion, so goes the criticism. "A Mac Donald is Mac Donald, and Kentucky is Kentucky. These "brands" cannot be shifted or exchanged one with another though both may be made out of chicken". This is a metaphor to differentiate that Sunnite teaching differs in religious thoughts as compared to that of the Ahmadiyah, though they both look as if they are similar (as Muslims) by the same token. Another metaphor that Sunni critics used to deny the Ahmadiyah's belief was: "It's a matter of choosing 'Nabi Arab (an Arabic Prophet) or 'Nabi India (an Indian Prophet)", you cannot have both, or substitute the first (original) with the second (false) one". This choice marks that the finality of Nabi Muhammad is irreplaceable and incomparable since there could not be another one but him s.a.w. Ahmadiyah was allegedly adjoining Prophet Muhammad with another figure coming from India.

The above metaphor clearly expressed strong refusal toward the Ahmadiyah's type of Islam, and urged them to call themselves with another religion outside Islam. Similar to this, others commented that "what MGA and his Ahmadiyah adherents claim is very much like "building a new house inside someone else's' house" --that is to say, founding a new religion within an already well-established religion". Embedded in this comment is an alleged view that Ahmadiyah had created a new religion inside Islam, since true Islam did not recognize three venerated figures jointly together into one figure. Moreover, the hardline group of Muslims had also made arduous attempts to get the SBY government to officially declare Ahmadiyah as belonging to a non-Islamic faith as what was done by the Pakistani government¹³. Such a suggestion was also resounded by former Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Yusril Iza Mahendra:

It is better if Ahmadiyah members recognize themselves or being recognized as non-Muslims, since this could mean that their constitutional rights will remain intact. Having such recognition means that the Indonesian government had followed a good step taken by the Pakistani government that had identified Ahmadiyah Qadian or the Qadiani in Pakistan as belonging to the non-Muslims minority group"¹⁴.

¹³ The anti-Ahmadiyah Ordinance was promulgated by General Zia, President of Pakistan, on April 26, 1984. This Ordinance marked government policies that discriminated against religious minorities through out the use of the "anti-Ahmadi laws", the blasphemy laws, stating: 1) prohibiting Ahmadi's from calling themselves Muslims, or 2) posing as Muslims, or 3) from referring to their faith as Islam, or (4) from preaching or propagating their faith, or (5) from inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith, and (6) from insulting the religious feelings of Muslims. (4) from preaching or propagating their faith, or (5) from inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith, and (6) from insulting the religious feelings of Muslims. (7)the blasphemy laws provide the death penalty for defiling Islam or its prophets; life imprisonment for defiling, damaging, or desecrating the Quran, and ten years' imprisonment for insulting the religious feelings of any citizens, (8) from offering to their place of worship as a mosque, (9) Ahmadi's cannot issue the call to prayer as other orthodox Muslims do.

¹⁴ Iza Mahendra, Yusril. "Jadikan Ahmadiyah Minoritas Non-Muslim". *Suara Islam*. Edisi 44, May 16-29, 2008. p. 17.

The above plea clearly indicates that mainstream Sunnite Muslims would likely to accept the presence of JAI – Jama'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia provided that they do not claim themselves to be Muslims. Embedded in this plea was that the majority of Indonesian Sunnite Muslims cannot accept Ahmadis as part of the Muslim faith mainly over the reason of MGA's prophethood. On the contrary, the Ahmadis insisted on their Islamism. Strong identification of being Muslim was apparently stated by H. Saeful Uyun, Mubaligh Ulama of Ahmadiyah of NTB in his speech during the celebration of Muhammad's birthday in 2007 at the Asrama Transito: "Similar to other Islamic mass organizations that developed in Indonesia, such as Muhammadiyah, NU-Nahdlatul Ulama, NW-Nahdlatul Wathan, PERSIS, Hizbut Tahrir, Ahmadiyah is one out of so many branches of the Islamic tree (*salah satu cabang dalam pohon Islam*)".

The recognition of Mirza Gulam Ahmad as a prophet bearing similar syariah as brought by his predecessor, Prophet Muhammad, was the core of religious discontent that eventually stimulated ideological disputes which ended with the collective persecution upon Ahmadiyah followers. The persecution did not only exhibit the heightening atmosphere of discontent and hostility, but also exposed the increasing sense of apprehension over world-wide expansion and uncontrolled missionary activities of the Ahmadiyah. These activities were valued as a threatening sign for the existing Sunni belief in the over the long term. Ahmadiyah's global mission is suspiciously perceived as relentlessly reversing the Quranic message on the finality of Prophet Muhammad. In this case the Muslim hardliners stressed the importance of putting their strong demand to the government to disband Ahmadiyah. "It was for the sake of maintaining the pure or originality of Islam that such an arduous effort is extremely crucial and being made to outlaw the Ahmadiyah". By tolerating Ahmadis' heretical belief in Indonesia, will give them opportunity to gradually substitute mainstream Islam with what they mostly believe.

The demand to dissolve Ahmadiyah is thus underlined by their strong apprehension upon the establishment and sustainability of Sunnite teaching in the long run. Such fearfulness is reasonable and worth noting since Ahmadiyah as a fast growing movement which had gained worldwide followers. Ahmadiyah claimed that the branches of its organizations had spread out in 189 countries and adherents around more than 200 million people. Whereas in Indonesia it claimed that it had 235 organisations under the banner of Ahmadiyah spread over 33 provinces with around 41,308,975 members in 2000¹⁵.

Furthermore since some of mainstream Sunnite Muslims believe that Ahmadiyah hold their own interpretation of the Quran¹⁶, this leads to their suspicion that if their movement was unstoppable, there will be a loosening bond and attachment of the Indonesian ummah toward the Sunnite teaching of Islam. A campaign of "giving them no space if you want to protect your belief (*jangan beri mereka ruang gerak demi mempertahankan aqidah yang benar*)" reached its peak especially after MUI issued a fatwa concerning Ahmadiyah's heresy and apostasy. This campaign was conceived as *jihad* of defending the claim over the truth

¹⁵ 'Uyun, Syaeful. 2008. "Membincang Akidah dan Khilafah Ahmadiyah". Paper presented on the event on celebrating 100 years of Ahmadiyah Khalifah. Mataram, Arsrama Transito

¹⁶ Ahmadiyah published the Qur'an with its own translation. It was called Ahmadiyah's translation (Qur'an tarjamah Ahmadiyah). The Tadzkirah is the holy book of Ahmadiyah, which is never regarded to a holy book. Instead, it was written by MGA and mostly contained the *kabar suka* (good news) from God upon the revelation of MGA. Some of the content explained that MGA's appealing spiritual rank has been destined and through *kasyaf* (spiritual experience obtained through out having a dream)

(*aqidah agama*) against the enemy of faith (*musuh agama*) who wanted to change and thus destroy the original message of the holy Qur'an. Ahmadiyah was one of the major targets¹⁷ for a religious campaign on anti heretical movement laced strongly with religious stigmatization, branding the detractors as offenders and enemies of the faith.

The MUI's constructed stigmatization of Ahmadiyah as a belief that will corrode the Sunnite belief, actually reflects the ulama's anxiety over the lengthy intensification of Ahmadiyah global movement. This development had potentially reduced their own influence and charisma amidst their own ummah. They were frightened by the decreasing socio-religious bond upon their own followers if more and more of their disciples were left alone and later became the main target of flourishing Ahmadiyah's missionary activities. On one side the fatwa was actually acting as a safety valve to safeguard the ulama's authority and status as well as the long established socio-religious bond between them and their ummah. It is also a vehicle of maintaining, control, and safe guarding their own ummah vis a vis the other version of ulamahood introduced by Ahmadiyah i.e. *Khalifah Dunia* (world caliph) and other local religious leaders who were all subservient to Khalifah's command, ranging from the national (*Amir*) to the province (*Mubaligh Wilayah*), and regency (*Mubaligh Kabupaten*)

From the above discussion, it is clear that the core of Sunnite Muslim's discontent is the Ahmadis' truth claim on MGA's prophethood, and the continued role of MGA's as prophet and Imam Mahdi, and Messiah on the hands of so called the Khalifatullah Masih (promised caliphs). Besides this, the Ahmadis were also accused for maintaining Tadzkirah as the Holy book, though such an allegation had been strongly denied by the Ahmadis themselves. They said that they never valued Tadzkirah as a holy book. Tadzkirah was valued as the good news (*Kabar Suka*) which spiritually revealed or obtained by MGA through *kasyaf*¹⁸. *Kasyaf* is a religious experience that Imam Mahdi had obtained by means of dreams foretelling the future reality. An example of *kasyaf* was when MGA was foretold that he would be blessed with a smart son. And this dream became known as true when his grandson was elected to be the second Khalifah. The other *kabar suka* explained by the Tadzkirah besides the family matter, was the future situation of the Ahmadiyah Jama'ah. This religious organisation was foretold in Tadzkirah that its would have a huge following dispersed across the world. For the Ahmadis this forecast was considered to be a good sign besides marking the fulfillment of God's promise that Islam will win over all other religions.

Ahmadiyah members did not see Tadzkirah as a holy book nor was it a book of revelation (*mensiarkan wahyu*). This book was actually a compilation of notes collected by the second Khalifah. The important spiritual experience was compiled and then published into a book so that the Ahmadiyah followers could also learn of the experience of its founder. The Tadzkirah, according to the Ahmadiyah Mubaligh at Central Lombok, was used by irresponsible people to spread further rumours as if it was the holy book of Ahmadiyah, and to promote further allegation that Ahmadiyah had replaced the holy Qur'an with Tadzkirah. This, as he added, is all aimed at stirring up and increasing hostilities upon Ahmadiyah

¹⁷ Another Islamic association which was subjected to anti-heretical movement was the LDDI –Lembaga Dewan Dakwah Indonesia.

¹⁸ Every Muslim has been blessed with the potency of achieving the spiritual level of obtaining *kasyaf*. It all depends on his/her own piety. Individual piety is measured, among other things, by one's closeness in maintaining spiritual relationship with God. The closer she/he is the more opportunity she/he has to experience *kasyaf* is

among the Sunnite mainstream Muslims. Amin Jamaludin, the leader of LPPI, was one of those believed to be spreading the rumour on Tadzkirah as Ahmadiyah's holy book.

What is also important in discussing the ongoing allegation of Ahmadiyah as heretical and deviant sect, is also a discussion of the way the radical section of Sunnite Muslims' violent responses toward the "heresy", and "deviation of Ahmadiyah. My main particular concern here is when such a heresy was legitimised by the religious body, such as MUI, and then legitimised by the state either at national or regional level that would also increase the magnitude of collective sentiment against Ahmadiyah. Let us now discuss how religious authorities aided by the state had developed religious decrees to stigmatize and thus marginalize the Ahmadiyah.

ANTI HERESY MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL IMPLICATION

The Ahmadiyah teaching was brought for the first time to Indonesia by its missionary team coming from India, Mirza Wali Ahmad baig and Maulana Ahmad. Both arrived in Yogya in March 1924 to attend the 13th Muhammadiyah conference. In this conference they brought their controversial teachings upon the fact that Jesus had survived the crucifixion and went to Kashmir to find the lost tribe of Israelis until his death at the age of 120 years. They also had specific reforming thoughts concerning the jihad¹⁹. This group was not so extreme in holding their religious view. They even held a belief that a Muslim cannot set war against a non-Islamic government if it did not harm the Muslims, and gave religious freedom for Muslims to conduct their beliefs. They were loyal and law abiding people toward the government.

The success in proliferating the early teaching was marked by the enactment of the Ahmadiyah organization in 1928. Interestingly important figures behind the establishment of Ahmadiyah as a formal organization were closely related to Muhammadiyah and NU - the two biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. They were Raden Ngabehi HM Djojosoegito and Wahab Chasballah. Raden Ngabehi HM Djojosoegito was one of the prominent figures of Muhammadiyah. He and Wahab Chasballah were both cousins of Hasyim Ashari²⁰ - the fonder of Nahdlatul Ulama. In 1930 the Dutch colonial government recognized Ahmadiyah as a formal religious organization. Besides Djojo Soegito, Erfan Dahlan was also known to be one of the prominent members of Ahmadiyah. Erfan Dahlan is the son of Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan - the founder of Muhammadiyah. Erfan Dahlan was studying Ahmadiyah in Lahore and then spread its teachings to Thailand. Djoyo Sugito then moved the headquarters of Ahmadiyah Organisation to Purwoketo. In 1929 at the Muhammadiyah Congress held in Solo, the Majelis Trajih of Muhammadiyah issued a statement that the Ahmadiyah's belief in another prophet besides Muhammad was considered heretical. Those who believe in Ahmadiyah teaching was considered to be apostates. Members of Muhammadiyah were prohibited from listening to the religious preachings of Ahmadiyah. However, no violence had ever broken out over this issue. One could say that the Ahmadiyah and Muhammadiyah and the NU were coexisting peacefully with one another.

¹⁹ They had refused the idea of aggressive jihad as they believed that jihad of the pen (jihad-bil-qalam) should replace jihad of the sport (jihad-bi-saif). For this reason they conceive that the ink of a scholar is holier than a blood of martyr. As the 4th Khalifah put it: "swords can win territories but not hearts, force can be heads, but not minds". See further Waseem Ahmad. "problems faced by Young Muslims Growing Up in a Western Society". Al-baseerat, March (1993). P4.

²⁰ Hasyim Ashari is the grand father of Abdurrachman Wahid who formerly was the NU leader, Indonesian President, and Leader of PKB-Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party).

Strong condemnation upon the Ahmadiyah movement reached its peak when the Indonesian Ulama Council held a meeting on defining the status of Ahmadiyah. At the fifth Congress of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Pekalongan in 1930, Muslim scholars declared that followers of Ahmadiyah were aberrants, infidels, and apostates (*murtad*). Five years later in 1935, the Ulama Association of East Sumatra (MUI cabang Sumatra Timur) issued similar statements notifying the ummah that JAI was *kelompok murtad* (infidel group), *keluar dari Islam* (out of Islam). Though the Ulama was so determined in this meeting, and stigmatized Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect, they had not yet reached a decision to dissolve Ahmadiyah as a religious organisation. However, the edict had successfully triggered an anti-heretical campaign or an anti Ahmadiyah movement among the mainstream Muslims.

In the beginning the campaign took the form of stigmatizing and labelling of Ahmadiyah as insulting the Muslim world by recognizing a fake prophet. Though such a movement worked merely in the sphere of spreading a negative public discourse concerning Ahmadiyah belief²¹ it was very successful in encouraging some outstanding figures in the MUI to participate in the World Muslim League (Rabita al-Alam al-Islami) to determine the fate of Ahmadiyah. This annual conference was held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia on the 6th up to 10th April 1974, attended by more than 140 Muslim countries as well as numerous Islamic organisations. At this global conference, the fate of Ahmadiyah was determined by the Muslim world, and the representatives came up with a declaration that “Qadianiyah or Ahmadiyah was an underground movement which was went against Islam and the Muslim world. It was declared to be a counterfeit and deceitful religion masquerading itself as one stream of Islamic teachings. Members of the Muslim League condemned the fact that Ahmadiyah managed to seek world’s attention at the expense of destroying the very fundamental belief of Islam ny claiming that:

- its founder declares himself as a prophet,
- its members deliberately skew the true meanings of the Quranic verses,
- jihad²²: or struggles along religious path had been eliminated.

After the above declaration was settled, the government of Saudi Arabia then issued a regulation preventing members of Ahmadiyah to enter Mecca for religious pilgrimage.

As a response toward the declaration taken by the Rabita al-Alam al-Islam, the Malaysian government on the 18th of June 1975 also eventually announced that Ahmadiyah was a prohibited religion and its existence was banned in the country. A policy was also adopted by its neighbouring countries. The Parliamentary members of Pakistan in the late 1979 passed a resolution to consider the Ahmadis as non-Muslims under the law. Not long after the Pakistani government’s action, Indonesia also adopted a similar policy previously taken by Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Pakistan to outlaw the Ahmadiyah. The process was

²¹ LPPI-Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam (Institute for Islamic Research and Study) was one among the Islamic organisations invigoratingly promoted that Ahmadis adopted a new prophet, held Tadzkirah as its holy book, and conducted pilgrimage in Qadiyan instead of Mecca.

²² Ahmadiyah interpretes jihad as “to struggle for righteousness, to fight with pen in rational debate, rather than fight with the sword. It is wrong for Muslims to fight non-Muslim (*kuffar*) states (such as the British colonial rule in India) if that state allows the practice of Islam” (see Simon Ross Valentine, 2008. *The Pen is Mightier than the Sword*). In *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama’at: History, Belief, Practise*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 189-210.

Due to have held this definition on jihad, Ahmadis are often accused of being British agent.

initiated by the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) which was headed by Prof. Dr. Hamka. The congress held by MUI Pusat in 1980 resulted in a religious verdict (*fatwa*) stating that Ahmadiyah is to be considered outside the fold of Islam, and its adherents' would be apostacizing. And this verdict was reaffirmed and legalised in 1984 in an official statement signed by MUI chairman Prof. Dr. H. Umar Shihab and its secretary Prof. Dr. H.M. Din Syamsuddin. In compliance with this statement, the Ministry of Religious Affairs at that time had also warned Muslims against the danger of Ahmadiyah.

From the above discussion it is clear that the conference called by the World Islamic League had caused a snowball effect. Nearly all of the countries especially within the Asia region with Sunnite Muslim majority implemented the decision taken by the Muslims League by issuing official religious statement (*fatwa*) that Ahmadiyah had deviated from the mainstream Sunni teachings and therefore not Islamic.. The fatwa was not intended to dissolve Ahmadiyah completely. It was meant to be a legal statement stressing that Ahmadiyah was *aliran sesat dan menyesatkan* (heretical and misleading), and warned Muslims to refuse its teaching that could mislead them.

The MUI's edict concerning the religious faith of Ahmadiyah was issued twice i.e. in June 1980 and in July 2005. The first fatwa was issued during the Suharto era²³, while the second one was strongly backed up by President SBY- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono²⁴. The Suharto government was seemingly having a better grip on how to handle religious differences compared to that of his successors. Though the 1980 fatwa had indeed stimulated a strong sense of abhorrence among Sunnite followers, it did not brake into open conflict and violence against Ahmadiyah. This was mainly because the Suharto authoritarian regime (1970-1998) was successful in setting up a policy on compressing public discussion on the issue of *SARA-suku, agama, ras, antar golongan* (ethnicity, religions, and inter-group relations). Open discussion on matters concerning SARA was strictly prohibited since the New Order regime regarded this would invite inter-groups conflict and therefore could harm the unity of Indonesia. The late President Suharto proved to be quite successful in taking a firm stand on preventing inter-religious or inter-ethnics clashes, by banning the issue of SARA as a public discourse. By outlawing the SARA issues as a public debate, it was able to suppress all kinds of massive protest rallies using the banner of religion or ethnic sentiments. SARA was used to close any public discourse that could stir up any religious or ethnic sentiment. The emulation of this kind of sentiment was conceived by the regime to cause detrimental effects on nation-building effort based on pluralism, as Alfitri also pointed out: "Soeharto's regime employed harsh regulations which violated human rights to control these four issues, justifying these measures as necessary for the continued development of Indonesia as well as for national unity"²⁵. The policy of anti public discourse on the issue of SARA was strongly inspired by the situation of Sukarno era in which Suharto evaluated that the ethnic Chinese,

²³ Under the New Order government of former general Suharto, public discourse was heavily censored. Specifically banned were discussions of race, religion and ethnicity. Also kept on a tight rein were radical Islamic organisations. Particularly curbed were those calling for Indonesia to become an Islamic state and throw off the concept of pluralism enshrined in the nation's constitution.

²⁴ President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won the presidency in 2004 with more than 60 % of the vote but his party only won 7 % of the votes in parliamentary elections and relies on the support of the Islamic parties. His decision to seize Ahmadiyah activities was said to gain sympathy and popular support from the Sunnite Muslims voters who made up the majority religious grouping in Indonesia

²⁵ Alfitri. "Religious Liberty in Indonesia and the Rights of Deviant Sects". 2008. Asian Journal of Comparative Law. Volume.3, Issue 1, Article 3. p.11

fundamentalist Islam, communism, and the West were four major problems of the Indonesian society required to be dealt strategically and systematically. This explained why the 1980 fatwa of MUI was unable to mobilize public unrests and riots over the Ahmadi sect compared to that of the second fatwa issued during the reformation era where freedom of speech and mass assembly were guaranteed by the government

The second MUI fatwa had raised more public awareness about the danger of Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect, since it involved the SBY government's intensive interference in legitimising the fatwa into a joint decree. It had also produced heated public debates of pros and cons. Prior to this joint decree, President Yudhoyono had initially instructed the Team of Coordinating Board for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society (*Tim Bakorpakem- Badan Koordinasi Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan*) to conduct survey on the Ahmadiyah. This team was established to meet the strong demand of Muslim radicals, such as the FPI, FUI, LPPI²⁶ to disband Ahmadiyah. As these groups were getting more vigilant about the short and long term effects of the lengthy extensive movement of Ahmadiyah, the government then attempted to meet with their demands by assigning the task to BAKORPAKEM to scrutinize Ahmadiyah and its missionary movement. Sometimes the above groups' expressive concern on the undisturbed rapid development of Ahmadiyah took the form of mass demonstrations, walking demonstrations (*orasi berjalan*). As they viewed that Ahmadiyah members were the "enemy of faith", so if they were always given free opportunity to continuously and persistently spread their "heretical teachings" without any hurdles, this might cause a further obliteration upon the Sunni faith. In responding to this growing uneasiness the, BAKORPAKEM as the government's important body started their work by deploying its officials to a fact-finding mission in all of Indonesia's provinces. In April 16, 2008 Bakorpakem made known its findings that the Jema'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) had truly deviated from Islam. BAKORPAKEM made such a conclusion through an evaluation of the Ahmadiyah activity from January till mid April 2008. According to this Board, Ahmadiyah failed to commit to the 12 points of declaration it signed in January 2008. Included in this declaration was the willingness of Ahmadiyah to acknowledge mainstream Islamic teaching, and to abandon its belief on the prophethood of Mirza Gulam Ahmad. Based on its evaluation the BAKORPAKEM team then urged the Minister of Religious affairs, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs to disband the Ahmadiyah.

The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Islamic Ummah Forum (FUI) are radical groups that used the BAKORPAKEM's recommendation to put more pressure upon the government to dissolve Ahmadiyah immediately. The edict implied that the existential belief of Ahmadiyah was conceived to be endangering other Muslims, and thus its ongoing activities should be ceased and its organisation be automatically banned. Based on the above recommendation the government then followed through by preparing a joint decree to curtail the Ahmadiyah sectarian belief perceived to be heretical, and deviant.

From the above discussion it was clear that in the project of disbanding Ahmadiyah, MUI did not work alone. MUI's second edict was strengthened by BAKORPAKEM's recommendation It aimed at emphasizing the notion of religious stigmatization of Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect of Islam, and therefore its prolong existence and development must be banned. Other organisations deeply involved in activities to effectuate the fatwa as a common

²⁶ FPI-Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Front), FUI-Forum Umat Islam (Forum of Islamic Ummah), LPPI-Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam (Institute of Islamic Research and Study).

tool to curtail Ahmadiyah activities, besides the MUI and BAKORPAKEM were mostly the radical sections of Muslim mass organizations, i.e. the FPI, FUI, and LPPI.

It was clear that the government trusted MUI in matters of coping with “deviant sect that could potentially endanger the stability of the Ummah. The BAKORPAKEM and three Ministries which had produced the joint-decree had all played significant role as the extension of government hand, in realising MUI’s legal edict. The government’s formulation of this joint ministerial decree is based on a 1965 law on the prevention of misuse and disgrace of religion. MUI and the state’s bodies are all party to the chain of violence which ensued. Their decision had triggered the spread of violence in some areas of Indonesia. The MUI’s edict which adopted the BAKORPAKEM’s decision, and legalised by the joint ministerial decree on curtailing the Ahmadiyah had sparked heated debates among various Islamic groups which culminated in the sustained persecution upon Ahmadiyah followers and centres.

Most of the Muslim reaction can be construed as supporting the ban despite the fact that Ahmadiyah was a non-violent sect. The NU leader, Hasyim Muzadi, for instance said: “Ahmadiyah is deviant. It is the government domain to outlaw this organization”. So the Muhammadiyah, the second largest Muslim mass organisation after the NU, under its chair person, Din Syamsuddin, more or less agreed with the government’s firm action on terminating the Ahmadiyah activity, as he stated: “the government ban is due to the’ reason that Ahmadiyah does not follow the mainstream Islamic teaching. For this reason the next steps should be efforts to persuade Ahmadiyah followers to return to mainstream Islamic teachings”.

However, the radical group, represented by FPI, was not satisfied with the joint decree of limiting Ahmadiyah activities, as their demand was the dissolution of Ahmadiyah completely. The decree still enabled Ahmadiyah to freely move amidst members within their own circle. To the FPI’s disappointment they blamed that the government worked half heartedly in matters determining the Ahmadiyah. As one of them commented the government did not make strong judgment, reflecting the persona of SBY as being too careful but indecisive and not assertive (“*tidak tegas*”). The decision to seize Ahmadiyah activity rather than to dissolve this organization completely was allegedly viewed as the SBY government’s half-hearted policy.

Other Muslim factions, expressing their disapproval toward the decree of seizing Ahmadiyah said that the decree should consider various aspects; the most important thing is maintaining stability. To be alert to the potential conflict generated by those dissatisfied by the decree. This was because some radical groups were still unsatisfied with the decree of curtailing Ahmadiyah activities. They wanted more than this, i.e. “to give no more space for Ahmadiis” in Indonesia. In fact government still allows space for them to pursue their activities among themselves within a limited circle of their own followers. With regard to this dissatisfaction it thus become the responsibility of the government to ensure the safety of Ahmadiyah members after the decree was issued.

Each region expressed their actions differently toward the fatwa of *MUI Pusat*. I will now look specifically at Lombok, a locality which displayed the most severe persecution of the Ahmadiyah after the edict of MUI Pusat (national level) was filtered down to its branches i.e. *MUI daerah* at the province and regional levels.

At the local level the 1980 fatwa of MUI Pusat fatwa was executed further by the MUI branches at the NTB province and Lombok Barat regency. The state bureaucracies at the province issued an official letter (SK Gubernur) concerning the heresy of Ahmadiyah strengthening further the fatwa issued by MUI Pusat passed on to MUI Propinsi and MUI Kabupaten (Ulama Council in provincial and regency levels). The SK Gubernur was then followed by the SK Bupati Lombok Barat i.e *SKB No 35 Tahun 2001* which was also officially proclaiming the heresy of Ahmadiyah and prohibiting its proliferated teachings. In a press conference held as public release of the *SKB*, Bupati Lombok Barat said: “the SK concerning the heresy of Ahmadiyah has been determined; it cannot be revoked by any reason”. The MUI head of NTB added this statement:

“MUI has suspended the dialogue with Ahmadiyah. There will be no more deals concerning the Ahmadiyah case. It is obvious that Ahmadiyah has tarnished Islam. For this reason its teaching can no longer be tolerated. Affirmative action should be taken forward regarding the Ahmadiyah religious status, if not debates and arguments concerning Ahmadiyah’s religious validity will remain open and this could mean a further acknowledgement of the long-established status of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia.

The fatwa of MUI Pusat received its reinforcement when the MUI at lower ranking branches of administration helped by the Governour of NTB and the head regency of Lombok Barat, had validated further the legitimacy of its edict within their own jurisdiction. Besides them, local religious elites, Tuan Guru, had also taken an essential role to enforce the fatwa at the bottom level of society that is among their own ummah or community of believers. Some local Tuan Guru who control massive number of followers among the grass roots were became important agents who, through their provocative sermons and preaches, had been successful in stirring up and mobilizing anti-Ahmadiyah feelings. Bearing charismatic influence and religious capability to translate the MUI’s edict into language of their loyal disciples, local Tuan Guru easily cultivated a collective sense of anti Ahmadiyah outrage towards its teaching, and mobilize this sense towards angry rioting. Without their role, the validity of the edict (fatwa) and the SK’s legitimation of the fatwa would remain as a piece of letter -- literal or spoken discourse only, without the power of action.

Local Tuan Guru provocative sermons and preaches were accentuated by the necessary tasks of Muslims to commit jihad against those who spread a wrongful belief. In Tuan Guru’s preaching the Ahmadis were considered to be the enemy of the faith (*musuh aqidah*) who had forced the true Muslims to defend their faith (*bela agama*). It was not surprising to find that besides the Ahmadis’ housing complex, worship centres, religious schools equipped with libraries, and orphanages were some of the main targets of violent attacks.. The call to commit jihad served to justify the destructive actions carried out by their loyal disciples. Those committing jihad (the mujahid) were promised entrance to *jannah* (heaven) as a reward for defending the truth.

There was also an alleged view held by the mainstream Muslims that Ahmadiyah tended to lead an exclusive life style, as they expressed that “they were likely to be among themselves rather than with other people outside their community of believers” This, according to them, was apparent from their unwillingness to perform prayers behind a non-Ahmadi Imam, to marry non Ahmadis, to build a specific exclusive neighborhood complex among themselves - to live side by side with people within their own organization. Instead of mixing and mingling with the non-Ahmadis, the Ahmadis tended to pray in their own mosques within

their living vicinity, as well as had brought up their children within their exclusive living enclosures. They rarely mingled with people outside Ahmadiyah. Ahmadiyah was again stigmatized as an exclusive religious community that often disengaged themselves from the non-Ahmadiyah people living outside their milieu. However, the Ahmadis countered this perception by, arguing that it was difficult to engage with others who had had held preconceived negative beliefs, stigmas and labels against them. “How will you join in with people who in the very beginning had charged us with tarnishing Islam (*menodai agama Islam*) even before we know and meet them yet”. The fatwa had given clear definition and picture of who the Ahmadis are. For the Ahmadis it was hard to build a healthy relationship underlined by misconceptions and bad labeling around them. Fatwa had built a strong sense of social distance between the Ahmadis bearing the above stigmas and the non-Ahmadis wanted to cleanse, prevent themselves from getting influenced by a practice that tarnished the true message of the Quran. Fatwa did not only construct stigmatization, but also denied, and ostracized from society. Fatwa functioned effectively as effective social boundaries fencing a great barrier that hindered both sides to enter the other socio-religious boundaries the exclusive living style was merely a defence against the snowballing anger effected by the fatwa. The MUI fatwa left the Ahmadis with no opportunity to rebuild or construct their identity in a more positive sense. After the fatwa was issued it was hard for mainstream Muslim society to perceive Ahmadis as normal human beings attaching a stigma against them. This was triggered by religious authorities or Ulama who organized themselves in the MUI body, whose position was later strengthened by government decree. The Ulama body, such as MUI played a significant role in affecting the split between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadis which make up the majority of the Muslim Sunnite population of Indonesia. In this case the fatwa represents the figure of ulama as the disintegrating element rather than the unifying element of Indonesian Ummah.

The more recent attacks²⁷ on Ahmadiyah were likely to be instigated by the renewed MUI fatwa issued in 2005. In Western Lombok it had caused around 36 households or 138 members of Ahmadiyah to have lost their houses and to abandon their lands. They were finally forced to flee to the Asrama Transito. In this shelter, each Ahmadi household occupied a space of only nine square metres, with only a sarong as partition dividing each family unit from the other. In this squashed compartment, every family had to exist while finding its own source of livelihood, since the government had stopped food relief since February 2007.²⁸

The dilemma faced by 138 Ahmadis’ refugee families living in the temporary settlement of Asrama Transito in Mataram city of the West Nusatenggara Province, remained unresolved. They were deprived from the right of obtaining proper education for their children, health services and other social securities, as well as the right to return back to their abandoned homeland. Neither had they been given compensation from the local government for their material losses and damages. Since the government did not guarantee their safety if they were to go back to their destroyed residences, they have continued to remain as refugees in their own country.

²⁷ These among others occurred in East Lombok (September 12-15, 2002), Kampus Mubarak, Parung (in July 2005), Cianjur-West Java (September 19, 2005), Cianjur-West Java (September 2005), West Lombok (October 19, 2005), Central Lombok (February 4, 2006), .

²⁸ “Bantuan Beras dan Lauk Ahmadiyah Disetop”. *LOMBOKNEWS.COM*. Monday, 5 February 2007

In Central Lombok there were 17 Ahmadiyah families comprising 67 people becoming the major victims of massive attacks in 2006. They were also forced to live as refugees in an abandoned pavilion of the former Public Hospital located in Praya- capital city of Central Lombok Regency and has now been restored to become the office of Kimpraswil (Infrastructure and Construction Project). The lives of Ahmadiyah refugees here are no better compared to those living in Asrama Transito. The government of Central Lombok seemed to be reluctantly maintaining the “pavilion” as their temporary settlement, and have not done anything to relocate them in a better place. Neither had the government provided any compensation for their material loss during the vandalisation of their properties. Most of the refugees make their living in informal sectors, such as being petty traders in the local market; working as cleaners, ojek drivers, and as parking attendants..

FATWA AND HUMAN RIGHT ISSUE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

With the 1980 and 2005 fatwa being used as a “legal” basis for attacks on Ahmadiyah communities, it would be hard not to come to the conclusion that MUI, despite its protestations of being against violence, was effectively encouraging other groups to use violence. For activist groups such as LPPI or FPI, a *fatwa* from MUI was considered as an expression of Islamic law and is therefore valid as a basis for action, regardless of the arguments made by Muslim scholars that *fatwa* are only opinions and do not have the same status as *hukm* (law).

Those against the fatwa blamed the MUI and the government for instigating communal outbreaks. For example Abdurrahman Wahid, chair of NU and PKB said that MUI should be responsible for the vandalism and all sorts of anarchy inflicted by grassroots Muslims toward the Ahmadiyah. This statement was echoed by Ulil Abshar Abdala, stating that “there is a strong indication that radical Islam is gaining ground. It is definitely something that moderate Indonesian Muslims must take note”. In short the MUI’s edict and the BAKORPAKEM recommendation that eventually manifested in ministerial decrees on seizing Ahmadiyah activities had produced ideological cleavages within Muslims. They had divided arguments concerning the fatwa, besides dividing Muslims into the radical but non violent group, the radical and violent group, as well as the lenient group who remain to be silent ones in their resistance against Ahmadiyah. A massive destructive treatment inflicted toward Ahmadis by the radical section of Sunnite followers was one most damaging snowball effects of the fatwa.

Sustainable persecution on Ahmadiyah proved the government’s inadequacy and unsuccessful guarantee of securing religious freedom for its citizen, as stipulated in the article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR) as well as the article of 28 (2) of 1945 constitution. The following states the 18 article of the UDHR and the article 28 (2) of the Indonesian Constitution

Every one 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 belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

The State guarantees the freedom of every citizen to embrace their religion and to worship according to their religion and conviction”

The religious freedom in Indonesia was limited to the recognition of six official religions only i.e Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. The official recognition of the six religions dated back to 1965 when Sukarno issued Presidential decree No1./Pn.Ps/1965. Earlier than this, in 1961 the Association of Khung Chiao Hui Indonesia (PKHCI), a Confucianist organization, declared that Confucianism is a religion and Confucius is their prophet. The recognition on the six official religions was also stipulated in the Statue No5/1969 declared in 1969. It was the reiteration of the 1967 presidential decree. Yet, in 1978 the government changed its policy again. Ministry of Home Affairs issued new directives declaring only five religions which were to be recognized as official ones, and excluding Confucianism in the list. On January 27, 1979, a presidential cabinet meeting was held and decided that Confucianism was not considered to be a religion.²⁹ Following to this policy, in 1990 the Ministry of Home Affairs publicly declared its directive reiterating the five official religions in Indonesia. Yet, when Abdurrahman was elected as the third President after the fall of Suharto in 1989, he deleted the Presidential Instruction No 14/1967 and the 1990 Minister of Home Affairs directive. Ever since then Confucianism has been officially re-recognized as a religion in Indonesia. Chinese related traditions, culture, rituals and beliefs have also been permitted to be practiced. Both Chinese and non-Chinese Confucianists have since then been guaranteed their freedom to practise their faith and religious conducts.

The recognition on six official religions have obliged the Indonesian citizen to identify their religion on the national identity card (*KTP-Kartu Tanda Penduduk*). The adherents of unrecognized religions are forced to register themselves by selecting one of the “authorized religions in order to own a *KTP*. If not they will face difficulties not only in obtaining the *KTP*, but also in acquiring official papers such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports, building permits, and applications for job vacancies, and school and university admittance. This shows that religious freedom in Indonesia has been limited if one goes by how it is being signified by the present government. Religious freedom in Indonesia is likely to be narrowly defined by the present regime. It would be made to follow the categorization and classification of the official or “authorized” religions and the unofficial or “unauthorized” religions.

Unlike the six official religions, other religions such as Judaism, the Sikkism, as well as sectarian teachings and mystical beliefs (*aliran kebatinan*) such as the Kaharingan³⁰, Salamullah³¹, Ahmadiyah, Syiah, Baha’i, Darul Arqam are not provided the rights and protection as much and as equally as the officially recognized ones. These have made the followers of the unofficial or unauthorized religions vulnerable to persecution They have become targets of ostracism by other dominant religious grouping, such as had been experienced by the Ahmadiyah, the Salamullah, and the Baha’i.

²⁹ Unlike other religions, Confucianism evolved more into loose individual practices and belief in the conduct, rather than a systematic and hierarchical structure. After the fall of the Indonesian Communist Party which allegedly claimed to have been by China, Suharto enacted the anti-China policy. He issued Presidential Instruction (KePres-Keputusan Presiden) No. 14/1967 that banned all forms of expressions of Chinese beliefs, culture, celebrations and festivities, language, and forced the Chinese to change their names. It was called the naturalization policy. Yet, in the same year Suharto also admitted that Confucian religion deserves to gain a decent place in Indonesia in front of the PKHCI national convention.

³⁰ Kaharingan is the traditional belief of the Dayak- native inhabitants of Kalimantan (Borneo island) mainly contains of a blend of ancestral beliefs and local dieties

³¹ Salamullah is a religious group conceived by the Council Of Indonesian Ulama as blasphemy for its leader, Lia Eden, recognizes herself as the representation of Angel Gabirel.

In the reformation era, especially during the SBY presidency, the state as represented by the three government bodies failed to express themselves as protector and guarantor of religious freedom. Instead of protecting the fundamental rights of any particular group to choose any specific type of belief and practice, they had deprived the Ahmadis of this right, and thus marked itself as the offender of Indonesian 1945 constitution especially on its article 28 (2) of 1945. State actors did not give the right examples as role models in abiding by the rights, rules and regulations concerning with religious freedom.

The protection that ideally should be given by the government upon religious freedom serves to justify that it cannot interfere on matters concerning religion. The SKB showed that the government had taken sides with, and therefore pandering to the demands of certain Islamic organizations that do not represent the majority opinion of Indonesian Muslims and who have exercised violence against the Ahmadiyah.

By restraining the religious activity of Ahmadiyah, the government had not only conducted severe interference on religious matters, it had also exposed an attitude which substantially breached the spirit of the Indonesian constitution and state foundation of maintaining pluralism and freedom of religious affiliation. The government can take intervention on religious matters upon certain conditions whenever activities of religious groups had instigated social unrest and controversy, and contained human rights violation. For example in the case of child marriage, where a leader of a pesantren had wanted to marry his own pupil who was only 13 years old. For the interest of maintaining public security as well as stability, the state agent represented by national police can interfere when religious dispute turn into vandalism. For the sake of maintaining order and stability the state agents had the prime right to interfere in religious disputes that stimulate or stir communal conflicts. As far as human security is concerned, Ahmadiyah as a collectivity never did anything that had caused physically harm. It did not carry out something that endangered the community's peace and stability. Neither was it involved in criminal conducts or uprisings that would place non-Ahmadi members in jeopardy.

Instead of curbing religious activities, the government should ideally perform the role as defender of pluralism whose main duty would not be limited to providing the right of choosing any type of belief for every citizen, but to give assurance over the conduct of religious duties and provisions. Otherwise the state will be criticized for being inconsistent and betraying the Indonesian founding fathers who had laid the foundation of this country based on the idea of a unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). In conclusion the government should ideally play a role in maintaining a safe and secure atmosphere for members of a religious community—be they in the minority or majority – to peacefully practice their religious beliefs.

The MUI had issued religious edict that had contravened article 28 (2) of the Indonesian constitution. It also provoked a sustained conflict between minority Islamic sect and the mainstream Muslims. Moreover the MUI had also instigated collective persecution as well as collective assaults to Ahmadiyah strongholds in Parung-Bogor of West Java and other Ahmadiyah communities scattered in West Java, and Lombok. Such a fatwa had indeed caused severe violation of human rights abuses. MUI did not only brand Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect but also reflected an attitude against pluralism, against the constitution, and against the UDHR- Universal declaration of Human Rights. Inclusiveness is an attitude that ideally should be performed extensively inside and outside the ummah. Intolerant, radical,

and oppressive attitude toward minority sect will only breed a negative perception of Indonesian Islam.

Ahmadiyah was not the only target of anti-heretical movement sponsored by MUI and the government. Other Islamic organizations that had also been banned along with Ahmadiyah were LDII-Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia, Darul Hadits, and IJ-Islam Jama'ah whose messages were considered to be offensive. JIL-Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islamic Network) was also included in this category and the call to keep an eye of the JIL's liberal tendency was reflected on the fatwa of MUI against SIPPHILIS-secularism, pluralism, and liberalism. The only difference lays in the fact that only Ahmadiyah was made to suffer the worst cases of vandalism and ostracism across the Indonesian island.

CONCLUSION

The long and uneasy relationship between Ahmadiyah and the mainstream Muslims took a turn during the period between 1980 and 2005 when the MUI issued edicts (fatwa) on the heresy of Ahmadiyah. After these consecutive edicts were publicly declared, the Ahmadis were the major target of persecution, and violent attacks. In Lombok in particular Ahmadi followers were forced to leave their destroyed houses, mosques and schools and to forcefully live as refugees in a place which was not adequate in terms of living space and insufficient in terms of sanitation, healthcare, education, and food supply.

The MUI fatwa of 1980 had instigated persecution on Ahmadiyah mainly in West Java and Lombok. And when it was renewed with the fatwa of 2005, which was later strengthened by the BAKORPAKEM recommendation and finally legalized by the joint ministerial decree in June 9, 2008, this then created recurrent excessive ambushes on some of Ahmadiyah living enclaves in West Java, West and Central Lombok.

The religious hostilities and disapproval of the Sasak against deviant Islamic sectarian movement, like Ahmadiyah were often expressed in communal assaults, taking the form of stoning and the burning of mosques, houses, other physical attributes representing the enemy of the faith. These destructive acts were justified by the religious creed i.e. defending the faith (*pembelaan aqidah*) against those who had embarked on a world-wide missionary activities to wan, tarnish, and replace it (*pengrusakan, penodaan aqidah*). The MUI fatwa had worked so well and successfully in terms of cultivating the mainstream mind and thus brandishing Ahmadis as “deviant (*sesat*), out Islam (*murtad*). This was a powerful weapon used to undermine and degrade Ahmadis' identity with the intention of ostracizing them from the rest of the Muslim community.

Causes leading to repetitive violent attacks were more likely to be multi-factors, rather than single ones. The ulama edicts were not the sole cause. In the case of Lombok, the Ulama edict in national level (MUI Pusat) was strengthened by the ulama's edict at the province and regency. Administratively, the SK Gubernur and SK Bupati were also factors contributing to the validity of the edict. The role of localized Tuan Guru's preaching and sermon reinforced further the sense of religious discrepancy as well as the stigmatization of Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect. The recognition that Ahmadiyah is a belief outside Islam got its most tone in the sphere of religious gathering among listeners of the Tuan Guru's sermon and preaches. The exclusive housing concentrations of Ahmadis in specific areas, such as dusun Ketapang, West

Lombok with their alleged sense of disengagement from the social surroundings had made the Ahmadiyah an easy and quick target of ambush.

Recurring persecution experienced by Ahmadiyah followers proved that the rights of minority religious group had not yet been well protected. The Indonesian government had redefined religious freedom in a narrower sense. It had constituted only six religions are recognised by the state i.e. Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. They are recognized as official religions in Indonesia. Other religions as well as religious sects do not enjoy the same rights. Their status is in question, and to some extent is in jeopardy, and vulnerable of being persecuted, outlawed, and banned. And so the call for promoting pluralism, freedom of faith and tolerance as guaranteed by the Indonesian constitution and the UDHR-Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains only as ideal texts.

The fatwa attached with stigmatization on Ahmadiyah had prevented the mainstream Sunnite Muslims from investigating the positive side of Ahmadiyah as a fast growing movement that had achieved success in promoting Islam peacefully and in gaining extensive number of followers across the world, such as Europe, Canada and America.

In his book 'Murder in the name of Allah', Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad³² Khalifatul Masih IV, raised important questions on the persecution and transgression advocated by Muslim clerics, and answered those doing so as follows:

These are the questions we should all think seriously about. Muslims should consider the attitude of these ulama. For suppression, torture, execution, arson and the razing of mosques are not the Prophet's tradition.

The Ahmadis did not deserve enduring severe persecution for merely the reason of defending the belief on Mahdi Ma'ud and Masih Mau'ud borne by MGA. This is not only against the basic right of human freedom to choose faith and behave accordingly to their faith, as the *ayat* (verse of the Qur'an) in Al-Baqarah: 152 said that "there should be no coercion on embracing religion (Islam)". Ahmadis have so far been peaceful, faithful and law-abiding citizens. However, differing doctrinal interpretations on the finality of Prophet Muhammad, had led the radical section among Sunnite Muslims to seek legal instrument, in the form of fatwa ulama, to impose their own interpretations and mount violent attacks on those who stray from this belief. Recent developments showed that Indonesia had been struck by the same radical influences as those existing in Pakistan and Malaysia by succumbing to the legalization and infliction of terror upon the Ahmadiyah thereby violating international standards of human rights and seriously threatening its status as a moderate Islamic nation.

³² Hazrat Mirza Tahir, Ahmad. 1990. *Murder in the Name of Allah*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press

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