

THE STRUGGLE TO DEFEND MINORITY RIGHTS: The Role of Islamic Religious Counselor in the Realization of Religious Freedom

Syamsul Rijal

*Faculty of Islamic Theology and Philosophy Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry
Banda Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia*

Email: literasi.syamsulrijal@ar-raniry.ac.id

Harjoni Desky¹

*Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, State Islamic Institute of
Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia*

Email: harjonidesky@iainlhokseumawe.ac.id

Ermy Azziaty Rozali

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Email: ermy@ukm.edu.my

Taslim H. M. Yasin

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry

Email: taslim.myasin@ar-raniry.ac.id

ABSTRACT

When the principle of tolerance is seen as an agreement on shared values, the forms of its practice can be diverse, even contradictory. On the other hand, the relationship between minority and majority groups in Indonesia continues to change over time, and this dynamic becomes a locus of control for the authorities. The government never ignores this problem. In addition to regulations, one of the facilities provided is the existence of Islamic Religious Counselors. The purpose of this study is to explain the role of Islamic religious counselors in realizing harmonious relations for minority groups in freedom of religion and belief. The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. The results of the study show the issue in understanding the extent to which the role of divine (heavenly) religious symbols is manifested in the social realm when the majority and minority groups of various religious believers interact with each other in a society, and when each different symbol touches each other intensely. Religious counselors can provide an important foundation for expressing religion amid diversity. The main thing that needs to be underlined is the moderate religious insight and attitude. This is what distinguishes a Islamic religious counselor from other religious figures although both convey religious messages through guidance and counseling activities. The efforts and roles of

¹ Corresponding author

religious icounselors are explained from the perspective of religious moderation, harmonization, and freedom of religion and belief. From the perspective of religious moderation, the counselors have a role as an agent of moderation, guardian of morals, and guardian of faith, while from the perspective of harmonization, the counselors have an informative and educative roles, the same thing also in realizing freedom of religion and belief.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Counselor; Freedom of Religion; Minority Rights

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian has a diverse and complex culture that cannot be separated from the fact that Indonesia is a plural and multicultural society bound in one unity, namely nationalism (Hadi 2020)the first pattern creates social friction or conflict. On the contrary, the second pattern is directed towards acculturation and assimilation of culture which can strengthen social harmony. The important finding of this research is that it can be known the real issue, so that problems related to all parties can be found a solution as well as a resolution. This research also proves that social mechanism preparedness is considered urgent to prevent negative excesses (negative things. One of Indonesia's diversities is the religious beliefs of its people. Formally, Indonesia recognizes six religions, namely Islam, Catholic Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Hadi 2020)the first pattern creates social friction or conflict. On the contrary, the second pattern is directed towards acculturation and assimilation of culture which can strengthen social harmony. The important finding of this research is that it can be known the real issue, so that problems related to all parties can be found a solution as well as a resolution. This research also proves that social mechanism preparedness is considered urgent to prevent negative excesses (negative things. The six religions have representatives in the Ministry of Religion both at the central and regional levels.

According to sociological conditions, the terms of religion is often interpreted as a continuous ritual belief system in something that is believed to bind its adherents. On the other hand, in the sociological dictionary, the definition of religion is a belief in spiritual things or a set of beliefs that are considered to have their purpose. In the legal approach, especially stated in Article 7 of the UDHR, it is stated that "Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal legal protection without discrimination." This means that everyone has the right to equal protection against any form of discrimination that is contrary and against all incitement to this kind of discrimination.

The high level of aggressive behavior that occurs towards minorities in terms of religion, as well as the fatal failure of the government in weakly enforcing regulations based on the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees the protection of religious freedom (Mubarrak and Kumala 2020), The right to religious freedom, has been demonstrated by violence and discrimination in a series of incidents, such as incidents in Aceh related to the freedom to practice religion according to each person's beliefs and beliefs, recorded in newspaper publications and also studied by Ansor (2016) in his research conducted qualitatively with the title *Becoming Like Other Religions: The Hijab and the Hybrid Identity of Christian Students towards minority religious students in Aceh*, regarding the use of the hijab (Islamic clothing) (Ansor 2016). The hijab which shows the identity of women who are Muslim, in this case, is forced to be used in public areas (PTN/campus) by non-Muslim adherents.

Social friction related to regulations on the establishment of Christian houses of worship in Aceh Singkil was also reviewed by Ondang (2015) in the *Serambi Indonesia Daily* entitled "Singkil Conflict Torn Wisdom". The burning of houses of worship is suspected to have originated from the clash of regulatory wisdom that provoked people's emotions to act discriminatively. In addition, the development of social prejudice that has not been resolved has given rise to in-groups and out-groups. Fanatical religious views have implications for errors in understanding religious life. This has contributed to triggering social friction, especially among adherents of different religions, even a small leaflet with a slanted sentence, the congregation is immediately provoked (Yunus 2014).

Coupled with the strengthening of identity politics that often marginalizes minority groups. Democracy is often interpreted as majoritarianism (Paralihan 2019). The authority of the majority as managers and policymakers is a common tendency in several regions in Indonesia. Through the door of democracy, demands, aspirations, and colors of political policies that are determined and controlled by the majority (majority rule) develop. Because it is determined by the logic of the majority, as a result in several regions many policies have emerged that are less biased and even marginalize the existence of minority groups. The contestation of religious symbols in public spaces is part of the symptoms of the strengthening of identity politics in Indonesia in at least the last two decades (Hutapea and Alexandra, Sukendro, Widodo 2023).

In Indonesia, minorities are often identified as non-Muslim groups only. Meanwhile, there are Muslim minorities in Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, North Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua, and several districts/cities that are centers of certain

ethnic cultures. Thus, minorities in Indonesia cannot be identified only as non-Muslim groups. Apart from that, ethnic and linguistic minorities also exist in Indonesia (Permana 2018). For example, the Gayo ethnic minority in Aceh, who cannot speak Acehnese, is both an ethnic minority and a language minority in Indonesia, because they are an ethnic minority and speak Gayo, not Acehnese or Indonesian. Meanwhile, the Chinese, Arab, Indian, European, and Japanese ethnic groups are examples of ethnic minorities in Indonesia. Some ethnic minorities in Indonesia still face social and political discrimination. Meanwhile, several other ethnic minority groups have also been accepted in social, political, and economic life in their homeland, Indonesia.

The culture and attitude of the diversity of Indonesian society is quite exclusive so it only recognizes salvation and truth unilaterally. There is a comparison between groups that are not based on a tolerant attitude, which triggers a conflict because each uses power to recognize the truth of their religion. To avoid such a conflict, it is necessary to grow and develop a moderate way of being religious, or an open way of being religious which is called an attitude of religious moderation. To deal with such a situation, a religious instructor must develop the right strategy in providing counseling to achieve certain goals. However, globally religious instructors can be classified into three main things, namely issues of faith (aqidah), issues of Islam (sharia), and issues of character (akhlakul karimah).

The role of religious instructors in society is very important because there are still many people who need an ideal figure to be used as a religious figure in community life. Religious instructors serve as agents of moderation, guardians of morals, and guardians of the faith and morals of society. The task of religious instructors is not merely to carry out religious education in the narrow sense such as religious studies or lectures, but also all activities in the form of guidance and development.

There are several studies related to the role of Islamic religious instructors that have been carried out, for example, Muhammad Dachlan who research related to building a harmonious life through religious instructors, the results of which acknowledged that the religious harmony that is established in the North Mamuju community cannot be separated from the role of instructors, both civil servant instructors and non-civil servant instructors (played by religious figures, community leaders, traditional leaders) in establishing harmony (Dachlan 2017).

Sarifah Suhra also conducted research related to the role of counselors in fostering tolerance character in the community which showed that one of the professions that most supports fostering tolerance character is religious

counselors (Sarifah Suhra. dkk 2023). However, unfortunately, the two studies have not discussed in depth the important roles that religious counselors should or have played in realizing a harmonious life and fostering tolerance character.

Research by Najwa Ainun Nabilah related to the role of religious instructors in the lives of marginalized communities shows a picture of the important role of religion in human life, especially in marginalized communities facing social and economic challenges. Marginalized communities face social imbalance, backwardness, and economic problems, which often lead to slums and low living standards. In facing these challenges, religion becomes the foundation of life and mental defense for marginalized communities. Religion provides moral and spiritual guidance to overcome anxiety and discomfort in a dynamic life. Religious instructors play a key role in providing religious understanding and support to the community (Nabilah and Darmaningrum 2023).

Furthermore, Husni Mubarrak's research, related to Discrimination Against Minority Religions: Case Study in Banda Aceh, shows that minority communities experience restrictions or obstacles in expressing themselves in public spaces. The things that cause discrimination are prejudices regarding Christianization efforts carried out by minority religious groups and the existence of regulations (written or unwritten) that are considered to limit opportunities, space for movement, and support for minority religious groups in public spaces (Mubarrak and Kumala 2020) .

Sa'idy and Verawati's research conducted a study related to the existence of religious instructors as agents of religious moderation in Indonesia (Sa'idy and Verawati 2022). The study shows that Indonesia has a pluralistic society and is very vulnerable to religious conflict in particular, therefore the existence of religious instructors is very important. and this is one of the studies that are very close to the author's research, but the author maps the role of instructors in 3 perspectives that are considered very relevant to the current conditions of Indonesia, namely the perspective of religious moderation, harmony, and freedom of religion and belief that are carried out ideally in Indonesia. By the background and previous studies, this study aims to determine the efforts of Islamic religious instructors from the perspective of religious moderation, religious harmony, and freedom of religion and belief that are implemented ideally in Indonesia.

THE EXISTENCE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR AS FIGHTERS FOR HUMANITARIANS

Religious counselors have a special position today in the context of building

religious commitment. Religious commitment is encompassed in three main Islamic teachings: Iman (belief), Islam (surrender to Allah), and then (the state of being obeyed by Allah) (Hikmawati 2014). One of the state's means of fighting for minority rights in society so that it is following humanity and the constitution is Islamic Religious Counselor who has an office (on duty/home base) at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). Institutionally, Islamic Religious Counselor's existence has a long history in this republic. As a form of recognition of the important role of religious leaders in resistance to colonialism during the pre-independence period and also their strong work and influence in society, the Ministry of Religion appointed Islamic religious leaders as Honorary Religion Teachers with the task of guiding the religious and social fields (Susanto and Ulfah 2022).

The term extension is used for activities to provide information to the community, both by government and non-government institutions. This term is taken from the word *suluh* or torch which functions as lighting (Mazid et al. 2021). Counseling in the sense of information is widely used in agricultural, plantation, health, drug, family planning, and religious activities. The term counseling means guidance in Psychology and is a translation of Counseling (Asrif, Asyifa, and Hafizianor 2022).

Religious instructors provide religious data services for the state and the general public, including data on religious facilities and infrastructure, such as data on Mosques, Musholla, Majelis Taklim, TPQ/TKQ, Dakwah Institutions, Islamic Mass Organizations, Population-based on religion, and so on. Meanwhile, the function of Islamic religious instructors at the KUA includes two things, namely; informative and educative functions. The Legal Basis for Islamic Religious Instructors Functional is stated in the following regulations: 1) Presidential Decree No.87 of 1999 concerning Functional Position Groups; 2) Kep menkwasbangpan No.54/kep.waspan 9/99; 3) Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Head of BKN No.574 and 178 of 1999; 4) Presidential Regulation Number 24 of 2006 concerning the duties, position, and Functions of the State Ministry and the organizational structure and procedures of the State Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia (Asnawi, Budiarto, and Hidayatullah 2022).

Intolerance is a serious threat to the diversity of a nation, including Indonesia. Religious and religious intolerance in Indonesia is accused of being a problem of religion, society, politics, education, and nationalism. Intolerance can be considered a trigger for radicalism amid national diversity. Wahid Foundation in its report explained the potential for intolerance in Indonesia. There are several indicators used. First, the disliked groups include LGBT 26%,

Communists 16.7%, Jews 10.6%, Christians 2.2%, Shiites 1.3, Wahhabis 0.5, Buddhists 0.4, and Chinese 0.4, while those who do not have problems with other groups are 38.7. The data shows that as many as 61.3% have problems with other groups. Second, the intolerance score includes neutral tending to be tolerant 43.4%, neutral tending to be intolerant 7.0%, tolerant 0.6%, while intolerant is 49% (<http://wahidfoundation.org/>, 2019). Therefore, it is important to strengthen tolerance education as one of the preventive steps to prevent intolerance (Amaliansyah 2020).

Islamic Religious Instructors are Civil Servants who are given full duties, responsibilities, authority, and rights by authorized officials to carry out Islamic religious guidance or counseling and development activities through religious language (Harahap, Siregar, and Harahap 2023). North Sumatra requires a long transformation within the framework of religious moderation to build harmony and maturity. This study aims to reveal the dynamic spectrum of religious moderation in the bubble of North Sumatra's local wisdom. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method by involving six subjects who were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Subject criteria are natives of North Sumatra and have sufficient knowledge of religious moderation in the local custom of North Sumatra. In-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis were used to collect the required data. This study reveals a vast spectrum of diversity among the North Sumatrans. In the meantime, religious moderation is evidence of upholding religious ideals integrated with the local culture. Moreover, this research also shows how the people of North Sumatra from the following three regions, (1. The term Religious Instructor began to be socialized in 1985, namely with the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 791 of 1985 concerning Honorariums for Religious Instructors. The term Religious Instructor is used to replace the term Honorary Religious Teacher (GAH) which was previously used in the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Since the beginning, Religious Instructors have been the spearhead of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in implementing Islamic religious education amidst the rapid dynamics of the development of Indonesian society (Barmawie and Humaira 2018).

The role of religious instructors is very strategic to build the mental, moral, and values of the piety of the people and also to encourage the improvement of the quality of life of the people in various fields, both in the fields of religion and development (Muhlisin, Kholis, and Rini 2023). So far, Islamic Religious Instructors have an important role in empowering the community and empowering themselves as government employees. In other words, success in guidance and counseling to the community shows success in self-

management. Islamic Religious Instructors as the leading sector of guidance for the Islamic community, have quite heavy, broad tasks/obligations and the problems faced are increasingly complex.

Islamic Religious Counselors cannot be alone in carrying out this quite heavy mandate, they must be able to act as motivators, facilitators, and at the same time catalysts for Islamic preaching. Preaching management must be able to be developed and actualized under the development of society which is experiencing changes as an impact of globalization and increasingly sophisticated technological developments, which result in shifts or multidimensional crises.

Religious instructors run their programs starting by recording places of worship, recording religious leaders, consolidating religious leaders, smoothing meetings every three months at the sub-district level, holding coordination ahead of religious celebrations and even practicing nationalist spiritual values. Religious leaders are community leaders of religious people, both those who lead religious organizations and those who do not lead religious organizations who are recognized and respected by the local community as role models: 1) Religious instructors record places of worship such as mosques, prayer rooms, Majlis Ta'lim, and other social facilities; 2) Religious instructors collaborate with figures from various religions; 3) Holding consolidation meetings with religious leaders once a quarter; 4) Coordination meeting for data collection with the regional government consisting of regional heads, police, TNI, Ministry of Religion, and other sectoral agencies according to existing levels starting from village to provincial level; and 5) Holding coordination ahead of religious celebrations. 6. Providing national insight such as teachings that adhere to Pancasila, NKRI and nationalism, democracy, religion (Triwahyuningsih 2018).

The 'obligation to respect' means that the state and its apparatus must not intervene or interfere under any pretext to reduce or eliminate the rights of individuals and/or groups to exercise or enjoy their rights, such as not interfering in the practice of carrying out religious worship. The 'obligation to fulfill' requires the state and its apparatus to take steps (such as judicial, administrative, and judiciary) and actions to ensure the fulfillment of individual and/or group rights (Hakim and Kurniawan 2022) masih menjadi diskursus yang menarik di Indonesia. Untuk itu, penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan pendekatan systematic literature review dengan tujuan untuk mengajukan paradigma hukum HAM yang berbasis pada kewajiban asasi manusia. Dari sudut pandang penelitian hukum, sifat penelitian ini dikategorikan ke dalam penelitian preskriptif. Data dalam penelitian ini bersumber dari peraturan

perundang-undangan, buku, dan artikel ilmiah dari jurnal nasional dan internasional yang berhubungan dengan konsep HAM dan hukum HAM. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penegakan HAM harus melihat pemenuhan kewajiban asasi manusia, karena secara umum seseorang dapat menuntut hak apabila telah memenuhi kewajiban. Dengan melandaskan hak pada kewajiban, maka hukum HAM akan menjadi seimbang (balance).

The 'obligation to protect' requires the state and its apparatus to take necessary steps to protect the rights of individuals and/or groups, including preventing violations of human rights. As a realization of the state's commitment to respecting, protecting, and upholding human rights, the government has many human rights instruments in the form of ratification of several international human rights instruments (Setiyani and Setiyono 2020).

The availability of the above national and international instruments shows the government's seriousness, at least on paper, in carrying out its three functions as a human rights actor. Consequently, the right to freedom of religion as a fundamental human right (basic rights) must be the main consideration in the formulation of every policy, regulation, and action in every state apparatus, including Islamic religious instructors without exception (Fauzia and Hamdani 2021).

Normatively, commitment to human rights is reflected in several documents that serve as guidelines for Islamic Religious Counselors, even though they do not explicitly use human rights language. Guidelines for Non-Civil Servant Islamic Religious Instructors, as stated in Decree No. 298/2017, states that in carrying out their roles and functions, Islamic Religious Counselors must adhere to the principles of democracy, equality, and also non-discrimination ('principles for all').

Indonesia is a multicultural country, this statement cannot be denied because in reality Indonesia has a population consisting of various adherents of different religions and beliefs and has a variety of cultures and languages. That is why Indonesian society is called a pluralistic society because there are various tribes, religions, races, and cultures caused by people who come from various regions and then settle in one place. They bring their customs and cultures to their new homes, resulting in diversity in a place or region. However, this diversity and diversity can cause social conflict, if it is not based on the foundation of nationality in building joint decisions in the state (Hakim and Darajat 2023).

About Indonesia as a pluralistic country, the role of Islamic religious instructors in diversity is very important, several studies show the existence

of the role of Islamic religious instructors in this field, including maintaining and optimizing tolerance between religious communities (Sarifah Suhra. dkk 2023), and as a facilitator of change (Mukhlisuddin 2016) and an expert in resolving conflicts (Ferdiansyah et al. 2023) and conduct consultations with related parties to improve community harmony (Nuruddin 2016), Therefore, religious instructors are expected to always guide, protect, and motivate the community to do good.

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR IS THE MAIN PILLAR DRIVING THE REALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

Religious harmony is also a mandate entrusted to the KUA through Islamic Religious Counselor. Conflicts with religious nuances that occur in the country encourage the state, through all its tools, to instill and maintain interreligious harmony in society (Prayogo, Simamora, and Kusuma 2020). Moreover, the fact that many religions (and also beliefs) have the potential to destroy unity if not managed well. KUA, as the government's spearhead in the religious sector, has a significant role because it is directly in touch with community problems at the grassroots. Based on this awareness, the KUA appointed a PNS² or Non-PNS³ Islamic Religious Counselor specifically deals with issues of religious harmony with three main functions: providing education about the importance of religious harmony to the community (informative/educative), becoming a place for consultation and complaints regarding issues of religious harmony (consultative), and help overcome, mitigate and resolve problems of religious harmony (Rusydi and Zolehah 2018).

The state's approach which relies on harmony and stability rather than religious freedom has given rise to some restrictions on religious freedom through legislation and regulations at both the central and local levels. Law No.1/PNPS/1965 concerning the Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion, for example, guarantees religious expression but is accompanied by restrictions that are still vague and open to many interpretations such as 'abuse', 'deviation' and 'religious blasphemy'. Violation of these restrictions may result in legal consequences. Another example is the Joint Regulation of Three Ministers no. 9 No. 8/2006, which among other things regulates the establishment of places of worship, as well as several local regulations in several areas that are considered discriminatory (Prakosa 2022).

2 PNS is a state civil servant, namely someone who works in government and receives a salary according to the standards set by the state based on their class and length of service.

3 Non PNS is employees who work in government institutions based on contracts or work agreements with a certain duration

'Public order' is the reason for restrictions put forward by the state. However, in practice, 'public order' is not placed in the true sense of 'public', which includes all citizens without exception. On the other hand, the 'public' referred to by the state is the majority, so it seems as if the state justifies limiting the right to religious freedom for minorities in order to protect the interests of the majority (Budiono 2017).

This is where problems sometimes arise because interpretations of the majority can also vary: does it refer to quantity or influence because in practice the idea of 'public order' comes from the idea of a small influential group that claims to represent the majority. In other cases such as religious blasphemy, for example, claims of maintaining 'public order' often stem from hate spin in the media and also mass mobilization by certain groups which then becomes the basis for someone being accused of committing religious blasphemy, even though it may be the perpetrator not intended to do so⁶⁰ or even disapproved by the majority of the public. Thus, the distinction between the claims of the majority and the hate spin of a small group of people needs to be carefully considered before any restrictions are imposed on a minority.

THE DILEMMATIC POSITION OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNSELORS AS FIGHTERS FOR HUMANITARIANS

Observing the reality of the implementation of Freedom of Religion and Belief (*Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan-KBB*), Islamic Religious Counselor has complex challenges in its position as the Freedom of Religion and Belief actor in the true sense. On the one hand, their status as ASN⁴ requires them to take responsibility for enforcing the Freedom of Religion and Belief as mandated by the Constitution. On the other hand, the state's approach which is more oriented towards public order or harmony and security places them to a difficult situation with many problems in fulfilling the Freedom of Religion and Belief for all citizens without exception (Budiono, 2017).

All Freedom of Religion and Belief restrictions implemented by the state through a set of laws or regulations have resulted in many cases of discrimination and even criminalization by both state and non-state actors. The question then is what an Islamic Religious Counselor's position is in this kind of dilemmatic situation. Is there a middle way that they can take by contributing to the maintenance of order or harmony without having to participate in restricting or violating the rights of the Freedom of Religion

4 ASN is profession for civil servants and government employees with work agreements who work in government agencies and ASN is a new term for government civil servants

and Belief as mandated by the Constitution? The answer to this question is not easy but that does not mean it is impossible. According to the author, there are several things that extension workers can do through their trilogy of functions in society: informative/educative, consultative, and advocative (Sa'idy and Verawati 2022).

In their role as Islamic religious instructors, both informative and educational, Islamic Religious Instructors need to continue to play an active role in building public awareness of Freedom of Religion and Belief through 'religious language' that continues to prioritize the principles of human rights. In this effort, the main challenge comes from religious doctrines that have long been deeply rooted in society. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many people are still anti-Islam and anti-human rights, and are in a pattern of irreconcilable relationships like oil and water.

This major problem is what religious instructors should be able to explain through innovations in their roles as extension agents and education agents for all levels of society with all their advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, the principle of preaching that calls for goodness and protects against evil with the language of "bil hikmah" wisdom becomes one of the central points of the extension movement carried out by these religious instructors. This is in line with the message from Mukhlisin's research, namely that promoting religious moderation must be seen as an important shared agenda because it plays an important role in determining the long-term survival of a country (Mukhlisin et al. 2023).

According to the data and facts that have been presented, Islamic religious instructors have not maximized their role in the field of information and education. This is a role of prevention for conflict in a pluralistic country like Indonesia. The ability of Islamic religious instructors to play their role as informants and educators must be complete and innovative. The informative and educative roles are also closely related to the resources or abilities they have (Tabroni and Idham 2023) the Salafist movement later gave rise to various factions. One of the results of the dynamic and contestation of these various factions was the emergence of religious moderation movements of Salafists. This article tries to explain the role of The Islamic Propagation Council of Indonesia (DDII). Therefore, the Ministry of Religion in supporting this must have a good recruitment pattern and quality training pattern, so that it can produce religious instructors who are under their roles and functions.

One strategy that can be taken to overcome this obstacle is to convey education through 'religious language' that is easily understood and accepted by the community. In this connection, the opinion of Mashood A. Baderin, a Muslim

thinker, is worth stating. According to him, Islamic law and human rights need a dialogical approach to achieve a common understanding and this can be done by prioritizing the concept of *maslahah* which is a valuable legacy in the treasures of Islamic legal thought (Hamu 2023).

Ethical-philosophical values in human rights such as internal freedom, non-coercion, non-discrimination, and non-derogability must be found in the context of religion so that they can be well accepted in society. This strategy is also in line with the movement of moderation and religious tolerance initiated by the government. Respect, protection, and enforcement of Freedom of Religion and Belief through the consultative role of Islamic Religious Instructors can be carried out through dialogue that is carried out in a civilized and humane manner.

So far, the role of consultation mandated to Islamic Religious Instructors tends to be more supervisory than coaching (Dzulfaqqor 2018). The 2009 Non-PNS Religious Instructor Task Implementation Module, for example, defines this role as "receiving consultations or complaints from the community". This means that Islamic Religious Instructors are positioned as 'police' tasked with monitoring the movements of fellow citizens who are considered dangerous to order and stability. Rather than carrying out a supervisory pattern like this.

Islamic Religious Counselors can implement a coaching pattern as a form of *da'wah* while still upholding human rights norms such as the right to freedom of religion or belief as guaranteed in the Constitution. Public complaints about the existence of deviant sects or heretical sects are not a reason to ostracize certain groups, but rather a trigger to create democratic living spaces amidst the differences in beliefs that exist.

Da'wah bil hikmah as a manifestation of the role of consultation is not interpreted as waiting but rather as inviting and working together to create a harmonious life amidst the diversity of Indonesia. This requirement of course requires strong regulations, freedom of movement for Islamic religious counselors, and adequate financial support, considering that one region and another in Indonesia are far apart and have different field challenges as well.

This means that Islamic Religious Counselors are positioned as 'policemen' tasked with monitoring the movements of fellow citizens who are deemed to endanger order and stability. Rather than adopting this kind of monitoring pattern, Islamic Religious Counselors can implement a coaching pattern as a form of *da'wah* while still upholding human rights norms such as the right to freedom of religion or belief as guaranteed in the Constitution. Complaints from the public about the existence of splinter or heretical sects are not a

justification for excluding certain groups but are a trigger for creating spaces for democratic life amidst existing differences in beliefs.

Finally, Islamic Religious Counselors can optimize their advocacy roles to also expand into *KBB*. The legal approach that has often been used in resolving various Freedom of Religion and Belief problems has turned out to cause many problems, not only in terms of the legal product itself but also the effects it has on victims, such as continued problems for their families, lengthy processes, and also failure to resolve the root of the problem. Ironically, the legal approach has the potential to become an instrument of power and become an extension of the majority to suppress minorities in the form of "threats, rewards, punishment, intimidation, stigmatization, or whatever to pursue and achieve their own goals."

CONCLUSION

Every citizen has the same rights for justice. This has become a common knowledge or shared principle along with the strengthening of the democratization process in Indonesia. The principles of social equality are seen as collective values that underlie relations among citizens in the country. When the principle of tolerance is seen as having become an agreement of shared values, the form of its practice can be varied, even contradictory. In a pluralistic Indonesian society, the polemic about whether an action is called tolerant or intolerant becomes more complex. The relations between the majority and the minority groups, therefore, are significant to the efforts of building harmonious life of the society. Both the majority and the minority are subject to defend their rights within the corridor of bulding a sustainable harmonious life.

Islamic religious counselors, indeed, have an important role in promoting sustainable a harmonious religious life. In giving services, they deal with religious issues such as marriage, inheritance of property, politics, and socio-religious conflicts. Religious counselors have more opportunities of sharing their contributions through their trilogy of functions in society including informative/educational supports, consultative services, and advocacy works. As the front line actors, religious islamic councilors have been seen as the representation of the government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in giving the ervices to the society where religious conflicts often accour.

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