

Press Release

**Indonesia Interfaith Network
*Jaringan Antariman Indonesia (JAI)*¹**

**"The State Must Not Fail in Opposing the Forces of
Intolerance Based on Religion and Capital"**

The situation our country now experiences is regressing day by day. The diversity of religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, and cultures that have lived side by side in this Land of the Archipelago for thousands of years, is experiencing a sharp decline due to a politics of identity being manipulated for the pragmatic interests of power.

This is a saddening development. The effort by the founders of this nation to make the Republic of Indonesia a friendly and civilized common home for diversity and differences is being drawn into conflicts among the nation's citizens that use religion as a shield for power. The formulation used for the foundation of our Pancasila nation with its Unity in Diversity motto is the common denominator, the "glue", that has enabled us to survive when other nations in the world met their fates as failed nations.

The era of political reformation has brought many changes, both positive and negative, to our nation. One of the negative impacts of reformation we have felt is the emergence of factions that attempt to force their will in the name of the majority. Even religion has been manipulated to justify the coercive use of power. This situation is threatening efforts to strengthen the spirit of anti-discrimination in Indonesia's diversity. It is not just a diversity of religions in Indonesia, but there are also many currents of faith that have grown within a religion that, until now, have had a space for mutual dialogue and enrichment. This is a strength in the context of pluralism, but it can also become a nuclear warhead capable of destroying the unity of the nation. Soekarno himself said that democracy that was given life in this nation is a democracy that enlivens and is able to give meaning to differences as a collective strength; it is a democracy that moves towards consensus, not a democracy of the majority, let alone destructive tyranny by a minority.

Addressing the increasing number of demonstrations that exhibit intolerance, we feel these are happening because the government is not seeing clearly the nature of these mass actions. Mass action can be understood as an expression of democracy when it opens up space for deliberation, is conducted voluntarily, is ethical and polite in expressing opinions, and does not involve elements of destruction, dehumanization, and propaganda. However, if

¹ The Indonesian Interfaith Network, *Jaringan Antariman Indonesia (JAI)*, was born in Malino in 2002. It comprises individuals and institutions that promote and advocate for issues related to justice, truth, equality, and peace: a) How do we value and respect various social differences, among and within religions, as reflected in the Indonesian national ideology, Pancasila, and 1945 Constitution, that is also an expression of God's grace? b) How are followers of different religions able to carry out the mandates of their respective religions; i.e., be agents of God's peace for all of humanity and nature? Those joined in our JAI network include representatives of non-government organizations, the government, higher education, schools, cultural figures, indigenous communities, religious organizations and leaders, etc.. (<http://www.interfidei.or.id>). Secretariat address: Jalan Banteng Utama 59, Yogyakarta 55581. Telp. 62-274-880149; <dianinterfidei@yahoo.com>

demonstrations are used with the intention to destabilize the nation, are directed at national disunity with verbal and written expressions full of hate, rudeness, and threats that create feelings of insecurity, what more when they are thought to be driven by the strength of capital and sensational amounts of money, then it is no longer appropriate to consider such demonstrations as expressions of democracy or as actions of peace. Peace is in appearance only: it is spoken, but not practiced.

Although the mass demonstration in Jakarta on 4 November 2016 in general was said to have been conducted peacefully, we see several defects of democracy in that action. That a large movement of money and the issue of religion were used to divide Indonesian society, including Muslims, is something of which we must be wary. We have seen that the impact of the action was not as extensive as the public rhetoric used in the demonstration. Leaders of the demonstration screamed about a *coup d'état*. There was political discourse that incited violence, including that expressed in the name of jihad. There were also efforts to claim this demonstration as representative of Muslims. In fact, from the beginning, the two largest Muslim mass organizations in Indonesia—*Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, who have been proven as guardians of the country and of the nation's unity, refused to participate in this action that was inclined to give rise to a spirit of destruction rather than of benefit.

Therefore, we of the Indonesian Interfaith Network, request that religious believers:

1. Protect the heritage of the Nation of Indonesia as a nation of diversity and uphold Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The differences among us must be our common strength to remain a nation and state with dignity for generations to come, especially as many other nations begin to collapse due to religious and sectarian issues.
2. Stop mass actions that encourage sectarianism and that use issues of religion that can destroy the unity of the Indonesian nation. Remember that our nation is pluralist and multi-cultural. Do not be easily provoked so that you become involved in sectarian issues like those promoted by people who lack a sense of responsibility for the existence of this nation. Beware of your communication so that you do not besmirch those of other faiths, and show civility as people of true faith and Indonesian spirit.

To the Chiefs of the Indonesian Army and Police Force:

1. Remain upright, professional, just, and impartial in fulfilling your roles to defend and maintain the security of the nation. The National Army and Police are the backbone of national defence and security. It is proper for you to see problems clearly and not be implicated in or even use the armor of being involved in political interests that are running rampant these days. May the oaths you took as police officers and soldiers continue to resonate in your hearts and minds as long as you have breath in your bodies. This nation needs a strong and solid Army and Police force to protect all the values of Indonesia for which blood was spilled and not permit efforts of infiltration, agitation, and propaganda to weaken the bonds of this nation.
2. Be firm in addressing seach and every evil intention of those who dishonor Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution in order to destroy our unity. Do not allow religious issues to be used to hurt groups within society. Strengthen efforts by intelligence and contingency plans related to political actions disguised as religious issues. The Army and Police must prevent each evil intention that emerges so that the masses are not incited to perform radical acts of intolerance that these days use mass media and information technology.

To President Joko Widodo:

1. Continue to be a president for the people of Indonesia, protecting all interests of the Indonesian people, both those of the majority as well as the minorities, whatever their religious background, from the people in cities to those in villages, from those whose shrill voices are heard at the center of power to the quiet voices in the margins, and remote regions of the Archipelago who want this nation to uphold the values of Pancasila, Unity in Diversity, and the 1945 Constitution.
2. Don't compromise with intolerant groups that have a power agenda, because the issues emerging now will become very crucial ones if they are permitted in the name of democracy and freedom of speech. Democracy has regulations that demarcate between issues that reflect substantial democratic values and those that are only elitist actions based on a short-term craving for power.***

Jakarta, Monday, 21 November 2016

Elga J. SARAPUNG

Coordinator, DIAN/Interfidei Institute

Team

1. Azyumardi Azra (Muslim Intellectual, Jakarta)
2. KH. Hussein Muhammad (Ulama, Cirebon)
3. Pdt. Andreas A. Yewangoe (Protestant Religious Leader, Kupang)
4. Romo Frans Magnis Suseno, SJ (Catholic Religious Leader, Jakarta)
5. Pdt. Margaretha Hendriks Ririmase (Protestant Religious Leader, Ambon)
6. Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (Pusad Paramadina, Jakarta)
7. Sri Pannyavaro Mahathera (Buddhist Religious Leader, Vihara Mendut, Magelang)
8. Pdt. Zakaria Ngelow (Protestant Religious Leader, Makassar)
9. RD. Neles Tebay (Catholic Religious Leader, Papua)
10. I Nyoman Sadra (Hindu Religious Leader, Karangasem-Bali)
11. Abidin Wakano (LAIM, Ambon)
12. Jacky Manuputty (LAIM, Ambon)
13. Teuku Kemal Fasya (JAII, Aceh)
14. Miryam Nainggolan (JAII, Jakarta)
15. Al Araf (IMPARSIAL, Jakarta)
16. Gufron Mabruri (IMPARSIAL, Jakarta)
17. Wawan Gunawan (Jakatarub, Bandung)
18. Aan Anshori (JIAD, Jombang)
19. Ciciek Farcha (Tanoker Community, Ledokombo)
20. Oto Adi Yulianto (Interfidei, Yogyakarta)
21. Rizal Panggabean (JAII, Yogyakarta)
22. Nia Sjarifuddin (ANBTI, Jakarta)
23. Noorhalis Madjid (LK3, Banjarmasin)
24. Abdul Karim (LAPAR, Makassar)
25. Rusli Umar (Pemuda Lintas Iman SULUT, Manado)
26. Alim Niode (JAII, Gorontalo)
27. Lian Gogali (Mosintuwu Institute, Poso)
28. Muhammad Taufik (JAII, Padang)
29. Ridwan al-Makasarry (JAII, Papua)
30. Siti Musdah Mulia (ICRP, Jakarta)

31. Muhd. Abdullah Darraz (MAARIF Institute, Jakarta)
32. Ahmad Imam Mujadid Rais (MAARIF Institute, Jakarta)
33. Helmi Pribadi (MAARIF Institute, Jakarta)
34. Deni Murdiani (MAARIF Institute, Jakarta)

Contact person:

Elga Sarapung (081328593697) atau WA: 0812 4702 8796

Email : <joanelga@yahoo.com>