

## **Editorial:**

### **ON MINORITY AND MAJORITY ISSUES**

Minority is a relevant theme in the discussion of Islam and Muslim society particularly today and is more so in Indonesian context. This theme entails many other issues from faith, ethnicity, race, language to human right protection. However, dealing with minority is always faced with the difficulties of self-criticism. For Indonesian Muslims, for example, when discussing minority, they will point out other societies where Muslims stand as minority among other communities. In other words, the majority status often leads many to forget minority groups among them. We Indonesian Muslims are still struggling with the protection of minority religious groups. Most of the articles in the current edition of *al-Jami'ah* depict the ways in which minority groups are treated and their relation to majority in different communities and society.

This edition presents the following articles dealing with minority and majority issues: “Minority Right to Attend Religious Education in Indonesia” by Raihani; “The Political Economy of Sunni-Shi’ah Conflict in Sampang Madura” by Masdar Hilmy; “Analysing the State’s Laws on Religious Education in Post-New Order Indonesia” by Mohamad Yusuf, Carl Sterkens; “Ulama, State, and Politics in Myanmar” by Naw Lily Kadoe and Fatimah Husein; Islamism and Post-Islamism: “Non-Muslim” in Socio-Political Discourse of Pakistan, the United States, and Indonesia by Hans Abdiel Harmakaputra; and Religious Leaders And Peace Building: The Role of Tuan Guru and Pedanda in Conflict Resolution in Lombok – Indonesia by M Suprpto. However, the readers are also given other themes: “In the Tradition or Outside? Reflections on Teachers and Influences” by Martin van Bruinessen; ‘Ā’isha, Mother of the Faithful: The Prototype of Muslim Women Ulama by Fatih Harpci; Is Prophethood Superfluous? Conflicting Outlook on the Necessity of Prophethood between Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and Some Muslim

Philosophers by Fauzan Saleh.

Without intending to delve deeply each of the articles mentioned above, we can perhaps see among the contents of the articles. Raihani, for instance, discusses the teaching of religious subjects in four different schools in Indonesia after the Indonesian government issued the 2003 Education Law, which requires schools to provide religion classes for students according to their respective faiths. He investigates the access of religious minorities to such classes in both public and private schools. He concludes that minority groups have a very limited access to that legally obligatory religious class. While public schools have indeed provided qualified religious teachers for minority groups, they failed to provide proper learning facilities. Worse, private schools fail to fulfill minority right. In both Christian and Islamic schools, minority rights are not accommodated. In the Christian-based school, non-Christian students are obligated to attend classes on Christianity. Raihani's writing concludes that education authority needs to seriously address this issue. One of his recommendations is to give a multicultural education for the school principals and teachers.

Mohamad Yusuf and Carl Sterkens see the relation between the types of religious education practiced in Indonesia and the vision of the state-religion relationship. The two pay attention to the Law No. 20/2003 which explains the type of mono-religious model. The two argue that, given this, Indonesia tends to discriminate religious minorities and therefore the state gives priority to a particular religious tradition. The two also find that the state legitimizes one religion policy.

Among other articles dealing with minority, Hilmy's offers a critical insight into the theme. He presents an alternative perspective to see religious conflict between the Sunni majority Muslim and Shia minority. He sees that the conflict was not merely rooted in theological difference but in political and economic conflict. Both factors fuelled the already developing economic conflict. Theological argument then was used merely to mobilize the mass and justify the following actions. The existence of Shia community in Sampang is seen as a political threat to the long-dominating Sunni. Hilmy believes that the conflict is a part of power contention to maintain what he calls the established mode of production.

Other articles by Bruinessen, Harpsi, and Saleh, present different themes, whose details should not be elaborated in this editorial. Please enjoy reading them.