

Radicals Threat to Moderate Indonesia: Report

By IslamOnline.net & News Agencies

CAIRO — Indonesia's moderate practice of Islam is being threatened by radical groups seeking to infiltrate mosques and schools to implement their agenda, a report warned on Thursday, April 2.

"Opportunistic politicians who work with extremist political parties and groups have joined the radicals in driving our nation towards a deep chasm," former president Abdurrahman Wahid, the report's author, said in a statement cited by Reuters.

"They are jeopardizing the future of our multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation."

"The Illusion of an Islamic State: the Expansion of Transnational Islamist Movements to Indonesia" report said radical groups were seeking to gain a foothold in mosques and other institutions by offering services such as financial help or even free cleaning services.

It said professionals such as lecturers, doctors or teachers would also help to infiltrate institutions and ultimately gain control over them.

The report, jointly authored by the Wahid Institute, the Maarif Institute and the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) movement, named two groups, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), for infiltrating moderate Muslim groups and institutions such as schools to press their agenda.

The report includes contributions from former leaders of the country's two largest mainstream Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah.

Muslim make up some 86.1 percent of Indonesia's 235 million population, Protestant 5.7, Roman Catholic 3, Hindu 1.8, other or unspecified 3.4 percent, according to the CIA World Fact Book.

Provocative

But the PKS and Hizbut Tahrir ridiculed the report's conclusions. "There's no infiltration, no hidden agenda," PKS spokesman Ahmad Mabruhi said. "We are open as a party."

The PKS, which campaigned on strong anti-corruption credentials, eyes 20 percent of the vote in the April 9 parliamentary elections, although most opinion polls have put it below 10 percent. The party could be a potential ally or coalition partner for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the April polls.

"What is clear is PKS is now even more moderate," said Mabruhi. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia spokesman Ismail Yusanto also denied the report's conclusions. "Using the term 'infiltration' is very provocative," he said. "It has a meaning of evil intention even though it is not in fact like that."

Hizbut Tahrir calls for the enforcement of Shari`ah in Indonesia and for the creation of a caliphate through peaceful means. The staunchly Muslim Indonesian province of Aceh is the only area officially allowed to enforce Shari`ah.



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