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Indonesia calls on Islamic leaders to promote tolerant Islam

FILE - In this Oct. 2, 2015 file photo, Indonesia's Vice President Jusuf Kalla addresses the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters. Kalla on Monday, May 9, 2016 called on Islamic leaders to spread messages about a tolerant Islam to curb extremism that often springs from misinterpretation of Islamic teachings. Speaking at the opening of the International Summit of the Moderate Islamic Leaders, Kalla said he believes that youths who don't have deep faith are susceptible to be militants, not for wealth or political cause, but rather as a "shortcut" to heaven. (Craig Ruttle, File/Associated Press)

By Associated Press May 9, 2016

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia's vice president on Monday called on Islamic leaders to spread messages about a tolerant Islam to curb extremism that often springs from misinterpretation of Islamic teachings.

Speaking at the opening of the International Summit of the Moderate Islamic Leaders, Vice President Jusuf Kalla said he believes that youths who don't have deep faith are susceptible to be militants, not for wealth or political cause, but rather as a "shortcut" to heaven.

“That’s why the role of Islamic clerics is needed to do more to correct the misinterpretation,” Kalla said. “We gather here today for that purpose, to produce the solution to curb radicalism in the form of terrorism, wars and conflicts.”

He added that the existence of 1.6 billion Muslims spread across 57 countries should become a force to promote the goodness of Islam.

The meeting organized by Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia’s largest Muslim organization, is expected to produce a message about the importance of promoting a peaceful Islam to combat radicalism worldwide.

More than 300 religious leaders from 33 countries, including clerics from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Iran are attending the two-day meeting.

Kalla said that extremism in the Middle East and radical acts in other parts of the world are the results of wars at home against authoritarian governments in the name of democracy, which caused the future of their people to fall in the darkness.

Therefore, he said, overcoming radicalism and terrorism requires the unity and integrity of the whole nations.

Kalla noted the need of moderate Islamic states, which are able to provide grace, goodness, and unite to the whole community.

Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation, has seen a spate of deadly attacks by Islamic militants including the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists. The smaller, less deadly strikes in recent years targeted government authorities, mainly police and anti-terrorism forces.

Eight people died in a Jan. 14 Jakarta attack including four militants, who claimed allegiance to the Islamic State group.

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