

## Stop politicalization of Islam: Yogyakarta Forum

Sri Wahyuni

Yogyakarta | Fri, October 26, 2018 | 09:27 am



Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) youth wing GP Ansor chairman Yaqut Cholil Qoumas (left) holds a press briefing on Wednesday to respond to a recent burning of a black flag bearing an Islamic creed allegedly by members of NU's Barisan Ansor Serbaguna (Banser) youth wing. GP Ansor said it would give a stern warning to Banser members, but has maintained that the flag was the flag of the banned Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and that, therefore, burning it was not an act of blasphemy. (The Jakarta Post/Dhoni Setiawan)

Participants of the Global Unity Forum (GUF) II, an international interfaith forum jointly hosted by Nahdlatul Ulama's youth wing GP Ansor and the Bayt Ar Rahmah da'wa movement, signed a joint statement on Thursday calling for all people to stop politicizing Islam.

The decree, called the “Nusantara Statement”, calls on people of every faith and nation to curtail the spreading of hatred and start building relationships founded upon respect for equal rights and dignity.

“We want to convey to the world that religion should be used as a basis for better civilization and not as a weapon or even norm to engage in conflict,” GP Ansor chairman Yaqut Cholil Qoumas told *The Jakarta Post* on the sidelines of the forum on Thursday.

Dozens of delegates representing Muslims, Jews, Christians and Catholics from the United States, Europe and the Middle East joined the two-day forum held to coincide with Kirab Satu Negeri, a movement launched by GP Ansor on Sept. 16 to campaign for pluralism and tolerance.

Among the international delegates participating in the forum include Reverend Johnie Moore of the Commission on International Religious Freedom (US), head of the All-India Organization on Mosque Imams Maulana Umer Ahmed Ilyasi (India) and Imam Talib Shareef of The Nation’s Mosque (US).

Yaqut said the forum was first initiated last year in Jakarta over concern about the endless conflicts, especially in Middle Eastern countries such as Libya and Syria, for which the fighting parties use religion as a basis.

“In fact we believe that none of the religions in the world, especially Islam, teach that religion can be used as a tool to engage in conflicts,” Yaqut said.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/10/26/stop-politicalization-of-islam-yogyakarta-forum.html>