

Ulama and Radicalism in Contemporary Indonesia: Response of Al Washliyah's Ulama on Radicalism

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ULAMA AND RADICALISM IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA: RESPONSE OF AL WASHLIYAH'S ULAMA ON RADICALISM

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Abstrak: Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah merupakan sebuah organisasi Islam moderat di Indonesia. Para ulama sejauh ini mendapatkan kedudukan terhormat dan strategis dalam organisasi ini. Para ulama sebagai kelompok elit dalam organisasi Al Washliyah memberikan respons terhadap persoalan sosial keagamaan di Indonesia, termasuk masalah radikalisme dan terorisme. Respons mereka terhadap masalah ini perlu diketahui dan menjadi salah satu landasan bagi upaya menangkal paham dan gerakan radikalisme dan terorisme di Indonesia. Artikel ini mengkaji respons para ulama Al Washliyah terhadap radikalisme dan terorisme. Kajian artikel ini difokuskan pada respons mereka terhadap empat isu yang menjadi doktrin kelompok-kelompok radikal dan teroris yakni negara Islam, *jihādī*, *takfirī*, dan bom bunuh diri. Artikel ini mengajukan temuan bahwa para ulama Al Washliyah yang menjadi informan terpilih memberikan interpretasi yang berbeda mengenai keempat isu tersebut. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa ulama Al Washliyah mengedepankan moderasi dalam kehidupan beragama dan berbangsa, dan secara tegas mereka menolak paham dan gerakan radikalisme dan terorisme.

Kata kunci: Al Washliyah; Radikalisme; Negara Islam; *Jihād*

Abstract: Al Washliyah is a moderate Islamic organization in Indonesia. Ulama (Islamic scholars) have obtained honorable and strategic positions in Al Washliyah organization. As an elite group in Al Washliyah organization, the ulama have responded to socio-religious problems in Indonesia, including issues of radicalism and terrorism. Their responses to these problems should be understood as the Ulama's reflection and a foundation in counteracting radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia. This paper is mainly written to get an insight into the ulama's responses towards the four issues indoctrinated by the radical and terrorist groups such as the Islamic State, jihādī, takfīrī, and suicide bombers. This research highlights that Al Washliyah ulama give different interpretations of those four doctrines, by prioritizing moderation in religion and firmly rejecting radicalism and terrorism in actions or ideas.

Keywords: Al Washliyah; Radicalism; Islamic State; *Jihād*

Introduction

This study discusses Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah (Al Washliyah) ulama's (Islamic scholars) response to radicalism and terrorism issues in Indonesia, particularly those related to the Islamic state, *jihād*, attitudes towards non-Muslims and suicide bombings in Indonesia. Al Washliyah was established in Medan, November 30, 1930, by the students of Maktab Islamiyah Tapanuli (MIT) and Madrasah Al-Hasaniyah, which is affiliated with the Sunni sect (Shāfi'ites and *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*) (Rasyidin, 2016). These organizations focus on education, preaching, social charity, and economic empowerment activities. Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah means "a connecting association". It becomes evident that this organization upholds the vision of religious moderatism (Pengurus Besar Al Washliyah, 2015b). Al Washliyah has successfully contributed to preserving and strengthening moderate Islamic teachings in the Indonesian archipelago.

There have been several studies on the response of Islamic organizations and scholars towards radicalism. Still, none discusses the response of Al Washliyah's ulama to the issue. Abubakar & Hemay (2020) studied radicalism among teachers in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). Some studies focus on the response of Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah (Hilmy, 2013) and Al-Ittihadiyah (Nasution & Rasyidin, 2019). Zada (2002), on the other hand, researched radical groups.

Up to date, the attitude of Al Washliyah's ulama toward radicalism remain understudied. This organization is one of the most prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia, with millions of supporters spreading across provinces, especially Aceh, North Sumatra, Jakarta, West Java, Banten, and South Kalimantan. Thus, the organization plays a significant role in shaping Indonesian Muslim society. Al Washliyah also manages 704 madrasas, schools and universities (Pengurus Besar Al Washliyah, 2021b). As an Islamic organization with a large constituency, Al Washliyah also criticized various acts of terror in the name of Islam. President Joko Widodo, at the opening ceremony of the 22nd Al Washliyah Congress in Jakarta, 19 March 2021, said that Al Washliyah is an organization that "develops a culture of moderation in religious and national life". Al Washliyah *Fatwa* Council stated that "terrorism is a crime against

humanity and civilization that poses a serious threat to the state, security, world peace and is detrimental to the welfare of the people. Terrorism is an organized crime and frightens many people” (Ja'far, 2020). Therefore, Al Washliyah supports religious moderatism and condemns radicalism and terrorism.

This study examines the responses of Al Washliyah ulama to the idea of Islamic state establishment, *jihād*, attitudes toward non-Muslims and suicide bombings in Indonesia. Jonathan Matusitz (2013) posits that these four themes are important to radical groups. This research relies on document studies and interviews with ulama affiliated with Al Washliyah organization. The informants consist of prominent ulama in the organization. They are lecturers in the religious field and well-known for having an in-depth understanding of radicalism. Moreover, they also hold important positions in the organizations, especially executive leaders and board members of Al Washliyah Fatwa Council. Located at the central level, this Fatwa Council acts as a shari'a board. The Council discusses various religious issues. This Council does not exist at the provincial and district levels. The collected data is analyzed using Miles and Huberman's methods: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Miles et al., 2014).

Al Washliyah Ulama on Islamic State

The Al Washliyah ulama give diverse emphasis on the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia. Some affirm that it is not important to establish an Islamic state because Indonesian Muslims struggle to apply shari'a peacefully and constitutionally. In their view, establishing an Islamic state is less important than making shari'a legislation in Indonesia. Hasbullah Hadi states that the struggle of Muslims is not the establishment of an Islamic state but the enactment of shari'a law constitutionally. When shari'a is enacted, Indonesia will automatically become an Islamic state (Hadi, 2018). Saiful Akhyar Lubis affirms that the idea of radical groups and terrorists to establish an Islamic state is unacceptable and unimportant because what is essential is to disseminate the teachings of Islam and make it a worldview of Indonesian Muslim society (Lubis, 2018). Syahrin Harahap adds that the attempt to imitate the condition during the early period of Islam to

establish an Islamic state is not an unimportant effort, but there should be more emphasis on upholding its universal principles. The structure of government in the time of the Prophet and his companions need not be reincarnated in its original form, but only its principles. Therefore, it is not important to uphold distinguishable symbols. Instead, there should be more heeds on disseminating Islamic principles to inspire the lives of the people and the state. In brief, they deem it unnecessary to establish an Islamic state (S. Harahap, 2010). What they think as imperative is how Islamic shari'a can be applied in Indonesia legally and how Islamic teachings can inspire the lives of the people and the state.

However, some ulama still consider establishing an Islamic state constitutionally instead of by force. This can be seen from M. Nizar Syarif's opinion, expressing the urgency for establishing an Islamic state, although it is impossible to change the system of the Indonesian government without a real movement. It is feasible to establish an Islamic state is in Indonesia through the legislative path. Thus, the cadres of Islamic organizations are obliged to become members of the legislature in order to change the legislation to conform with Islamic teachings. In his belief, it is important to consider that the Indonesian people are bound by Pancasila. It needs to be preserved because Pancasila is born out of the idea of Muslims instead of unbelievers. The principles of Pancasila are the core of the teachings of Islam. Although they see the importance of establishing an Islamic state, some ulama consider that Pancasila is a final form. Indonesian Muslims are only to fight for the application of shari'a to be a legal rule in Indonesia to make Pancasila imbued with Islamic teachings (Syarif, 2016).

In addition, all Al Washliyah ulama disallow the use of the radical approach in the struggle for the implementation of shari'a in Indonesia; instead, they prefer to do it constitutionally. Hadi explained that the enforcement of shari'a law in Indonesia should be done constitutionally through the legislature, although secular groups will challenge it. Thus, some Al Washliyah ulama who actively served as executive officers of Al Washliyah assert that it is unnecessary to establish an Islamic state, although others opine otherwise. However, all are in one voice that the shari'a of Islam should be the law of the state, and the principles of Islam should enliven the state's life. Furthermore, they are of the same opinion that it is prohibited to use radical means and terror in the struggle for Islamic law, except through the constitution (Hadi, 2018).

Al Washliyah ulama serving as the Al Washliyah Fatwa Council board also have different views about the Islamic state. Some of them refuse to establish a formal Islamic state. Ramli Abdul Wahid rejects the idea and movement to change the system of the Indonesian government. In his view, the Republic of Indonesia's government system and state's principles of Pancasila should remain the same. However, Muslims must fill Pancasila and Indonesian's rules with the teachings of Islam. Islam must imbue Pancasila, and it is crucial to apply the shari'a in Indonesia. Therefore, Muslims must first be enlightened so that they are ready to accept shari'a. Indonesian Muslims are bounded by a platform called Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the House of Representatives, for which they must be in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Muslim leaders in Indonesia should try to fill them with the teachings of Islam, and fight for Islam in the House of Representatives (Wahid, 2018).

Ovied Rangkuti denies the so-called Islamic state but reinforces the importance of establishing a state with Islamic principles. He believes that a country can be considered an Islamic state if its law is not contradictory to Islamic law, even though its form does not conform to an Islamic state. Further, he explains that Muslims are obliged to guard the law of that country. Otherwise, if Muslims reject it, they are categorized as rebels. In fact, there is no *ijmā'* among ulama about the state form in Islam (Rangkuti, 2016).

Other ulama well support such opinion. Amar Adly asserted that it is inappropriate to raise the idea of establishing an Islamic state, but Muslims should prioritize thinking about the realization and implementation of Islamic teachings in Muslim societies in the first place. When Muslims uphold and practice the teachings of Islam in their daily life, Indonesia will inevitably turn into an Islamic state. It is quite ironic that the Islamic state is upheld, but the teachings of Islam are not practiced consistently by Muslims (Adly, 2018). Watni Marpaung affirms that there is no need to discuss the Islamic state from the formalistic aspects of Indonesia since there are many Islamic countries founded formally with no Islamic principles in it. Muslims thus should be more focused on making Islamic regulations. Raising the symbols of the Islamic state in Indonesia can only lead to disputes among other religious people. In fact, it is possible to label Indonesia

as an Islamic country because the majority of the population embraces Islam, although formally, it does not take an Islamic state (Marpaung, 2018). The same thing is expressed by M. Riduan Harahap, in that he believes that the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia is no longer important. What is more essential today is to incorporate Islamic values into the Indonesian state system. Thus, Indonesia will be a country adhering to Islamic principles. To put it in brief, it can be highlighted that Al Washliyah's teachers reject the idea of the formal Islamic state and call for the revitalization of Islamic values in the life of the family, community and state of Indonesia (M. R. Harahap, 2018).

Some ulama, who are Al Washliyah's Fatwa Council members, are of the view for establishing an Islamic state. However, they believe that the effort must be pursued by the constitution instead of by radical acts. According to Ardiansyah, for now, it is irrelevant to bring up the idea for the establishment of an Islamic state. Indonesian ulama and Islamic organizations are of the same opinions that Indonesia is a unitary state, but that does not mean that the idea for establishing the Islamic state should cease. Islamic state may be established by considering Indonesian territorial and specific time frame, say when Indonesia is separated into several parts, which makes Pancasila no longer applied. However, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is the ultimate form, as is supported by Islamic mass organizations. Hence, when other parties try to raise a different ideology, Indonesian Muslims should oppose this, as do the scholars affiliated with Islamic mass organizations. All the while, the chances of establishing an Islamic state in the future remain widely open. Theoretically, it is imperative to enforce the state and government of Islam based on the Qur'an and hadith (Ardiansyah, 2018). Irwansyah reinforces that the idea of establishing an Islamic state needs to be supported by all Muslims because it is the only ideal prerequisite for the glory of Islam. It is undeniably true that the ultimate law for human beings is Islamic law, unlike democracy, which is not originally from Islam and is unfamiliar to Islam. The only concept ever written in Islam is discussion (*shūrā*). On this basis, it is no wonder if they believe that the Islamic state is still mandatory, despite the current condition in Indonesia, which disallows such effort since the Indonesian Republic is the ultimate form of the country resulting from previous scholars' convention. All in all, it is possible to say that they shared

the similar thought that democracy is not derived from the teachings of Islam (Irwansyah, 2018).

Thus, the thoughts of the ulama from Al Washliyah about the Islamic state are divided into two. The first opinion comes from the ulama who reject the concept of the Islamic state. However, they still consider the importance to implement Islamic law in Indonesia peacefully and constitutionally. This opinion rejects the notions and movements of radical groups, such as HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, NII (Negara Islam Indonesia or Indonesian Islamic State), JI (Jemaah Islamiyah), LJ (Laskar Jihad), MMI (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia or Indonesian Mujahidin Council), and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) (Greg Fealy, 2004; Hilmy, 2014). Although they reject the notion of Islamic state, they are different from JIL (Jaringan Islam Liberal or Liberal Islam Network) because they still want to implement Islamic Law in Indonesia (Azmy & Yusra, 2020). The second opinion comes from the ulama accepting and admitting that Indonesia can become an Islamic State, but it must still be formed peacefully and constitutionally. However, this opinion is only a discourse. In reality, they still recognize the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, which are considered relevant to Islamic teachings and the legacy of the ulama in Indonesia. This group rejects violence and still accepts democracy. This makes them different from the mentioned radical groups that use violence to fight for an Islamic state and even rejects democracy. Because they reject violence, ulama from Al Washliyah are not categorized as radical. From Hilmy's view, the ulama from Al Washliyah are part of a middle-moderation group that consists of educated scholars and becomes the leading agents in religious moderatism. Specifically, the second group can be called a radical-moderate group because they still prioritize the peaceful way (Hilmy, 2012) but still accept the notion of Islamic State. This second group is still influenced by classical *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) on constitutional law.

Al Washliyah Ulama on *Jihād*

The research's questions were mainly aimed at targeting the responses of Al Washliyah ulama towards the meaning of *jihād*, the difference between *jihād* and terrorism, *jihād* against the infidels, and the division

of *jihād*. First, they agree that *jihād* is not limited to war but has a more humanistic meaning. Akhyar Lubis states that *jihād* is every effort carried out seriously, wholeheartedly, and totally with whatever they have to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT. Hadi argues that some of the meanings of *jihād* include the attempt to uphold, establish, and fight for the establishment of Islamic law in all Muslim lifelines. According to Syarif, the meaning of *jihād* is to earnestly promote goodness, *da'wah* (proselytizing), and worship. According to Adly, the literal meaning of *jihād* is war, but it can also be interpreted with other meanings, such as the war of thought and words. *Jihād* in the sense of war is permissible as long as the elements of the permissibility of *jihād* are fulfilled. These elements are an Islamic state, permission from the Imam, and being attacked by the infidels. Also, it is imperative that during the war, Muslims are prohibited from making destruction, say destroying houses of worship, killing children and women, cutting down trees, and killing animals unlawfully.

Some other *ulama* also provide other meanings of *jihād*. According to Hadi, the most relevant meaning of *jihād* for Muslims today is *jihād* in the sense of trying to uphold and struggle to disseminate the teachings of *shari'a* into the rules of life on earth so as to improve the welfare of Muslims in all walks of life in accordance with Islamic teachings, especially in terms of the economy, social, politics, and education. Ovied opined that the true notion of *jihād* is not limited to fighting in the path of God, but it is broader than that. *Jihād* is anything that can elevate Islamic religion, such as *jihād* in the field of organization, politics, education, economy, culture, social activities, and technology. According to Akhyar Lubis, Muslims can do *jihād* with anything they own, including knowledge, wealth, position, and power to benefit other Muslims. Irwansyah added that the true essence of *jihād* for Muslims is eradicating poverty, ignorance, underdevelopment, and increasing the low level of Muslim's human resources. It is undeniably true that learning is also *jihād*.

Syahrin Harahap asserts that Muslims interpret *jihād* into two connotations. (1) The first interpretation refers to that shared by Muslim fighters, especially those living in the conflict area, requiring them to maintain Islam politically and demographically. No wonder

that in their view, the word *jihād* is understood more by its generic meaning in accordance to the history of the word referring to holy war in the struggle for Islam. (2) The second interpretation defines *jihād* as a struggle for progress and empowerment with Islamic spirit. In addition to the connotations of war, the word *jihād* in Islam has four more important connotations. First is *jihād* in the meaning of empowerment. The essential substance of the meaning of *jihād* is the struggle to genuinely exert all the potential and ability to defend the religion of God to achieve Allah's approval. Second, *jihād* is defined as an effort to improve work ethic and quality of work. Third is *jihād* in the meaning of diplomacy. Fourth, *jihād* in meaning is critical in upholding the truth (S. Harahap, 2010).

Second, they also affirm the distinction between *jihād* and terrorism. Wahid asserted that there is a stark difference between *jihād* and terrorism. He insists that terrorism is destructive and anarchic, aiming at instilling fear and is carried out without boundless rules and targets. On the contrary, *jihād* means to repair, even through warfare, to uphold Islam and defend the rights of the oppressed. This is supposed to be done following the rules set by the *shari'a* with clear targets. According to Syarif, *jihād* and terrorism are not identical. If terrorism is valued as part of *jihād* as what ISIS shares, the hatred against Islam and its adherents shared by those non-Muslims will take to its toll. Terrorists make such interpretation falsely to distract Muslims from the real meaning of *jihād*. M. Nasir added that there is an absolute difference between terrorism and *jihād*. According to him, terrorism uses violence, cruelty and brutality to cause fear in humans to achieve unregulated goals, while *jihād* is a noble task to defend religion. Terrorism is usually used for political and power purposes. In contrast, *jihād* aims to guide human beings in achieving happiness based on affection, merely hoping for God's pleasure. Terrorism is entirely unjust and astray from the guidance of Islam, while *jihād* is an effort to maintain religion's integrity. Ovied opines that terrorism and *jihād* are dissimilar in the way that terrorism is purely a criminal act. Meanwhile, *jihād* is a struggle based on religious norms in accordance with *shari'a*. According to Hadi, the notion of deeming *jihād* as terrorism is unacceptable. This is constructed by the West. In the Islamic essence, the meaning of *jihād* is vast. Hence, it is entirely erroneous to consider *jihād* as terrorism or a mere war.

Although one of the meanings of *jihād* is indeed a war, not every war may be labeled as *jihād* unless it is done according to *shari'a* guidance.

There are diverse opinions among Al Washliyah's *ulama* about the doctrine of *jihād* against the infidels. Wahid asserted that radicals misinterpreted the verses of *jihād* since war and murder are never tolerable in Islam. Murder and wars against other people or other nations are only permissible for defending life and religion. Islam also regulates the ethics of war as it should not kill women and children or damage and tear down enemy buildings for unjustifiable reasons. Akhyar Lubis believes the meaning of *jihād* against the infidels, as written in the scripture, is more on the fight against human destruction, regardless of religion. *Kāfirs* are not merely seen from whether they are Muslims or not because the essential meaning of *kāfir* is disbelieving. Every religious believer possesses the likelihood of being a disbeliever, with no exception a Muslim. Thus, the war against the heathen is a war against the prevailing disbelief lying inside the heart of every religious person.

Jihād, in this sense, is in line with the *jihād* against the passions. According to Syarif, Muslims are only allowed to carry out *jihād* against unbelievers as long as Muslims are attacked and assaulted by infidels. At the same time, Muslims are banned from fighting the unbelievers who befriend the Muslim community. Ardiansyah maintains that the verses and hadith of *jihād* and war can never simply be applied in various situations and conditions since they must be correctly understood according to the scholars' commentaries. Indonesia, for instance, is declared by a particular group as *dār al-ḥarb*, where *jihād* is a necessity. This opposes the scholars' opinion, considering Indonesia is *a dār al-salām*. Thus, war and the massacre of innocent people are unnecessary.

Those *ulama* also divided *jihād* into some sections. M. Riduan Harahap shared the same thought in that *jihād* in Islam consists of three levels, namely *jihād* against self, *jihād* against demons, and *jihād* against the enemy (*jihād* against falsehood, immorality, cruelty, and arbitrary acts, *jihād* against the polytheists, and Disbelievers). The most important type of *jihād* in Indonesia is *jihād* against lust and *jihād* against the temptations of Satan.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the *ulama* of Al Washliyah refuse the notion of Jihad as a "holy war" to crush the infidels

as what is thought by radical fundamentalist groups (Bachtiar et al., 2019). The ulama of Al Washliyah also found errors from interpretation made by radical groups in interpreting verses related to *jihād*, which is one of several factors driving the emergence of radicalism and terrorism (Zuhdi, 2019). Studies have shown that radicals and terrorists have distorted the meaning of *jihād* (Marranci, 2006). Al Washliyah's ulama views on *jihād* have been inspired by the classical ulama in the field of *fiqh* (Aydin, 2012), especially the Shāfi'iyah school. Their views on *jihād* show that they accept moderation and reject radicalism.

Al Washliyah Ulama on Non-Muslims

Al Washliyah ulama's response to non-Muslim existence can be seen from views of the urgency of fostering religious harmony; the ability to work with non-Muslims in *mu'amalah*; attitudes toward non-Muslims who are hostile towards Muslims; attitudes toward countries that interfere with the interests of Islam; and attitude towards the concept of *kāfir ḥarbī*. First, all Al Washliyah ulama agree that Muslims should foster harmony with non-Muslims and foster cooperation in all fields except *'aqidah* and *shari'a*, and so long as they do not attack the Muslim community. Masyhuril Khamis states that the *dā'i*, ulama and religious leaders should soothe the community with their preaches. The role of religious leaders is significant in providing the community with an insight to maintain a harmonious atmosphere. Religious tolerance and peace among people are fixed priced and non-negotiable (Pengurus Besar Al Washliyah, 2015a). Later, Syahrin Harahap added that Islam came to bring mercy to the whole universe. Affection is not only for lovers, families and relatives, but love is given to all beings. The offer of affection in Islam is meant for the within groups and communities (S. Harahap, 2010). According to Syarif, Muslims are allowed to cooperate with non-Muslims in the social field. At the same time, they are forbidden from cooperating with non-Muslims in faith and worship as promoted by religious pluralism supporters. Hadi added that Muslim attitudes toward unbelievers must be seen in different contexts. Riduan Harahap reveals that Indonesian Muslims must uphold mutual respect for non-Muslims. Therefore, Muslims should display the *Islām of rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*.

According to Wahid, Islam recognizes the existence of other religions and their adherents. The term Islam itself refers to salvation, and it is a symbol of peace declaration with all people regardless of religion. This is in line with the core principle of why Islam was brought by the Prophet Muhammad, that is as *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. According to Ovied, the Qur'an and Hadith had explained how the believers should treat people of different religions in which they should respect them as well as possible and behave fairly towards them.

Secondly, some ulama suggest that Muslims may cooperate with non-Muslims in terms of *mu'āmalah*. According to Wahid, Muslims may be friends with them, as long as they are not hostile to Muslims. Islam commands that Muslims take heed of poor non-Muslims or help each other and unite in facing common enemies. Muslims should live peacefully side by side with other people, not just other people in their own country, but also with people from other nations. Ardiansyah reveals that Muslims are allowed to establish cooperation in the field of *mu'āmalah* as long as non-Muslims do not betray the covenant with Muslims. However, the tolerance of Muslims does not apply in the field of *'aqidah* and *shari'a*, for example, worshipping together and eating non-Muslim food. Adly insists that Muslims are allowed to cooperate with non-Muslims socially, at the individual and state level, as long as it does not cause any harm to Muslims. Still, Muslims are ought to keep cautious in cooperating with non-Muslims. Once there is an indication that such cooperation is harmful to Muslims, the cooperation is unjustified. Riduan Harahap added that Muslims' friendly attitude toward non-Muslims should not undermine the sanctity of *'aqidah* and worship and degrade the dignity of Islam and Muslims. The attitude of Muslims must remain firm in matters of faith and worship since there is no bargain for these things.

Thirdly, some Al Washliyah ulama claimed that Islam values that it is important to respect other believers. However, if non-Muslims exhibit a hostile attitude towards religion and Muslims, Muslims must stand to fight. According to Hadi, every Muslim can interact and cooperate with unbelievers. However, when the disbelievers disrupt Islam and Muslims, it is obliged for Muslims to fight against them as demanded by Islamic law. Ovied uttered that Muslims must be firm against individuals and

non-Muslim countries that are hostile to Muslims. Muslims must be firm against The United States, which is a state supporting the existence of Israel that does not give the rights of the Palestinian people. The state of Israel will forever become the enemy of Muslims as long as they do not surrender the Palestinian people's rights and sovereignty.

Fourth, some Al Washliyah ulama affirm the urgency of boycotting the products of countries that express hostility towards the state and Muslims. Ovied affirms that Muslims need to boycott The United State and Israeli products individually while boycotting their products by the Indonesian state is unnecessary because it will only cause new problems in the global political aspect. According to Hadi, Muslims must fight against the domination of The United States and its allies by gathering the strength of Muslims in the field of education, economics, politics, and technology. Irwansyah reinforces that it is a must to fight against countries that oppress Muslims by boycotting their products, such as Israel and The United States, two countries considered to harm Islam a great deal.

Fifth, some Al Washliyah ulama reveal the concept of *kāfir harbī* and the attitude of Muslims against them. According to Adly, given to the current fact that the so-called Islamic state (*daulah islāmīyah*) does not exist, there is no such thing as *kāfir harbī*, that is, infidels to be fought. Thus, Muslims should enlighten non-Muslims and pagan countries to convert them instead of fighting against them. Ardiansyah added that there had been clear guidance as to how Muslims should treat non-Muslims in that Muslims are obliged to guard the blood of others, except those who disbelieve and attack the Muslims. In the concept of warfare in Islam, Muslims are strictly forbidden to kill non-Muslims who do not fight, especially children, women, the elderly, and people in the worship houses. Indeed, not all unbelievers⁴ are enemies of Islam, for there are *kāfir dhimmī* and *kāfir harbī*. Since Indonesia is not an Islamic state and has no religious leader, the *jihād* command in Islam cannot be a strong reason for waging warfare and attacks on other religions. *Jihād* is only applicable when the elements of *jihād*, such as the Islamic state and Islamic leadership, are fulfilled.

In general, the ulama's opinion in Al Washliyah about fostering relations with non-Muslims is influenced by *ulama* in *fiqh*, especially the

Shāfi'iyah School. Generally, they put forward the idea of Islam *rahmatan li al-ālamīn*. However, the issue of relations between Islam and non-Muslims still raises controversy and is seen as a sensitive issue (Podungge, 2018). Ulama of Al Washliyah, as explained in the classic *fiqh* books, limit the relationship between the two parties by asserting that Muslims can build a relationship with non-Muslims in *mu'āmalah*, not in faith and worship. That is why, for example, Al Washliyah rejects non-Muslim leaders (Ja'far, 2017). According to some people, the interpretation of Al Washliyah's ulama on Muslim and non-Muslim relations, especially on the issue of non-Muslim leader, from the perspective of multiculturalism and democracy, seems rigid and intolerant and is considered to have failed in responding to contemporary socio-political dynamics since the rules in Indonesia do not prohibit them from becoming leaders (Syarif, 2012).

Al Washliyah Ulama on Suicide Bombing

Experts of radicalism and terrorism concur that the most important doctrine of terrorist groups is suicide bombing to achieve martyrdom and heaven. In this case, Al Washliyah *ulama* agree that suicide bombing in the name of religion conducted in the *dār al-salām* area and destroying Western symbols is an unjustifiable act in Islam. However, they differed on suicide bombings in the *dār al-ḥarb* region.

Al Washliyah's top officials rejected and condemned suicide bombings in Indonesia. M. Ridwan Ibrahim Lubis asserted that the suicide bombing done by terrorists in Indonesia is heretical and illegitimate. The suicide bomber is not a martyr (Dewan *Fatwa* Al Washliyah, 2009). Masyhuril Khamis added that if the country is safe, the suicide bombing is not *jihād*. Instead, it is a disgraceful act. Islamic teachings forbade his people to commit actions that damage lives, let alone kill innocent people. So, such understanding of the meaning of *jihād* should be re-straightened (Pengurus Besar Al Washliyah, 2009, 2021a).

Al Washliyah's ulama, who once served as the organization's leader in North Sumatra and made it as a base of his work, also rejected the doctrine of suicide bombing as a martyr's act for the requirement of heaven. According to Syarif, suicide bombing is not part of *jihād*; instead, it is a sinful suicide, and the perpetrators are subjected to severe torture in the hereafter. Akhyar Lubis asserted that suicide bombing is

a sin, self-torture, vain action, not part of *jihād*, and did not achieve martyrs. Death and life should not be in the hand of humans since it is God's business. Thus, what needs to highlight is that Islam urges to prosper Muslims instead of torturing its adherents through self-blowing. Moreover, the victims who died from suicide bombing are not from the enemies of Islam but also innocent Muslims. Syahrin Harahap stated that Islam does not allow its people to detonate bombs to kill other humans. In Islam, killing a human would mean killing people as a whole. Suicide bombing does not indicate the perpetrators are implementing the teachings of Islam, but a form of a rigid and simplistic understanding of Islam, which betrayed the values of love taught by Islam (S. Harahap, 2010). Hadi conveyed the same thing that suicide is forbidden in Islam, as it is forbidden to commit suicide as a way of killing others. Suicide bombings are never justified in the teachings of Islam, let alone when it brings harm to many suicide bomb victims from among Muslims and innocent people, instead of the main target of the perpetrators. The suicide bombing is not part of *jihād*, and the culprit's death is not a martyr's death.

The group of ulama who served as the board of the Fatwa Council also strengthened the ban on suicide and suicide bombings. However, some of them justify suicide bombings as long as they fulfilled elements of *jihād* as described in the leading books of *fiqh*. There is no other way to destroy the Enemy fortress on the battlefield. However, some ulama are consistent that suicide bombing is forbidden. Imam Yazid, Secretary of the Al Washliyah Fatwa Council (2021-2026), emphasized that the law on suicide bombing is *haram* (Yazid, 2021).

Some agree that it is unlawful to detonate suicide bombing in *dār al-salām*, but it is allowed to conduct suicide bombing on the battlefield (*dār al-ḥarb*) as long as the elements of *jihād* are fulfilled. In Wahid's view, it is unjustified to commit suicide bombing for personal gain. From the Islamic legal perspective, suicide bombing is *ḥarām* (unlawful) because it is a form of despair and self-destructive action, both in peace and war zones. The Indonesian suicide bombing targeting Western symbols such as the J.W. Marriot Hotel is unlawful because its enemy is unclear and the country is not in a state of war. Accordingly, the suicide bombers in Indonesia are not martyrs. They misunderstand their martyrdom. In this

fashion, it is essential to sensibly consider the benefit, harm, effectiveness, and contribution of suicide bombing for the struggle of Muslims and its impact on Muslims globally before choosing it as a way of fight. According to Ardiansyah, it is unjustifiable to do suicide bombing in Indonesia because it is not a war zone. The blood of the perpetrators is in vain because they killed themselves, which is a forbidden act. As a result, there is no obligation to bathe, shroud, and pray for the bodies of the suicide bombers. Their bodies should be buried like a carcass because they had gone against the command of Allah. The suicide bombers' understanding is very mistaken as they misinterpreted the Qur'anic verses about *jihād* and *qitāl* (killing). They are not martyrs. According to Adly, suicide bombers in Indonesia cannot be labeled as *jihād*, because they do not meet the requirements of *jihād*. Their death in the suicide bombing is more to ridicule than a martyr since they endanger and end their lives for an unjustifiable reason. The current suicide bomb is not classified as *'amaliyah al-ishtishād* (martyrdom), but *'amaliyah al-intihāriyah* (suicidal); in other words, it is not the practice of martyrdom.

According to Wahid, a suicide bombing in the *dār al-ḥarb* area could be chosen as one of the ways to destroy enemy forces throughout the war legalized by the shari'a. However, it may be deemed a desperate attempt by a Muslim fighter to invade the enemy fortress. Thus, if it is the only way, there must be a reconsideration of the Islamic concept of war (*ḥarb*). On the battlefield, there are times when suicide is required; that is when a person is ready to die a martyr, for there are no other ways but that. Suicide bombings are allowed when the enemy and his target are clear, when they do not sacrifice the weak, and when they are done on the battlefield. The war must also be legalized by the *mu'tamad 'ulamā'*, such as the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), instead of individual scholars. In this fashion, suicide bombings are only allowed in Palestine. According to Adly, it is justified to conduct suicide bombings in Palestine because the elements of *jihād* are well fulfilled. In contrast, a similar practice should not be done in safe and sound countries like Indonesia. According to Ardiansyah, the notion of suicide bombing in a war that shari'a legalizes divides Islamic scholars into different views. Some scholars say that *intihar* (suicide) may be done under conditions of war against the enemies of Islam who attack Muslim regions. Watni added that suicide bombing is banned in *dār al-salām* regions, and is

only allowed in *dār al-ḥarb* area in urgent and critical conditions. If there is another way to destroy the enemies of Islam, it is expected that suicide bombs are not chosen as an option. Shari'a forbids suicide bombings for no reason, and those who carried out such acts are not categorized as *jihād*, and their death is not considered martyrdom. In Palestine, suicide bombings are possible when conditions are urgent, but in Indonesia, which is *dār al-salām*, there should be no reason for suicide bombings.

Unlike the previous thoughts, some other ulama members of Al Washliyah Fatwa Council condemn the suicide bombing committed by the terrorists. Oviad states that suicide bombing aimed at the country and the symbol of the West is wrongdoing and indiscretion. Islam totally prohibits the act of violence and terror. The suicide bombers cannot be called *shahīd*/martyrs and do not go to heaven because they die in violation of the rules of shari'a of Allah. Irwansyah stated that the suicide bombers are not called martyrs, and it is necessary to review the Islamic view of the treatment of Muslims against the terrorist body. According to Riduan Harahap, suicide by any means is certainly not allowed in Islam, with no exception by exploding a bomb. Such terrorist acts negatively impact the image of Islam, and Muslims must affirm to the international world that Islam completely never teaches and strictly forbid suicide.

All ulama in Al Washliyah agree that the law of suicide bombing is *ḥarām*, and it is not part of *jihād*. The perpetrators will not get martyred and can damage the image of Islam. Some of this opinion is influenced by the *fiqh* discussing *dār al-salām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. That is why some of them claim that Indonesia is *dār al-salām* in that the suicide bombings carried out by terrorist groups are illegal in Islam. However, according to them, in *dār al-ḥarb* areas such as Palestine, as long as the elements of *jihād* as described in the classical *fiqh* are fulfilled, the suicide bombings are possible, and even they must obtain the approval from the official *ulama* institution. Their views are identical to the *Fatwa* issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council. Thus, it can be seen that they reject the view of terrorist groups who legalize suicide bombings because Indonesia is *dār al-ḥarb*. Rusli explained that the Salafism Jihadist group in Indonesia justified suicide bombings targeting infidels and *ṭāghūt*

(false God) groups such as Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) and Jemaah Islamiyah (Rusli, 2014). This confirms that Al Washliyah ulama reject suicide bombings as those carried out by terrorist groups in Indonesia.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Al Washliyah as an Islamic organization and Fatwa Council of Al Washliyah as its shari'a institution have responded to the problem of radicalism and terrorism. Both assert that Islam rejects radicalism and terrorism, and *jihād* is entirely dissimilar to both. In particular, Al Washliyah ulama have given various responses on radicalism and terrorism. First, some ulama still consider the importance of establishing an Islamic state, but such the idea must be pursued peacefully and constitutionally. On the other hand, some ulama cannot see the significance of establishing an Islamic state because the most important thing is to make the shari'a of Islam the only rule in Indonesia and to enliven Islamic values in the social life and nationwide. Secondly, all ulama of Al Washliyah think that the meaning of *jihād* is not limited to war as shared by terrorists, and *jihād* is different from terrorism. They agreed that Muslims should not kill non-Muslims who do not confront the religion and Muslims. In addition, they believe that *jihād* consists of three types: *jihād* against lust, *jihād* against demons, and *jihād* against the infidels threatening Islam. They believe that *jihād* against evil and demons is the greatest *jihād*, while *jihād* against the infidels confronting Islam is a small *jihād*. Third, Al Washliyah ulama agree that Muslims should foster interfaith harmony; Muslims may cooperate with non-Muslims in many fields, including the field of *mu'amalah*, but not in the field of *'aqidah* and *shari'ah*. They must also be firm against non-Muslims who challenge Islam. It is also necessary to boycott the products of countries that harm the Islamic world, and it is forbidden to kill the infidels who do not threaten Islam and Muslims. Fourth, some Al Washliyah ulama refuse suicide bombs, and even they consider that the perpetrators will not die as martyrs. On the other hand, some other *ulama* believe that suicide bombing is forbidden in *dār al-salām*, like Indonesia. In contrast, it may be done in *dār al-ḥarb* when the prerequisite for *jihād* conditions have been fulfilled, such as in Palestine.

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