

Indonesia's religious leaders urge promotion of religious harmony

Over 100 representatives of Indonesia's religious communities who attended a government-sponsored seminar this week in Jakarta, said it is everyone's responsibility to promote religious harmony.



Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population.

Robin Gomes, *Vatican News*, 29 February 2020

Not only civil and religious leaders but also all citizens have the responsibility in promoting values such as tolerance, respect, religious harmony, which strengthen Indonesians in their daily lives.

Leaders of several religions of Indonesia made the call on February 27 in the capital Jakarta, during a seminar on "Harmonious and constructive religion that strengthens national life". The event was organized by the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR), the legislative branch of the Indonesian political system. Over 100 delegates, representing various faiths, government officials and civil society groups, attended the seminar.

The Vatican's Fides news agency reported Prof. Syafiq Mughni, president of "Muhammadiyah", the oldest Islamic organization in Indonesia, as saying that every citizen of the country must contribute to religious harmony in a given situation and find ways to contribute to national life. Only in this way, he said, can the whole country progress. No religion can be used for "destructive purposes in any context and time", he added.

In his speech, Fides said, Bishop Paskalis Bruno Syukur of Bogor, the vice president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Indonesia (KWI), said that "religious leaders and government officials must work together to promote peace, love and solidarity between the different communities".

Gomar Gultom of the Central Church Fellowship in Indonesia said that it is the task of every community and every believer "to find ways for religion and the practice of worship to contribute to the country's ideals of peace and prosperity, opening the way to people's progress and the common good".

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian representatives. The South-east Asian nation has long been an example of peaceful harmony, tolerance and unity among its people, thanks to the Pancasila, the 5 principles that form the philosophical and political ideology of the Indonesian state, ensure unity amidst religious pluralism in an officially secular system.

With over 85% of its some 267 million people professing Islam, Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population. Christians of all denominations make up some 12% of the population. Most Indonesian Muslims are moderates but the nation's image as a tolerant nation has been undermined by Islamic radicalism and intolerance in recent years, threatening its unity amidst its diversity. (Source: Fides)