

Former Members of Gafatar Face Demographic Issue

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Thousand of former members of Gafatar (Fajar Nusantara Movement) have been relocated from East Mempawah, West Borneo. They were sent back to their origin.


Senior Researcher of Centre for Demography and Policy Studies of Universitas Gadjah Mada, Prof. Dr. Muhadjir Darwin, MPA., said that the return of the former members of Gafatar creates new problems. One of them is the problem of demographic administration. This problem arose because the majority of the people have revoked the status of their residence in the territory of origin. In fact, some are enlisted as West Borneo residents.

"The measure taken by the government to bring them back to their place of origin has forced them to resume their residential status," he said on Wednesday (3/2) at UGM.

Muhadjir explains, despite their ideology or belief, mobility of former Gafatar members is one form of migration. This case has shown how rigid the registration system in Indonesia is. ID card system in Indonesia is built on the assumption that the population is static.

"In fact, our society is getting more mobile," he explained.

Muhadjir exemplifies a system for identity record of the US population that is effective, efficient, and able to accommodate the mobility of its inhabitants. Whilst staying in the United States, the identity



of a citizen is a social security number (SSN), while the person is traveling abroad, their identity document is a passport. Besides serving as an identity, SSN is also a form of social security of citizens.

"It also applies to migrants," explained by the expert of State Administration.

Muhadjir mentioned, even though a person is not registered as citizens and only settles or stays temporarily (temporary residents) for jobs, business affairs, study and others, they are also required to have an SSN. Demographic data is recorded nationally and integrated so that the system is able to detect anyone who is staying in the country, it is even capable to monitor their mobility. SSN can be used for all administrative matters, such as banks, offices, government, schools, or election.

SSN is attached to the country, so that wherever the people traveled, crossing state lines, he will continue to use the same identification numbers. Unlike the National Identity Card (KTP) in Indonesia which is attached to the description of a place to stay. When someone moves, even in the same city, he/she still has to renew his/her ID card.

"For example, people who work in a big city such as Jakarta, but they regularly return to the area of their origin every month. In Jakarta, they will be considered as illegal residents, because they do not have Jakarta ID card," said Muhadjir.

According to the man, mobility is one form of the fundamental right. Therefore, the population administration system also needs to be built on the premise that people are dynamic, moving, mobile, and not stagnate in one place.

Related to the return of ex-Gafatar members which is viewed as an attempt to avoid conflict, Muhadjir reminded that their rights as citizens should not be removed. The fact that the former Gafatar people have different beliefs is another matter, but it is important for the country not to be trapped in a narrow sectarian mindset. Countries should be bold and willing to provide protection to all its citizens.

'It means as citizens they are also obliged not to cause damage, not take actions that harm other people, help to create an atmosphere of peace and calm in the community, and that's enough," Muhadjir said.

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