

Romo Magnis: Radicalism and Exclusivism, Challenges to Indonesian Nationhood

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The clergy, Franz Magnis Suseno, or widely known as Romo Magnis, states that radicalism and exclusivism are a part of a challenge to Pancasila state ideology in accommodating the nationhood. Even though Pancasila has been admitted as a part of the national identity. “We are now facing radicalism that does not accept Pancasila and (is not) religious but exclusive, only I, and others are the second or third,” said Romo Magnis in a National Seminar entitled “Moral Resilience and National Culture: Defending the Country and Preventing Radicalism in Campus”, on Friday (26/7) at the seminar room of Graduate School UGM.

The seminar within the sequence of the 14th Lustrum of UGM events presents other speakers, such as the Vice Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Mochammad Maksum, and a Member of the Muhammadiyah Da’wah Institution, Dr. Zuly Qodir, the Director General of Learning and Student Affairs of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Prof. Ir. Ismunandar, the Director General of Potential Defense, the Ministry of Defense, Prof. Dr. Bondan Tiara Sofyan, the Director of Deradicalization of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Prof. Dr. Irfan Idris, and a terrorism observer, Nasir Abbas.

In terms of terrorism and radicalism, Romo Magnis admits that those ideologies are spreading to many countries nowadays. Moreover, the suicide bombers in the Philippines were a husband and



wife from Indonesia, who were known recently returned from the Syrian war. To anticipate similar incidents and encourage deradicalization, he argues that the presence of the state and religious leaders are very determining. "We can agree that religiosity must be perceived positively, religious leaders must be able to convince their people that religions never teaches violence," he said.

Even though radicalism and exclusivism in religious matters become a part of challenges in Indonesia in actualizing a process of national accommodation, Romo Magnis argues that Indonesia is very lucky because there was no division in the post-1998 reform era as experienced by Egypt recently, which ended with a military coup d'etat. "Egypt experienced something like Indonesia did in 1998, only wanting to manifest a Constitution that is acceptable for everyone, yet ending up with a military coup d'etat, now Egypt is divided into pros and cons, but Indonesia is moving forward," he added.

In this chance, he appreciates his fellow citizens who became a politician, such as Amien Rais, Gus Dur, and Akbar Tanjung at that time, leading Indonesia to be democratic. "Not to be a religious state, but on the basis of the Pancasila," he expressed.

The Vice Chairman of NU, Prof. Dr. Ir. Mochammad Maksum, states that Islam teaches its ummah to live in tolerance with other religions. Regarding the Pancasila state, Maksum asserts that all national components have agreed upon Indonesia as a state of 'agreement' to accommodate all ethnicities, religions, and cultures.

Meanwhile, Dr. Zuly Qodir expresses that Muhammadiyah as a religious community organization views the Pancasila state as a decision made by all elements of the nation. "The intention to replace Pancasila is the same with dismissing this nation," he said.

Prof. Dr. Bondan Tiara Sofyan, says no religion teaches terrorism and radicalism. However, according to Bondan, the teachings of terrorism and radicalism are now spread through campus and schools, therefore, the young generation needs to be protected against the exposure of these ideologies. He quotes one survey result stating that around 19.4 percent of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) disagrees with the ideology of Pancasila and 23.4 percent of college students agree with jihad to uphold an Islamic state.

This radicalism, according to Tiara, penetrates through mentorship in campus and schools. "The mentors are occupied by a misleading understanding of religion," he stated.

Even though the organization of HTI (Hizbut Tahrir) has been prohibited in Indonesia, he does not think it necessarily stops the spreading of their ideology. "HTI has been prohibited in 21 countries,

yet, it may transform into different forms we are not aware of," he explained.

Meanwhile, Prof. Ir. Ismunandar, says that the government has stipulated policy to strengthen the fostering of the Pancasila ideology in various educational and scholarship practices. "One of the ways is through the reinforcement of quality religious courses with a nuance of anti-radicalism and anti-terrorism. We want to strengthen the students in terms of critical, creative, and innovative thinking," he said.

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