This paper examines the issuance process and the responses of the fatwa on Lia Aminuddin, the leader of the God’s Kingdom-Eden, which was officially declared as a deviant and misleading religious sect by Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI). The fatwa is theoretically formulated based on which consists of mustafti (persons asking for a fatwa), mufti (fatwa giver), and ifta’ (fatwa-giving process). Fatwa is not binding yet it can be a strong religious opinion depending on the socio-religious circumstances, which underline it. In Islam, fatwa is conducted based on ijtihad (reasoning), which refers to some verses of the Qur’an and Hadith. The massive responses of Indonesian Muslims to the fatwa is viewed not only as the result of a changing socio-political situation in the country but also of the ‘conservative turn,’ which gives more pressure to the state authority to send the leader of the God’s Kingdom-Eden to prison.

Keyword: Fatwa, Lia Aminuddin, MUI, Indonesia

Introduction

In 2009, the judge of the Public Court of central Jakarta declared that the leader of God’s Kingdom-Eden, Lia Aminuddin was guilty. She was proven to have defamed Islam by claiming herself as the new prophet based on the blasphemy law in Indonesian criminal code. She was in prison for two years
and six months.¹ It is worth noting that the judge, who proceeded the case of Lia Aminuddin considered the fatwa of MUI as evidence to accuse her. A manifestation of religious authority, among others, is fatwa (edict). According to Kaptein “a fatwa is an opinion on a particular issue from the point of view of Islamic law given by an acknowledged expert(s) known as mufti.”² Masud defines it as “a formal legal opinion given by an expert on Islamic law” or as an issue about law and religion based on the fatwa-giving process (ifta).³ However, in practice fatwa is seen as a religious opinion which deals with current issues of Islamic law.

Although fatwa is not binding in nature, Muslims primarily need it in order to have certainty whether something is allowed or prohibited by religion. Fatwa plays an important role in the lives of Muslims for a number of reasons. First, it is issued to control the attitudes of Muslims so that they can act and live based on Islamic teaching. In addition, fatwas also “reflect the creative tension between the normative ideals of Islam and social reality”⁴ in which Muslims strive to find some religious answers to problems in their daily lives. Further, it serves as a bridge for the confluence between the ideas expressed by

⁴ Anwar, Syamsul, “Fatwa, Purification and Dynamization: A Study of Tarjih in Muhammadiyah”, in Islamic Law and Society, 12 (1), 2005, pp. 27-44.
religious scholars and the reality of daily life as experienced by Muslims.⁵

In addition, there has been, to a certain extent, a significant change in terms of who is eligible to issue fatwas. In earlier periods, fatwa was frequently issued by an “independent” mufti who is considered as expert in Islamic jurisprudence. Nowadays, especially in Indonesia, it often involves a group of people “affiliated muftis”⁶ or institutions who have religious knowledge or expertise in a particular science, such as medicine.⁷ In the Indonesian context, fatwas are commonly issued by institutions like the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and Majlis Tarjih⁸ in Muhammadiyah, or by a group of Muslim scholars in the form of Bahtsul Masail⁹ in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

The influence of fatwa on society is much more determined by socio-political conditions in the society and its “dissemination through printed media, radio, television, and the

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⁶ The terms (independent and affiliated) are derived from Messick’ levels of muftis; Masud, Muhammad Khalid, Messick, Brinkley Morris, Power, David S. (eds.), Islamic Legal Interpretation, pp. 3-32.


⁸ Majlis Tarjih is an institution inside the central board of Muhammadiyah which consists of Ulama and experts to deal with religious issues encountered by Muhammadiyah members. See Nadirsyah Hosen, “Revelation in a Modern Nation State: Muhammadiyah and Islamic Legal Reasoning in Indonesia” in Australian Journal of Asian Law, vol. 4 (2), 2002, pp. 232-258.

⁹ Bahtsul Masail is a forum which consists of Muslim scholars and occasionally experts to discuss religious matters faced by umma. See Nadirsyah Hosen, Nahdlatul Ulama and Collective Ijtihad, pp. 5-26.
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internet after the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{10} Mass media has generally brought together the fatwa and current issues in an open arena of debate among Muslim organizations, and even sometimes led groups of Muslims to violate other groups deemed as “deviated” from the mainstream of Islam. Further, this radical reaction has influenced the government policy related to the violated communities in which there might appear a contestation between religious authority and state authority. For example, the MUI fatwa on Ahmadiyah reflects how a religious authority legitimates the “public anarchy” of some Muslims towards the Ahmadiyah community. In this case, the impact of issuing such a fatwa is even more destructive than the emergence of ‘deviant’ sects for it could easily trigger wider anarchy.\textsuperscript{11}

Against this background, this paper elaborates in detail the MUI fatwa on the God’s Kingdom of Heaven\textsuperscript{12} community led by Lia Aminuddin (so-called Lia Eden), which is regarded as one of the “deviant” sects in Indonesia. This main topic can be formulated into the following questions. What was the background of the MUI’s fatwa on Lia Eden community? What was the reaction of Indonesian Muslims through their commentaries on the fatwa? The first question deals with the concept of the fatwa and consists of the background of mustafti and mufti, while the second examines the responses of prominent Muslim scholars and some leading Muslim


\textsuperscript{12} The term used is based on the books of the community which are published to spread its beliefs to other people. The books published are \textit{God’s Kingdom Tahta Suci Eden, Wahyu Tuhan} (eng. God’d Revelations), \textit{Fatwa Malaikat Jibril} (eng. Jibril’s Edict).
organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyyah. This paper tries to answer the questions of how was the fatwa was issued by MUI? What are the backgrounds of the fatwa? And how Muslim communities react to it? To answer the questions, I collect the data from the document of the fatwa published by MUI, some books published by Lia Aminuddin and God’s Kingdom-Eden, and some responses to the fatwa from Muslim communities published in books, articles, and blogs. Since the fatwa has been very controversial, this paper views the fatwa as a triggering means by which the Muslim public was encouraged to demand the government to act against the community in the name of religious desecration and public disturbance. By this means, Lia Eden was sentenced for two and a half years in prison. This reflects the emergence of the issue from the private sphere into the public sphere as part of the process of the Islamization in Indonesia.

The fatwa is interesting to investigate because it drew different responses from Indonesians. In its issuance in 1997, it gained little attention from the public because the New Order regime gave little room for Muslims to speak out and suppressed every religious movement which was considered harmful to the stability of the state. Consequently, Muslims preferred to concern themselves with rituals and only secretly discuss religious issues. Besides, the role of the MUI at that time was mainly as an “advisor” to the ruling government, especially in religious matters. However, since the collapse of the New Order regime the fatwa has become an important issue and captured the attention of Indonesians in 2003 because of a change in socio-political circumstances.

The study on Lia Aminuddin’s faith and her followers is not by any means new in academic research. Qodir analysed in general the phenomenon of new religious streams in Indonesia in which the Lia Eden community became one of the issues discussed using a social movement perspective. The mass
violence towards new religious streams after the reformation era is seen as the government’s failure to manage diversity. Anwar conducted his fieldwork to observe the roots of the God’s kingdom Salamullah using an anthropological point of view, including its development after its leader was in prison. It does not take the MUI fatwa into consideration, instead viewing the group as a social movement which attempts to maintain the faith through any possible efforts. Another discussion focuses on one of the religious demands in Indonesian society in which MUI has authority to issue an “edict” or fatwa. The study mainly emphasizes on MUI which regulates the religious market and the rules concerning the liberty of confessing religions in Indonesia. None of them, however, discusses the MUI fatwa on Lia Eden’s faith in specific and looks at the case in the broader Indonesian context, as the largest Muslim population in the world.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that despite not being an Islamic state, Indonesia has been dominated by Muslims through cultural and socio-political influences in society. Hooker and Lindsey argue that Indonesia is a secular state with a secular constitution which is dominated by Muslims, representing 88.5 percent of a total population of 217 million people. Islam is not only pervasive in personal activities such as performing prayers, fasting and pilgrimage, but its presence

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13 Qodir, New Prophet, pp. 8-10.
in the public sphere is obvious in Islamic institutions such as the Ministry of Religion and the role of MUI. As a result, Islamic issues have always been publicly contested and debated. Accordingly, the following discussion opens the horizon of the relationship between fatwa as religious authority and the criminal court as state authority by examining the prosecution of Salamullah’s leader based on the demands of the majority group in the country.

It is self-evident that accounts of this religious group vary widely, both in the mass media and also among social researchers who are interested in this phenomenon. Some of them attempt to look at it through the normative juridical perspective of the enforcement of the law on blasphemy. Conversely, this paper views it through the perspective of fatwa as part of Islamic law which arranges a meeting between the religious authority and the reality in society.

**Emergence of God’s Kingdom-Eden**

The God’s Kingdom-Eden derives from a religious group called *Salamullah* which was established in November 1996. It was originally a small informal religious discussion group whose members consisted of students from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN), Jakarta, including Islamic scholars Nadirsyah Hosen, Ray Rangkuty, and others. However, when the group came under the supervision of Lia Aminuddin, most of the students left, especially after Lia Aminuddin declared that she had received revelations from an

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17 I use the term God’s Kingdom-Eden which derives from its recent publications of its doctrines such as “Surat Ruhul Kudus tentang Keadaan Bangsa Indonesia ke Depan (Eng. The Letter of the Holy Spirit about Indonesian Conditions in the future)”, “Fatwa Mahkamah Tuhan (Eng. Edict of God’s Court)”, and “Sumpah Tuhan Yang Maha Kuasa (Eng. God’s Divine Oath)”.

angel (*Jibril*\(^{19}\)) beginning in October 1995. Ironically, some students who left the group later were members of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) that issued the fatwa against it.

The founding of the God’s Kingdom-Eden cannot precisely be separated from its main figure, Lia Aminuddin. She was a florist in Jakarta and born to a family with a strong Islamic background. Yet, she lacks any specific religious education and cannot recite the Qur’an fluently and correctly. She created the group after she was disappointed that she was forced out of al-Thabi’in Foundation (*yayasan*)\(^{20}\) by her colleagues Anton Medan (an ex criminal), KH. Noer Muhammad SQ, and KH. Zainuddin MZ. *Yayasan al-Thabi’in* is a foundation which helps criminals in prison and ex criminals by providing them with educational skills, so that, in due course they are released, they could have a better living. Lia Aminuddin is one of the social activists in this institution together with Anton Medan, KH. Noer Muhammad Iskandar SQ, and KH. Zainuddin MZ. Lia Eden stated the same reasons to as they (who are they of MUI?) of MUI when called for clarification and questions by the Central Board of the Council. The conflict began when there was an election to vote for a person to lead the foundation. Most of the members supported Lia Aminuddin. However, the other three figures did not allow her to hold the leadership position at the foundation because she is a woman. She began to worship God and beg every night, complaining and asking for justice about what had happened to her. She then claimed that she had received

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\(^{19}\) *Jibril* is an angel whose main duty is to deliver revelation (*wahyu*) to prophet. It sounds strange for every Muslim to know *Jibril* comes to earth to deliver revelations again since Muslims believe based on their understanding to the Qur’an and *Hadith* that Muhammad is the last prophet and it is impossible to admit that there is a new prophet after him.

\(^{20}\) See the compilation of the MUI fatwas on deviant sects in “Mengawal Aqidah Umat: Fatwa MUI tentang Aliran-Aliran Sesat di Indonesia”, Jakarta: Sekretariat Majelis Ulama Indonesia, p. 95.
revelations from Habib al Huda, believed to be the angel Gabriel (Jibril).

After she founded the religious group, Salamullah was declared to be Eden and Lia Aminuddin started to be called Lia Eden. According to her, she changed the name to avoid being affiliated with other religions, especially Islam. She based her religion on the orders from the angel Gabriel. The number of followers has fluctuated over the years. A recent report claims that it consists of 50 members who are dominated by well-educated and from a middle class background.²¹

Typically, this group has its own design of dress they wear when worshiping God. The dress is a seven-meter-long piece of white-coloured cloth without stitching and a white bracelet with the inscription of “God’s Kingdom-Eden”. The white-coloured cloth symbolizes their emancipation from physical and material dependency, and purity as well, while the unstitched clothing is a symbol of spirituality which could not be confined by “the boundaries of religions”. This special dress code is only allowed for the members who have succeeded in committing certain purification rituals.

In relation to religious practices, the members are allowed to perform their own religious rituals that had been practiced before confessing the faith of Salamullah. Muslims, who have become members of Eden-Salamullah, are still allowed to do prayer and fasting. Non-Muslims can conduct their own rituals as they want. Lia Eden argues that those who still perform their rituals and traditions are allowed to do so because it is a kind of process to reach the universal values found in all religions. Consequently, there are two different groups: those who were formerly Muslims, called Salamullah, and those who were non-Muslims, named Eden. In addition, they conduct Saturday

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Sermon (Majelis Hari Sabtu) and Holy Cycle (Halaqah Suci)\(^{22}\) to reinforce and disseminate their faith. The call to fully convert to the faith of God’s Kingdom-Eden began in February 26, 2005 when Lia Eden claimed that Gabriel had ordered her to ask the members to turn to the teachings of God’s Kingdom-Eden-Salamullah and leave their previous beliefs and rituals. Most Muslims who joined the group left and since then it is the Eden community that remains.

The reasons why Muslims left might be because of the fact that the religious practices of the community are financially expensive since the members are obligated to finance the group by collecting money. In addition, it could be that some members of the God’s Kingdom community felt threatened after the MUI issued a fatwa pronouncing the group as banned and declared as a deviant religious sect. Moreover, the fatwa to a certain extent has become a tool for a number of hard-line Muslims to legitimize the suppression towards the community.

It is also worth noting that the tension between Indonesian Muslims and the Eden community was exacerbated after Lia made several controversial statements. In 1999, she claimed herself as the reincarnation of Bunda Maria\(^{23}\) on the one hand and as Imam Mahdi (Messiah) on the other. One year later she pronounced that Salamullah was a religion mixing all religions in the world and set up her residence in Mahoni Street no. 30 Jakarta to be the center of spirituality all over the universe.

\(^{22}\) The missions and visions of the two activities are slightly different. Saturday Sermon is aimed at facilitating Lia Eden speaking to members of Eden-Salamullah about Jibril’s orders. In contrast, Holy Cycle is a medium for questions and answers between Lia Eden and people who are interested in joining the group. However, in its development, the second was banned by the community because this session was used not only for questioning God’s Kingdom-Eden teachings, but also for criticizing the group.

\(^{23}\) Bunda Maria is a name used by Christians in Indonesia for the mother of Jesus.
Consequently, people reacted to the beliefs of the community and urged the government to take action in response to the existence of God’s Kingdom-Eden, especially in 2005 and 2008.

Development of MUI

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is a “semi-official” institution which was founded on July 26, 1975. The establishment of the council was generally understood as an initiative of Muslim scholars and intellectuals who arranged a conference in Jakarta (on behalf of the invitation of President Soeharto). This conference is then regarded as the first conference of MUI. The members of the organization consist of Muslim scholars and intellectuals from different Muslim organizations in Indonesia such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Beside its central board in Jakarta, MUI has a number of branches in all provinces and districts throughout the archipelago. On certain occasions, local councils may have a different opinion from the central board of the council in Jakarta.

Interestingly, the function of MUI has changed over the years depending on social and political conditions in the country. Since the institution is attached to the government, receiving funding through the Ministry of Religion, in the beginning, it functioned as an “advisor” to the government on religious matters. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that despite being founded as the initiative of the Indonesian ulama, politically MUI became a means for the New Order at the time to persuade and control “devout” Muslims who did not support the government party, Golkar.24 The aftermath of reformation has forced the institution to redefine its position among

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Muslims in Indonesia, even though it was not very prominent until the period of Gus Dur’s\(^{25}\) presidency since the president commonly opposed the decisions and opinions of the council. Therefore, through its congress, MUI declared itself to be “the servant of the umma\(^{26}\)” and an institution which has the authority to issue fatwa (mufti) through the Fatwa Commission of MUI (Komisi Fatwa MUI).

MUI Fatwa on God’s Kingdom-Eden

In December 1997, MUI issued a fatwa on the case of Lia Aminuddin about Jibril’s guidance to human beings. The fatwa is formulated like a court letter to the suspects and contains four parts. First are clarifications which explain the sequence of the events in which Lia Aminuddin was requested to attend a question and answer session with MUI members of the Fatwa Commission. Second is a description of the importance of the issue for Indonesian society in which Muslims are dominant, using quotations of the Qur’an and Hadith against Lia Eden’s confession that she has been visited and guided by Habib al-Huda, mentioned by her as Malaikat Jibri\(^{27}\). Thirdly there is the decision that declares Lia Aminuddin’s belief and statement about Jibril guiding her is as deviant and misleading. Finally, there is an appeal addressed to Lia Aminuddin.

The interaction between Lia Eden and MUI is started when Ir. Andan Nadriasta, a son of one of Salamullah’s members, sent

\(^{25}\) Abdurrahman Wahid is the fourth president of the Republic of Indonesia from the period of 1999-2001.

\(^{26}\) The term “umma” is questionable whether it refers to Muslims or to Indonesian society in general; Ichwan, Moch. Nur, “Ulama, State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia after Suharto”, in Islamic Law and Society, vol. 12, (1), 2005, pp. 45-72.

\(^{27}\) Jibril is called Gabriel in Christian Tradition and Bible.
a letter to the MUI on 4 October 1997. Throughout the letter, Andan raised a question to the MUI regarding the possibility of people being guided by and receiving revelations from Jibril, after the last prophet, Muhammad. This letter urges the council to summon Lia Aminuddin to come to the council for clarification. In addition to her conflict with Anton Medan and two prominent leaders at the Thabi’in foundation, it is critical to underline three admissions which Lia Aminuddin gave as answers to MUI’s questions in the fatwa regarding what she receives as revelations and who comes to her as Jibril. She started with the claim that the angel came to her after she was regretful and crying every night before God asking for justice and truth. At that time, she felt that her body was trembling and sweaty, yet she felt cold. The day after she received the revelation, she suddenly had special knowledge. For example, she states that she knew if a car was obtained using corruption and she could cure sick bodies. The second admission is that Jibril asked her to go to an umra (ar. Umroh) to prove to her that he was truly Jibril. She saw that he was Jibril through the events she experienced when she performed umra. In her last

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28 The mustafti is an engineer who is well-known among middle class Muslims for designing houses. In addition, he is a member of al Falah Mosque caretakers while his wife frequently delivers sermons in al Falah forum of religious discussion. The full biography is available in http://www.mail-archive.com/jamaah@arroyyan.com/msg06544.html or http://www.warnaislam.com/rubrik/arsitek/2008/9/2/25935/Rumah_1_Pint u_Merugikan_Konsumen.htm

29 The dictionary meaning of umroh is “to visit” but in religious terminology it is to assume the “ihram” and at the “miqat” or hill and observe the ‘tawaf’ of the ‘baytullah’ and perform ‘Sa’ay’ between Safa and Marwah. It is also known as ‘Hajj Asghar’. It is ‘sunnah muwakida’ to perform it once in a life time if one has the ability and means to perform it. Unlike Hajj, which is a compulsory pillar of Islam, Umrah is optional and simpler. It is based on a smaller scale, involving only some selected exercises of the hajj.
admission to the council, she says that Jibril would come whenever she needed a revelation.

Regarding the admission, the first two points indicate slight similarities to the well-established Islamic doctrines about the way the Prophet Muhammad received the second revelation and Lia Aminuddin’s explanation about how Jibril proved himself as an angel. When the Prophet Muhammad received the second revelation\(^\text{30}\), his body also trembled and was extremely sweaty, but he felt cold. The story of Isra’ Mi’raj\(^\text{31}\) in which Jibril had shown evidence of the greatness of God, was not to prove Jibril as an angel but seems to be similar to the confession of Lia Aminuddin even though it is basically different. Furthermore, the last admission is in conflict with the teaching of Islam since according to the history of the last prophet, Muhammad, Jibril only came to him based on God’s order. Even if Muhammad badly needed a revelation, Jibril would never come except if God ordered him to do so.\(^\text{32}\)

The next part of the fatwa is an argument in which the fatwa commission of MUI quotes some Qur’anic verses and some prophet’s sayings (Hadith) concerning Jibril’s presence and duties, such as verse 2:177 of the Qur’an about faith in the existence of angels, verse 4:136 about the consequence of no belief in angels, and verses 72:26-27 concerning faith in supernatural things and the characteristics of angels. In short, the fatwa describes Jibril as one of the angels in charge of

\(^{30}\) See the Qur’an Surah al Mudatsir (74:1) and its commentaries for further explanation.

\(^{31}\) During the month of Rajab (two months before fasting month), the Prophet Muhammad made a night-time trip to the city of Jerusalem (isra’), visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and from there was raised up into heaven (mi’raj).

\(^{32}\) Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Mengawal Aqidah Umat: Fatwa MUI tentang Aliran-aliran Sesat di Indonesia, (Jakarta: Sekretariat Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1997), pp. 5-121.
delivering revelations from God to the prophets. He has no authority to add to the revelations as mentioned in verses 16:43-44 of the Qur’an, explaining that the duty to comment on the revelations belongs only to the prophet and Muslim scholars (ulama).

Moreover, the fatwa also considers the possibility of a man being visited and guided by Jibril after the last prophet. Actually, there is a possibility to see and be visited or even helped by an angel, for someone who has been given an honor (ar. Karā>mah) by God based on the verse 8:9 in the Qur’an. But MUI asserts that there are some special criteria for a person to be eligible to have karā>mah. First, his or her attitudes and deeds should be based on the Qur’ān and Sunnah or he or she must obey God’s orders and prohibitions. Unfortunately, MUI does not cite any verses of the Qur’an or sayings of the prophet to support their argument.

Based on the aforementioned considerations, the MUI declares that Lia Aminuddin and her followers are deviants and misleading:

Praying, belief or faith about an angel, including Jibril, both his duty and characters, should be based on the explanation of the al-Qur’ān and Hadith. In fact, there is no verse or prophetic tradition stating that Jibril is still ordered by Allah, the Almighty, to deliver revelations to humankind about new teachings or commentaries to the existing religion because Islamic teaching has been perfect. Someone’s claim that he or she has been guided by Jibril or has gained the new teachings from Jibril is against the Qur’ān. Therefore, that opinion is acclaimed deviated and misleading.

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33 This is a translation of the fatwa which was written in Bahasa Indonesia. See for the original text in http://www.mui.or.id or Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Mengawal Aqidah Umat, pp. 95.
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In addition, the council firmly requires Lia Aminuddin and her followers to return to Islamic teachings and learn the Qur’an and Hadith from the ‘Ulama. For Muslims, they should be aware that this misleading faith and belief are against the main sources of Islamic teachings, and MUI is willing to give guidance and direction to her and her followers.

In conclusion, the MUI fatwa on Lia Eden’s community has strong opinions and fulfills the “conceptual breakdown” of fatwa. The mustafti, “a person who raises the issue”34 is clearly mentioned in the beginning of the fatwa and the ifta is firmly set up through reasoning based on the Qur’an and Hadith.

Reaction of Indonesian Muslims on the Fatwa

The political chaos after the resignation of the New Order triggered “ethno-religious conflicts, Islamic radicalism and the threats for religious tolerance and harmony”.35 The Moluccas tragedy between Muslims and Christians which captured the attention of Muslims in the archipelago, some Muslims requesting fatwas on Jihad in it to the Ulama in the Middle East,36 the launching of hardliner Muslim organizations such as the Front Pembela Islam (Front of the Defenders of Islam or FPI) and so forth, and the communal violence against Ahmadiyah members are evidence to the socio-political disturbance in

society. The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) fatwas exacerbated the collapse of politics both in social and political arenas. The MUI tausiyah on general election in 1999 about women presidency and religious sensitivity aroused heated debate among people.

The MUI fatwa on Lia Aminuddin and her followers, and the disobedience of the community towards the religious authority of the council has brought responses from Muslims. The faith in Jibril’s guidance possessed by Lia Aminuddin entered into the public sphere after the sequential activities of the community undertook to maintain its belief. In 1999, she declared herself as Bunda Maria and changed Salamullah to the God’s Kingdom Tahta Suci Eden in 2000 to avoid offending other religions, particularly Islam. The publication of Lia Eden’s fatwa on bilingual prayers performed by Muhammad Yusman Roy in 2005 in which she defends and agrees with the activity of bilingual prayers shows her opposition to the MUI’s fatwa. In addition, the community continues to disseminate their belief to other people through its publications and sermons door to door even though the fatwa declared the community deviant and misleading and commanded them to return to the Qur’an and Hadith

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40 Yusman Roy and his followers perform prayer in two languages Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic in Malang, East Java. MUI has issued a fatwa that the ritual is forbidden because basically the prayer should be conducted in Arabic and every Muslim must learn to recite it in Arabic. Lia Eden responded with a fatwa defending Yusman and opposing the MUI religious edict (http://www.liaeden.info/indonesia/index). Accessed in July 2010.
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At the end of 2005, a number of Muslims came to the center of God’s Kingdom-Eden in Mahoni Street no. 30 Jakarta and demanded the government to arrest Lia Aminuddin and the community. During the judicial process in 2010, the response of Indonesian Muslims was clearly in favor of abolishing the community. Komaruddin Hidayat, a Muslim scholar and a rector of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, argued that Lia Aminuddin’s belief should be prosecuted in court because she disobeyed the MUI fatwa. Further, he added that Indonesia gives freedom to its people to have different belief and faith as long as it does not “offend” the mainstream of the existing religions in the country.\(^{41}\) The leader of the Persatuan Islam (the Islam United), Habib Abdurrahman Assegaf responded emotionally on behalf of Muslims:

The *umma* of Muslims in Indonesia are going to radically prosecute them (the community) if the government do nothing for their attitudes that have created social unrest and religious harassment to Islamic teachings by saying that “al-Qur’an and Bukhori Muslim,” instead of “al-Qur’an and Sunnah”. She knows nothing about Islam because she is not well-educated in Islam. The duty of the government is to secure the stability of the *umma* in order to avoid disintegration among them\(^{42}\).

Afterwards, the government tried to convince Indonesian society through Hasrul Azwar, a member of the House of Representatives (DPR) [Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat] and a politician of the United Development Party (PPP) [Partai Persatuan Pembangunan], which was the only Islamic party in the New Order era and had changed its sole foundation and symbol from Pancasila to Islam (Hasan 2008:32), who strongly


\(^{42}\) Ibid.
urged the court to sentence Lia Aminuddin with a heavy punishment and send her to prison until she feels regretful for what she did. The leader of Great Attorney (Kejaksaan Agung), Abdurrahman Saleh understandably presumes that MUI has issued the right fatwa on God’s Kingdom-Eden and Muslims have to obey it including Lia Aminuddin and her followers. But if they still practice their belief, the government should take action because they have disturbed other religions, Islam in particular. Similarly, the leaders of the two largest Muslim organizations, Hasyim Muzadi of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Din Syamsuddin of Muhammadiyah commented on the issues. In his office, Hasyim Muzadi said that it sounds funny that someone (Lia Aminuddin) who claims to be guided by Jibril cried before the court. This emotion implies that she is not justified in her claims. Moreover, he urges the government to take action against the community because it has caused social controversy. Whereas Din Syamsuddin suggested that the right step was not only to punish her in jail but also to give her guidance to understand Islamic teachings in order to put her back on the right way. Furthermore, he asserts that the issue of deviant sects emerging just before the national general election in Indonesia is of political interest.

Indeed, Lia Eden was under arrest from December 2005 until 2007. However, after having completed her sentence, she immediately disseminated 4 risalah (treaties) to some institutions including to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) from November 23 till December 2, 2008. As the result, she was asked to come to the criminal court again and prosecuted under article

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156a and 157b Indonesia’s Criminal Code (KUHP) [Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana] which consists of three indictments; (1) religious desecration, (2) unpleasant acts to the public, and (3) violating public order. Consequently, she was arrested for the second time in July 2009.

Therefore, it is obvious that the MUI fatwa was used as a legitimating means both to mobilize Muslims’ reaction and influence government decision on a particular issue. It became the basis for the arguments of the hardliners to have the government ban the community. Further, the personal belief of Lia Aminuddin appears to have become a public issue which was determined by other socio-political issues such as Ahmadiyah, so that the reactions of the government and some leaders of Muslim organizations and political elites might be seen as political, trying to attract the attention of Muslims before the general election in 2008. Interestingly, the fatwa has legitimated the charge for Lia Eden to be judged as “criminal’ through the state authority in the form of the criminal court. It seems that the religious authority, fatwa, provoked the state authority, KUHP, to take action regarding the issue.

Concluding Remarks

The fatwa of the Indonesia Ulama Council on God’s Kingdom-Eden is officially ‘formulaic’ and based on strong religious reasoning (ijtihad). The mustafti, ifta, and mufti are obviously mentioned. MUI enhances its position to Indonesian Muslims as the institution which has authority to issue fatwas and functions as the servant for the umma. The reaction of Indonesian Muslims to the fatwa cannot simply be seen as a social force to protect Islamic teachings from misleading


47 Rofiqoh, The Fatwa of the Majelis, pp. 57.
doctrines, but also as the process of conservative turn in the secular country like Indonesia, which has an impact on the state, societies, and communities on politics, economics, law, education, women, and minorities in the country.\textsuperscript{48} The demand of Muslim society to bring the case of God’s Kingdom-Eden as “minority” to the criminal court can also be perceived as one of the processes of islamization, which occurred simultaneously with the efforts of islamization by Islamic parties such as the Crescent Moon Party (Partai Bulan Bintang or PBB) and the Development United Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or PPP) which requested the government to reinsert the seven famous words of the Jakarta Charter\textsuperscript{49} to the constitution before the general election 2004 after their sudden ideological change from \textit{Pancasila}\textsuperscript{50} to Islam as the sole foundation in the early reformation.\textsuperscript{51} These social forces apparently have a significant impact on the state, though not really a great influence, but it might become part of the ongoing process to the manifestation of an Islamic state.

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{49} The Jakarta Charter is a draft resulted from the second meeting to formulate \textit{Pancasila} which was conducted by the Committee of Nine after the independence day of Indonesian State. To Muslims, this preamble is very controversial since there are seven famous words omitted which pronounce “Ketuhanan dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariah Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya (eng. Belief in Almighty God with the obligation for its Muslim citizens to carry out the Islamic law/Syari’ah)”; Hosen, Nadirsyah, “Religion and the Indonesian Constitution: Recent Debate”, in \textit{Journal of Southeast Asian Studies}, 36 (3), 2005, pp. 419-440.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Pancasila} is the sole foundation of the Republic of Indonesia which consists of five principles concerning justice and human right.

\end{footnotesize}
Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council on the God’s Kingdom-Eden

BIBLIOGRAPHY


