

THE FATWAS OF MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA ON THE AHMADIYAH DOCTRINES

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses two relevant fatwas and corresponding recommendations by Indonesian's Ulema Council (Majlis Ulama Indonesia: MUI) on the doctrines of Ahmadiyah. In doing so, it takes the historical background of the issue of the fatwas along with its political context. MUI in issuing the fatwa received the full political support of the New Order government, which at that time was highly concerned with the national security and stability. Moreover, Indonesia did not seem able to reject the influence of the transnational Islamic countries' policy, which strongly demanded that Ahmadiyah must be banned from any Muslim country. A strong influence of particularly the government has created distrust in the MUI's authority as an Islamic scholar organization that was politically not sterilized. Many have doubted that MUI's fatwa was genuine and/or even effectively binding, particularly when its fatwa dealt with the status of sects within Islam—whether or not they are heretic.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the Ahmadiyah as a heretical sect had cropped up before the MUI issued the first fatwa on the Ahmadiyah Qadian doctrines in 1980. Many years before, in 1925, Maulana Rahmat Ali, the first Indian Ahmadiyah Qadian preacher, arrived in Sumatra, Indonesia. A year later, in 1926, the indigenous Muslims in Sumatra noticed that the doctrines he brought were different from the doctrines of mainstream Sunni Islam. In the same year Hamka's father, Haji Rasul, alias H. Abdul Karim Amrullah, fulminated against the doctrines as deviating Islam. He even condemned the Ahmadi as apostates. He wrote a book entitled *Qaul aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* which discussed Muhammad as the last Prophet, the death of Isa (Jesus), and khalīfah (Zulkarnain, 2006). These themes represented Haji Rasul's reasons for condemning the Ahmadiyah as deviant.

Besides from Haji Rasul, Maulana Rahmat Ali received a great deal of other opposition from the Sumatrans' ulama, however, he continuously disseminated the Ahmadiyah Qadian doctrines in various cities. He then moved to Jakarta where he succeeded in gaining more followers (Mustafa, 2005).

In Java, the Ahmadiyah Lahore was introduced to the Muhammadiyah circle by two Indian preachers, Mirza Wali Baiq and Maulana Ahmad in 1924. The two organizations went well together since they shared the same vision of representing the modern and reformist Islam (Blood, 1974). Nevertheless, Haji Rasul, when visiting his daughter and her husband Ahmad Rashid Sutan Mansur, who was the chairman of the Muhammadiyah branch in Pekalongan, revealed the nature of the Ahmadiyah Lahore doctrines in 1925 (Beck, 2005). However, these two groups continued to cooperate until 1927, when an Indian preacher, Abdul Alim Siddiq Al-Qadiri, was invited to attend one of the Muhammadiyah meetings. In the meeting, the preacher announced the false doctrines of the Ahmadiyah (Beck, 2005).

Subsequently, the Muhammadiyah held a Mukhtamar, or meeting, and issued a declaration in 1928 which forbade the Muhammadiyah members to pass on any the Ahmadiyah knowledge or views in the Muhammadiyah circle (Beck, 2005). In the following year, 1929, the congress of the Muhammadiyah passed a resolution stating that anyone believing in the existence of a Prophet after the Prophet Muhammad was considered an 'unbeliever'. In the same year, the complete separation between the Ahmadiyah and the Muhammadiyah was signified by the establishment of Ahmadiyah Lahore in Purwokerto by the former member of Muhammadiyah R.M. Djojosoegito (Beck, 2005).

In contrast to the above debate, the Ministry of Justice issued a decree in 1953 which stated that Ahmadiyah Qadian was not a religion, nor an ideology, an understanding or a religious organization. Rather, it was registered as *rechtspersoon* or corporation. This decree was considered to be the government's acknowledgement of the status of the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. Additionally, it has legitimized the dissemination of the Ahmadiyah doctrines in Indonesia.

Despite the fact that the Ahmadiyah was acknowledged as a corporation, the rejection of this denomination continued to grow. The first rejection came from the provincial MUI of West Sumatra, which was established long before the national MUI. This institution issued a fatwa on Ahmadiyah Qadian in 1965 which stated that it was a deviant denomination (Djamaluddin, 2007). Another rejection came in 1973 from the North Sumatran government which refused to issue a license for building an Ahmadiyah mosque.

In the same year, the District Military Command of South Sumatra arrested two Ahmadiyah preachers. Moreover, in 1976, the mass media released an issue on the Ahmadiyah doctrines and on many other sects, seen as heretical denominations since their doctrines were different from those of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. Additionally, many provincial governments through their District Attorneys issued the banning of the Ahmadiyah; such as the District Attorney of Subang, West Java, which issued a decree in 1976 on the banning of the Ahmadiyah and a recommendation to the regency MUI in Subang to retrain the followers of the Ahmadiyah Qadian. The last decree was issued by the General Attorney three days before the MUI issued the first fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines on 1 June 1980.¹

¹ The decree was issued in 29 May 1980. See a copy of recommendation to ban Ahmadiyah in Indonesia by leaders of Islamic organizations, Ulama, Muslim scholars and academics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Fatwa on the Banning of the Ahmadiyah Qadian Doctrines in 1980

Before the MUI issued the first fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines in 1980, there were two fatwas, issued by the Muslim World League² in 1974 (Hamka, 1980), and by the Malaysian government in 1975, on the banning of the Ahmadiyah doctrines. This fact raises at least two questions. Why did the MUI issue the fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines five years after its establishment? And why did the MUI not follow the decree of the Muslim World League, as Indonesia was one of its active members?

In fact, in its first year of establishment, the MUI was busy with administrative matters such as their working schedule, basic policies, and funding (MUI, 1976). Besides, the MUI made an effort to introduce its existence through the Islamic Brotherhood Commission which was appointed to hold meetings with all leaders of national Muslim organizations, as well as with leading Muslim figures. Furthermore, this commission was in charge of establishing a relationship with Muslims all over the world. In addition to these efforts, the Commission for the Improvement of the Cooperation between Ulama and the Government had on its agenda to visit the leading figures in the country, and all governmental institutions and departments.

Meanwhile, the Fatwa Commission was urged to issue fatwas to support the success of the country's development, and national defense (MUI, Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1976). The themes discussed by the Fatwa Commission in this first year of establishment were far removed from the study of various religious doctrines in Indonesia. Based on the result of the Plenary Meeting on 18 November 1975, the Fatwa Commission was given five themes, which were drugs, holidays during the fasting month, setting off firecrackers, simple life and the government officials as pioneers in performing devotional activities (MUI, 1976).

The duty to oversee the differing religious doctrines within society was in the hands of the Commission for the Inter-religious Harmony. This commission was in charge of studying the doctrines of the differing sects in each of the five official religions, their organizational chart and operational methods. Accordingly, any fatwa or recommendation on heretical doctrines issued in this period, must build on the result of the study conducted by this commission.³ However, the MUI did not discuss the Ahmadiyah doctrines yet.

In 1979 the Minister of Religious Affairs issued an instruction to the General Director of Muslim Guidance and Hajj Affairs, the Chairman of the Research and Development of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the General Inspector, and the chairmen of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the provincial level, that they improve their effort toward guiding, and overseeing the activities of the Islamic organizations and schools of thought which were contradictory to Islamic doctrines. In this regard, the Minister of Religious Affairs instructed these four leaders to improve their relationship and cooperation with the General Attorney, Department of Home Affairs, Badan Koordinasi Inteligen Negara (BAKIN)—or the State Intelligence Coordinating Agency, local government, the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI), and all Islamic institutions, in order to improve their guidance to those Islamic organizations and schools of thought. Furthermore, the

² The Muslims World League is an Islamic non-governmental organization based in Saudi Arabia and controlled and Funded by the Saudi government. It was founded in 1962 by the representatives of 22 countries. However, I could not get information on when Indonesia joined this organization. But in 1975 Indonesia had its representatives in this organization. Hamka himself was appointed by the Minister of Religious Affairs to attend the Mosque Congress held by the Muslims World League in September 1975

³ There was only one fatwa issued on heretical doctrines before the MUI issued the fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines. This fatwa was addressed to the Jamaah Muslimin Hizbulaah which was issued in 1978. See appendix I.

MORA (1980) instruction stated that the intended guidance must be in line with Islamic doctrines and legislation (1980).⁴ The establishment of this instruction perhaps influenced the emergence of the discussion on the Ahmadiyah doctrines in the second National Conference of the MUI in 26 May-1 June 1980.

However, it is difficult to uncover the background of the fatwa issuance since information available surrounding it is rare. The only existing information comes from the Fatwa Commission which listed the Ahmadiyah case on its agenda in the second National Conference in 1980 (lih. Materi-materi yang akan dibicarakan dalam Munas 2 MUI, 1980). It denoted that it was intended that the Ahmadiyah case be discussed in the meeting and that the case was considered crucial by the national MUI.

According to K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, the present chairman of the Fatwa Commission of the national MUI, this first fatwa on Ahmadiyah was issued after the council was denounced by society concerning this denomination.⁵ However, the name of the mustafti was not mentioned in the fatwa. This fatwa was signed by three most authoritative people in the national MUI. They were Hamka, the General Chairman of the Leadership Board,⁶ Drs. H. Kafrawi, the Secretary and the Minister of Religious Affairs, Alamsjah Ratu Prawiranegara, who was the Chairman of the Advisory Board at the time. This fatwa took the form of a governmental decree containing preamble and dictum. The preamble consisted of three points which I call "considering," "listening" and "observing" sections. The dictum, meanwhile, covered the substance of the fatwa.

In this fatwa, the "considering section" mentioned the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet. However, neither the specific verse of the Qur'an nor the Prophetic traditions are used as reference. The second section of the preamble, the "listening section," lists President Suharto speech, the introductory remarks given by Hamka as the General Chairman of the Leadership Board of the MUI, and the speech given by the Chairman of the Fatwa Commission, K.H. Syukri Ghazali.⁷ In his speech Hamka stated that "concerning with religious cases the MUI depends on the Fatwa Commission. It is agreed that the uncertain (*khilāfiah*) cases will not be discussed. Moreover, issuing a fatwa on Islamic law should cover all propositions and the opinions of all Islamic schools." (Hamka, Munas II MUI seIndonesia, 1980). Yet the fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines, as mentioned above, does not mention any rationale or background of the issuance. The last section of the preamble, the "observing section," mentions the report of the fatwa Commission as well as ideas and opinions of the participants of the conference. However, these two important items are not available.⁸

The dictum of the fatwa lists two points. The first point mentions that, based on the data and facts found in the nine books on the Ahmadiyah, the MUI declares that the Jamaah Ahmadiyah is a non-Islamic group, heretical and deviant. The second point states that in order to deal with the problem, the MUI needs to get in touch with the government. This fatwa has no appendices giving additional explanation of the dictum. Therefore, it leaves one with an unclear argumentation concerning the nine intended books and their contents. Yet none of the editions in 1980/1981 of the official magazine of the MUI, *Mimbar ulama*, discuss this fatwa. The Ahmadiyah continues to ask about the intended books and their heretical contents, to the present

⁴ See the instruction of the Minister of Religious Affairs no.8/1979 on guiding and overseeing Islamic organizations and schools of thought which contradict Islamic doctrines.

⁵ For the complete text of this fatwa see appendix II point A

⁶ Hamka was reelected to this Board as the General Chairman in the second National Conference in 1980

⁷ Unfortunately I could not get the copies of the speeches of President Suharto and the chairman of the Fatwa Commission.

⁸ Sometimes the MUI omits the details of a fatwa's arguments since many ulama were usually asked to present papers on the topics being deliberated. Detailed arguments and references are given in these papers, but not retained in the texts of the fatwas as issued. This entails that one needs to attend the meeting in order to know the complete rationale behind the issuance of fatwa. Alternatively, copies of the data on the conference provide important information related to the fatwa

day.

The second point of the dictum, which states the need to cooperate with the government regarding the Ahmadiyah case, explains that the MUI does not have the right to ban certain denominations. Rather, it is in the hands of the Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat (PAKEM) or the Overseer of the People's Belief (Sutanto, 2006).⁹ This institution consists of the representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the General Attorney. This interdepartmental institution is more powerful than the MUI since its main duty is:

to maintain 'stability and order', and this includes, inter alia, 'monitoring mystical beliefs movement that can be dangerous to people and the state, preventing the misuse and/or insult to religion'. Moreover, this body can investigate religious books, brochures, tracts, and materials produced in Indonesia or imported from foreign countries. Additionally, it has unlimited power to judge which religious and/or mystical beliefs is deviant and deviating and thus conceived as 'dangerous' to the people. (Sutanto, 2006).

In fact, according to K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, there were nine Ahmadiyah branches closed after the fatwa was issued (Mustofa, 2005). However, the MUI has no such power to close these branches. Rather, they were probably closed after the General Attorney issued a decree on the Ahmadiyah Qadian Doctrines in October 1980.¹⁰ Along with the MUI fatwa and the General Attorney's decree, the District Attorneys of Sungai Penuh, Kerinci issued a decree on the banning of the Ahmadiyah Qadian in their regencies in 1980.

However, the government did not issue a strict policy on the Ahmadiyah. This fact encouraged the Saudi government, through its embassy and the attaché of Religious Affairs, to interfere with the Indonesian government policy. They sent letters mentioning the decrees of the Muslim's World League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the International Council of Mosque on the Ahmadiyah Qadian heresy. The letters were aimed at reminding the government of Indonesia as an active member of the Muslim's World League to support its decree. In these letters, the Saudi government encourage the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ban the Ahmadiyah (Qadian) and to explain its heresy to religious people in Indonesia (Djamaluddin, 2007).¹¹ However, this intervention seems to have been ignored, since the government did not release any decree in support of General Attorney's decree on the Ahmadiyah doctrines.

Rather, the Indonesian government's moves with regard to the Ahmadiyah case seemed to be ambiguous. On the one hand, the Minister of Religious Affairs signed the fatwa as a symbol of the government's agreement to the fatwa. On the other hand, he did not ban the arrival of the Vice-Caliph of the Ahmadiyah in June 1981. Moreover, the Chairman of the local MUI of Tasikmalaya regency attended the meeting of the local Ahmadiyah at that time (Mustafa, 2005).

The Recommendation on the Ahmadiyah Qadian in 1984

Before the recommendation on the banning of the Ahmadiyah doctrines was issued in 1984, the District Attorney of West Lombok issued a decree in 1983 on the banning of the denomination. It was the Minister of Religious Affairs, Munawir Sjadzali, who brought the discussion on the banning on Ahmadiyah doctrines in the National Working Meeting in 1984.

⁹ This institution was first established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1954. But in 1960 the institution was placed under the Ministry of Justice and the General Attorney

¹⁰ The issued decree is probably the decision of the PAKEM. However, it did not mention the ban on Ahmadiyah. Rather it mentions that the Ahmadiyah belief in Mirza's prophecy contradicts the belief of Indonesian Muslims.

¹¹ The letter was sent by the Saudi Arabia embassy in 6th May 1981, while the attaché sent its letter a week later. However the content of the two letters is absolutely the same.

He encouraged the MUI to issue recommendations both on the Ahmadiyah and Shiite. He also presented a speech before this meeting was held, in the Preparatory Meeting of the Plenary Meeting of the MUI, in which he explained about the Ahmadiyah doctrines. Regarding the Ahmadiyah case he emphasized banning only the Ahmadiyah Qadian since the Ahmadiyah Lahore doctrines did not contradict "Islamic faith". In the end, the recommendation on the Ahmadiyah was more or less influenced by the Minister's speech.

This recommendation was issued in one long decree, together with a fatwa on adoption, recommendations on taking benefit from inherited land, performing Hajj, and Shiite. It was signed by the General Chairman of the MUI, K.H. Syukri Ghazali and the General Secretary, Qadir Basalamah (*Penerangan*, 10 Tahun Majelis Ulama Indonesia). Compared to the fatwa in 1980, this recommendation gave more precise explanation of the MUI's view of the Ahmadiyah doctrines. The recommendation mentions the decree of the Ministry of Justice on the status of the Ahmadiyah Qadian as a corporation. Furthermore, it states that the Ahmadiyah doctrines have evoked social unrest and disintegration, thus endangering the social stability and the security of the country.

The social unrest, according to the recommendation, is a result of the dissimilarity of the Ahmadiyah doctrines from the Sunni Muslims'. In this case, the dissimilar doctrines are the beliefs on the death of Isa (Jesus), the Prophecy, and the divine revelation claimed for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of Ahmadiyah.¹² Up to now, these doctrines are still being contested in and outside Indonesia. The disintegration, as in the recommendation, is in performing devotional activities, such as in performing prayers. Ahmadis are not allowed to pray with a non-Ahmadi imam, otherwise, they need to redo the prayer. Besides, the Ahmadis are not allowed to marry non-Ahmadi Muslims unless the nonAhmadi is willing to pronounce the Ahmadiyah oath. Regarding marriage affairs, it is stated that the prohibition is aimed at creating a harmonious family where both husband and wife share the same vision. The Ahmadis are obliged to pay a sum of money, chandah, to the Caliph. This obligation may not be fulfilled if either the husband or wife is not an Ahmadi. Moreover, if an Ahmadi breaks this rule he will lose his membership.¹³

Since the above problems may endanger the social stability and the security of the country, the MUI recommended that the Council of Indonesian Ulama explain the heresy of the Ahmadiyah doctrines, and that those who became members of this denomination return to the "true Islam." Since the MUI comprises Sunni Muslim organizations, the term "true Islam" means following the Sunni doctrines. In addition, the recommendation ended with the call for increasing vigilance toward the Ahmadiyah doctrines.

This recommendation was followed by the issuance of a circular letter by the General Director of Muslims Counseling and the Hajj Affairs, who was Qadir Basalamah. This circular letter referred to the recommendation of the MUI in 1984. It mentions two points: the first point states that the Ahmadiyah Qadian is considered a deviant group since it acknowledges its founder as a Prophet; the second point, which is based on the first, mentions that in order not to evoke social unrest and irritate the society's religious harmony, the Ahmadiya. In the same year, 1984, the General Attorney stated that the Ahmadiyah doctrines are non-Islamic doctrines and that all its publications are banned and that its status as a corporation would be reconsidered.¹⁴

In 1985 a non-governmental organization, namely Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam (LPPI) or the Institute of Research and Study on Islam, was officially legalized. This institution was

¹² These three doctrines are deviant from the doctrines of the Sunni Muslims. The Muslims World League also took these three doctrines as the reason for condemning the Ahmadiyah as deviant

¹³ This information was given by the Ahmadis

¹⁴ This decree is followed by the District Attorney's of Sidenreng Rappang in 1986, Tarakan in 1989, Jambi and North Sumatra in 1994.

led by M. Amin Djamaluddin¹⁵ who holds the position up to the present day. He was the one who actively disseminated the results of his study on the Ahmadiyah book, the *Taẓkirah*. Based on his study, one can say that the *Taẓkirah* is a compilation of the verses of the Qur'an, which are mixed here and there. Additionally, before becoming a member of the MUI, Djamaluddin, in the name of LPPI, actively summoned the local residents of Parung¹⁶ to protest to the local government regarding the status of the Ahmadiyah headquarters (Djamaluddin, 2007).

Besides, he also sent letters to the Supreme Court in June 1994, and another letter was sent to the General Attorney in June 1996 on the banning of the Ahmadiyah nationally (see Djamaluddin, 2007). These letters seemed to be influential to the PAKEM since it issued a decree on the banning of both Ahmadiyah Qadian and Lahore on 31 July 1996. However, according to Djamaluddin, the government postponed the issuance of the decree since it was close to the forthcoming general election in 1997. Nevertheless, the reformation wave in that year made that the decree was ignored (Misbah, 2000). Up to the present, the decree remains unpublished.

Fatwa on the Banning of the Two Differing Doctrines of Ahmadiyah in 2005

The Ahmadiyah case re-emerged in 2000 when the Ahmadiyah held its annual meeting. In this meeting, which was intended to commemorate the 75th year of the establishment of the Ahmadiyah Qadian in Indonesia, the committee cooperated with Dawam Rahardjo and his institution, the International Forum on Islamic Studies. They invited the fourth Caliph, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, to attend this meeting. Besides, with the help of Dawam Rahardjo, the Caliph managed to meet the President at the time, Gus Dur, and the Chairman of the People's Consultative Council (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat), Amin Rais. Rahardjo then stated that the meeting between the Caliph and these two figures was a sign that Indonesian Muslims could accept the Ahmadiyah's existence, and that the MUI's fatwa was no longer valid (Misbah, 2000). In response to this statement, the MUI pronounced a campaign against heretical doctrines in its conference in 2000.

Additionally, in 2002 LPPI sponsored a seminar, held in the Istiqlal mosque,¹⁷ entitled "Ahmadiyah, its heresy and danger." The seminar was attended by the boards of the national and regional MUI, as well as ulama of the national Islamic organizations. It was reported that the seminar stimulated a number of people to attack the Ahmadiyah headquarters in East Lombok (Djamaluddin, 2007).¹⁸ As a matter of fact, the attack was committed after a seminar on religion discussing the heretical sects in Indonesia, including the Ahmadiyah. The seminar was held by the district MUI, in which M. Amin Djamaluddin was invited to present the results of his study on the Ahmadiyah doctrines (Djamaluddin, 2007; Mustafa, 2005). Thus the destruction must have been stimulated by what he presented in the seminar.

Following the aforementioned seminar in 2002, the MUI held the fourth Muslims Congress in April 2005 which resulted in a decision mentioning that:

aliran sesat (heretical sects) should be a special priority having precedence over other major social problems such as corruption, bribery, adultery, abortion, pornography, porno-action, narcotics, gambling, alcohol, intellectual copyright, criminality, destruction of the

¹⁵ The LPPI, the institution led by Djamaluddin, listed as one of the members of the research team for the Ahmadiyah case. This team was founded in 1990. See M. Amin Djamaluddin, *Ahmadiyah dan Pembajakan al-Qur'an*, pp. 145-146. Djamaluddin has become the member of the Commission of research in the MUI since 2000. However, I could not obtain any data mentioning the exact year of the LPPI's or Djamaluddin's enrollment to the MUI.

¹⁶ An area where the headquarters of the Ahmadiyah Qadian established. It is located in West Java.

¹⁷ The great mosque situated in Jakarta. The office of the national MUI is also located in this mosque

¹⁸ Komisi Hak Asasi Manusia (Komnas HAM) or the Indonesian Commission for Human Rights received a complaint regarding this matter and sent a letter of clarification to LPPI.

environment, violence and enmity.

This decision was enacted by the seventh National Conference of the MUI in July 2005. As a matter of fact, there were many denominations which were considered to be deviant. But it was only the Ahmadiyah doctrines which were discussed in the seventh National Conference. The reason for issuing the Ahmadiyah case was probably the absence of government policy on this denomination. Besides, there was continuous discussion on the Ahmadiyah doctrines in society, so the case was discussed by the PAKEM. It twice held Rapat Koordinasi (Coordination Meeting). The first meeting listed three religious denominations as the topics for discussion, including the Ahmadiyah. In the first meeting,¹⁹ held on 18 January 2005, the national MUI sent two representatives to attend the meeting; they were Dr Utang Ranuwijaya and M. Amin Djamaluddin. The meeting was attended by representatives of the General Attorney, the Police Headquarters, the Army Force Headquarters, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Religious Affairs, the State Intelligence Agency (Badan Inteligen Nasional), and the Department of Culture and Tourism. In this meeting, Dr. Utang Ranuwijaya explained about the Ahmadiyah case reported by the provincial and the regency MUI.

These local MUIs demanded the banning of the Ahmadiyah since there had been many clashes between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis. M. Amin Djamaluddin explained the doctrines of the Ahmadiyah, differing from those of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, as well as speaking of his personal experience of being interviewed by the Chairman of the National Commission for Human Rights. Besides, he showed the letters between LPPI and the Ahmadiyah. Eventually, all representatives in this meeting agreed upon banning the Ahmadiyah. However, the representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs suggested that the ban be done locally, since there was protest from the International Commission for Human Rights (see Djamaluddin, 2007).²⁰ In the end, the committee decided to ban both the Ahmadiyah Qadian and Ahmadiyah Lahore in Indonesia.

Subsequently the Chairman of the meeting, the representative of the General Attorney, appointed the representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Police Headquarters, the MUI and the General Attorney to draft a Presidential Decree on the banning of the Ahmadiyah, both Qadian and Lahore, throughout Indonesia (Djamaluddin, 2007).²¹ The meeting for making the draft was eventually held on 12 May 2005.

Although the PAKEM had issued the draft in a recommendation, the government did not make a strict policy. Rather, the Ahmadiyah got the approval to hold an Annual Conference or Jalsah Salanah from both Provincial Police Department of West Java and the Head of the Regional Police in Bogor.

This approval encouraged the LPPI to send a letter to these two institutions demanding they revoke the approval. Besides, the LPPI also established the Posko Pembubaran Ahmadiyah secara Nasional, or Post for Dismissing the Ahmadiyah Nationally (Djamaluddin, 2007:194-196). It follows from the explanation above that M. Amin Djamaluddin, through his institution - LPPI, is the one who played a role in spreading the accusation concerning the Ahmadiyah heresy. Additionally, his status as a member of the national MUI enabled him to influence the special team of the Fatwa Commission to list the Ahmadiyah case in the seventh National Conference in July 2005.

¹⁹ This meeting was a continuation of the previous meeting in September 2004 which did not reach any decision on whether to ban the Ahmadiyah locally or nationally.

²⁰ This information is gained from Djamaluddin's notes from attending the coordination meeting. There was no additional explanation on what the content of the International Commission for Human Rights protest was, and of when it was issued. However, in this meeting the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that there were often protests at many Indonesian embassies regarding the Ahmadiyah case. But the embassies and the protesters concerned were not mentioned.

²¹ The intended draft was a recommendation to the President to issue a Presidential Decree

In short, the absence of government policy on the Ahmadiyah, the continuous discussion of this denomination, and the result of the coordination meeting of the PAKEM, have made the MUI launch the Ahmadiyah case as an important issue in the July 2005 National Conference. Nevertheless, this latest fatwa on Ahmadiyah does not mention the result of the PAKEM, or any District Attorneys' decree on the Ahmadiyah.²² However, echoing the result of the PAKEM meeting, the MUI considers both Ahmadiyah Qadian and Ahmadiyah Lahore to be sectarians.

Like the previous fatwa in 1980, this recent fatwa does not mention the name of the mustafti. Besides, the fatwa has no appendices so that the reasons for issuing the fatwa remain unclear. Regarding this matter the MUI then published a book explaining all the issued fatwas in the seventh National Conference in 2005, including on the Ahmadiyah. The book explains that the fatwa was issued after many questions from society, through various forums, letters and emails.²³ These questions were selected by the Tim Materi (Material Team) of the Fatwa Commission for the National Conference. The team, which was led by K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, consisted of 15 people, most of them from the Fatwa Commission. The eleven selected cases were then discussed by the team. They then made the fatwa drafts for each case in two days. The drafts were then submitted to the Fatwa Commission to be reviewed. Next, the drafts were submitted to the plenary National Conference Board to be legalized (Mustafa, 2005).

However, before issuing the fatwa, the MUI undertook a study of the Ahmadiyah, tracing its history of establishment, and assessing books written by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the leading figures of the two differing schools of the Ahmadiyah, as well as their doctrines through their publications. Besides, the MUI has studied the Qur'an, the traditions of the Prophet, the ulama consensus and their opinions, and also the world ulama's fatwas on the Ahmadiyah (MUI, n.d.). The intended study must have been done before the case being brought to the National Conference, because it would have been impossible for the Special Committee to study the whole Ahmadiyah case and the other ten cases and formulate the drafts of the fatwas in two days. Since the fatwa is aimed at strengthening the previous fatwa in the second National Conference, the intended study may also have relied on the research on the Ahmadiyah which was conducted in 1980.

Similar to the previous fatwa, this latest fatwa contains two parts. The first part is the preamble, consisting of the "considering section," "bearing in mind section," and "observing section". The second part mentions the dictum.

In the first section of the preamble, the "considering section," the fatwa lists four points, mentioning the background of issuing the fatwa. The background consisted of (i) the continuous dissemination of the Ahmadiyah doctrines, though there is a fatwa which forbids it,²⁴ (ii) the effort to develop the Ahmadiyah doctrines had evoked social unrest, (iii) the demand for the affirmation of the MUI's fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines in relation to the emergence of various opinions and reactions within the society, and (iv) the need to strengthen the fatwa on Ahmadiyah doctrines, in order to fulfill the demand to purify Islamic belief.

Unlike the previous fatwa and recommendation, in this latest fatwa the MUI emphasized the Ahmadi's belief in Mirza as a Prophet, which is the belief of the Ahmadiyah Qadian. It is stated in the second section of the preamble, "bearing in mind section," which mentions particular verses of the Qur'an, such as sura 33 verse 40 on the Prophet Muhammad prophecy, sura 6 verse 153

²² See appendix II point C for the translated fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines in 2005

²³ Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Fatwa Munas VII Majelis Ulama Indonesia: perlindungan hak kekayaan intelektual, perdukunan (kahanah) dan peramalan ('irafah), do'a bersama, perkawinan beda agama, kewarisan beda agama, kriteria maslahat, pluralisme, liberalisme, dan sekularisme agama, pencabutan hak milik pribadi untuk kepentingan umum, wanita menjadi imam shalat, hukuman mati dalam tindak pidana tertentu, aliran Ahmadiyah, disertai lampiran penjelasan fatwa.

²⁴ Both the MUI's recommendation issued in 1984 and the decree of the Ministry of Religious Affairs issued in 1984 on the banning on the dissemination of the Ahmadiyah doctrines are not mentioned here.

on the “right path of Islam”, and sura 5 verse 105 on maintaining faith. This section also lists two Prophetic traditions: the first tradition, which is narrated by Bukhari, mentions that there will not be any prophet after the Prophet Muhammad; and the other tradition, which is narrated by Tirmidhi, having the same content with different phrasing.²⁵

The last section of the preamble, the “observing section,” mentioned the decree of the Organization of Islamic Conference on Ahmadiyah Qadian and Ahmadiyah Lahore as deviants in 1985, the fatwa issued on Ahmadiyah in 1980 and the opinion of the Fatwa Commission in the seventh National Conference in July 2005.²⁶ The MUI refers to the decree of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), since Indonesia is a member of this organization. However, this reference gives lead to a number of interpretations. First, the MUI acknowledges the authority of this international organization, and second, the MUI needs to underpin its decision by referring to a more wide-scale organization. This decree mentions the following statement:

Truthfully, what is claimed by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad on his prophecy, the doctrines he carried and revelations descended on him are strict deviancy against the definite Islamic doctrines that the Prophet Muhammad is the last Messenger and Prophet; and that there would be no more revelations descended on anyone after this. The belief disseminated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has made him and his followers apostates, deviating from Islam. The Ahmadiyah Qadian and the Ahmadiyah Lahore are the same, although the later (the Ahmadiyah Lahore) believes that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the shadow and the continuation of the Prophet Muhammad.²⁷

In fact, this quotation is the explicit supporting reason for banning the Ahmadiyah, both Qadian and Lahore. By contrast, the other two points in this section do not relate to the dictum of the fatwa directly, especially since the fatwa in 1980 is addressed to Ahmadiyah Qadian only, and the opinions of the Fatwa Commission are not available.

In the above preamble, the dictum of the fatwa, which is in the last section, listed three points. The first point reaffirms the fatwa issued first, in 1980, stating that the Ahmadiyah doctrines are heretical, and deviant, and that Muslims who follow these doctrines are apostates. The second point states that those who became members of these denominations should return to “the right path” of Islam, which is in line with the Qur’ an and the traditions of the Prophet. The last point states that the government should ban the doctrines throughout Indonesia and ban their organizations and close their offices.

After issuing this fatwa, the MUI held a sequence of meetings. These were the Forum of the Muslims Community on 16 August 2005, the Islamic Brotherhood Forum of the MUI on 27 August 2005, a meeting with the 8 th Commission of the Indonesian Legislative Assembly (DPR) on 31 August 2005, a meeting with leaders of Islamic organizations and the head of the Indonesian Police on 6 September 2005, and the Islamic Brotherhood Forum of the MUI on 10 September 2005, on the status of the Ahmadiyah doctrines in Indonesia (Djamaluddin, 2007).²⁸ In order to strengthen the recent fatwa, the MUI sent a letter to the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the General Attorney and the head of the Indonesian Police Department. The letter mentions that the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia has evoked social unrest and conflict amongst society. Besides, their doctrines are despised, stigmatize Islamic doctrines, and evoke enmity, which in turn will potentially create instability. Therefore, the MUI encouraged the addressees of this letter to ban the Ahmadiyah doctrines, to revoke their status as official organizations, to strictly

²⁵ See the Bahasa translation of the cited verses and the traditions of the Prophet in the fatwa text on the MUI official website

²⁶ The opinion of the Fatwa Commission in this conference is not provided.

²⁷ It is translated from the Indonesian translation of the Arabic text of the OIC decree quoted in the fatwa.

²⁸ Letter sent by the national MUI to the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the General Attorney and the head of the Indonesian Police Department dated 10th September 2005.

obey their leaders and preachers, and also to save the Ahmadiyah followers and guide them back to the “right path of Islam”, as it is stated in the Qur’an, the traditions of the Prophet, and as it is acknowledged by the ulama (Djamaluddin, 2007).

Having read the above fatwa and the letter, it is clearly proved that the MUI exhibited its right to judge which denomination held to the right path and which did not. This right is supported by the present President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who, in his speech during the opening ceremony of the seventh National Conference of the MUI in July 2005, stated that he would support the MUI decision regarding Islamic belief.²⁹ Besides, the MUI also received support from the national ulama after a sequence of meetings with them. Additionally, the ulama support can be seen in their agreement to sign the letter of recommendation addressed to the President on the banning on the Ahmadiyah doctrines. It gained greater confidence it could intervene in the making of the state policy, after getting the support of the President as well as the national ulama.

In fact the MUI is not an institution which has the right to ban certain denominations. As mentioned previously, it is the PAKEM, of which the MUI is one of the members, which holds the authority to do so. The support of the President may belittle the power of the PAKEM, which has the authority to judge certain denominations, whether religious or mystical, to be deviant. However, the PAKEM is not the most powerful body able to ban any religious or mystical group; it is the President who holds the final decision on banning such groups. This is the reason why the MUI sent the above-mentioned letter to him to consider. This letter mentions all fatwas issued by the World ulama, the fatwas of Indonesian ulama, as well as the decrees of both the General and the District Attorneys on the “heretical” doctrines of the Ahmadiyah (see Djamaluddin, 2007).³⁰ However, after the letter was sent, neither the PAKEM nor the President issued any decree on the Ahmadiyah doctrines. On the contrary, this latest fatwa evoked lots of criticism.

In response to the criticism, the MUI later on issued ten points of heresy. These points were formulated in the National Working Meeting held from 4 to 6 November 2007. It was attended by all members of the national MUI, as well as from the provincial and regency levels. In this meeting, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, while delivering his speech, again stated that he would support the MUI’s decision.³¹ In line with the President, the head of the Police Department stated that he would arrest the leader of the deviant denomination and its followers (Rumadi, 2007). However, these points of heresy also received a lot of criticism since it may lead society toward anarchy. The ten points cover those sects which: (1) Deny the principles of faith (rukun iman) and the principles of Islam (rukun Islam);³² (1) Believe or follow a certain belief which is not in line with Qur’an and the Prophet tradition; (3) Believe in the revelation after the Qur’an; (4) Deny the authenticity and the truth of the content of the Qur’an; (5) Interpret the Qur’an acknowledge that Mirza received divine revelations from God, which are compiled in the book (see Suryawan, 2006; Misbah, 2005). It is based on this book that the Ahmadiyah are considered heretic.

²⁹ The President gave the following statement “Kami ingin meletakkan MUI untuk berperan secara sentral yang menyangkut akidah ke-Islaman, dengan demikian akan jelas bedanya mana-mana yang itu merupakan atau wilayah pemerintahan kenegaraan, dan mana-mana yang pemerintah atau negara sepatutnya mendengarkan fatwa dari MUI dan para Ulama. See <http://www.antara.co.id/arc/2007/11/5/presiden-dukung-langkah-tegas-terhadap-aliran-sesat>. (Last accessed on 30 May 2008). The President was mistakenly referring to the 10 criteria of heresy mentioned previously and stated that the criteria consisted of 13 points.

³⁰ The copy of the letter together with the list of signature can be read in M. Amin Djamaluddin

³¹ The President in the national working meeting in 2007 put forward the following statement "Ada 13 poin yang ditulis MUI. Yang pertama lakukan langkah-langkah sangat tegas dan tepat terhadap aliran dan paham sesat. Saya dukung, mari kita jalankan bersama-sama," See <http://www.antara.co.id/arc/2007/11/5/presiden-dukung-langkah-tegas-terhadap-aliran-sesat>. (Last Accessed on 30 May 2008). The President was mistakenly referring to the 10 criteria of heresy mentioned previously and stated that the criteria consisted of 13 points.

³² The Rukun Iman cover the belief in God, His Angels, His Holy Books, His Messengers, The Doomsday and The Divine Decree or Qadha and Qadar. The Rukun Islam are the five basic principles of Islam. It covers pronouncing shahadat, performing prayers five times daily, fasting in the Holy Month (Ramadan), paying for zakat (charity), and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca

The second point relates to the belief in Mirza as a prophet who continued the duty of Muhammad. Mirza himself declared that he was a Messenger of God and never revoked this to his death. His declaration is in many of his books, such as *Eik Ghalti ka Izalah*, *Dāfi' al-Balā'*, and *Ḥaḳīqah al-Wahy*. Besides, he also made this declaration in newspapers, namely *Badr*, published on 5 March 1908, and *Akhbar-I 'Aam* published on 26 May 1908, the day he died (Muhammad, 1986). His declaration is acknowledged by the Ahmadiyah Qadian followers. However, the belief in Mirza as a prophet after Muhammad conflicts with the MUI's belief in the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet. These two differing opinions come from different interpretations of a certain word in one of the verses in the Qur'an, containing the phrase *Khatam al-anbiya'*.

The Ahmadis interpret this phrase as the main or the most important Prophet, which refers to the Prophet Muhammad (Ahmad, 2008), so this interpretation does not avoid the possibility of a new prophet emerging. Furthermore, the Ahmadis also state that the Prophet Muhammad is the last Prophet who was given the responsibility of disseminating sharia, while Mirza was just sent to strengthen the Muslims' faith (Mustafa, 2005). Ahmadis also believe that Mirza is the Promised Messiah, as he admitted himself, who continued the Prophet Muhammad's duty (Mustafa, 2005). On the contrary, the MUI interprets *khotamul anbiya'* as the seal of the prophet, meaning that there will not be any prophet sent to people on earth after the Prophet Muhammad. This interpretation is also supported by the Prophetic tradition in which He stated *la nabiyya ba'di*, or there will be no other prophets coming after me. In contrast to the Ahmadiyah Qadian belief, the Ahmadiyah Lahore merely considers him to be a reformist. However, the one they refer to, as discussed above, admitted himself to be a Prophet.

The last point related to condemning others as deviant. Related to this condemnation, it was the non-Ahmadi ulama who issued fatwas on the Ahmadis' heresy. Because of these fatwas the Ahmadis were not allowed to perform prayer behind a non-Ahmadi (Suryawan, 2006). Moreover, Mirza also forbade his followers to marry their children to non-Ahmadis (Mustafa, 2005). However, the second Caliph put forward the following statement "all Muslims who do not acknowledge the truth of al-Masīḥ, although he/she has never heard his name, is an infidel and is an apostate. I admit this with all my faith." He also issued another fatwa mentioning that one's Islam is illegal when he or she does not believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. This fatwa was published in *Bigham Shalah* on 19 April 1933 (Muhammad, 1986). This means that the non-Ahmadis are apostates.

Despite these three points, the fact that the MUI issued these two fatwas and a recommendation on the Ahmadiyah showed that the MUI paid a lot of attention to this denomination.

CONCLUSION

After a sequence of debates on whether or not an institution of *ifta'* needed to be established, the government successfully assisted the establishment of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), or the Council of Indonesian Ulama, in 1975. It even agreed to cover the council's expenses. The government assistance can also be seen from the involvement of the President and many Ministers in its organizational chart, up until 2000. By gathering various differing Islamic organizations, the government wanted to unite the opinion of all ulama throughout Indonesia. Besides, the council was aimed at being the national authority in Islam. Therefore, the government set some roles for the council. Those roles were being the translator for the activities and concepts of national or local development for the people, advisory council to the government on Religious Affairs, mediator between the government and the ulama, and as a forum for the ulama to discuss the problems related to the duties of the ulama.

In accordance with the aim of unifying the differing opinion among the Muslims, the MUI recruited more and more Islamic organizations to join its membership. Accordingly, more people were appointed as the members of the executive board of the national MUI, and more commissions were founded in order to meet the societal need. However, the Fatwa Commission continuously was the main commission in the MUI, since it is in charge of issuing fatwas. The MUI, through its Fatwa Commission issued fatwas and non-fatwas which were published in its official magazine *Mimbar Ulama*, collective volumes in the form of books, and also on the website www.mui.or.id. Under the leadership of three different General Chairmen, from 1975 until 2005 the MUI has issued more than ninety fatwas and non-fatwas. They also published methods of issuing fatwas which were aimed at diminishing controversy between the national and provincial MUI and also between the MUI and government. However, these methods cannot prevent controversy cropping up in society, such as in the case of the fatwa on the Ahmadiyah doctrines, both Qadian and Lahore branches. Although the Ahmadiyah doctrines, both Qadian and Lahore, had been rejected by society in a number of areas in Indonesia, they continuously gained more and more followers, especially the Ahmadiyah Qadian, which was acknowledged as a corporation in 1953. After a decade, the first fatwa on the banning of this denomination was issued by the council of ulama of West Sumatra in 1965.

This fatwa was followed by a number of decrees by various district attorneys, aiming at diminishing the activity of the Ahmadi. The first fatwa of the national MUI was issued in the second National Conference in 1980, a year after the Minister of Religious Affairs had issued an instruction to the General Director of Muslim Guidance and Hajj Affairs, the Chairman of Research and Development of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the General Inspector, and the Chairmen of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the provincial levels, to improve their relationship and cooperation with the General Attorney, Department of Home Affairs, the State Intelligent Coordinating Agency, local government, the MUI and all Islamic institutions in the effort to guide and oversee the activities of the Islamic organizations and schools of thought which were contradictory to Islamic doctrines.

This fatwa has two points enlisted in its dictum. The first point states the opinion of the MUI on the Ahmadiyah Qadian as adhering to heretical and deviating doctrines. The second point states that the MUI needs to cooperate with the government with regard to the Ahmadiyah case. This last point acknowledged its inability to ban the denomination, since the right to do so is in the hands of the government, through the organization under the General Attorney that is the overseer of the people's belief, PAKEM. In 1980 the General Attorney also issued two decrees on the Ahmadiyah. These two decrees, which were issued in May and October 1980, mentioned the belief of the Ahmadi on the prophecy of their founder and also the findings on the *Ta'zkirah*. In other words, the General Attorney did not yet ban the Ahmadiyah. However, K.H. Ma'ruf Amin mentioned that there were nine Ahmadiyah branches closed after the fatwa was issued. No available information can support his statement. The MUI issued a recommendation on the Ahmadiyah doctrines through its National Working Meeting in 1984. This recommendation stated that the Ahmadiyah doctrines had evoked social unrest, rooted in the dissimilarity between the Ahmadiyah doctrines and the doctrines of the Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. Accordingly, the Ministry of Religious Affairs through the General Director of Muslims Guidance and Hajj Affairs issued a circular letter. This letter suggested that the Ahmadiyah Qadian should not disseminate its doctrines in order not to stimulate social unrest. Following these two decisions, the PAKEM reached a decision on the banning of the Ahmadiyah Qadian and Lahore in 1996. However, the decree remained unpublished. The latest fatwa was issued through the seventh National Conference in July 2005.

This fatwa lists three points of dictum. The first two points reiterate the dictum of the fatwa issued in 1980. The last point of the dictum states that the government should ban the doctrines of the Ahmadiyah and all organizations operating under their name. This last point of this fatwa is more or less influenced by the result of the PAKEM meetings held in January and May 2005. The PAKEM concluded that both the Ahmadiyah Qadian and Lahore should be banned throughout Indonesia. After issuing the fatwa, the MUI held a number of meetings to gain support from ulama, especially those not affiliated to the MUI. Moreover, the MUI and these ulama sent letters to the President, Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Religious Affairs, and the General Attorney. Additionally, the MUI issued 10 points of heresy, of which three of these criteria are applicable to the doctrines of the Ahmadiyah.

Despite all the above efforts to gain the support from the ulama and the government, the MUI received a lot of criticism from both Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals, such as the Alliance of Civil Society. This alliance, concomitant with the other individual opponents, does not recognize the MUI as the national authority in Islam. Rather, they promote the opinion that no one, and also no institution, has the right to condemn others as deviant or even ban a certain organization for its differing belief. In other words, the MUI does not have the right to define Indonesian Islam, not even to enforce its opinion on the term "the right path". Moreover, the MUI should not have its fatwa approved by the government.

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