



PRESS RELEASE

ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF THE INDONESIA - U.S. COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND PLURALISM

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

August 15, 2016

The United States-Indonesia Society (USINDO) and committed non-government Indonesian and American leaders from the religious, academic, and non-government sectors of each country announce the creation of the Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on August 11, 2016.

An independent, bi-national, non-governmental body, the Council is also welcomed by the two governments. Presidents Jokowi and Obama have “endorsed the Council on Religion and Pluralism, an innovative bilateral mechanism, designed to promote pluralism, tolerance, and moderation.”

Indonesia and the United States, with our strong and varied religious traditions, have each historically valued diversity, religious tolerance, and pluralism. Although each country still has issues to address, and the composition of religions in each country is quite different, the issues being faced are similar. In a world increasingly at risk owing to misunderstanding and intolerance of other religions, lack of appreciation of diversity, and religious extremism, it is important for the positive values of Indonesia and the United States to be shared and enhanced in both countries, as well as more broadly. Yet, our two countries have not done so in a concerted way.

The Council will therefore develop a shared understanding of how the United States and Indonesia are each religiously diverse and tolerant, identify the remaining challenges we each face in the sphere of religion and pluralism, and explore what the people of our two countries we might do together in these areas.

The founding meeting of the council held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia convened the Council's members and identified priority areas of shared interest, experience, and concern. They are:

- a) Increasing Religious Understanding, Mutual Respect, and Collaboration
- b) Identifying and Fostering Positive Civic and Religious Education Models that Promote Analytical Thinking and Respect
- c) Empowering Civil Society to Deter Violent Extremism

The Council will strengthen networks between and in both countries, and has begun to identify proposed concrete initiatives in the priority areas which may be undertaken by the Council. Activities selected for implementation will be compelling, relevant, not done effectively previously, draw on the unique composition of the Council, and use an evidence-based process. These would, subject to further refinement and availability of resources, start to address the Council's selected goals.

Council Members, Co-Chairs, and Working Groups

A complete list of the Council Members is attached.

The Council selected as its Co-Chairs Imam Jihad Turk, Founding President of Bayan Claremont, an Islamic graduate school in Southern California, and Ibu Yenny Wahid, Director, the Wahid Institute. They will lead a bi-national Executive Committee to implement the Council's initiatives under the oversight of the Council. The Executive Committee includes the Co-Chairs of Working Groups in each of the Council's three priority areas, and the President of USINDO, a bi-national organization.

Attachment: Members, Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism

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Indonesia - U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism

Senior Advisory & Executive Board Members

Senior Advisory Board	
United States	Indonesia
<p>Galen Carey Vice President for Government Affairs, National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)</p>	<p>Rev. Agustinus Ulahayanan Executive Secretary for the Commission for Interreligious and Interfaith Affairs Bishop's Conference of Indonesia (KWI)</p>
<p>Jim Winkler President and General Secretary, National Council of Churches</p>	<p>Prof. Azyumardi Azra Director, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University</p>
<p>Imam Mohamed Magid Executive Director, All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) and Former President, Islamic Society of North America</p>	<p>KH. Hasyim Muzadi Presidential Advisory Council Member and Former Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama</p>
<p>Elder Randy D. Funk General Authority Seventy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</p>	<p>Rev. Dr. Henriette-Lebang General Chairperson, Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI)</p>
<p>Salam Al-Marayati President, Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)</p>	<p>Dr. Muhammad Sirajuddin Syamsuddin Presidium of Inter Religious Council Indonesia and Former President of Muhammadiyah</p>
<p>Representative from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops</p>	<p>Major Gen. (Ret) Sang Nyoman Suwisma Chairman, Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI)</p> <p>Represented by: KS Arsana, Chairman for International Affairs, Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI)</p>

Executive Board	
United States	Indonesia
<p>Rabbi David Rosen International Director for Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee (AJC) (Represented by: Robert Silverman, AJC)</p>	<p>Dr. Abdul Mu'ti Secretary General, Muhammadiyah</p>
<p>Prof. Debra L. Mason Director of the Center on Religion and the Professions, Missouri School of Journalism and Former Director of Religion News Writers Association (RNA)</p>	<p>Dr. Bahrul Hayat Senior Lecturer, State Islamic University and Vice Chairman of the Executive Board, the Istiqlal State Mosque</p>
<p>Prof. James Hoesterey Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Emory College of Arts and Sciences</p>	<p>Dr. Chandra Setiawan Rector of President University and Former Chairman, Council of Confucian Religion in Indonesia (MATAKIN)</p>
<p>Imam Jihad Turk Founding President, Bayan Claremont</p>	<p>Endy Bayuni Executive Director, International Association of Religion Journalists (IARJ) and Editor-in-chief, the Jakarta Post</p>
<p>Prof. Katherine Marshall Senior Fellow, Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs</p>	<p>Prof. Muhammad Ali Associate Professor in Islamic Studies, Religious Studies Department, University of California</p>
<p>Imam Plemon El-Amin Imam Emeritus, Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam</p>	<p>Prof. Dr. Philip Wijaya Former Secretary General, Indonesian Buddhists Association (Walubi)</p>
<p>Rabia Chaudry Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow, United States Institute of Peace (USIP)</p>	<p>Imam Shamsi Ali Imam <i>Islamic Center New York</i> (US Based)</p>
<p>Prof. Robert Hefner Director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) at Boston University</p>	<p>Dr. Siti Syamsiatun Executive Director, Indonesia Consortium of Religious Studies (ICRS)</p>
<p>Rev. Susan Hayward Director of Religion & Inclusive Societies, United States Institute of Peace (USIP)</p>	<p>Yahya Cholil Staquf Secretary General for Supreme Council, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)</p>
<p>Dr. William F. Vendley Secretary General, Religions for Peace International (Represented by: Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, Deputy Secretary General)</p>	<p>Yenny Wahid Director, The Wahid Foundation</p>
<p>Ambassador David Merrill President, USINDO [bi-national organization]</p>	