

## THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION IN PROMOTING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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**Abstract:** Religious moderation is an important key in minimizing radical acts and extremism in religion in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religion is an important element in being responsible for religious harmony in Indonesia. The program to strengthen religious moderation was also intensified in 2019 by the Ministry of Religion. The author uses a qualitative research approach for this research method. Based on the results of research conducted by researchers, it is "The Role of the Ministry of Religion in Religious Moderation in the City of Medan". The Mayor of Medan advised that we must maintain harmony and establish harmony between religious communities so that Medan City can become a harmonious city for all believers. "How to Promote Religious Moderation" Use social media to spread the message of religious moderation, educate the public, and create a positive platform for communication "The Ministry of Religion's goal is to promote religious moderation in the Digital Era" to be able to develop an online educational platform to deliver religious moderation material, utilizing technology digital as an easily accessible learning tool. Through campaigns on social media, the ministry can spread messages of religious moderation, promote interfaith dialogue, and share inspiring stories that show harmony in life amidst differences in beliefs.

**Keywords:** Ministry of Religion, Religious Moderation, Digital

### INTRODUCTION:

In the midst of ethnic, racial, cultural and religious diversity, Indonesia is still vulnerable to conflict issues. Acts of terrorism and radicalism are still big problems for this nation. This also gives rise to efforts to moderate religion. This condition also makes the government, namely through the Ministry of Religion, promote and encourage religious moderation. This is done to tackle extremism, acts of radicalism and religious conflict which cannot be avoided in a landscape of diversity. For this

reason, there is a need to practice religious moderation amidst the various complexities of problems in society.

Religious moderation is an important key in minimizing radical acts and extremism in religion in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religion is an important element in being responsible for religious harmony in Indonesia. Therefore, efforts to encourage religious moderation must be carried out in the face of the ideology of radicalism that is sweeping this country.<sup>1</sup>

The program to strengthen religious moderation was also intensified in 2019 by the Ministry of Religion. The National Working Meeting (Rakernas) of the Ministry of Religion was held on 23-25 January 2019 in Jakarta and the serving Minister of Religion, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, gave a speech entitled "Moderation for Community Unity: Interpreting the 2019 National Working Meeting of the Ministry of Religion". On this occasion, he delivered various materials that must be understood and implemented by all leaders under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. Three things were conveyed, namely religious moderation, community togetherness, and data integration. He hopes that the concept of religious moderation can be applied in all Ministry of Religion programs.<sup>2</sup>

## METHOD

The research method that the author uses is qualitative research. The qualitative research approach is a process of research and understanding based on methods that investigate social phenomena and problems man. In this research, researchers create a complex picture, examine words, detailed reports from the respondents' views and conduct studies in natural situations.<sup>3</sup>

The research in this research design uses descriptive qualitative methods to obtain concrete events and facts in field research. The definition of qualitative methods as proposed by Kirik and Miller as quoted is a particular tradition in social

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<sup>1</sup> Irama, Y., & Zamzami, M. (2021). *Study of the Mainstream Moderation Formula for 147 Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Religion for 2019-2020*. Glass (God's Gift of Light): Dialogical Journal of Ushuluddin Science, 11(1), 65–89.

<sup>2</sup> Mursyid Ali 2d, (2009). *Mapping Religious Harmony in Various Regions in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Research and Development and Training Agency, Ministry of Religion.

<sup>3</sup> Lexi J. Moleong, *Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Bandung: Teen Rosdakarya, 2000), p. 5.

science which fundamentally relies on human observation. in one's own area, and in contact with these people, discussions and terms.<sup>4</sup>

The place used as the object of research is the Ministry of Religion (KEMENAG) of Medan City. Jln. Sei Batu Gingging No. 12 Medan – 20154 The author conducted research from September 13 202 until completion. data collection, starting from various sources, namely from several informants and direct observations which will be written down in interview transcripts, the selection process, by coding. Coding is a symbol or abbreviation that is applied to a group of words which can be sentences or paragraphs of notes. After completing this stage, start the discussion stage of research results.<sup>5</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Pran Ministry of Religion in Religious Moderation in Medan City

Based on the results of research at the Ministry of Religion of Medan City, the Ministry of Religion's Practice in Moderation is very important in the digital era and is also taught to the millennial generation. So that the millennial generation is not easy to blame for using digital, social media and other things with a difference. As stated by Mr. Zainul Ikhsan, financial coordinator of the Medan City Ministry of Religion office.

"Religious moderation is how we can understand the concept of religion, where we can see which side we should talk about that may be different from us. So religious moderation is something that sees differences as a blessing, in the sense that they are impossible different people will have the same understanding regarding what they believe. However, there must be universal values that all understand and agree are something good, so they will be used as a common guide in carrying out muamalah."<sup>6</sup>

That differences exist as a blessing from Allah SWT. And no one can reject the diversity in this world, because the universe was created diverse, such as: the

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<sup>4</sup> Lexy J. Moleong in Nurliana, *Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Bandung: Teen Rosdakarya, 2013), p. 77

<sup>5</sup> Miles, Mattew.B In Nurliana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Translated by R.R, (Jakarta: Ui Press, 2012), p. 87

<sup>6</sup> Zainul Ikhsan, financial coordinator of the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office, *Interview*, Medan 15 November 2023

existence of various religious beliefs, ethnicities, races and different colors. In other words, diversity is absolutely the will and will of Allah SWT. In this universe, we as servants are only able to accept and maintain the differences that Allah SWT desires. As the Qur'an clearly states regarding this matter: **QS. an-Nahl:16/93.**

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَسُنَّ عَنْمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

**It means :**

“And if Allah had willed, He would have made you one people (only), but He leads astray whom He will and guides whom He will. But you will definitely be asked about what you have done”.<sup>7</sup>

The thing you have to be wary of is when a belief you believe in then turns it into truth, then blames all beliefs that are different from what you believe in and forces your will through violent means. So the thing that needs to be avoided is coercive behavior in inviting someone to believe in what we believe in. In a life of diversity we must be able to make an attitude of religious moderation into our character, so that it is easy to apply to everyday life.

### **How to Promote Religious Moderation**

Head of the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office, Dr. H. Impun Siregar, MA together with the extended family of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City held the 78th Charity Charity Day Ceremony of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in the Medan Haji Dormitory Yard. Wednesday, January 3 2024, attended by the Mayor of Medan, M. Bobby Afif Nasution, SE, MM, attending the 78th Charity Charity Day Ceremony of the Ministry of Religion RI which was held in the Medan Haji Dormitory Courtyard and acted as the Apple Convener.

The Mayor of Medan advised that we must maintain harmony and establish harmony between religious communities so that Medan City can become a harmonious city for all religious and ethnic adherents. "Indonesia is Great with the People" Present at the activity were the Chair of the Medan City MUI, the Chair of the Medan City FKUB, the Chair of the Medan City Ministry of Religion's Dharma

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Mushaf Al-Qur'an Tajwid and Translation*, p. 277.

Wanita Association (DWP), Muslim Ulama, Community Figures, Leaders of Islamic organizations, Section Heads of the Medan City Ministry of Religion, Heads KUA Ministry of Religion Medan City and Head of Madrasah Ministry of Religion Medan City.

Dr. H. Impun Siregar, MA as head of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City also explained that religious moderation is also the main role and object in realizing harmony between people in the city of Medan, here is the explanation. "Hold an interfaith dialogue forum to build understanding and tolerance between religious communities. Hold educational campaigns to raise awareness about the values of religious moderation through seminars, religious outreach, and other educational events. Form collaborations with religious institutions, government and human resources to gather support and resources.

Use social media to spread messages of religious moderation, educate the public, and create a positive platform for communication. Establish an interfaith youth program to create positive networks among the younger generation. Host arts and cultural events involving various religious communities to celebrate similarities and differences. Involve women in activities to promote religious moderation because they have a key role in shaping values in society."

The role of religious ministries in managing religious moderation is very important, as explained by Mr. H. Ahmad Kamil Harahap, MA as head of the Islamic Community Guidance section at the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office. Religious moderation Many religious teachings contain the values of tolerance, mutual respect and peace. Religious moderation is very important, especially in the city of Medan, which is clearly seen in the words of Allah SWT in (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

**It Means :**

"O people, indeed We created you from a man and a woman and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other."

"The verse above explains the equality of human beings, for both men and women there is no difference between them. Musawah in Islam has the meaning,

namely equality is the result of justice in Islam, everyone is the same, there is no privilege between one over another in the eyes of Allah, all are equal. Linguistically, musawah means equality. Meanwhile, in terms of terms, musawah is equality and respect for fellow human beings as creatures of Allah. All humans are the same, regardless of gender, ideology, ethnicity, language and race as well as religion.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Ministry Of Religion's Goal Is To Promote Religious Moderation In The Digital Era**

The promotion of religious moderation by the Medan City Ministry of Religion in the digital era can cover various aspects. This includes the use of technology and social media to spread the values of tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and a deeper understanding of religious beliefs. Apart from that, training and workshops can be held to raise public awareness of the importance of living together in harmony amidst religious diversity. Therefore, it is very important for the Ministry of Religion of Medan City to implement various modes of moderation in this digital era. To find out this, the researcher conducted an interview with the Head of Administration (TU) of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City, he explained

"The Ministry of Religion's aim in promoting religious moderation in the digital era is to be able to develop an online education platform to deliver religious moderation material, utilizing digital technology as an easily accessible learning tool. Through campaigns on social media, Ministries can spread messages of religious moderation, promote interfaith dialogue, and share inspiring stories that show harmony in life amidst differences in beliefs.

Organize training for religious leaders to become agents of change who promote moderation, teach how to deal with controversial issues, and support diversity in their communities. Maintaining awareness of potential religious-based conflicts in the digital world and providing quick responses to reduce tensions and educating the public online about the importance of tolerance. Strengthening National Identity: Motivating citizens to understand and accept religious diversity as part of

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mr H. Ahmad Kamil Harahap, MA as head of the Islamic Guidance section at the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office, December 22 2023 at 10.23 WIB

national identity, by highlighting the shared values inherent in the nation's culture and history.<sup>9</sup>

The Medan City Ministry of Religion is committed to promoting religious moderation in the digital era by involving various holistic strategies. Through an educational approach by developing a curriculum that includes the values of religious moderation in the education system, ensuring that the younger generation understands these principles from an early age. In addition, efforts are made through campaigns on social media by spreading messages of tolerance, supporting interfaith dialogue, and sharing inspiring stories that illustrate harmonious living amidst differences in beliefs.

The Ministry is also actively inviting lecturers who are experts in the field of tolerance to give lectures and discussions, as well as forming inter-religious dialogue groups as regular platforms for exchanging views and building mutual understanding.<sup>10</sup> In the educational sphere, strengthening the religious curriculum in schools and involving community figures, including celebrities, are part of this initiative. Meanwhile, through technology, they design interactive applications and monitor social media to respond quickly to potential religious-based conflicts.<sup>11</sup>

Strengthening national identity is also a focus to motivate citizens to understand religious diversity as an integral part of national identity. Thus, the Medan City Ministry of Religion is making comprehensive efforts to create an inclusive and harmonious society amidst the complexity of the digital era

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers regarding "The Role of the Ministry of Religion in Promoting Religious Moderation in the Digital Era". That religious moderation is an important key in minimizing radical acts and extremism in religion in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religion is an important element in being responsible for religious harmony in Indonesia. The role of the Ministry of Religion in Moderation is very important in the digital era and is also taught to the

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Mr. H. Untung Nasution, S.Ag, M.H.I as Head of Administration (TU) at the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office, December 25 2023 at 11.23 WIB

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Mr. Imam Mukhair, M.Hum as General, Information and Public Relations Coordinator at the Ministry of Religion of Medan City, 30 December 2023 at 15.40 WIB

<sup>11</sup> Agus Akhmadi, Religious Moderation in Indonesian Religion, Journal, *Education and Training*



millennial generation. So that the millennial generation is not easy to blame for using digital, social media and other things with a difference.

Use social media to spread messages of religious moderation, educate the public, and create a positive platform for communication. Religious moderation Many religious teachings contain the values of tolerance, mutual respect and peace. Religious moderation is very important, especially in this city of Medan. The Ministry of Religion can develop an online education platform to deliver religious moderation material, utilizing digital technology as an easily accessible learning tool.

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