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RI is a constitutional, not religious, state

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The Republic of Indonesia is a constitutional state, not a religious state. This was the first stance of Indonesia's founding fathers before and during the proclamation of independence on Aug. 17, 1945, which was declared by the duumvirate, Sukarno and Mohamad Hatta.

As a sovereign state, Indonesia has a philosophical foundation that is written in the 1945 Constitution, i.e. a Pancasila state with Unity in Diversity and democracy, and the sovereignty in the hands of the people.

The pluralistic Indonesian people, since the beginning, have never wanted a state based on religion because its people comprise various cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, beliefs, views, ideologies and so forth. This is similar to what was demanded by the Egyptian people who protested in Tahrir Square, Cairo, i.e. to live under democracy and refuse the form of a religious state.

The founding fathers of the Republic of Indonesia also envisioned a nation state that emulated the modern European principle of "separation between church and state". The state cannot determine which religion is legitimate because

that is a matter between individuals and God. Neither a religion nor the state can say a religion is heresy, or should be prohibited, dissolved and attacked — for whatever reason.

History shows that the idea of incorporating the Jakarta Charter into the Constitution has never materialized and the freedom of religion and the freedom to worship are clearly stated in the 1945 Constitution.

However, in this reform era, harmony and tolerance among religious communities has been disturbed by acts of some groups who want their ideologies to be adopted as the philosophical foundation of the state.

Acts of violence, bombings, persecution and burnings of houses of worship and the belongings of people of different faiths, and even killings and persecution of religious followers, have been rampant.

This behavior is not the character of the Indonesian people who are known throughout the world as "*de zachtste volk in de wereld*" (the gentlest people in the world). We do not want to lose our identity and will defend it forever. We still have the Indonesian Military (TNI), which is always ready to defend the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and the Pancasila philosophy.

Article 1 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that the State of Indonesia shall be a state based on the rule of law, which means law is

superior and all problems in the life of the nation and the state must be settled according to this law.

The attacks on houses of worship, prohibition of others from worshiping, burnings of others' belongings, rioting, persecution and killings, even if their justification is to defend religion, are criminal acts and must be punished according to the Criminal Code and Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights.

What happened in Cikeusik village, Banten, and Temanggung, Central Java, is obviously a movement to disrupt the unity of the republic and to change the Pancasila ideology. Religion is not a reason for eliminating others, so burnings, destruction, persecution and killings are criminal acts.

The right to life and the right to property, freedom of religion and freedom of worship are human rights, so the state, in this case the government, should act firmly, directly and thoroughly against such offences. The absence of a resolution for these recent incidents and those in the past constitutes a crime against humanity.

The Presidential Instruction regarding the incidents in Cikeusik and Temanggung must be implemented by all of the nation's components. The state should rely on the Constitution and not religion, so the state must not surrender to the radicals and must protect its citizens,

whatever their backgrounds.

Given the current condition, where religious conflicts have escalated, the state, or the government, must be alert 24 hours a day and preserve and guard the NKRI and the Pancasila philosophy.

The intelligence must function optimally and the TNI must be involved in handling a state of emergency in every corner of the nation 24 hours a day. Thus, there should be a National Guard consisting of the Police, the TNI, state prosecutors, etc., as a special team to handle any form of violence, riot, natural disaster, emergency, which threaten the unity of the NKRI.

This National Guard should be led by the President who will coordinate the Chief of Police, the Supreme Chief of the TNI and the Attorney General, so that the chain of command is clear, efficient and quick, and it will be situational, i.e. it will only be deployed if there is any incident that threatens the unity of the NKRI.

In conclusion, the decision on religion and worship is left to the individual, while the state only preserves and guards it, so that all citizens can profess their religion and rituals comfortably and safely.

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