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# VOICE OF JUSTICE

## PKS and the question of democracy

Hundreds of thousands of supporters of Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) gathered in the historic Bung Karno National Stadium, Jakarta on May 4 to mark the tenth anniversary of their party. Young at age, PKS's story in the Indonesian politics is impressive. The party holds 45 seats in the national parliament, more than 1000 MPs in provincial and district legislatures across Indonesia, and 3 ministers in the cabinet. In April, many Indonesians and political analysts were surprised when PKS convincingly won two gubernatorial elections and sent its candidate, Mr. Ahmad Heryawan, as the governor of West Java, the most populous province in Indonesia. Yet for some people the question remains the same: Can PKS bring democratic value?

### No contradiction between Islam and democracy

Such question clearly represents a skeptical view on how PKS can translate its Islamic platform and agenda within a democratic environment. In a larger context, it casts a doubt on whether Islam is compatible with democracy, which itself has generated hot debates and arguments even among Islamic movements. Hizbut Tahrir, for example, rejects democracy, considers it as un-Islamic and proposes the reestablishment of caliphate. On the contrary,

PKS views that, even though democracy is invented by the west, the teachings of Islam promote values that being the foundation of democracy.

In his speech at the Congress of Democrat from the Islamic World in Jakarta, September 2005, Dr. Hidayat Nur Wahid, former chairman of PKS, argued that democracy has roots in Islamic tradition. He provided three aspects of these roots. First, Islam views every person is created equal. Therefore it promotes egalitarianism and tolerance. Second, Islam encourages Muslims to learn and acquire knowledge from any sources regardless from where it comes, whether from Muslims or non Muslims. Third, the moral system of Islam puts common wisdoms above personal ego.

As the consequence, he argued, Islam promotes the concept of shura governance which in many ways resembles democracy. In his view, shura (Arabic, literally means: consultative) is formed on three basis: all persons in a society are equal in human and civil rights, the public issues should be decided according to majority view, and

***“According to Islam, human is neither angel nor devil. S/he should not be materialistic nor ascetics. Neither should s/he be on the far end of individualism nor collectivism. Islam rejects all extremes, including consumerism and terrorism. At the same time, Islam encourages democracy that can protect the weak and poor as well as supporting economic growth.”*** – Dr. Hidayat Nur Wahid, former chairman of PKS.

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major values of Islam such as justice, equality, and human dignity can be best obtained through shura than through any other forms. Thus, shura brings democratic values.

**Sharia**

Nevertheless, some people still doubt on the PKS's motives and believe that PKS will quickly impose sharia (Islamic law or jurisprudence) if it wins. In fact, this issue became ammunition for some political opponents to discredit PKS especially during election. For example during Jakarta gubernatorial election last August; PKS lost the election with slight margin against a coalition of 20 parties.

Dr. Zulkieflimansyah, a vice chairman of PKS fraction in the parliament, rejected such accusation and criticized PKS opponents for playing on the fears of the people. "Indonesia is a very diverse society", he said, "It would be impossible for PKS to make dramatic change, including imposing sharia. The most important thing is that the substance of sharia can be implemented in Indonesia". He also said that it would be very unlikely for Indonesia to go down the path of Afghanistan under the Taliban. In its national congress held last February in Bali, PKS reiterated its commitment to the national constitution and the idea of the national unity of the Republic of Indonesia.

For Mr. Muhammad Qodari, a political analyst, the issue that PKS will impose the sharia when it governs is based only on speculation. He then mentioned an interesting fact that in some provinces that introduce sharia law, their governors are not from PKS. The province of South Sulawesi, for example, is led by Golkar Party.

Moreover, many political analysts such as Mr. Saiful Mujani believes that the impressive success of PKS is due to its

image as a clean and caring party who has strong commitment to good and clean government. PKS representatives, he added, are well known for their integrity to resist the temptation of corruption. Such image, rather than campaign to impose sharia, that actually attracts voters.

**Medina Charter**

Interestingly, while its political opponents accuse PKS for trying to impose sharia once it wins, some Islamic groups – on the other hand – claim that PKS as an Islamic party has done little to implement sharia in Indonesia. The basis of their claim is PKS rejection to reinstate "Jakarta Charter".

This charter, written by founding fathers of the country in 1945, contains Pancasila as a state philosophy for the new republic. Unfortunately, it was modified one day after the independence proclamation; deleting its famous seven words which says "with the obligation to carry out Islamic sharia for its adherents." The restoration of those seven words has become a rallying cry for many Islamic movements ever since.

Instead of reviving Jakarta Charter, PKS promotes the adoption of the Medina Charter, a profound document written by Prophet Muhammad for governing multi-religious and multi-ethnic city-state of Medina nearly fourteen century ago. The charter can be claimed as the

first written constitution in the world.

According to Dr. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, a Professor in Indonesian constitutional law and also a former minister of State Secretary of Indonesia, the essential theme of the Medina Charter is the recognition of a pluralistic society in which every citizen has equal rights and obligations regardless of their background. This charter also acknowledges legal subsystem where each community has its own internal autonomy to conduct its affairs, that is Muslims can practice their sharia, the Jews can implement their Torah, and other societies such as Arab pagan can exercise their own customs. For external affairs, however, they are unified as a single community under one leadership.

PKS argues that Medina Charter is more suitable to be implemented in a pluralistic society such as Indonesia since it was successfully implemented by the prophet in a pluralistic society of Medina. The charter guaranteed the right of the various communities to practice their own religion, laws and customs, while Jakarta Charter only obliges Muslims to abide their sharia.

***What they say about PKS***

***"We know from the history that Medina Charter positioned all citizens, regardless of their background, in an equal position. The charter also recognized equality before the law. The adoption of this charter by PKS clearly shows that the party adopts "inclusivism" on their political platform".***– Budi Setiyono, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia

## Editorial

For PKS entering politics is a manifestation of its belief on comprehensiveness and universalism of Islam. Islam is not only about faith and worship, but also economic, land, state, moral, civilization, so on so forth including politics. As the consequence, PKS does not hesitate to adopt democracy. For them implementing democracy is part of practicing Islam. Here are some examples. First, PKS can work together with other political groups, regardless of their ideological affiliation, on the basis of common interests. PKS has formed coalitions with other parties in many provincial and district elections.

Second, PKS has shown a good example on practicing democracy; readiness to accept a defeat. An attitude that barely exists in a young democratic nation such as Indonesia where parties are ready to claim the victory but not the opposite. They tend to dispute the election if the result is not for their favor. In this regard, PKS gently and unhesitantly accepted the Jakarta election result and congratulated the winner. Third, as an Islamic party that acknowledges diversity, PKS is ready to nominate non-Muslims as its candidate for the regions where Muslims are minorities.

PKS has embraced democracy fully. It has articulated its Islamic platform and agenda within a democratic environment. The history will chronicle that public believe its sincere intention and support its programs.

**VOICE OF JUSTICE** is published by The Center for Information and Services for the Prosperous Justice Party (better known for its Indonesian acronym: PIP PKS) in North America. The PIP PKS is a non-profit organization founded and managed by PKS supporters in USA and Canada. Its mission is to give accurate and updated news and information about PKS and provided services to all PKS supporters and sympathizers in North America. The PIP PKS, however, is not a party branch of PKS in USA and/or Canada.

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## Profile

### Dr. Hidayat Nur Wahid



Although he has never dreamt to become a politician, Dr. Hidayat Nur Wahid is now the Chairman of the People Consultative Assembly (MPR) of the Republic of Indonesia. Young, charismatic, soft-spoken, yet articulate, he represents a new breed of Indonesian political activist. In 2004, he co-founded the Justice Party (PK) that aims to introduce a more progressive form of Islam in Indonesia. The party soon attracted many Muslim activists from universities across Indonesia and become a rising star in the Indonesian politics. Its member of parliament (MP) jumped from only 7 in 2000 to 45 in 2004 election. Many analysts predict this party will become an influential player in the next 2009 election.

Born on April 8, 1960 in Klaten, Central Java, Mr. Nur Wahid grew on a religious family. Although his family culturally come from traditional Islam

of Nahdhatul Ulama, his parents were activists in the modern Muhamaddiyah Islamic movement. His father enrolled him in the famed Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Gontor, East Java partly because many of his cousins were schooled there. Nevertheless, his intelligent began to shine by always getting top ranking in school. From Gontor, though he wished to go to medical school, he went to the Islamic University of Jogjakarta and got a chance to study abroad. He then spent 13 years in the Islamic University of Medina, Saudi Arabia and graduated with doctoral degree in 1992. After returning to Indonesia, he dedicated himself on education as a lecturer in various universities, an author, and an activist in many Islamic organizations.

As for the Justice Party (later changed its name to the Prosperous Justice Party – PKS), Dr. Nur Wahid wants it to become a part of solution, not problem, for Indonesia by practicing clean politics and anti-corruption. He prefers to have a small but influential party rather than tarnishing the image of

Islam by having a big party but corrupt and doing dirty politics. He often said, “Even if you’re not member of PKS but you support and carry out justice, you’re practicing Islam and part of us.”

He set an example by resigning as party leader when he was elected as the chairman of MPR. He said it is a commitment of PKS to prohibit his member to hold position in party while at the same time holding public or government position to avoid conflict of interest. For him, a public position is an *amanah* (trust) that has to be taken into account before God and all Indonesian people. No wonder while he is a high-ranking government official, he still maintains his modest life style. He famously refused, for example, a luxurious Volvo as an official car for him and asked for more modest car. “We hope that state can give us facilities that help us to work properly but not to live lavishly”. (Excerpted from [www.TokohIndonesia.com](http://www.TokohIndonesia.com))

# PIPPKS News

## PIP PKS Writing Contest

To celebrate the Kartini Day on 21 April, The Women Affair of PIP PKS North America and Canada held a writing contest from April 6 to May 9, 2008, which was open for Indonesians. There were two themes in the contest, "The color of the world of women" for fiction and "Optimizing the role of Indonesian women in foreign country" for non-fiction criteria. The panel judges include Ms. Adi D Adinugroho, Ms. Sofie Dewayani, and Mr. Adi Susmono from FLP North America and also Mr. Aria Novianto from PIP PKS. FLP (Forum Lingkar Pena) is a famous Indonesian writer's club that has thousand members all over the world.

The competition itself is a success with the total of 350 essays and short stories accepted. It seemed that the short window time of this event did not discourage people to participate. The participants are very diverse in terms of age (from 17 to 58 years) and location where they live (Indonesia, Japan, Netherland, Egypt just to name a few).

The panel finally released their result on June 1, 2008 after one week postponement. For fiction criteria, the first winner is "Selarik Kartini" (Wildan Nugraha, West Java – Indonesia), and for non-fiction is "Mengubah 'wajah' Perempuan Indonesia" (Rinaldi, North Sumatra – Indonesia). The complete list of winners can be found at PIP PKS website at: <http://www.pk-sejahtera.us>

## A Big Surprise on My Journey to Seattle.

By Rudi Himawan

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. We in PIP PKS are always eager to visit

and to share knowledge with all Indonesian Muslim Study Circles ("Pengajian" in Bahasa Indonesia) that spread all over United States and Canada. Despite the rising cost trip, Alhamdulillah this year we are able to visit some "Pengajian" in Boston, New York, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Vancouver. Many are still in queue.

This journey program can be carried out not because we get financial support from DPP PKS or some wealthy donors, but because of contribution from PKS supporters in the US and Canada. Their assistances reflect their supports on our missions and beliefs that justice and prosperity can only be achieved through education.

During our journey, we often find something surprise and joyful. I feel it as a blessing from Allah. Last month, for example, when I went to Seattle, I met with my old friends back to my freshman year in the University of Arizona and, to my tears of joy, my high school friend whom I have never met in 20 years. I suddenly realized how old I am. I know my grey hair won't lie. It just hard to believe after years passed, Allah made us meet in His Blessed Place, at the Redmond Mosque, during His Blessed occasion, at a Qur'anic Study Circle.

After "pengajian" in Mosque, nine participants who work for Boeing wanted to continue our discussion at brother Irfan's house in North Seattle. We discussed the challenges of our ummah and how PKS can be part of the solutions. The discussion lasted until I had to catch my flight back to Dallas. To me, it was a wonderful journey. Jazakumullahu khoiran to Br. Irfan and Ust. Joban. Please convey my salaam to our brothers and sisters in Seattle.

## Next Events

**July 4, 2008**  
**Urbana, Illinois**  
*Fun with PKS – Outdoor activities, BBQ, Fishing, Games, and more fun activities*

For more information, please contact Mr. Aslan Baco ([acoinggo@gmail.com](mailto:acoinggo@gmail.com))

**July 19, 2008**  
**Toronto, Canada**  
*Get acquainted with PKS*

For more information, please contact Mr. Teddy Natanegara. Email: [tnatanegara@yahoo.com](mailto:tnatanegara@yahoo.com)

**July 26, 2008**  
*Online Discussion with PKS Member of Parliament*

For more information, please contact Mr. Barokah Widodo Email: [barokahw@gmail.com](mailto:barokahw@gmail.com)

**Late July, 2008**  
**San Francisco, Urbana, and DC**  
*Face to face discussion with scholars (Mr. Suryama and Mr. Budiyanto)*

For more information, please contact Mr. M. Yusuf Efendi Email: [mye@bali.to](mailto:mye@bali.to)

**August 3, 2008**  
**Atlanta, GA**  
*Get acquainted with PKS*

For more information, please contact Mr. Agustian. Email: [ismailm2@gmail.com](mailto:ismailm2@gmail.com)

**Mid August, 2008**  
**San Francisco, Houston, Boston, NY, and DC**  
*Parenting and Family Communication Seminar*

For more information, please contact Ms. Wiwied Irfanti. Email: [akuwied@yahoo.com](mailto:akuwied@yahoo.com)