



Polemics on Jews and Israel among Indonesian Muslims and Christians

November 20, Wed, 2024

16:00–17:00 (Japan Time)

Seminar Room (Room 213),
Inamori Center, CSEAS, Kyoto University



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Presenter
Sumanto Al Qurtuby

Director, Nusantara Institute /
Visiting Research Scholar, CSEAS



Abstract

Notwithstanding the absence of Israel-Indonesia diplomatic relations and the lack of Jews in Indonesia, sentiments toward Israel and the Jewish community—both anti and pro-Semitic (and anti/pro-Israeli) attitudes—are always high. The talk tries to understand the logic behind anti/pro-Jews and anti/pro-Israel (and to some extent Judaism and Zionism),



especially among Indonesia's various groups of Muslims and Christians by examining the roots, factors, and rationales of their pros and cons from historical outlooks to contemporary stances. I argue that even though views concerning Jews and Israel (as well as Judaism and Zionism) are not monolithic but deeply varied, polarized, and contested among the country's Muslim and Christian groups resulting in different understandings and practices of inter/intra-religious interactions, Muslims generally tend to be anti-Semitic and anti-Israel while Christians prone to pro-Semitism (and pro-Israel). Multiple factors—both internal and external, local and foreign—contributed to their differences and contestations not only because of the Israeli-Palestinian violent conflicts but also religious texts and discourses as well as the complex uneasy relationships between Muslim and Christian communities in the Indonesian social field.

Presenter

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Director, Nusantara Institute /
Visiting Research Scholar, CSEAS

Sumanto Al Qurtuby is the Director of Nusantara Institute on Culture and Religion and Visiting Research Scholar at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Previously, he was a professor at King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (Saudi Arabia); a Senior Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore; and Research Fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, the University of Notre Dame. A specialist of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia (and other countries in the Gulf), Sumanto received his doctorate in Anthropology from Boston University. Sumanto has written over 30 research articles published in various academic journals as well as authored and edited more than 40 books (in English and Indonesian) including *Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks: Migration, Education, and Islam* (Bloomsbury, 2019); and *Religious Violence and Conciliation in Indonesia: Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas* (Routledge, 2016).

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