

The Ulama and The State Politics During Pandemic: A Study on the Covid-19 Related Fatwa of the Council of Indonesian Ulama

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Abstract: *This study examines the contemporary dynamics of the relationship between the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) and the Indonesian government. As far as the MUI is concerned, the council has experienced a changing position concerning the Indonesian state relationship, from being the custodian of the government (khādim al-ḥukūma) to the custodian of the Indonesian Muslim community (khādim al-umma). This changing position appears mainly through MUI legal opinion (fatwās). Considering the current situation in Indonesia, where the Covid-19 pandemic has stormed, this article analyzes the relationship between MUI and the government. It examines MUI's fatwās issued during the pandemic, especially those related to public worship, economy, and health. This article argues that MUI's related fatwās on Covid-19 indicate a new turnback with MUI and the Indonesian state relationship. The fatwas show a strong direction that MUI leads to the position of khādim al-ḥukūma rather than khādim al-umma.*

Keywords: *MUI's fatwās, Covid-19, khādim al-ḥukūma, khādim al-umma*

Abstrak: *Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat dinamika kontemporer hubungan antara Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dan pemerintah Indonesia. MUI mengalami perubahan posisi dalam hubungan kenegaraan Indonesia; dari menjadi pelayan pemerintah (khādim al-ḥukūma) menjadi pelayan umat Islam Indonesia (khādim al-umma). Perubahan posisi ini tampak terutama dalam pendapat hukum (fatwās) MUI. Dengan mempertimbangkan situasi terkini di Indonesia yang dilanda pandemi Covid-19, artikel ini menganalisis hubungan antara MUI dan pemerintah. Kajian tersebut mengkaji fatwā-fatwā MUI yang dikeluarkan selama pandemi, khususnya yang terkait dengan aspek ibadah, ekonomi, dan kesehatan masyarakat. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa fatwā MUI terkait Covid-19 mengindikasikan adanya perubahan baru dalam hubungan MUI*

dan pemerintah Indonesia. *Fatwā-fatwā tersebut menunjukkan arah yang kuat bahwa MUI kembali pada posisi khādim al-ḥukūma dari pada khādim al-umma.*

Kata Kunci: *Fatwa MUI, Covid-19, khādim al-ḥukūma, khādim al-umma.*

INTRODUCTION

Religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*) have played key roles in the formation of Islam in Indonesia. Their roles, initially exercised through Muslim organizations, such as Muhammadiyah (est. 1912), Persatuan Islam/Persis (est. 1923), and Nahdlatul Ulama/NU (est. 1926), were not only limited to educational activities but also to politics. On the eve of Indonesian independence in 1945, some leading Indonesian *‘ulamā’* which includes names like Wahid Hasyim (1914-1953), Abdul Kahar Muzakir (1907-1973), Agus Salim (1884-1954), and Ki Bagus Hadi Kusumo (1890-1954), served as members of the Investigation Body for the Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (*Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia/BPUPKI*) that drafted the future state constitution.¹ Following the Indonesian independence, the Indonesian *‘ulamā’* enjoyed a particular position in politics, and it culminated in the establishment of the Council of Indonesia Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) in 1975 by the New Order (Orde Baru) government (1966-1998).²

Several researchers have demonstrated the functions and roles of MUI in the periods of the New Order and following the fall of the New Order in 1998. Nico Kaptein,³ Atho Mudzhar,⁴ and Nadirsyah Hosen⁵ Argue that, during the New Order government, MUI functioned as a *fatwās* giver (*mustafti*) to the government and the Muslim community on religious issues. At the same time, it played a role as a supervisor to ensure what is against and under Islamic teachings. Its *fatwās*

¹ Zulkifli, "The Ulama in Indonesia: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 37, no. 1 (2013): 180-197.

² Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "The Ulama Fatawa and Challenges to Democracy in Contemporary Indonesia," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 25, no. 4 (2014): 489-505.

³ Nico J.G Kaptein, "The Voice of the Ulama: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Arch. De Sc. Soc. Des Rel* 125 (2004):118.

⁴ M. Atho Mudzhar, "Fatwas and Social Interactions in Modern Indonesia," *Jusur* 8 (1992): 52.

⁵ Nadirsyah Hosen, "Behind the Scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975-1998)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2004): 161.

showed strong support for the New Order government programs, thus projecting the council as the custodian of the government (*khādim al-hukūmah*).

Nevertheless, following the fall of the New Order government in 1998, as Nurshahril Saat,⁶ Syafiq Hasyim,⁷ Moch Nur Ichwan,⁸ and Iswandi Syahputra noted,⁹ MUI seemed to have distanced itself from the government and reserved itself as the servant of the Muslim community (*khādim al-ummah*). From 2000 to 2010, some of MUI's *fatwās* contravened the post-New Order government's initiatives, such as the *fatwā* on opposing pluralism, liberalism, and secularism.¹⁰ Likewise, MUI has become increasingly active in responding to widespread issues. La Jama¹¹ and Fitriyani Zein¹² I have pointed out that MUI's *fatwās* have triggered a transformation of contemporary Islamic law, be they related to social, cultural, economic, medical, scientific, and technological issues or worship. In the economic field, MUI has issued a *fatwā* on Islamic Financial Institutions (*Lembaga Keuangan Syariah*, LKS). In the health sector, Nadirsyah Hosen wrote, MUI has issued a *fatwā* related to organ transplantation, vasectomy, and IUD

⁶ Norshahril Saat, "Theologians "Moralising" Indonesia? The Case of the Post-New Order Ulama Council of Indonesia (MUI)," *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 44, no. 4–5 (2016): 546-570.

⁷ Syafiq Hasyim, "Fatwas and Democracy: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulema Council) and Rising Conservatism in Indonesian Islam," *TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* (2020): 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.13>.

⁸ Moch Nur Ichwan, "Ulama', State, and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia after Suharto," *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (2005): 45-72.

⁹ Iswandi Syahputra, "Social Media Activities and the 212 Movement: The Indonesian Ulema Council's Perspective," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 58, no. 2 (2020): 323-354.

¹⁰ Piers Gillespie, "Current Issues in Indonesian Islam: Analyzing the 2005 Council of Indonesian 'Ulamā' Fatwā No. 7 Opposing Pluralism, Liberalism and Secularism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18 (2) (2007): 202–240

¹¹ La Jamaa, "Fatwas of the Indonesian Council of Ulama and Its Contributions to the Development of Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal Of Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 29-56.

¹² Fitriyani Zein, "Legislation Fatwa of National Sharia Board Indonesian Council of Ulama (DSN-MUI) In the State Economic Policy," *Jurnal Cita Hukum (Indonesian Law Journal)* 6, no. 1 (2018): 77.

(Intra-Uterine Devices).¹³ The most recent *fatwās*, which have not received much attention yet from previous researchers, are those related to Covid-19.

Therefore, this study will contribute to the gap by discussing MUI's *fatwās* on the Covid-19 pandemic, especially those related to public worship, economy, and health. It seeks to re-examine the position of MUI in state politics in contemporary Indonesia. It argues that MUI's *fatwās* on Covid-19 indicate a turning point for MUI's position toward the *khādim al-ḥukūmah*.

METHOD

In the contemporary era of Islamic law, decrees established by the authority of *fatwā* affect the nation's governance system. The authority holds substantial control over the order of society. During the Covid-19 outbreak, the government has robust control over the people to guarantee their safety. However, the government needs support from authorized religious institutions to strengthen any national policy they make. The present research is intended to reiterate the relationship between the Indonesian government and MUI in terms of *fatwās* about the Covid-19 outbreak.

To achieve the objective of the present research, the research design employed is a qualitative approach under normative, empirical, and juridical design.¹⁴ The primary data source is MUI's *fatwās* related to Covid-19—next, books and articles in journals relevant to the research topic. The data collection used in the present research is document analysis.¹⁵ The data are then analyzed using descriptive, comparative, and critical analysis.¹⁶ The data analysis in the present research employs systematic analysis.¹⁷ The step includes data reduction

¹³ Nadirsyah Hosen, "Collective Ijtihad on Health Issues in Indonesia", in *Research Handbook on Islamic Law and Society*, ed. Nadirsyah Hosen (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), 289-306.

¹⁴ Khudzaifah Dimiyati & Kelik Wardiono, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Surakarta: Fakultas Hukum UMS, 2004).

¹⁵ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, 3rd Ed* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013).

¹⁶ N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2011).

¹⁷ Robert Bogdan & Steven J Taylor, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000).

and classification,¹⁸ data display and conclusion drawing. The conclusion is written in narration to make it easy to understand.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

MUI and the State: Between *Khādim al-Ḥukūma* and *Khādim al-Umma*

As the Minister of Religious Affairs Mukti Ali (1923-2004) remarked at the inauguration of MUI's leadership on July 27 1975, the council was expected to function as an advisor of the government and was not allowed to carry out political programs,¹⁹ while the government's position was only to receive suggestions from MUI.²⁰ This function is emphasized in the council's Memorandum of Association, which mentions that MUI acts as an institution that provides *fatwās* and advice to the government and the Muslim community on issues related to religion in particular and on all problems facing the nation in general. Through its *fatwās* and advice, MUI is expected to encourage the unity of Muslims, acting as a mediator between the government and Muslim citizens and representing Muslims in inter-religious deliberations. Besides, MUI also functions as a supervisor so that no state laws conflict with Islamic teachings.²¹

Since its foundation, although the position of MUI has been primarily designed to ensure public acceptance and maintain good relations with the government and other Muslim organizations, the relationship between MUI and the government, as Mudzhar notes, was indeed dynamic. The government provided financial support to MUI, and it was expected to justify the government policies from a religious point of view. In this regard, MUI became an institution under the government's control whose role was to support and designated as the

¹⁸ M.Q Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* (London: Sage Publication, 1980).

¹⁹ Mukti Ali, *Sambutan Menteri Agama R.I. Pada Peresmian Pimpinan Majelis Ulama Indonesia Tanggal 27 Juli 1975* (Jakarta: Departemen Penerangan RI. 10 Tahun Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1985).

²⁰ M. Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwas of the Council of Indonesia Ulama: A Study of Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia 1975-1988* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993).

²¹ Nadirsyah Hosen, "Fatwa and Politics in Indonesia", in *Shari'a and Politics in Modern Indonesia*, ed. Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003).

spokesperson for the government from the Islamic point of view.²² Such a condition occurred from the period between 1975 to the early 1990s. During this period, the primary function of MUI was to support and, in some cases, justify government policies and programs. An example is a *fatwā* on breeding frogs and rabbits for food, which later became controversial. Some Muslims alleged that MUI tended to legitimize government policies rather than act for the common good.²³ Some MUI officials rejected this accusation and claimed that the *fatwā* was under Islamic authoritative sources.²⁴ In addition, the issuance of *fatwās* was also claimed only to answer questions raised not only by the government but also by the Muslim public. Some *fatwās* do not always correspond to the government's position, such as *fatwās* on vasectomy and tubectomy.²⁵ Nevertheless, government policies often shape the issuance of MUI *fatwās*.²⁶

Nevertheless, as some scholars urged, MUI's attitude toward the government can be divided into two periods: the initial period of its formation during the New Order government and following the fall of the New Order in 1998 or the reformation period (*reformasi*). At the beginning of its formation, the position of MUI did not always support the government openly.²⁷ This was seen in 1977 when MUI did not support the government during the general election. MUI openly supported the government in the following years, especially from 1982 to 1997. During three elections (1982, 1992, and 1997), MUI mentioned Suharto's name to continue his position as President of Indonesia. 1987 was less different. MUI did not mention Suharto's name explicitly but only stated the need to continue the New Order government and the importance of Indonesian Muslim

²² Norshahril Saat, *The State, Ulama, and Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

²³ MUI's *fatwā* on consuming the flesh of rabbits was issued in 1983, and another *fatwā* on consuming and breeding frogs was issued in 1984.

²⁴ M. B. Hooker, "Islam and Medical Science: Evidence from Malaysian and Indonesian Fatwas," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 4, no. 4 (1997): 16.

²⁵ MUI's *fatwā* in 1979 on Vasectomy and Tubectomy.

²⁶ MUI's *fatwā* in 1981 on a joint Christmas celebration.

²⁷ This was the period of MUI leadership under Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka). He emphasized that the '*ulamā*' in MUI were the Prophet's successors, not the government's servants.

participation in elections.²⁸ From the period of its establishment until the 1990s, the attitude of MUI toward the government was to support and legitimize the government's policies.

During the reformation period, a significant shift occurred in MUI's position. MUI changed its position from being a supporter of the government to a supporter of Islamic parties. This change was caused by the weakening power of the government and the emergence of political parties in the Reformation era – in contrast to the New Order era that suppressed various political streams as a consequence of the regime's policy of making Pancasila a single principle (*asas tunggal*). This changing situation, in turn, prompted MUI to support Islamic parties immediately. During the 1999 election, MUI issued *tausiyah* (recommendation): Muslims should vote for Muslim candidates affiliated with Islamic parties. However, this recommendation is unlikely to significant impact because many Muslim citizens still voted for secular parties. On the eve of the 2004 national election, MUI seemed to have distanced itself from electoral politics as it did not show genuine support for secular or Islamic parties.²⁹ MUI's position during the 2004 election was relatively neutral.³⁰ However, during the 2009 election, MUI issued a *fatwā* against vote abstention.³¹ The *fatwā* ignited public controversy because MUI had never issued a *fatwā* on the vote in the general election; it merely issued less stringent statements like statements and *tausiyah* (recommendation).³²

²⁸ Muhammad As'ad, "Religion and Politics in Indonesia Attitudes and Influences of The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) on The General Election," *MA Thesis* (Leiden: Leiden University, 2010), 4.

²⁹ MUI's *fatwā* in 1999 on non-Muslim leadership.

³⁰ This position was influenced by two: *first*, Islamic parties no longer used the issue of religion (Islam) in their campaigns; *second*, all the candidates in the presidential and vice presidential election were of Muslim backgrounds. Muhammad As'ad, 16.

³¹ MUI's *fatwā* in 2009 on the use of the right to vote.

³² Mohamad Baihaqi, "Legitimasi Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dalam Kontestasi Islam Politik Mutakhir," *Politea: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 2, no. 2 (2019): 31. MUI exercises its religious authority with the issuance of *fatwās* and *fatwās*-like which include *tawsiyyah* (recommendation), *tadhkirah* (reprimand), instruction, statements, appeal, and contributions of thoughts. Thus, it is reasonably valid that not only does the MUI resort as a semi-official organization that supports the

As the above discussion, the difference between the position of MUI in the New Order era and the Reformation era: is that, during the New Order era, MUI built political patronage to the government to invite political protection and influence. In the post-New Order period, MUI politics, particularly electoral politics through political election, seemed to distance itself from the government and oriented its legal opinions according to political contexts. Accordingly, during the Reformation period, we witnessed the declining political influence of MUI.³³ MUI's independent position was further exercised by issuing a *fatwā* that contradicted the interest of the Indonesian government, such as the 2017 MUI's *fatwā* on religious blasphemy.³⁴ As such, MUI's position, whether as *khādim al-ḥukūma* (servant of the government) or *khādim al-umma* (servant of the Muslim community), is determined by the degree to which its *fatwās* and *fatwās*-like take sides.

Socio-religious Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic and MUI's Responses

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted many dimensions of Muslim life. It changed how people dealt with daily life and affected Muslims' religious activities. Muslim public worship activities have been somewhat disrupted due to the Covid-19 dangerous transmission.³⁵ The virus can spread through droplets when sneezing, through the intensity of physical contact between the Covid-19 infected persons and the non-infected others, and even through objects contaminated with the virus and former contacts from the infected.³⁶ Moreover,

government, but also as a religious institution that provides religious guidance. Moch Nur Ichwan, "Towards a Puritanical Moderate Islam: The Majelis Ulama Indonesia and the Politics of Religious Orthodoxy," in *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the 'Conservative' Turn*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013), 70.

³³ Norshahril Saat, "The Implications of a Ma'ruf Amin Vice-Presidency in Indonesia," *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 11 (2019).

³⁴ MUI's *fatwā* in 2017 on blasphemy, <https://mui.or.id/berita/10590/pendapat-dan-sikap-keagamaan-mui-terkait-pernyataan-basuki-tjahaja-purnama/>, accessed on October 16, 2020.

³⁵ See M Sofwan Jauhari and Abdul Ghoni, "The Level of People's Obedience to MUI Fatwas (COVID-19, Bank Interest, and Interfaith Marriage)," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 2 (2020): 233-256.

³⁶ Yoghi Arief Susanto Ramdani Wahyu Sururie, "Legal Aid Post Services at the Indonesian Religious Courts during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 2 (2020): 207-232.

the virus, which has an incubation period of at least 14 days, is not easily detected. Due to the dangerous consequence of the virus, medical experts have to take necessary practical steps. However, the only alternative emergency measurement when the vaccine had not been given was an appeal to do physical distancing.³⁷ The Indonesian government has also initiated various policies to reduce the medical and economic impacts of Covid-19.³⁸

MUI responds to questions concerning the Covid-19 pandemic by exercising what has been called “collective (*ijtihad* legal reasoning)” by accommodating all considerations that come not only from the perspective of Islamic law but also from health and economic perspectives. This effort is intended to produce *fatwās* that are considered valid and can be accepted by all circles. MUI employs two principles of reasoning: *istiṣlāḥ* (seeking public good) and *sadd al-dharī‘ah* (preventing harm). As we will see, these principles are reflected in MUI’s *fatwās* related to Covid-19. Its *fatwās* are directed toward ensuring public good, namely maintaining *al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khamsa* (five necessities), which include the maintenance of human health and safety.³⁹ Methodologically, the criteria of public good in MUI’s *fatwās* are based on textual basis from the Qur’an and *ḥadīth*, and the opinions of credible scholars to ensure that the good is not derived from human appetite. It seems that MUI’s *fatwā* concerning socio-religious issues during the Covid-19 pandemic is based on the argument that the provisions of Islamic law always have specific implications on

³⁷ Abdur Rahman Adi Saputera, “Menelisik Dinamika Dan Eksistensi Fatwa MUI Sebagai Upaya Mitigasi Pandemi Covid-19,” *TAHKIM, Jurnal Peradaban Dan Hukum Islam* 3, no. 2 (2020): 59-78.

³⁸ Olisias Gultom, “Indonesia in the Covid-19 Vortex,” *Indonesia For Global Justice*, April 13, 2020, <https://igj.or.id/indonesia-in-the-covid-19-vortex/?lang=en>, accessed on April 5, 2021.

³⁹ See Iffatin Nur, Syahrul Adam, M. Ngizzul Muttaqien, “Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘at: The Main Reference and Ethical Spiritual Foundation for the Dynamization Process of Islamic Law,” *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 2 (2020): 331-360.

the public good.⁴⁰ In addition, regarding the *fatwā* model that benefits everyone, MUI also pays attention to local customs (*urf*) when producing *fatwās*.⁴¹

The swing pendulum between the *khādim al-ḥukūma* and *khādim al-umma* in the post-New Order period, which demonstrates the centrality of MUI in Indonesian politics, constitutes an essential tool of our analysis here. Indeed, MUI's *fatwās* in responding to the Covid-19 problems are intended to provide advice and recommendations to the Muslim community and the government. Yet, MUI appears to support and give some perspectives that benefit the government's position.⁴²

On Public Worship

MUI's *fatwās* related to public worship were issued following the request of Ma'ruf Amin, the Indonesian Vice President and former chairperson of MUI. The requested *fatwās* include the legal opinions on worship in mosques, the celebration of Eid al-Fitr,⁴³ the funeral procedure for the Covid-19 infected corpses, and the guidelines of funeral prayer for medical personnel possibly infected by the Covid-19.⁴⁴ Ma'ruf Amin expects that MUI's *fatwās* will be able to give some perspectives and solutions to overcome religious polemics related to the Covid-19 pandemic. In other words, MUI's *fatwās* are expected to provide more facilities for Muslims rather than difficulties.⁴⁵ MUI's *fatwās* on worshipping during the Covid-19 pandemic shed some light on the relation

⁴⁰ Zakaria Syaifei, "Tracing Maqasid Al-Shari'ah In The Fatwas Of Indonesian Council Of Ulama (MUI)," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 1 (2017): 99-123.

⁴¹ Agus Moh Najib, "Reestablishing Indonesian Madhhab: Urf and the Contribution of Intellectualism," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 58, no. 1 (2020): 171-208.

⁴² Slamet Suhartono, "Eksistensi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Dalam Perspektif Negara Hukum Pancasila," *Al-Ihkam* 12, no. 2 (2017): 448-465.

⁴³ Tim Editor, "Pemerintah Minta Fatwa MUI Lagi, Kini Panduan Salat Id Saat Pandemi," *Detiknews*, 07 April, 2020, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4967832/pemerintah-minta-fatwa-mui-lagi-kini-panduan-salat-id-saat-pandemi>, accessed on April 6, 2021.

⁴⁴ Tim Editor, "MUI Mulai Bahas 2 Fatwa Baru Terkait Corona Yang Dimintai Wapres Ma'ruf Amin," *KOMPAS.Com*, 23 Maret, 2020, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/03/23/18091321/mui-mulai-bahas-2-fatwa-baru-terkait-corona-yang-dimintai-wapres-maruf-amin>, accessed on April 6, 2021.

⁴⁵ Tim Editor, "Wapres: Fiqih Islam Jadi Solusi Atasi Dampak Pandemi Covid-19," *Berita Kementerian Komunikasi Dan Informatika Republik Indonesia*, 09 Mei, 2020, <https://kominfo.go.id/content/detail/26390/wapres-fiqih-islam-jadi-solusi-atasi-dampak-pandemi-covid-19/0/berita>, accessed on April 6, 2021.

between the '*ulamā*' and the state in Indonesia because all of the MUI-issued *fatwās* are in line with the government's policies that aim to prevent further spread of the Covid-19 virus. MUI responded to the request by issuing the *fatwā* no. 14 of 2020 concerning the organization of worship during the Covid-19 outbreak⁴⁶ and the *fatwā* no 31 issued in 2020 concerning the organization of the Friday and congregational prayers to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.⁴⁷ The first *fatwā* contains general legal decisions regarding whether or not it is permissible to hold the congregational and Friday prayers based on the potential level of the virus transmission in their respective areas. In contrast, the second *fatwā* provides more specific legal provisions regarding the procedure for congregational prayers by stretching the rows and the Friday prayer with a shift model. These two *fatwās* consider the Indonesian people's condition during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the contents of these two *fatwās* are pretty straightforward, various interpretations arise within the society. Some support the *fatwās*, while others refuse to follow.⁴⁸

In addition to the above two *fatwās*, in 2020, MUI issued a *fatwā* regarding the organization of the Eid prayer. This *fatwā* recommends that Muslims perform the Eid prayer at home, especially for those in areas with high potential Covid-19 transmission. Meanwhile, Muslims who live in areas with low levels of potential transmission may perform the Eid prayer in congregation, either in mosques or open spaces.⁴⁹ MUI issued another *fatwā* regarding the organization of the Eid al-Adha prayer and the procedure for slaughtering

⁴⁶ MUI's *fatwā* no. 14 of 2020.

⁴⁷ MUI's *fatwā* no. 31 of 2020.

⁴⁸ In some areas, like Banda Aceh, Muslims maintain congregational prayers because they do not fear the Covid-19 virus. Meanwhile, some mosques are closed for congregational prayers and worshiping activities in other districts like Bandung City and Jakarta. Tim Editor, "Virus Corona: Di Tengah Wabah, Apakah Sebaiknya Salat Berjamaah Di Masjid Untuk Sementara Ditiadakan?," *BBCNEWS*, 20 Maret, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-51971330>, accessed on April 7, 2021.

⁴⁹ MUI's *fatwā* no. 28 of 2020 on the Eid al-Fitr celebration and prayer guidelines during the Covid-19 pandemic.

sacrificial animals.⁵⁰ In its *fatwā*, MUI emphasizes the importance of implementing health protocols in slaughtering sacrificial animals to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

In general, MUI defines its legal opinions on fundamental tenets rooted in the principles of Islamic law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*): a) *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (no harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated), (b) *dar'ū al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (avoiding a harm takes precedence over taking a benefit), (c) *al-ḍarar yuzālu* (danger must be removed), (d) *al-ḍarar yudfa'ū bi qadr al-imkān* (danger must be prevented within possible limits), (e) *al-mashaqqa tajlib al-taysīr* (difficulty brings to ease). These principles are essential for being the fundamental rationale to strengthen *fatwās* that align with the arguments derived from the Qur'an and the prophet tradition (*ḥadīth*). The above principles also function as a fundamental consideration of MUI's two other *fatwās*, e.g., on guidelines for managing corpses.⁵¹ And guidelines for funeral prayers for health workers, both issued in 2000.⁵² These *fatwās* emphasize that religious law regarding the funeral process and its prayer (*ṣalat janaza*) must still be carried out even though the deceased died due to the Covid-19 infection. However, the funeral procedure must comply with health protocols for public health and safety. Through the *fatwās*, which consider religious and health regulations, MUI relies on the opinion of the majority of *madhhabs* (schools of law) and employs *talfīq* (amalgamation), emphasizing that religious ruling can change according to time and place. To do so, MUI pays attention to the strength of the arguments and principles of public interest contained in the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* and emphasizes inclusiveness, moderation, and accommodation of Islamic legal principles so that the *fatwās* can

⁵⁰ MUI's *fatwā* no. 36 of 2020 on Eid al-Adha prayer and slaughtering sacrificial animals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁵¹ MUI's *fatwā* no. 18 of 2020 on the guidelines for managing the Covid-19 infected Muslim corpse.

⁵² MUI's *fatwā* no. 17 of 2020 on the guidelines for prayers for health workers who wear personal protective equipment when caring for and handling Covid-19 patients.

answer the challenges of the times,⁵³ And highlight the idea that Islam is compatible with every place and time (*ṣāliḥ li-kulli zamān wa makān*).

MUI's *fatwās* above were issued following the government announced a large-scale social restriction policy (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar/PSBB) through the Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of the Covid-19 Virus. The Regulation rules several steps that must be taken, such as school holidays, work holidays, restrictions on religious activities, and restrictions on activities in public places or facilities. The Ministry of Health later also announced the Regulation of the Minister of Health no. 9 of 2020, which explicitly regulates the technical implementation of large-scale social restriction policies. Following the move, some provincial governments also issue special regulations on large-scale restriction policy, such as the Jakarta Governor's Regulation No. 33 of 2020.⁵⁴ Likewise, some important Islamic organizations, like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, issued similar *fatwās*.⁵⁵

On Economy

The impact of Covid-19 extends not only to public health but also to national economic growth. In response to this problem, MUI tries to accommodate the state's interests in tackling economic problems caused by Covid-19. In so doing, MUI highlights its position as *khādim al-ḥukūma*, supporting the state's interests in maintaining economic stability. Through its *fatwās*, MUI seeks to realize the government's policies for the sake of economic protection. This position is taken after taking into account the shared objectives between the Indonesian government's economic policy amid the Covid-19

⁵³ Regarding the method of *talfīq* see Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Al-Wajīz fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003).

⁵⁴ Ahmad Muhtadi Anshor & Muhammad Ngizzul Muttaqin, "Kebijakan Pemerintah Indonesia Dalam Pencegahan Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Perspektif Maqashid Syari'ah," *Al-Istimbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (2020): 159-176.

⁵⁵ Marcus Mietzner, "Populist Anti-Scientism, Religious Polarisation, and Institutionalised Corruption: How Indonesia's Democratic Decline Shaped Its Covid-19 Response," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2020): 228.

pandemic and MUI's *fatwā* on the use of *zakat*, *infaq* (charity for public purposes), and *shadaqah* for coping with Covid-19.⁵⁶

However, because the impact of Covid-19 is huge on the economy, the government, through the Ministry of Finance, issues a government debt securities policy as referred to in law no. 24 of 2002 concerning the government securities. This is taken to meet the state budget's financing needs, including overcoming this pandemic outbreak.⁵⁷ Technically, this policy is the government's effort to continue a credible, sustainable, disciplined fiscal policy amid turbulent global economic conditions, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, this responsive and effective fiscal policy can support three priority and fundamental programs in handling Covid-19, namely handling health problems and supporting business actors such as MSMEs and social safety net operators.⁵⁸

MUI sees the government policies on the economy and financial sectors are by the legal doctrine of *taṣarruf al-imām 'alā al-ra'īyya manūṭ bi al-maṣlaḥa* (the leader's policy regarding the people must be oriented toward benefit). MUI later also issues a *fatwā* no. 23 of 2020 concerning the utilization of *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah* assets for combating the Covid-19 outbreak and its impacts.⁵⁹ This *fatwā* is based on the doctrine of *li al-wasā'il ḥukm al-maqāṣid* (the rule of intermediary things follows the law of the objectives). Based on this rule, MUI, through its *fatwā*, seeks to realize the general benefit through *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah*. The benefit in question is that the target for distributing *zakat*, *infaq*,

⁵⁶ Tim Editor, "Wapres: Kebijakan Pemerintah Dengan Fatwa Ulama Saat Pandemi," *Republika.Co.Id*, 25 Agustus, 2020, <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/gek/pj8396/wapres-kebijakan-pemerintah-dengan-fatwa-ulama-saat-pandemi>, accessed on April 5, 2021. Both the government and MUI share concerns about the stability of the financial sector and public economic recovery due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Among the government's policies is the government regulation instead of law (Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang/PERPU) of the Republic of Indonesia no. 1 of 2020 concerning the state financial policy and financial system stability for handling the Covid-19 Virus pandemic and in facing threats that endanger the national economy and/or stability financial system. This government regulation contains policies to maintain the national economic stability and recovery of those affected citizens through spending activities to mitigate health risks, protect the citizens and maintain business activities.

⁵⁷ Endang Naryono, "Impact of National Disaster Covid-19, Indonesia Toward Economic Recession," *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pasim Sukabumi*, 2020, 1-10.

⁵⁸ Zulfa Harirah & Annas Rizaldi, "Merespon Nalar Kebijakan Negara Dalam Menangani Pandemi Covid 19 Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Kebijakan Publik Indonesia* 7, no. 1 (2020): 36-53.

⁵⁹ MUI's *fatwā* no. 23 Tahun of 2020, utilizing *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah* assets to combat the Covid-19 outbreak and its impacts.

and *shadaqah* should focus more on people experiencing poverty directly affected by Covid-19. In addition, *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah* assets can also be managed to provide personal protective equipment, disinfectants, treatment and the needs of humanitarian volunteers. Moreover, MUI *fatwā* also recommends that Muslims immediately pay *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah* to those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As for Islamic legal perspectives, the distribution of *zakat* to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic is indeed in line with the primary objective of the *zakat*, namely *sadd khallat al-muslimān* (fulfilling the basic needs of Muslims). In addition, the objective principle is also in line with the goals of *zakat* from various dimensions,⁶⁰ such as the improvement of people's education, social security, economic maintenance and Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*). Furthermore, *zakat* embodies the concept of *takāful ijtimā'ī* (social mutual guarantee), which aligns with the concept of "social insurance" in the modern economic system. These two concepts both idealize conditions in which a person who encounters difficulties does not stand alone with his difficulties. The presence of the state alone is less effective in overcoming various community problems due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a need for cooperation to ease the burden of others so that the difficulties encountered related to economic and financial problems can be overcome. In this context, *zakat*, which has the potential to reach IDR 327.6 trillion, is undoubtedly expected to contribute to alleviating poverty and hardship in the pandemic situation,⁶¹ as well as realizing the idea of social insurance⁶² That at least help minimize the burden and difficulties encountered by Muslim citizens.

⁶⁰ Fahmi Yunus Hafas Furqani, Ratna Mulyany, "Zakat for Economic Empowerment of The Poor in Indonesia: Models and Implications," *IQTISHADIA: Jurnal Kajian Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 11, no. 2 (2018): 391-411.

⁶¹ Anita Yossihara, "Potensi Rp 327 Triliun, Zakat Diharap Turut Entaskan Kemiskinan," *Kompas*, 4 April, 2020, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/ekonomi/2021/04/05/potensi-rp-327-triliun-zakat-diharap-turut-entaskan-kemiskinan/>, accessed on May 4, 2021.

⁶² See Asep Saepudin Jahar, "Marketing Islam Through Zakat Institutions in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 22, no. 3 (2015): 405-442.

On Covid-19 Vaccination

To overcome the Covid-19 pandemic in the health sector, the government issued Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia no. 99 of 2020 concerning the vaccine procurement and the implementation of vaccination in the framework of combating the Covid-19 pandemic and Regulation of the Minister of Health no. 10 of 2021 concerning the implementation of vaccination in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic management. Unfortunately, the government's policy on Covid-19 vaccination has caused polemics among citizens. Some supported the government's vaccination program, while others refused. These polemics are triggered by various issues such as vaccine safety, post-vaccination conditions, the vaccine's *halal* status, and an issue of business conspiracy. The pros and cons of the vaccination program are getting heated because of political issues concerning the Chinese origin of a Covid-19 vaccine and the remnants of the conflicts of the 2019 presidential election.

In response to the polemics arising from the Covid-19 vaccination program, the government, represented by Vice President Ma'ruf Amin, requested MUI to issue a *fatwā* regarding the *halal* status of the Covid-19 vaccine before being circulated by the Indonesian government.⁶³ In addition, MUI is also heavily involved in the Covid-19 vaccination program, starting from planning, procuring vaccines, and determining the *halal* status of a vaccine, auditing vaccine factories in the People's Republic of China, to socializing the Covid-19 vaccination program to the public.⁶⁴ The government seems to believe that MUI's *fatwā* that supports the vaccination program will become an effective way to convince those citizens who stand against the Covid-19 vaccination.⁶⁵ This implies that the role

⁶³ Tim Editor, "Wapres Minta MUI Keluarkan Fatwa Sebelum Vaksin Covid-19 Diedarkan," *KOMPAS.Com*, 27 November, 2020, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/11/27/12172051/wapres-minta-mui-keluarkan-fatwa-sebelum-vaksin-covid-19-diedarkan>, accessed on April 9, 2021.

⁶⁴ Tim Editor, "Wapres: Fatwa MUI Jadi Rujukan Umat Islam Saat Covid-19," *Beritasatu*, 16 Oktober, 2020, <https://www.beritasatu.com/kesehatan/688215/wapres-fatwa-mui-jadi-rujukan-umat-islam-saat-covid19>, accessed on April 9, 2021.

⁶⁵ MUI's independence has been spotlighted because the issuance of its *fatwās* in this regard was due to the government's request. This can happen because MUI's board is filled by those who support the government. Vice President Ma'ruf Amin even becomes the Chairman of the MUI

of religious (Islamic) legal products in the form of *fatwās* becomes one of the essential instruments for the success of state policy. Although Islam is not the only religion in Indonesia, Islamic values greatly influence society. This influence can be seen very clearly from the effect of the *fatwā* on the *halal* status of a Covid-19 vaccine, which can reduce polemics among the citizens.⁶⁶

MUI's *fatwā* no. 2 of 2021 concerning Covid-19 vaccine products from Sinovac Life Sciences Co. Ltd of China and PT Bio Farma states that this Covid vaccine is pure and *halal*.⁶⁷ This *fatwā* decision considers that the Covid-19 outbreak is a health threat. The *fatwā* is based on the doctrines of *al-ḍararu yuzāl* (adversity must be eliminated) and *al-daf' awlā min al-raf'* (preventive action takes precedence over curative action). A means to prevent the transmission of the virus is the vaccination program. MUI bases its *fatwā* on the rule of *al-amr bi al-shay' amr bi wasā'ilih* (an order against something also means an order to carry out its ingredients). On the other hand, vaccine products that Muslims consume must meet the standards of purity and *halalness*. This *fatwā* also considers the *halal* certification application for Bio Farma's Covid-19 vaccine.⁶⁸ Produced by Sinovac and PT. Bio Farma. The orientation of MUI's *fatwā* is the realization of benefit. This *fatwā* product comes from a collective *ijtihād*.⁶⁹ The term collective *ijtihād* is called because it involves various parties, including MUI's Fatwa Commission and MUI's LPPOM, BPOM, the Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI), and experts in their respective fields.

Advisory Council. Some consider Ma'ruf Amin's recent position in the government to have made MUI more prone to government intervention.

⁶⁶ Tim Editor, "Ma'ruf, Vaksin, Dan Politik Fatwa," *Pintar Politik*, 16 Januari, 2021, <https://www.pinterpolitik.com/in-depth/maruf-vaksin-dan-politik-fatwa>, accessed on April 11, 2021.

⁶⁷ MUI's *fatwā* no. 02 of 2021 on Covid-19 vaccine products from Sinovac Life Sciences Co. Ltd of China and PT Bio Farma.

⁶⁸ Bio Farma is a state-owned enterprise, funded on August 6, 1890 and working in the pharmaceutical field.

⁶⁹ Alias Azhar, "The Need for Collective Ijtihad between the Fuqaha and Experts in Health Science and Modern Medicine: A Review," *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation* 24, no. 2 (2020): 4233-4242.

In addition to MUI's *fatwā* no. 2 of 2021, MUI also issued *fatwā* no. 14 of 2021 concerning the rule of the use of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine. This *fatwā* confirms that AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine is *haram* (forbidden) because pork elements are involved in its production. However, the MUI views that the AstraZeneca vaccine is currently permitted due to an urgent need.⁷⁰ This decision is based on the doctrine of *al-ḥājat qad tanzilu manzilat al-ḍarūra* (urgent needs sometimes occupy the position of emergency law) and the doctrine of *al-ḍarūrat tubḥ al-maḥzūrāt* (in an emergency it is permissible to do something, which is prohibited). In addition, the permissibility of using the AstraZeneca vaccine is also based on experts' testimony that there will be a dangerous risk if the Covid-19 vaccination is not immediately carried out. To eliminate this dangerous risk, MUI stipulates its *fatwā* using a legal doctrine of *al-ḍarar yuzāl* (danger must be eliminated). Another consideration for allowing the AstraZeneca vaccine is also because the pure and *halal* Covid-19 vaccine's availability is insufficient for the Covid-19 vaccination program. In addition, Indonesia has already bought vaccines at high prices.⁷¹

The opinion taken by the MUI central board seems only sometimes followed by its regional branches. The MUI provincial board of East Java, for example, opines for the clear permissibility of the AstraZeneca vaccine,⁷² Due to the conviction that the pork elements in the vaccine have already been deformed and transformed into other substances. This deformation, which is based on the principle of *istihāla*,⁷³ Ensures that the vaccine is no longer *haram*.

Thus, there are similarities and differences regarding the position taken by the MUI central board and the East Java MUI. Both allow the use of the

⁷⁰ MUI's *fatwā* no. 14 of 2021 on the use of the Covid-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca.

⁷¹ Mutiara Nabila, "Harga Vaksin Covid-19 Di Indonesia: Sinovac Paling Mahal," *Bisnis.Com*, 13 April, 2021, <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20210413/15/1380546/harga-vaksin-covid-19-di-indonesia-sinovac-paling-mahal>, accessed on April 13, 2021.

⁷² Tim Editor, "Safari Vaksinasi AstraZeneca Jokowi Hingga Fatwa MUI Jatim," *CCINDONESIA*, 22 Maret, 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210322200511-20-620702/safari-vaksinasi-astrazeneca-jokowi-hingga-fatwa-mui-jatim>, accessed on April 12, 2021.

⁷³ Tim Editor, "Hasil Bahtsul Masail PWNU Jatim: Vaksin AstraZeneca Suci," *Nuonline*, 21 Maret, 2021, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/127449/hasil-bahtsul-masail-pwnu-jatim-vaksin-astrazeneca-suci>, accessed on April 12, 2021.

AstraZeneca vaccine but for different reasons.⁷⁴ The former allows it because of an emergency, applying the Shafi'i legal reasoning. Meanwhile, while the latter allows it because it is substantially *halal*, applying the Hanafi and Maliki methods of legal reasoning. The former stipulates that AstraZeneca is *haram* because it does not accept the doctrine of *istiṣlāḥ* absolutely and excludes pigs and their derivatives from applying it. It upholds the principles of *iḥtiyāt* (prudence) and *al-khurūj min al-khilāf* (avoiding differences in opinion) of the Shafi'i school. For the MUI central board, AstraZeneca becomes permissible not because of *taḥlīl al-ḥarām* (allowing the unlawful), but because of the principles of public *ḥājāt* (needs) and emergency that justify its permissibility.

As MUI plays a vital role for issuing legal status of Covid-19 vaccines, which appears to support the government's vaccination program,⁷⁵ We may be unable to conceal if some judge that MUI is moving toward serving the government (*khādim al-ḥukūma*). Ma'ruf Amin, vice president and former chairperson of MUI, emphasizes that the Covid-19 vaccination is mandatory.⁷⁶ by referring to MUI's *fatwā*.⁷⁷ Amin demands that the public not just focus on the *halalness* or *harmless* of vaccines, but instead on the permissibility of the use of the vaccines.⁷⁸ It seems that MUI's *fatwās* successfully reduce the polemics.

⁷⁴ Asrori S Karni, "MUI Menyikapi Istihalah: Kasus AstraZeneca," 23 *Maret*, 2021, <https://mui.or.id/opini/29908/mui-menyikapi-istihalah-kasus-astrazeneca/>, accessed on April 12, 2021.

⁷⁵ Muhamad Agus Mushodiq & Ali Imron, "Peran Majelis Ulama Indonesia Dalam Mitigasi Pandemi Covid-19 (Tinjauan Tindakan Sosial Dan Dominasi Kekuasaan Max Weber)," *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar'i* 7, no. 5 (2020): 455-472.

⁷⁶ Nindya Aldila, "Setelah Divaksin Covid-19, Wapres Ingatkan Vaksinasi Hukumnya Wajib," *Bisnis.Com* 17 *Februari*, 2021, <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20210217/15/1357380/setelah-divaksin-covid-19-wapres-ingatkan-vaksinasi-hukumnya-wajib>, accessed on April 13, 2021.

⁷⁷ Tim Editor, "Vaksin AstraZeneca Dipakai MUI, Wapres Harap Tumbuhkan Kepercayaan," *KOMPAS.Com*, 07 *April*, 2021, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/04/07/11173381/vaksin-astrazeneca-dipakai-mui-wapres-harap-tumbuhkan-kepercayaan>, accessed on April 13, 2021.

⁷⁸ Tim Editor, "Tinjau Vaksinasi Di MUI, Wapres: Kita Fokus Pada Status Boleh Agar Herd Immunity Terkejar," *Mui.or.Id*, 7 *April*, 2021, <https://mui.or.id/berita/29941/tinjau-vaksinasi-di-mui-wapres-kita-fokus-pada-status-boleh-agar-herd-immunity-terkejar/>, accessed on April 14, 2021.

Related to Ma'ruf Amin's position as the vice president and the former Chairman of the MUI, he influences the relationship between MUI and the government. In the first period of Jokowi's government, MUI takes a neutral position, and even some of the board members of MUI state their support toward Jokowi's opponent. An unharmonic relationship between MUI and the government appears in its development because of a *fatwā* on religious blasphemy addressed to one of Jokowi's group supporters. However, the unharmonic relationship between MUI and the government improves when Ma'ruf Amin is vice president. Ma'ruf Amin's entry into the government is also strengthened by the exit of some figures of MUI who so far have criticized Jokowi. The position of Ma'ruf Amin then returned to MUI as a government supporter. Ma'ruf Amin's position has also caused MUI to issue a *fatwā* that supports every government policy.⁷⁹

CONCLUSION

MUI's *fatwās* related to Covid-19, especially in terms of public worship, economy, and health, are closely related to the policies taken by the Indonesian government. This relation can be seen from the issuance of MUI's *fatwās* right after the government issued policies related to handling the Covid-19 pandemic. This fact implies the role of MUI in supporting and confirming every government policy in handling Covid-19. The MUI's support for the government, of course, is closely connected to the government's awareness of the growing popularity of MUI among the Muslim community since the Reformation era, precisely when the council began to keep its distance from the state and began to take a closer position to the Muslim society (*khādim al-umma*). Kyai Ma'ruf Amin's position as part of the government structure (Vice President) is a momentum for the state to maximize the role of MUI. In this context, MUI, which is expected to be able to reduce all socio-religious polemics between the state and society due to Covid-19,

⁷⁹ Syafiq Hasyim, "Indonesia's MUI Today: Truly Moderate or Merely Pragmatic?," *ISEAS Perspective Is Published Electronically by: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute*, 2021, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/iseas-perspective-2020-3-indonesias-mui-today-truly-moderate-or-merely-pragmatic-by-syafiq-hasyim/>.

is seen as capable of "communicating" the state policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic through its *fatwās*. This view refers to the fact that the issuance of MUI *fatwās* related to the Covid-19 pandemic is greatly motivated by the government's requests, and the *fatwās* also support the government policies such as the *fatwās* regarding the permissibility of using the AstraZeneca vaccine which is considered *haram*. This context indicates the repositioning of MUI to become a *khādim al-ḥukūma*.

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- Fatwa MUI Nomor 18 Tahun 2020 Tentang Pedoman Pengurusan Jenazah (Tajhiz Al-Jana'iz) Muslim yang Terinfeksi Covid-19.
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