

RECONCILIATION FROM BELOW: INDONESIA'S RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AND GRASSROOTS AGENCY FOR PEACE

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Since the downfall of Suharto's New Order dictatorial regime in 1998, Indonesia has witnessed a range of sectarian violence and religious intolerance. Rather than examining the nature and dynamics of the communal violence and acts of prejudice among some ethno-religious groupings, this article addresses the phenomenon of "grassroots peacebuilding," namely, various attempts at peacemaking and reconciliation made by local activists and actors of peace from both state and civil society across Indonesia. It discusses ways, strategies, and challenges of building civic peace and intergroup harmony, and of connecting conflicting parties on the ground. Finally, it suggests that those concerned with the establishment of global peace need to go beyond liberal and secular frameworks of peacebuilding that emphasize only the roles of international and national actors and of secular groupings; also important are the contributions of grassroots peacemakers, and religious actors and institutions. Strategic peacebuilding requires intense collaboration between religious and secular actors, state and society agencies, and national and local players.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses religious violence and attempts at peacemaking and reconciliation in contemporary Indonesia. The bulk of this article, however, is to examine the phenomenon of so-called "grassroots peacebuilding," namely, efforts at building peace, maintaining harmony, and creating

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