
The Indonesian Central Government in Local Conflict Resolution

Lessons from the Reconciliation of Nahdlatul Wathan

Saipul Hamdi and Kevin W. Fogg

In September 2019, some five thousand people from towns and villages across the island of Lombok came to demonstrate at the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, over a dispute between two factions of an organization. While a large demonstration by an Islamic group is not exceptional in Indonesia, it is noteworthy that this action took the form of a protest against a symbol of the national government—instead of the apparatus of the rival organization. From the start of the *Reformasi* period, the two factions of the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Wathan have been in continual conflict, but this had long taken the form of violence and competition in nongovernmental forums. Since 2019, the conflict—and eventual reconciliation—has moved largely into arenas mediated by the Indonesian national government.

This article discusses not just why the two factions of a mass Islamic organization that split in the 1990s would reconcile now, but specifically why they would actively

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seek central government intervention in their reconciliation and follow government guidance for that intervention. This case extends our understanding of social conflict resolution in post-authoritarian Indonesia, in addition to its contribution to the study of Islamic organizational life and of society on Lombok.

In the transition out of the authoritarian Suharto regime in Indonesia, social conflict emerged across the archipelago. Small-scale violence lingered for decades after the transition to the *Reformasi* era, even as large-scale violence subsided.¹ The case study in this article looks fundamentally unlike most of the conflicts that have been the focus of previous scholarship, and its resolution also points toward a shift in the role of the state in Indonesian society.

This study challenges some of the stereotypes about religious violence in Indonesia since 1998, because although the dividing lines on Lombok were clearly between two different communities organized around religion, the religion in question was the same: Islam. This makes the case markedly different from the work of Ward Barendschot or Christopher R. Duncan on North Maluku, Lorraine Aragon or Dave McRae on Central Sulawesi, and even John T. Sidel's broad thesis about the motivating factors that pushed Muslims into various forms of nativist and religious violence around 1998.² Within Sidel's framework, the social conflicts around Nahdlatul Wathan most closely align with the form and context of "riots," happening in provincial towns and cities where the "institutions of Islamic learning, association, and political activity enjoyed a special claim on the public sphere."³ Still, these conflicts were not just a groundswell of discontented and disempowered Muslim masses looking for an outlet; they were openly and unambiguously part of a power struggle between known rival sets of elites.

Thus, this case fits the traditional definitions of neither ethnic nor religious violence—as were the focus of so much attention in the first decade of this century.⁴ Rather, Nahdlatul Wathan on Lombok represents a pure case of social conflict. Although it was deeply ingrained and resulted in loss of life, much property damage, and a very tense environment for over two decades, it did not fall along the lines that have been most commonly tracked by scholars. In that way, it bears some greater similarities to the political schisms of the last several decades, such as the multiple splits within the political parties Golkar and PPP.⁵

¹ Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey and Ashutosh Varshney, "When Large Conflicts Subside: The Ebbs and Flows of Violence in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16 (2016): 191–217.

² Ward Barendschot, "Patterned Pogroms: Patronage Networks as Infrastructure for Electoral Violence in India and Indonesia," *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 1 (2020): 171–84; Christopher R. Duncan, *Violence and Vengeance: Religious Conflict and Its Aftermath in Eastern Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Lorraine Aragon, "Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People," *Indonesia* 72 (2001): 45–79; Dave McRae, *A Few Poorly Organized Men: Interreligious Violence in Poso, Indonesia* (Boston: Brill, 2013); John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³ Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*, 101.

⁴ Edward Aspinall, "Ethnic and Religious Violence in Indonesia: A Review Essay," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 62, no. 4 (2008): 558–72.

⁵ Aisah Putri Budiatri, *Faksi dan Konflik Internal Partai Politik di Indonesia Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor, 2018); Firman Noor, "Leadership and Ideological Bond: PPP and Internal Fragmentation in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 1 (2016): 61–103; Marcus Meitzner, "Indonesian Parties Revisited: Systemic Exclusivism, Electoral Personalisation and Declining Intraparty Democracy," in *Democracy in Indonesia: From Stagnation to Regression?*, ed. Thomas Power and Eve Warburton (Singapore: ISEAS, 2020), 191–209.

This case study of Nahdlatul Wathan not only compliments the current scholarship on the nature of social conflict in Indonesia, but also challenges previous studies about conflict resolution in the archipelago. The bulk of the scholarship has emphasized the centrality of non-state actors to effective resolution.⁶ In one of the most exhaustive surveys on violence from 1996 to 2006, Yuhki Tajima argued that overreliance on the state during the New Order period had led to much of the conflict after the fall of authoritarianism, because groups could no longer rely on the state as a mediator.⁷ In a related vein, Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey, and Ashutosh Varshney have argued that the post-1998 state has been most effective at keeping a lid on major armed conflict but has not been effective at promoting or facilitating real reconciliation between conflicting groups.⁸ These studies point alternatively to the state's lack of authority with the conflicting parties or the state's lack of capacity to facilitate conflict resolution.

Reconciliation, or *islah* to use the Arabic term that has been adopted for this Islamic context, is a key step in the process of conflict resolution. Reconciliation is not a box to tick, but rather a process that must be followed by the agents of a conflict to facilitate further steps in resolution. Reconciliation overlaps with the process of healing the wounds and trauma of society, seeking justice and truth and mutual forgiveness between the victims and perpetrators of violence.⁹ David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, and Luc Huyse note that reconciliation can require several decades or even generations.¹⁰ In this case, the supposed *islah* has come after one generation, but has also appeared very quickly after a reconciliation pushed onto the organizational elites by the government. This raises questions about whether it is actual reconciliation within society, or merely a kind of new equilibrium among power players. This study builds on and speaks to broader themes raised in earlier studies by Saipul Hamdi and Hamdi and Bianca J. Smith¹¹ in relation to conflict and the reluctance to reconcile within NW.

Nahdlatul Wathan in 2021 is an example of the central government having not only the authority and the capacity to negotiate a resolution between the parties of a longstanding social conflict, but also the interest to do so. This reflects a change from the last twenty years, and it suggests a more assertive central state in Indonesian society.

⁶ See, for example, the authors in part III of Charles A. Coppel, ed., *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution* (London: Routledge, 2006); Suprpto, "Religious Leaders and Peace Building: The Roles of Tuan Guru and Pedanda in Conflict Resolution in Lombok—Indonesia," *Al-J mi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 225–50; and Alexandre Pelletier and Jessica Soedigdo, "The De-escalation of Violence and the Political Economy of Peace-Mongering: Evidence from Maluku, Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 25, no. 4 (2017): 325–41.

⁷ Yuhki Tajima, *The Institutional Origins of Communal Violence: Indonesia's Transition from Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁸ Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney, "When Large Conflicts Subside."

⁹ David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, and Luc Huyse, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook* (Stockholm: The International IDEA, 2006), 11–14.

¹⁰ Bloomfield, Barnes, and Huyse, *Reconciliation*, 22.

¹¹ Saipul Hamdi, *Nahdlatul Wathan di Era Reformasi: Agama, Konflik Komunal, dan Peta Rekonsiliasi* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 2014), "Politik Islah: Renegosiasi Islah, Konflik, dan Kekuasaan dalam Nahdlatul Wathan di Lombok Timur," *Kawistara* 1 (2011): 1–14; Saipul Hamdi and Bianca J. Smith, "Sisters, Militias and Islam in Conflict: Questioning 'Reconciliation' in Nahdlatul Wathan, Lombok, Indonesia," *Contemporary Islam* 1, no. 6 (2012): 29–43.

Nahdlatul Wathan: A Mass Islamic Organization Split in Two

The organization Nahdlatul Wathan has been the dominant nongovernmental institution on the island of Lombok since Indonesian independence.¹² The central figure of this movement was Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid (1908–97, hereafter Tuan Guru Zainuddin), who was educated in Mecca before returning to Lombok and founding a school in Pancor in 1935, with the name Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyyah Islamiyyah (Revival of the Nation Islamic Religion, hereafter NWDI). Through the example of its high standards and modern format, and through the powerful charisma of its founder, this school grew in the 1940s into a network of schools spreading out from East Lombok, planted by Tuan Guru Zainuddin with alumni of the mother school as the staff. In 1953, the network formally established an organization, called Nahdlatul Wathan (Revival of the Nation, hereafter NW).

From the 1950s to 1999, NW's influence over Sasak Muslims was unrivaled. This was largely embodied in Tuan Guru Zainuddin, who was inexhaustible in his educational and propagation efforts. He also involved himself directly in politics, both supporting candidates and (during the 1950s and 1960s) serving as a national legislator himself. One Swedish anthropologist visiting Lombok in the 1970s estimated that the anniversary celebrations for the founding of NWDI would draw half a million people to Pancor each year—one quarter of the Muslim population of the island!¹³ By the 1990s, Nahdlatul Wathan had established over six hundred Islamic schools across Lombok, each operating quasi-independently but under the direction of Tuan Guru Zainuddin's leadership and instruction.¹⁴

The ubiquity of NW did not mean that it was without internal conflict, and two serious issues arose in the 1970s. First, the leadership of the organization chose to align politically with Golkar, the Suharto regime's ruling party, after the party restructuring process of 1973. This led many within the organization to dissent, with the argument that NW should be supporting the Islamic political party. The dissenters were promptly exiled from the organization by Tuan Guru Zainuddin—providing an organizational precedent for excommunication over political questions. The second conflict was both an organizational and a family conflict, and it connects more directly with later conflicts within the organization. Tuan Guru Zainuddin had up to four wives at a time, as is permitted under Islamic law, but only ever had two children—both daughters. The elder daughter is Sitti Rahun and the younger daughter is Sitti Raihanun, and they were born to different mothers. In 1969, Tuan Guru Zainuddin moved to hand off the day-to-day leadership of NW to his son-in-law by his elder daughter, Sitti Rahun. That move ended calamitously with an extraordinary organizational congress called in 1977 at which Tuan

¹² The history recounted here is based on the authors' own research. Prominent sources from within the organization that have surveyed the organizational history include H. M. Yusuf, ed., *Sejarah Ringkas Perguruan N. W. D. I. & N. B. D. I. dan N. W.* (Pancor-Selong, Lombok Timur: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Wathan, 1976); H. Abdul Hayyi Nu'man, *Maulanasysyaikh TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid: Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangannya* (Pancor, Lombok: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Wathan, 1419 H/ 1999 M); and Mohammad Noor, Muslihan Habib, and Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, *Visi Kebangsaan Religius: Refleksi Pemikiran dan Perjuangan Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, 1904–1997* (Ciputat: Logos, 2004).

¹³ Sven Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah: A Sasak Community on Lombok*, Gothenburg Studies in Social Anthropology 3 (Goteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1981), 85.

¹⁴ Noor, Habib, and Zuhdi, *Visi Kebangsaan Religius*, 221.

Guru Zainuddin lambasted his son-in-law for subverting the proper purposes of the organization and removed him from leadership.

From 1977, Tuan Guru Zainuddin again ran NW (and the mother school, NWDI), although he integrated his son-in-law by the younger Sitti Raihanun as formal organizational head and later drew in representatives of Sitti Rauhun's family, too (she divorced the man who had been exiled from the organization and remarried another, more religious figure). Rivalries and tension between the two daughters, their husbands, and children continued from the 1980s to the 1990s. When Tuan Guru Zainuddin passed away in 1997, the heir to organizational leadership was unclear, as some of the likeliest candidates passed away around the same time. NW held an organizational congress in July 1998—at the peak of Indonesia's political *Reformasi*, after President Suharto had resigned in May—when against all expectations the leader chosen as the new organizational head was Tuan Guru Zainuddin's younger daughter: Sitti Raihanun.

The election of Sitti Raihanun was highly controversial and was immediately rejected by several other leaders within the family and within the organization—both because it favored one side of the family and because it elevated a woman to a place of spiritual leadership.¹⁵ During the organizational congress itself, a large voting bloc walked out and boycotted the vote before Sitti Raihanun secured the final victory. One of her uncles who had been running the school NWDI declared himself the organizational leader, but confusion and dissension continued to reign. Eventually in September 1999, those who rejected Sitti Raihanun's leadership held a "Reformasi" congress at which Tuan Guru Zainuddin's grandson, through the older Sitti Rauhun, a young scholar named Zainul Majdi (now famous as *Tuan Guru Bajang* or "Young Tuan Guru") was elected as a rival organizational head for NW. Thus, since 1998, two separate factions of the organization recognizing two separate sets of institutional leaders have existed.

The factional split within NW also led to a social split and deep and abiding social conflict. In the central town of the organization—Pancor, the home of the NWDI school—there was fighting on the streets, back-and-forth property damage, and the burning of shops affiliated with either side throughout September 1998. In October 1998, the younger Sitti Raihanun and those who followed her leadership emigrated from Pancor, where the faction supporting her uncle and her sister's son was ascendent, to a village several kilometers away. Eventually in 2000, Sitti Raihanun established a permanent base for the organization under her leadership at the village of Anjani. From 2000 to 2021, the two factions of NW have thus been known by the towns that hosted their main establishments: NW-Anjani has been led by the younger daughter Sitti Raihanun (and later by her son), and NW-Pancor has been led by Zainul Majdi.

The most heated period of violent conflict lasted until 2005. During this period, the move by one faction or the other to claim an Islamic school, prayer group, or local NW asset was frequently the spark that led to recriminations, personal violence, or the destruction of buildings. Qur'anic recitation groups that should have been locations for spiritual guidance instead turned into training vehicles for armed conflict. This split

¹⁵ Bianca J. Smith, "Reorienting Female Spiritual Power in Islam: Narrating Conflict between Warriors, Witches and Militias in Lombok," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40 (2012): 249–71.

communities down the middle, often with different teachers or leaders in the same village taking different sides.¹⁶

The two decades since the split have also brought some progress to the organization. Both NW-Anjani and NW-Pancor were able to establish new schools, including expanding to more provinces across Indonesia. The most notable success has been NW-Pancor's political ascendance, with Zainul Majdi elected twice as governor of West Nusa Tenggara province (serving 2008–18), and his older sister Sitti Rohmi Djalilah coming into office as Lieutenant Governor in 2018. Individuals from both factions have also served in the legislatures at the national, provincial, and local levels. The area in which there had not been progress up to 2021 was in reconciliation between Nahdlatul Wathan's two factions.

Efforts at Reconciliation in NW and Why They Failed

For two decades since the split in 1998, there had been efforts toward reconciliation by NW elites, but without any lasting success. From NW's 10th Congress in Praya in 1998 until 2020, the reconciliation process had not seen much meaningful progress. This section will focus on prior attempts at reconciliation and demonstrate how the government failed to play any positive role pushing the sides together.

The hurdles impeding reconciliation between the two factions in NW are multifaceted. They include theological arguments (e.g., women cannot be legitimate spiritual leaders under Islamic law), political concerns (with the domination of NW-Pancor in provincial politics), and cultural elements (such as the tradition of leadership within NW). In light of this, efforts by provincial and national governmental leaders to facilitate reconciliation—to say nothing of initiatives by religious and societal leaders—have never borne fruit. On the contrary, some observers have suggested that the NW conflict has been perpetuated by governmental leaders, most notably by cozying up to one side or the other to seek electoral support, thus increasing the level of conflict between the two factions.¹⁷ At least one leader in the NW-Pancor faction has suspected that the whole organizational split was intentionally designed and caused by the government through the military, which has feared the power of a united NW since the 1990s.¹⁸

Since the failure of the two NW factions to reconcile after the 10th Congress in 1998, the closest the two sides came to *islah* was in 2010. In that year, the political momentum of a local election in Central Lombok pushed the two sides to negotiate toward reconciliation, especially the NW-Anjani faction. The eldest son of younger sister Sitti Raihanun, Tuan Guru Haji L. Gede Sakti Amir Murni, entered the ring as a candidate for district head of Central Lombok in the 2010 elections. To win this election, he needed the votes of the whole NW community, including those who were affiliated

¹⁶ The best source on the split within NW and the ensuing violence is Hamdi, *Nahdlatul Wathan di Era Reformasi*. On the gendered aspects of this, see Bianca J. Smith and Saipul Hamdi, "Between Sufi and Salafi Subjects: Contested Female Leadership, Spiritual Power, and Gender Matters on Lombok," in *Gender and Power in Indonesian Islam: Leaders, Feminists, Sufis, and Pesantren Selves*, ed. Bianca J. Smith and Mark R. Woodward (New York: Routledge, 2014), 25–48.

¹⁷ Fauzan Fuad, Habibuddin, and Muhammad Rafii (lecturers in Hamzanwadi University and Nahdlatul Wathan activists), interview by Saipul Hamdi, October 20, 2010.

¹⁸ Rosiady Sayuti (vice-chairman of NW Pancor), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 25, 2021.

with NW-Pancor. If the NW bloc was split, it would mean he had very little chance of winning, because NW is not the dominant group in Central Lombok district. The leaders of NW-Anjani agreed to reconcile (*islah*) with NW-Pancor in May 2010 and engaged in joint campaigning. The sisters Sitti Rauhun and Sitti Raihanun met in person for the first time in ten years, at the grave of their father—an act of great spiritual importance for the NW community. This meeting was also attended by their children, including the two prominent political sons of Sitti Rauhun: Governor M. Zainul Majdi and district head of East Lombok Syamsul Lutfi. Besides showing up to campaign for TGH. Sakti in Central Lombok, the two sides also had several meetings toward consolidation. The NW-Anjani group for the first time attended the anniversary celebrations of the school NWDI in Pancor that year.¹⁹

The *islah* in 2010 created controversy among society, because they thought it reeked of politics. This NW *islah* was seen by some of society as a pseudo-*islah*, not a pure effort from a selfless (Indonesian and Arabic: *ikhlas*) desire by each faction to unite. In spite of this, the *islah* in Praya in 2010 had a positive effect to reduce the tensions and accusations between the factions, particularly at the grassroots level. The reconciliation at Praya also helped TGH. Sakti win a plurality (but not majority) the first round of the election. However, in the second round (where only the top two candidate teams participate), Sakti lost badly, winning only 40.7% (to his opponent's 59.3%).²⁰ This loss shook the reputation of NW, which had been on the rise after winning the governorship of West Nusa Tenggara and the district head position in East Lombok (both held by sons of Sitti Rauhun). This loss also killed the reconciliation process within NW, in particular the discussions of the format of the leadership of NW and the integration of the two leadership boards into one umbrella organization.

The loss of Sakti in the second round of the Central Lombok district head election in 2010 killed the great plans for an NW reconciliation, and the two sides blamed each other in connection with that failure. The NW-Anjani faction accused NW-Pancor of not making serious efforts to help them in the lead-up to the run-off. According to NW-Anjani leaders, the momentum of reconciliation was just used by NW-Pancor to get sympathy from the public. According to this narrative, the NW-Pancor faction wanted to show the public that they were the ones who had wanted reconciliation all along. On the other side, NW-Pancor thought that the failure of Sakti was because they were no longer being involved by the NW-Anjani side in the second round during the political campaign. According to this narrative, NW-Anjani became overly proud after winning the first round, even though they had spent billions of rupiah to support Sakti's success, according to Muhammad Suruji, the Secretary-General of NW-Pancor.²¹ In the first round, both sides were very active campaigning and the reconciliation was a force to unite the votes of NW followers. However, in the second round, the two sides each went their own way and notes of reconciliation were no longer heard during the campaigns, nor were they seen together. In the end, the results of the 2010 election for the district head

¹⁹ For more on this, see Kevin W. Fogg and Muhammad Saleh Ending, "One Islamic Community, Two Rival Sisters," *Inside Indonesia* 103 (Jan 2011).

²⁰ Hamdi, "Politik Islah," 1–14; "KPU Tetapkan Maiq Meres Pemenang Pilkada Lombok Tengah," *Antara News*, September 28, 2021, <https://mataram.antaranews.com/berita/12538/kpu-tetapkan-maiq-meres-pemenang-pilkada-lombok-tengah>.

²¹ Muhammad Suruji (secretary-general of NW-Pancor), interview with Saipul Hamdi, October 12, 2010.

of Central Lombok ended the reconciliation process in NW for the moment. Amid that failure, NW-Anjani argued that it had never been an organizational reconciliation—just a reconciliation within the family.²²

After the failure in the 2010 Central Lombok election, the relationship between NW-Anjani and NW-Pancor deteriorated again. Both sides sniped at each other, claiming that their own faction was the legitimate one recognized by the government. This conflict reached a peak in the 2013 regional elections because NW-Anjani put forward one of its cadres, Muhyi Abidin, the son-in-law of Sitti Raihanun, as a Lieutenant Governor candidate, against the incumbent ticket that had NW-Pancor's Zainul Majdi at the head. Zainul Majdi won a clear victory, beating the ticket with an NW-Anjani figure and another ticket put forward by the Islamist party PKS.²³ This phenomenon showed that the conflict within NW cannot be separated from political interests and is played out directly on the political field at the time of elections.

The examples above show that the conflict in NW was not only caused by internal factors, but also external factors. This article argues that political interests of the government—particularly the provincial-level government—toward the NW conflict increased the intensity of the conflict between these two factions. The intervention of the government to take the side of or cooperate with one faction or the other on the political field created new spaces for the NW conflict to grow. This intervention also prevented the reconciliation of NW's factions.

That is not to say that the government was the only hurdle to reconciliation—far from it! Internal personal conflicts, economic interests, saving face, and the weakness of the culture of dialogue were also contributing factors. Perhaps the most interesting (and most discussed) issue contributing to the failure of reconciliation was a written legacy—almost a prophecy—from the founder of the organization himself. Tuan Guru Zainuddin wrote a book (called *Wasiat Renunang Masa*), published in several editions since the 1970s, that is filled with his daily experiences in politics, economics, spirituality, and even social relations in society—written in the form of poetic quatrains. In this book, he predicts future events, such as natural disasters that will happen in Indonesia and around the world. Besides that, he also has prophecies about the path forward for NW in the future, including a prophecy about conflict and division in NW. Tuan Guru Zainuddin in his book predicted a split and conflict in NW would happen for a fifth of a century, or twenty years. The text runs as follows:

Seperlima abad anakku berpisah, selama itu timbullah fitnah.
Di sana-sini anakku berbantah, bersama saudara di dalam *nahdilah*.
Wahai anakku mari kembali, kepada NW karya sendiri.
Tak usah lari kesana kemari, agar bersama sepanjang hari.
Aku melihat banyaknya fitnah, karena anakda berpisah-pisah.
Tidak seturut pada ayahanda, *masya'allah wa innalillah*.

²² Ustaz. Jaelani, Tuan Guru Hajji Anas Hasri, Hayyi Nu'man, and Mugni SN (NW-Anjani figures), interview with Saipul Hamdi, November 20, 2010.

²³ Sutarno, "Pilkada NTB: Gubernur Incumbent Menang 45% Suara," *Kabar24*, May 14, 2013, <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20130514/15/138869/pilkada-ntb-gubernur-incumbent-menang-45-suara>.

For a fifth of a century my children will be divided, during that time there will rise slander.

My children will quarrel everywhere, with their siblings in the revival [referencing the organization's name, Revival of the Nation].

Oh my children, come home, to the NW that is your own work.

It is no use to run hither and thither, to be together all day long.

I see so much slander arising, because my children are divided.

They do not obey their father, Lord have mercy.²⁴

Counting from the emergence of conflict in NW, i.e., 1998, many NW loyalists believed as a matter of faith that NW would be unified in 2018. As a result, some NW followers (and even NW elites) felt that no matter how strong the efforts at reconciliation were, they would not come to fruition before their time, just as predicted in Tuan Guru Zainuddin's text. The NW community that believes this prophecy felt resigned to the conflict in the organization, and they just waited until the expected reconciliation in 2018—which did not come as predicted.

The Role of Jokowi in Initiating the Reconciliation of NW

After two decades of deadlock, with sporadic (but decreasing) violence and enduring enmity between the two sides, the conflict between the two factions of NW became a focus of national governmental action during the Joko Widodo (Jokowi) administration, and it finally reached a formal resolution in 2021. The reconciliation of NW saw progress under the Jokowi administration after he gave special attention to NW—in particular when he needed the support of large social organizations (and Islamic voices) in the 2019 presidential election. Losing the province of West Nusa Tenggara to his rival in the 2014 election pushed Jokowi to approach the NW organization as the largest Islamic organization on Lombok. Jokowi used his structural relationship with the governor of West Nusa Tenggara, Zainul Majdi, to build political cooperation in the lead-up to the 2019 national election. This effort by Jokowi was fairly successful; he not only won the support of NW-Pancor led by Zainul Majdi, but he also won the support of NW-Anjani under the leadership of Zainuddin Atsani, son and spiritual heir of Sitti Raihanun. This differed from the 2014 presidential election, when NW-Pancor supported the ticket of Prabowo Subianto and Hatta Rajasa, while the NW-Anjani faction supported Joko Widodo and Yusuf Kalla.

Jokowi's cooperation with Zainul Majdi was built starting in 2016, after Zainul Majdi gave a speech before national governmental figures clearly and forcefully criticizing the government's policy to import rice and corn. That event also raised the profile of Zainul Majdi on the national level, because of his boldness in criticizing the president.²⁵ From

²⁴ Kyai Hamzanwadi Pancor [an honorific for Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid], *Wasiat Renungan Masa Pengalaman Baru* (Pancor, Lombok Timur: Yayasan Pendidikan Hamzanwadi, n.d.), 89–91. These three quatrains are numbered 8, 9, and 10 in the “new” book of poetry, authored in 1970. There are many invocations of “my children” throughout the whole book of poetry that are clearly not about his genetic daughters but rather about his spiritual sons—but these quatrains have most often been interpreted as about familial descendants.

²⁵ Novy Lumanauw, “Di Depan Jokowi, Gubernur NTB Kritik Bulog soal Impor Beras dan Jagung,” *Berita Satu*, February 9, 2016, <https://www.beritasatu.com/ekonomi/348153/di-depan-jokowi-gubernur-ntb-kritik-bulog-soal-impor-beras-dan-jagung>.

that point onward, Jokowi frequently visited Lombok to strengthen his relationship with the people of West Nusa Tenggara generally and the NW community specifically. On November 9, 2017, Jokowi awarded the title of National Hero to the founder of NW, Tuan Guru Zainuddin Abdul Madjid.²⁶ Jokowi also visited both headquarters of NW-Anjani and NW-Pancor on November 23, 2017, as part of his giving congratulations to the family of the new national hero.²⁷ Jokowi's initiative to visit both NW Islamic schools marked a historic occasion and also indirectly formed part of the strategy to unite the NW organization that was still in a time of conflict and division. The interesting thing in the visit to NW-Anjani was the participation of Zainul Majdi (head of NW-Pancor and also governor at the time), accompanying the president and meeting with the NW-Anjani leadership that had been in conflict with him for so long.

Coming into the 2019 presidential election, the Jokowi camp had built ties with both NW factions. This was especially true with NW-Pancor, where its leader Zainul Majdi emerged on several short-lists for vice-presidential candidates to run with Jokowi for his reelection.²⁸ The eventual vice-presidential running mate chosen by Jokowi was another Islamic leader, K. H. Ma'ruf Amin, who also visited both the NW-Anjani Islamic school and the NW-Pancor Islamic school on October 26, 2018, during the campaign.²⁹

Jokowi succeeded in getting support from both factions of NW in the 2019 presidential election, but despite this he still lost the province in the 2019 presidential election, with only 35% of the vote on Lombok. At the very least, Jokowi's portion of the vote was preserved, and it even improved a little on his performance in the 2014 presidential election. The same support from the two factions of NW did not mean they could campaign together; on the contrary, they went out separately, which prevented Jokowi from getting the maximum turnout he could have had.

Running simultaneous with this political courtship, the NW conflict was being fought in courts of law. This all began when NW-Pancor re-registered Nahdlatul Wathan as an organization under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2014; this registration brought a lawsuit from NW-Anjani. NW-Pancor had registered the organization on the ministry's online portal because Nahdlatul Wathan had not yet appeared in that database. NW-Pancor took advantage of that opportunity to go into the system and register the leadership according to their faction. According to Rosiady Sayuti, at the beginning the faction of Zainul Majdi wanted to register the NW organization so that they would be recognized by the government under the name of NW-Pancor because the name "Nahdlatul Wathan" had already been registered by NW-Anjani with the Ministry

²⁶ On this, see Kevin W. Fogg, "Making an Indonesian National Hero for Lombok: The Shifting Category of *Pahlawan Nasional*," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 137 (2019): 1–22.

²⁷ Debbie Sutrisno, "Jokowi Kunjungi Ponpes NW Anjani di Lombok Timur," *Republika*, November 23, 2017, <https://republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/17/11/23/ozv00v440-jokowi-kunjungi-ponpes-nw-anjani-di-lombok-timur>.

²⁸ Friski Riana, "Poros Pemuda Nusantara Dukung TGB Zainul Majdi di Pilpres 2019," *Tempo*, May 2, 2018, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1085035/poros-pemuda-nusantara-dukung-tgb-zainul-majdi-di-pilpres-2019/>; Rayful Mudassir, "Pendukung TGB Yakin Zainul Majdi Dipilih Jokowi Jadi Cawapres, Ini Alasannya," *Bisnis.com*, August 8, 2018, <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20180808/15/825978/pendukung-tgb-yakin-zainul-majdi-dipilih-jokowi-jadi-cawapres-ini-alasannya>.

²⁹ "Kiai Ma'ruf Amin Silaturahmi ke Ponpes NW," *Radar Lombok*, October 27, 2018, <https://radarlombok.co.id/kiai-maruf-amin-silaturahmi-ke-ponpes-nw.html>. From field data, NW-Anjani also had a personal, familial connection with K. H. Ma'ruf Amin, through the wife of Zainuddin Atsani.

of Home Affairs.³⁰ A new regulation from the ministry of Law and Human rights gave a window to the NW-Pancor faction to gain recognition by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. After registering NW as an organization and the leadership according to their faction, the Ministry of Law and Human Rights immediately accepted the data and recognized them in a letter dated July 11, 2014.³¹

The re-registration of NW in 2014 and the recognition by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights caused renewed polemics and brought the two sides to court. NW-Anjani took umbrage with the leadership of NW-Pancor that made a new legal body, even though NW had been established in 1953 and formally registered with the government since 1960.³² The younger sister Sitti Raihanun, on behalf of NW-Anjani, formally sued in 2014 over the letter of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, as issued to NW-Pancor. NW-Anjani won in this lawsuit.³³ The impact of this lawsuit was the issuance of letters of cancellation by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2016 on its letter of recognition from 2014. This cancellation simultaneously changed the recognized leadership of Nahdlatul Wathan in the ministry to be the leadership headed by Sitti Raihanun (i.e., NW-Anjani).

NW-Pancor's loss after the cancellation of the 2014 ministry letter by the courts was not the end of the matter. NW-Pancor tried to appeal, but the appeal was rejected. A second attempt at appeal was considered by the Supreme Court, which was accepted, and NW-Pancor won the appeal in 2019. This appeal decision created yet another letter of recognition by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights.³⁴ This letter recognized NW-Pancor under the leadership of Zainul Majdi as the legitimate "Nahdlatul Wathan," which caused fury and frustration among the supporters of NW-Anjani. They held huge public demonstrations demanding that the Ministry of Law and Human Rights withdraw the 2019 letter recognizing NW-Pancor and return to the decision of the Supreme Court that recognized Sitti Raihanun's leadership. This demonstration was led by Zainuddin Atsani, who had just been seated as the new head of NW (in the Anjani version) as a result of the 15th organizational congress in 2019 held in Mataram, replacing his mother who had been the organizational leader for two decades since 1998.

The followers of NW-Anjani demonstrated in front of the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in West Nusa Tenggara on September 18, 2019, attended by some five thousand people from many different villages and towns. They came from morning until almost the sunset prayers, expressing their demands. Push and pull between the NW community and the police force, throwing of stones and destroying the front gate of the ministry's provincial office raised the tension level in the city. The demonstrators put forward four demands, namely that (1) the Minister of Law and Human Rights uphold the law and justice for Nahdlatul Wathan; (2) the Minister of Law and Human Rights void the 2019 letter (which had recognized NW-Pancor as the legitimate Nahdlatul Wathan); (3) the Minister of Law and Human Rights apologize publicly to the NW community for his mistake that was offensive and violated the law;

³⁰ Rosiady Sayuti (vice-chairman of NW-Pancor), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 25, 2021.

³¹ Surat Keputusan Menkumham No. AHU-00297.60.10.2014.

³² Nu'man, *Maulanasysyaikh*, 10.

³³ Putusan PTUN Jakarta Nomor 203/G/2014/PTUN.JKT. jo. 186/B/2015/PT.TUN.JKT. jo. 37 K/TUN/2016.

³⁴ Surat Keputusan Menkumham No. AHU-0000810.AH.01.08 tertanggal, September 10, 2019.



Figure 1: Supporters of NW-Anjani demonstrated on September 17, 2020, at the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Photo by Hayatun Sofian of Radio Republik Indonesia, used with permission.

and (4) the Ministry cancel the license of notary public Hamzan Wahyudi, because he was accused of being the source of this tension and violating the notary's code of ethics.³⁵

This demonstration drew the attention of both the regional and national governments because it was held for two days straight, causing unbelievable traffic jams. NW elites gave speeches on a rolling basis, criticizing the policies of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, while the crowd recited Sufi prayers of the organization continuously and waited for the fulfillment of their demands. The crowds later dispersed before sunset prayers, and some of the elites were received by the local Ministry office to discuss next steps in solving the conflict within NW.

The two factions of NW were called by the Minister of Law and Human Rights in Jakarta to discuss a path toward reconciliation as a resolution to the conflict within

³⁵ "Dinilai Provokator, 5 Ribu Massa NW Segel Kantor Kemenkumham," *Suara Rinjani News*, September 17, 2019, <https://suararinjaninews.co.id/?p=7135>; "Ribuan Massa NW Anjani Gedor Kantor Kemenkumham NTB," *Arki Radio Online*, September 18, 2019, <https://arkifm.com/7016-ribuan-massa-nw-anjani-gedor-kantor-kemenkumham-ntb.html>.



Figure 2: Delegations from NW-Pancor (led by Muhammad Zainul Majdi, in the coat and open-collar shirt) and NW-Anjani (led by Zainuddin Atsani, immediately to the left of Zainul Majdi) met in Jakarta for a reconciliation meeting convened by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, January 11, 2020. Photo by Mohammad Azhar of Suara NTB, used with permission.

NW—seemingly at the urging of President Jokowi, who was pushing for a solution. This closed meeting was held at the Ministry offices on January 11, 2020, attended by NW elites from both factions.³⁶ This meeting did not result in any consensus, but it opened the door to communication and clarification between the two sides that had not met formally in two decades. Even though the two factions argued with each other and disagreed on the roots of the conflict, the two sides restrained themselves and were able to embrace at the end of the discussions.

This meeting to open the door to reconciliation could not relieve the tension and conflict between members in society. The two factions continued to disagree and to claim their own side as the righteous and true organization recognized by the

³⁶ From NW-Anjani the delegation was Muhammad Zainuddin Atsani, Prof. Dr. Fahrurrozi, Tuan Guru Anas Hasri, L. Gede Samsul Mujahidin, Prof. Dr. Agil al-Idrus, Nur Kholis, and Dr. L. Muhyi Abidin, while from the NW-Pancor side the delegation consisted of Dr. Zainul Majdi, Tuan Guru Hasanain Juani, Tuan Guru Yusuf Ma'mun, Dr. Rosiady Sayuti, Dr. Najmul Akhyar, Dr. Iswandi, and Irzani. See "Kedua Kubu NW Bertemu di Kantor Kemenkumham. Ternyata Ini yang Dibicarakan," *Koran Merah*, January 10, 2020, <https://www.koranmerah.com/2020/01/10/kedua-kubu-nw-bertemu-di-kantor-kemenkumham-ternyata-ini-yang-dibicarakan/>.

government, with their respective letters from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. The government then froze (again) the 2019 letter recognizing NW-Pancor, and the national administration asked the two sides to come together in a joint organizational congress (Muktamar). Not only from the government in Jakarta, but the provincial government of West Nusa Tenggara through the head of the Office of National and Political Unity (Kesbangpol) tried to facilitate the two sides by inviting them to discuss a few offers. These ideas included a joint congress that would draw together both leaderships into one board, respective congresses for each faction and registering the Nahdlatul Wathan organizational name with a new and different one, or the formation of a day-to-day leadership that would rotate. Amid this time when the fate of NW was unclear, NW-Anjani also continued the judicial process against the 2019 decision by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights that had recognized NW-Pancor, asking for judicial reconsideration of the previous judgement. In the judicial reconsideration the court accepted and endorsed the leadership of NW-Anjani, which caused the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to issue yet another Letter of Recognition.³⁷

The issuance of this letter to NW-Anjani by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2020 was welcomed happily by the NW-Anjani leadership, after they had felt quite pressured by the letter in favor of NW-Pancor in 2019. This letter of recognition was used to the hilt as a weapon to regulate activities under the name of NW, including reporting any activities of NW-Pancor as illegal if they happened without the blessing of the head of NW-Anjani. NW-Anjani put out notices and warnings not to use the logo or flag of NW in any context without their blessing, because NW-Anjani owned the rights to these symbols.³⁸ The Anjani faction also viewed the 2020 letter as voiding the 2019 letter that preceded it, and thus their leadership was seen as the only one recognized by the state. An instruction from the headquarters of NW-Anjani that prohibited the use of NW symbols gave rise to a controversy among the public. Some activities of NW run by the Pancor faction were reported to the police because they were seen as violating the law on mass organizations. The activities that were reported to the police were, for example, the installation of the leadership of NW-Pancor branches and the installation of the leadership for the auxiliary organization NW Youth in West Lombok, which was attended by the Lieutenant Governor of the province and the district head of West Lombok. Besides that, the branch congress of NW-Pancor that took place at the Darul Muttaqien NW Perian Islamic boarding School, East Lombok, on Tuesday, January 18, 2021, was also reported. Syamsu Rizal, a member of the leadership of NW-Anjani, said that the police reports happened because of the misuse of the logo and symbols of NW, which were deployed without permission, even though the Ministry of Law and Human Rights letter of recognition in 2020 had recognized NW-Anjani and voided the letter for NW-Pancor.³⁹ The individuals who were reported to the police by NW-Anjani were called into the station to explain themselves.

³⁷ Surat Keputusan Menkumham No. AHU-0001269.AH.01.08 tertanggal, 30 November 2020.

³⁸ "Laporan Penggunaan Lambang dan Logo NW Berbuntut Panang," *Suara Nusra*, March 18, 2021, <https://nusramedia.com/hukum-kriminal/laporan-penggunaan-lambang-dan-logo-nw-berbuntut-panjang-25992.html>.

³⁹ Syamsu Rizal (NW-Anjani activist), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 27, 2021.

The violations of the use of NW symbols and logos brought a reaction from broader society, especially those who supported NW-Pancor. They felt that the actions of NW-Anjani broke with the vision and mission of the founder of NW, Tuan Guru Zainuddin, who instructed them to spread the NW flag and logo to every corner of the archipelago and even the world. Bickering and arguments were seen on social media like WhatsApp and Facebook. Rahmat (fifty years old), a follower of NW-Pancor, strongly criticized the leadership of NW-Anjani in a video on Facebook, saying they prohibited the use of the logo and symbols of NW even though they were still young. In his view, the founder of NW, Tuan Guru Zainuddin, never prohibited the use of the logo, so it made no sense that the young generation would do that now. Rahmat also invited anyone who disagreed with him on the question of the NW logo to fight him.⁴⁰

NW-Pancor leader and former governor Zainul Majdi also publicly discussed the prohibition on using the NW logo, and he found it to diverge sharply from the teachings of NW. In his view, the logo and symbol of NW were not a commercial product that could be bought or sold. The symbol of NW was the intellectual property of the NW founder Tuan Guru Zainuddin, and after he passed away the copyright passed down with all the other inheritance, including to Zainul Majdi's mother Sitti Rahun, as Tuan Guru Zainuddin's oldest daughter. As an heir himself, Zainul Majdi told all the followers of NW that there was no prohibition on using the NW logo—and, to the contrary, he asked the NW community to keep spreading the NW logo. He also emphasized that Islamic schools could not be hindered from using the NW logo, but rather should be encouraged. Organizations should not pressure Islamic schools because the schools were not the property of the organization; the role and position of organizational leaders was to serve the schools. Majdi expressed his gratitude that organizational followers and communities had built up Islamic schools, and that through these schools the logo and symbol of NW could shine and be spread to all corners of the world.⁴¹

In anticipation of physical clashes within the NW community, Zainul Majdi sent a letter to the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to clarify the question of the new letter of recognition that was issued for NW-Anjani, even though one year earlier the Ministry had issued a letter for NW-Pancor. Because he did not get a response, Zainul Majdi wrote a letter to the president to facilitate and mediate the NW conflict. The president then ordered the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to solve the NW conflict without recourse to the courts. The Director General of the Law Administration Directorate of the ministry came himself to Lombok on March 22, 2021, to meet the two sides and discuss a format for reconciliation of NW, and the two sides were invited to attend and sign an agreement in the Lombok Astoria Hotel on March 23, 2021.⁴²

⁴⁰ This viral Facebook video was posted by user *madi.harlan23*, "Jamaah Wirid NW Bersuara Terkait Penggunaan Logo NW," February 10, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/madi.harlan23/posts/722903541919959>.

⁴¹ "Penjelasan Lugas TGB Dr. TGKH M. Zainul Majdi, MA Tentang Organisasi dan Lambang Organisasi NW," KM Channel on *YouTube.com*, March 11, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YowZcvwRREM>.

⁴² Rosiady Sayuti (vice-chairman of NW-Pancor), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 25, 2021. See also Hayatun Sofian, "Berselisih 23 Tahun, Dua Ormas NW Didamaikan Kemenkum HAM," *Radio Republik Indonesia*, March 23, 2021, <https://rri.co.id/mataram/daerah/1004762/berselisih-23-tahun-dua-ormas-nw-didamaikan-kemenkum-ham>.

NWDI as the Compromise

The meeting at the Lombok Astoria Hotel on March 23, 2021, was a historic and monumental meeting for the two factions of NW, because they reached agreement on the details of a reconciliation. The prophecy of Tuan Guru Zainuddin that anticipated “for a fifth of a century my children will be split” was proved true with the signing of the reconciliation document, ending the dualism of leadership in the body of NW. This meeting was attended by the security apparatus of the province, including the head of the provincial police, the regional commander of the military, and the Director-General of Law Administration at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. This meeting was broadcast live through both print and electronic media.⁴³ The leaders and respected elders of the two factions of NW also attended, and the meeting included the heads of each faction: Zainul Majdi for NW-Pancor and Zainuddin Atsani for NW-Anjani. This meeting had an atmosphere that was full of a spirit of brotherhood, peace, and harmony. Of course, this differed from the condition on the street, where the two factions criticized and argued with each other about who was right and who was wrong.

In this reconciliation meeting, there were seven points in the peace settlement that were signed by the leaders of the two factions of NW, Zainul Majdi and Zainuddin Atsani. These points were:

1. RTGB Lalu Gede Muhammad Zainuddin Atsani will continue to carry forward NW as founded by Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid, based in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara province.
2. At the same time, TGB Muhammad Zainul Majdi will found a new group named Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (or NWDI), based in Pancor, East Lombok.
3. The two parties are equal in their efforts to continue the struggle in the fields of education, social work, and propagation that had been done by Nahdlatul Wathan.
4. RTGB Lalu Gede Muhammad Zainuddin Atsani has the right to use the symbol and flag of Nahdlatul Wathan, while TGB M. Zainul Majdi will use a different symbol and flag.
5. Both parties must preserve good relations, mutual respect, and recognize the legality and legitimacy of the other in realizing the goals of Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid, the founder of the collective Nahdlatul Wathan.
6. Both parties also agree to avoid disputes or quarrels and to withdraw criminal reports, lawsuits, and/or bureaucratic complaints and to cease and desist in any actions of discrimination, insults, bullying, and persecution in any form.
7. Regarding schools, Islamic schools, and institutions for social work or propagation such as orphanages, family centers, and study groups under educational foundations that are formed by cadres, students, or the

⁴³ “Momen Momen Pertemuan Islam NW Pancor dan NW Anjani,” *Radar Lombok*, March 24, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRnan9Ufa-Q>.

community of Nahdlatul Wathan, each is given the full rights to choose freely which organizational leadership to align with, led by the first party or by the second party, without any intimidation or compulsion.⁴⁴

The second point in this document established a new organization, Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI), led by Zainul Majdi, while the organization known as NW was surrendered to Zainuddin Atsani. According to Rosiady Sayuti, on the afternoon the day before the reconciliation, the leaders of NW-Pancor had a meeting and agreed to use the name “NW-Pancor” for their organization. However, on the morning of the reconciliation, Zainul Majdi received a “divine insight” (*ilham*) to use the name NWDI for his new organization, to avoid drawing out the polemics in society about the status of NW.⁴⁵ If they used the name “NW-Pancor,” they could later be accused of establishing a new NW, which would be labeled as a false NW, according to Rosiady. The term NWDI was chosen because it was created by the founder of NW Tuan Guru Zainuddin as the name of his first Islamic school and the kernel for the organization NW. In other words, NW and NWDI were both the intellectual property of Tuan Guru Zainuddin that have been made eternal and developed by the NW community. NWDI would just experience a small shift in status: from previously being the name of the Islamic school, now NWDI would be a mass organization on equal footing with NW.

It was still unclear whether this move would be accepted by society or would simply give rise to new issues among the NW community. The decision of Zainul Majdi to let go of the term NW entirely in the structural context and to use the term NWDI as the new mass organization did manage to bring to a close the conflict and polemics that existed. Even though they were of the same general idea and ideological lineage, they would still be two different, separate units on an institutional level, with equal status. There was no reason for the old proponents of NW-Anjani, for example, to insult and tear down NWDI, because it would be outside the structure of NW. NWDI was a middle road to end the conflict within NW and the associated, drawn-out conflict. Although it elicited a varied response from the NW community, still the emergence of the organization NWDI made that group more independent to undertake activities and develop the teachings of Tuan Guru Zainuddin. This prevented fighting for seats in the leadership of NW, which had become a factor preventing reconciliation internally because individuals were angry and acrimonious toward each other.

The fifth and sixth points were no less important in securing stable relations between the two factions of NW. Both factions agreed to respect each other and to stop all forms of derision, insults, police reports, and to recognize each other’s legality. Throughout the NW conflict, both factions continually tore down the other and attacked them verbally in sermons from the pulpit. NW-Anjani, for example, produced a discourse about itself as the group that was most faithful to the instructions of Tuan Guru Zainuddin, preserving religious traditions such as *melontar*—throwing of coins or paper money up during NW sermons and study groups, so this could be donated to charity—and claimed itself as the descendants who were given a mandate to lead NW. The most popular expression of

⁴⁴ Rosiady Sayuti (vice-chairman of NW-Pancor), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 25, 2021; Syamsu Rizal (activist with NW-Anjani), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 27, 2021. See also “7 Butir Nota Kesepakatan NW Anjani dan Pancor,” *Lombok TV News*, March 27, 2021, <https://lomboktvnews.com/7-butir-nota-kesepakatan-nw-anjani-dan-pancor>.

⁴⁵ Rosiady Sayuti (vice-chairman of NW-Pancor), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 25, 2021.

Tuan Guru Zainuddin was “ine Zainuddin Atsani gentik Zainuddin sak tokol,” meaning Zainuddin Atsani is the replacement for Zainuddin who was sitting before you. (The name “Zainuddin Atsani” is the Indonesianized version of the Arabic for “Zainuddin the Second”—he was anointed as a successor very early on.) The NW-Anjani discourse was constructed, reproduced, and capitalized on continually to augment the legality and the recognition of their leadership in the NW community. They also accused NW-Pancor of being a group that was not faithful to Tuan Guru Zainuddin, always going against his ideas, and trying to erase the NW traditions that had been built up by Tuan Guru Zainuddin.

The discourse built up by the NW-Pancor side in the public eye was different from what came out of Anjani. NW-Pancor strived to avoid words of conflict and division in their leaders’ speeches and on the contrary continued to speak of unity and reconciliation. This strategy was very effective to win sympathy from the NW community, especially those who had not yet chosen an affiliation or who were still confused. In fact, there were many in the community and several Islamic schools who moved their affiliation to NW-Pancor, where they had previously been aligned with NW-Anjani. The public saw that NW-Pancor was more polite, well-mannered, and not coarse in addressing the issue. Zainul Majdi as a representative of NW who held the position of head focused in every speech on rationality in organizational life, for example going to the substance rather than the symbols of NW, which had become part of the indoctrination and cult of personality for certain other figures. Zainul Majdi defined NW as a tool for the struggle in support of the religion of Islam, not something sacral that had to be deified. When asked whether one could or could not practice a Sufi order besides the NW’s own order (*Hizib Nadhlatul Wathan*), he told people they could. This different discourse that developed in the elites and cadres of NW-Pancor pointed to the inconsistencies of the NW-Anjani faction in following the Shafi’i school of Islamic jurisprudence, because they elevated a woman to be the head of NW (Sitti Raihanun). According to them, there was not a single Islamic mass organization in Indonesia that was led by a woman, other than NW-Anjani.

The seventh point was crucial to both sides and has given rise to polemics until the time of this writing, regarding the affiliation status of institutions like Islamic schools, study circles, and orphanages. According to Anjani, this point was removed (or at least not agreed to) on the day before the document was signed, however the point reemerged at the signing because it was pushed by NW-Pancor. According to Syamsu Rizal, NW-Anjani claimed that Islamic schools and branches of NW had to retain affiliation to their faction, not to Pancor whose NWDI organization was new and did not have any connection at all with the old NW.⁴⁶ On the other hand, in the agreement the institutions are given freedom to choose their affiliations with no compulsion or intimidation from any side. One must note that fighting over Islamic schools’ affiliations was one source of conflict and violence within the body of NW, where one faction wanted to fight for and control Islamic schools and the other side wanted to defend them. If there were teachers who favored both Anjani and Pancor inside one school, that guaranteed that tension and conflict would arise between the teachers.

As much as the solution of creating separate “NW” and “NWDI” organizations was a compromise between the two factions, it was also a moment of resolution pushed

⁴⁶Syamsu Rizal (activist with NW-Anjani), interview by Saipul Hamdi, March 27, 2021.

by the government. The meeting was convened by officials from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and the presence of the province's entire security apparatus demonstrated how the most powerful regional players were on board. The president himself was on the record calling for and promoting reconciliation between the two factions. Since 2014, the organizations had primarily used government institutions (recognition letters from the national ministries, court rulings in Jakarta, interventions with national political leadership) as the venue for their struggle, rather than primarily on the streets of East Lombok. Thus, it made sense that the resolution in 2021 was also mediated by figures connected to the central government.

Conclusion: What Does This Say About the Government and Social Conflict in Indonesia?

The resolution of the internal conflict in Nahdlatul Wathan, hailed as *islah* or reconciliation between the two sides, represents a new day for society on Lombok, but also a shift in how governmentality works in Indonesia. This is a case of *Reformasi*-era social conflict where the government was actually crucial in bringing both sides to the table, mediating between conflicting elites, and using its authority to strengthen the terms of reconciliation. Furthermore, this is a case where the government's authority was recognized (and sometimes even weaponized) by the conflicting sides—a far cry from the early years of *Reformasi* when government authority was very weak.

There are several reasons why government influence might be particularly strong in this kind of conflict between mass organizations. First, both of the groups in question were heavily involved in local and provincial government, vying constantly for and frequently winning elected leadership positions. This makes them likely to recognize institutions of state as bases of power. Equally important, though, might be the negative example of how the Indonesian central government has censured social organizations (most notably mass Islamic organizations) that do not comply with government directives. This has been most notable in the Jokowi administration's ban of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in 2017, followed by the ban on the Front Pembela Islam (FPI) in 2020.⁴⁷ In both cases, the Jokowi administration used a legal tool (at first a Regulation in Lieu of Law [Perppu], which then became a part of the Law on Mass Organizations [UU Ormas]), but outside observers remain skeptical of this method as providing actual resolution to the appeal of Islamist groups.⁴⁸ Greg Fealy has even framed this increased control of civil society by the government as “repressive pluralism.”⁴⁹ Thus, it is easy to understand why other mass Islamic organizations in 2021—even staunchly nationalist

⁴⁷ Masdar Hilmy, “The Rise and Fall of ‘Transnational’ Islam in Indonesia: The Future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),” in *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic Groups and Identity Politics*, ed. Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim, and Alexander R. Arifianto (London: Routledge, 2020), 133–45; Masdar Hilmy, “The Rise and Fall of ‘Transnational’ Islam in Indonesia: The Future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),” in *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic Groups and Identity Politics*, ed. Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim, and Alexander R. Arifianto (London: Routledge, 2020), 133–45; the-indonesian-governments-crackdown-on-islamists/.

⁴⁸ Usman Hamid and Liam Gammon, “Jokowi Forges a Tool of Repression,” *New Mandala*, July 13, 2017, <https://www.newmandala.org/jokowi-forges-tool-repression/>; Hilmy, “Rise and Fall.”

⁴⁹ Greg Fealy, “Jokowi in the Covid-19 Era: Repressive Pluralism, Dynasticism and the Overbearing State,” *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 56, no. 3 (2020): 301–23.

groups like Nahdlatul Wathan—would fall in line with the administration’s push for reconciliation, rather than risk “securitization” of their social conflict.⁵⁰

In the case of Lombok, specifically, the end to the longstanding power struggle over NW and among the descendants of Tuan Guru Zainuddin will cause some to celebrate. However, there remain also reasons for skepticism and concern. At a local level, the *islah* mediated by the government has not actually ended recriminations between the two sides, particularly from NW (formerly NW-Anjani) against NWDI (formerly NW-Pancor). These have largely taken the form of internet memes and sharp sermons about how Nahdlatul Wathan is a genuine creation of Tuan Guru Zainuddin from decades ago, whereas the NWDI organization is merely months old and was founded by Islamic scholars of much less prestige.⁵¹ It seems that creating separate organizations has not eliminated the personal acrimony from elites, at least on one side.

On a broader level, the strong role of the government in conflict resolution may feed the idea (a recurring theme in the recent volume by Thomas Power and Eve Warburton)⁵² that Indonesia is trending toward greater authoritarianism. Following the framework suggested by Tajima’s exhaustive study,⁵³ societal groups may be reverting to the New Order model of expecting resolution from above (i.e., the state).

⁵⁰ See also Ayu Rikza, “The Securitization of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia,” *Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 5, no. 2 (2020): 172–91.

⁵¹ For example, see the Facebook post of Junaid Al Bagdadi, “Gagal Faham . . .!!” July 13, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1226815451123582&id=100013854167404.

⁵² Thomas Power and Eve Warburton (ed.), *Democracy in Indonesia: From Stagnation to Regression?* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2020).

⁵³ Tajima, *Institutional Origins*.