



The Indonesian Way: Islam and Democracy

A lecture by **Dr. Giora Eliraz**

Wednesday, May 3rd, 2017, 12:15 p.m. – 13:30 p.m.

INTS 1113

The “Indonesian way” is increasingly challenged by exclusive, intolerant winds originated outside of the local context. About two years ago Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, started to publicize its initiative of promoting globally, to the Middle East in particular, the concept Islam Nusantara (the Islam of the Indonesian Archipelago), as a multi-faceted message of a tolerant, moderate, peaceful Islam for curbing terror and extremism. This initiative seems to correspond with growing self-confidence of Indonesia of the post-reformasi era including its foreign policy. So far there are no signs that “Islam Nusantara” has an impact on Islam in the Middle East. Moreover, during recent months the “Indonesian way”, in a sense of the distinctive Indonesian Islamic identity, seems to be increasingly challenged by strict exclusive, intolerant winds, originated outside of the local context. It was mainly manifested by the tough gubernatorial campaign in Jakarta that was closely connected with the blasphemy accusations against the Jakarta’s Christian and ethnically Chinese governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, known as Ahok, for allegedly insulting Islam. As to the gubernatorial, Ahok was defeated in the run-off election in April by the Muslim candidate, Anies Baswedan, who won decisively. These entire developments leaving behind a trail of questions, related to founding values and concept of the secular oriented Indonesian polity, including separation of state off religion, pluralism as well as the distinctive, impressive process of building democracy in the home to the largest Muslim population in the world.



Dr. Giora Eliraz is the author of *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism and the Middle East Dimension*. Brighton & Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2004 and the monograph, *Islam and Polity in Indonesia: An Intriguing Case Study*. Washington: Hudson Institute, February 2007. His major research interests are related to both Southeast Asia, Indonesia in particular, and the Middle East. Dr. Eliraz is affiliated with the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington and Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Sponsored by Middle East and Islamic Studies; Southeast Asia: Ritual, Text, and Performance; Maimonides Chair in Jewish Studies; Holstein Family and Community Chair of Religious Studies.