

Research Article

Analysis of Majelis Ulama Indonesia Fatwa on Deforestation: Implications and Relevance in the Context of Environmental Conservation

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Abstract.

The *Fatwa* of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) on deforestation has significant implications in the context of environmental protection in Indonesia. In this abstract, an analysis of the background, content, implications, and relevance of the MUI fatwa is conducted. The background of this fatwa is influenced by the trend of increasing deforestation in Indonesia, the influence of Islamic cultural values, community demand, ulama consensus, and global environmental concerns. The MUI fatwa states that actions harming the environment and contributing to the climate crisis are considered forbidden, including uncontrolled deforestation and forest burning that damage natural ecosystems. Implications of the MUI fatwa include changes in government policies, influence on industrial practices, strengthening public awareness, and collaboration among institutions to achieve environmental protection goals. However, challenges in implementing and adhering to this fatwa include diverse interpretations, resource limitations, alignment with existing policies and practices, behavioral and habit changes, adaptation to local conditions, and education and awareness of the public. To effectively and sustainably address deforestation, measures such as the strict implementation of forest and land management policies, promotion of sustainable agriculture, and increasing public awareness through education and outreach campaigns are necessary. With solid cooperation among the government, civil society, private sector, and religious institutions like the MUI, we can preserve Indonesia's natural environment for future generations.

Keywords: *Majelis Ulama Indonesia, fatwa MUI deforestasi, konservasi lingkungan*

1. Introduction

Indonesia's forests play a crucial role as one of the world's lungs, providing vital oxygen essential for the survival of life on this planet. The rich biodiversity within Indonesia's forests not only generates oxygen but also maintains the balance of global ecosystems. From dense tropical forests to vast peatlands, Indonesia possesses a priceless natural heritage. Protecting and preserving these forests is our shared responsibility to ensure that this invaluable natural resource can be enjoyed by future generations.

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Almost every year, Indonesia faces severe forest fire disasters. These fires are often triggered by various factors, including human activities such as land clearing through uncontrolled burning. The impact of forest fires is highly detrimental, not only to the environment and biodiversity but also to public health and the nation's economy. Prevention, response, and post-disaster recovery efforts are crucial in addressing this issue and in protecting both the forests and the communities that rely on them.

Deforestation refers to a significant reduction in forest area due to land conversion for infrastructure, settlements, agriculture, mining, and plantations. This phenomenon not only threatens the survival of forests and biodiversity but also has negative consequences for the environment and ecosystems as a whole. The loss of natural habitats can also affect global climate, leading to adverse changes for humans and other living beings[1].

Global warming is an increasingly palpable challenge for societies around the world, marked by continuously rising temperatures. This phenomenon results in various negative impacts, such as extreme climate change, rising sea levels, unstable weather patterns, and threats to biodiversity and natural resources. Addressing this issue requires global cooperation and concrete actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, implement renewable energy sources, raise awareness of the importance of environmental conservation, and develop adaptation strategies to mitigate the effects of global warming.

The background for the issuance of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on deforestation can include several factors, such as:

- 1.1. Increasing Deforestation Trend: The rise in deforestation activities in Indonesia and its impact on the environment has become a major concern, prompting the need for a religious perspective on this issue.
- 1.2. Cultural and Religious Values Influence: The rich culture and Islamic religious values hold significant potential to offer valuable insights on human responsibility towards nature and the environment.
- 1.3. Public Demand: There has been a call from the community for an official stance from religious authorities regarding deforestation and environmental sustainability.
- 1.4. Scholarly Consensus: Efforts to reach an agreement among scholars and religious leaders on how Islam views and addresses the issue of deforestation.
- 1.5. Global Attention to the Environment: With the increasing global awareness of the importance of environmental conservation, there is a need to update religious understandings regarding these environmental issues.

A brief overview of the content of the MUI fatwa on the Law of Controlling Global Climate Change includes: 1. Any actions that can cause environmental damage and impact the climate crisis are considered haram, 2. Uncontrolled deforestation and forest burning that damage natural ecosystems, leading to large-scale greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the Earth's ability to absorb and store carbon, are also considered haram, 3. All parties are obligated to: a. Contribute to efforts for better mitigation and adaptation to climate change, b. Reduce their carbon footprint for non-essential needs, c. Engage in a just energy transition.

2. Methods

This type of research is a library research, as the data used is sourced from literature or written materials. This study involves reviewing books, texts, or other relevant information related to the discussion. It is a qualitative research study, where qualitative research is a strategy of inquiry that emphasizes the search for meaning, understanding, concepts, characteristics, phenomena, symbols, and descriptions of a phenomenon. It is focused and multi-method; it is natural and holistic, prioritizing quality and using various approaches, presented in a narrative format.[2]

The nature of this research is descriptive, with data presented qualitatively. Descriptive research is aimed at creating a depiction of situations or events.[3]

This research is descriptive because the results will be presented narratively. As this study falls under library research, the data sources include secondary data, which are obtained through the examination of legal materials. Data sources are the subjects from which data can be acquired. Furthermore, the legal materials used in this research are categorized into primary legal materials and secondary legal materials. The data analysis method employed is qualitative inductive analysis using an interactive model.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Interpretation of Islam on the Issue of Deforestation

Deforestation is regarded as an action that contradicts the principles of religion. Islam teaches the importance of maintaining the balance of nature and caring for the environment. The Quran and Hadith emphasize human responsibility as stewards (khalifah) of the Earth to protect Allah's creation. Irresponsible deforestation not only damages ecosystems but also negatively impacts the lives of humans and other beings, which is an action that is not justified within Islamic teachings.[4]

Deforestation can lead to severe environmental damage, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, and natural disasters. In this context, Islam emphasizes the importance of behaving justly towards nature and upholding the trust (amanah) that Allah has given to humanity. Islamic teachings stress that protecting the environment is a part of worship and a manifestation of the moral responsibility of Muslims.

The issue of deforestation is of great urgency in the context of Indonesia. As a country with one of the largest tropical forests in the world, deforestation in Indonesia has both local and global implications. Some reasons why this issue is particularly urgent in Indonesia include:

- 3.1.1. Biodiversity: Indonesia's forests are home to thousands of unique and rare plant and animal species. Deforestation threatens the survival of these species and diminishes global biodiversity.
- 3.1.2. Climate Change: Indonesia's forests store a significant amount of carbon in the soil and biomass. Deforestation leads to the release of carbon into the atmosphere, significantly contributing to global warming and climate change.
- 3.1.3. Water Sources: Indonesia's forests play a crucial role in maintaining regional and national water cycles. Deforestation can disrupt water flow, increasing the risks of flooding and drought, and threatening clean water supply for communities.
- 3.1.4. Livelihoods of Communities: Many Indonesians, particularly indigenous groups and local communities, depend on forests for their livelihoods. Deforestation threatens their means of survival and reduces their access to natural resources.
- 3.1.5. Economy: Indonesia's forests provide substantial contributions to the national economy through sectors such as forestry, tourism, and other natural resources. Deforestation can lead to significant economic losses, both in the short term and long term.

Addressing the issue of deforestation requires comprehensive efforts from all parties, including the government, civil society, the private sector, and the international community. The protection and sustainable management of Indonesia's forests are crucial steps in preserving environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and the well-being of communities.

3.2. View on Human Responsibility Towards Nature and the Environment

Khalifah is the title given by Allah to humanity, indicating that humans are His representatives on Earth and are granted the authority to manage and care for the universe wisely. In Islam, the responsibility of being a khalifah includes several important aspects: 1. Caring for the Environment: As khalifah, humans have the responsibility to nurture nature and maintain the balance of ecosystems. This includes protecting biodiversity, reforestation, conserving forests, and preventing environmental damage. 2. Wise Use of Resources: Humans are granted the freedom to utilize natural resources, but this must be done wisely. This means ensuring sustainable use of natural resources, avoiding wastefulness, and reducing pollution. 3. Empowerment of Communities: As khalifah, humans have the responsibility to ensure the well-being of communities and social justice. This includes advocating for the rights of communities to a healthy environment and empowering them to participate in environmental protection. 4. Upholding Justice: One important aspect of the responsibility as khalifah is to uphold justice, both towards nature and fellow humans. This means not exploiting nature solely for personal interests or economic gain, but ensuring that the interests of both the environment and society are prioritized. 5. Developing Environmental Awareness: As khalifah, humans have the responsibility to foster environmental awareness among one another and advocate for environmental protection as a form of worship to Allah.[5]

The MUI fatwa on deforestation and the environment can have several significant implications for environmental policies and industry practices in Indonesia:

- 3.2.1. Changes in Government Policy: The MUI fatwa can encourage the Indonesian government to take concrete steps to address the issues of deforestation and overall environmental protection. This may lead to the formulation of stricter policies regarding the approval of new land clearing permits, sustainable forest management, and the protection of natural habitats.
- 3.2.2. Influence on Industry Practices: The MUI fatwa can impact certain industrial practices, particularly those related to the exploitation of natural resources and land use. For example, the agriculture, forestry, and mining industries may face increased pressure to adopt environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.
- 3.2.3. Strengthening Public Awareness: The MUI fatwa can also enhance public awareness of the importance of environmental protection and natural conservation within the context of Islamic teachings. This may motivate communities to take more

active steps in advocating for environmental protection and supporting policies that favor environmental sustainability.

3.2.4. Collaboration between Government and Religious Institutions: The MUI fatwa can pave the way for closer cooperation between the government and religious institutions in addressing environmental issues. This collaboration may include the development of joint policies, educational programs, and conservation projects that engage faith communities.

3.2.4. Influence on Consumption Practices: The MUI fatwa can also impact community consumption practices, particularly regarding the selection of environmentally friendly products, the use of renewable energy, and habits that contribute to the conservation of nature.

3.3. The Importance of the MUI Fatwa in Environmental Protection Lies in Several Key Aspects.

The MUI fatwa holds significant moral authority among Muslims in Indonesia. Therefore, the views and recommendations contained in the fatwa can have a strong influence on the awareness and behavior of Muslims regarding environmental protection. It provides a moral and ethical framework for Muslims to understand the importance of safeguarding the environment, further motivating them to participate in conservation efforts. MUI aims to integrate Islamic values with environmental concerns, creating a strong connection between religious teachings and environmental protection, which can enhance the awareness and commitment of Muslims toward environmental preservation.

The implications of the MUI fatwa can influence government policies and industry practices related to environmental issues. Due to its moral authority, these fatwas can serve as a basis for introducing stricter environmental policies and more environmentally friendly industrial practices. The MUI fatwa can be an important means to raise public awareness and education about the significance of preserving the environment. By referencing Islamic teachings, the fatwa can provide Muslims with a better way to communicate their environmental messages.[6]

Implementing and adhering to the fatwa in practice can face several challenges, especially in contexts involving complex aspects such as the environment and religion. Some of the challenges that may arise in applying and complying with the MUI fatwa on the environment include:

3.3.1. Diverse Interpretations: The MUI fatwa may require accurate interpretation for practical application in daily life. However, varying understandings among different

individuals or community groups regarding the content of the fatwa can pose a challenge to its consistent implementation.

- 3.3.2. Resource Limitations: Implementing the fatwa requires adequate resources, both financial and human. Challenges in allocating sufficient resources to comply with the fatwa can be a barrier to its practical application.
- 3.3.3. Connection with Existing Policies and Practices: The MUI fatwa may conflict with or not align with existing policies or practices at the government or industry level. Implementing the fatwa in a context that does not support it can be a significant challenge.
- 3.3.4. Behavioral and Habitual Changes: Adhering to the fatwa may require changes in behaviors and habits that are deeply rooted in society. Altering established mindsets and actions can be a challenging process that takes time.
- 3.3.5. Relevance to Local Conditions: The MUI fatwa may not always align with specific local conditions or cultures. The challenge of adapting the fatwa to ensure it is relevant and acceptable to local communities can be complex.
- 3.3.6. Consistent Application: Implementing the fatwa consistently and comprehensively across society requires cooperation and good coordination among various stakeholders, including the government, religious institutions, and civil society.
- 3.3.7. Education and Awareness: Adhering to the fatwa may require significant efforts in educating and raising awareness among the community about its importance and implications. Challenges in effectively communicating the fatwa's message to the public can hinder its implementation.

3.4. Steps to Effectively and Sustainably Address Deforestation

To effectively and sustainably address deforestation, comprehensive and integrated steps need to be implemented. First, the government should enforce strict policies related to forest management and land use. This includes robust law enforcement against illegal logging and unauthorized land clearing. Furthermore, it is essential to promote sustainable forest management practices, such as reforestation, habitat protection, and the wise use of natural resources. This can be achieved through incentives for industries and communities that adopt sustainable practices, as well as the application of penalties for violators.[7]

Second, there is a need to promote and support sustainable agriculture that does not harm forests. This includes the adoption of environmentally friendly agricultural

techniques such as agroforestry and the diversification of farming to reduce pressure on forests. Empowering local farmers in these practices can also enhance food security and reduce dependence on clearing new land.

Finally, it is essential to raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of forest preservation and the negative impacts of deforestation. Outreach campaigns, environmental education in schools, and the use of social media can be employed to disseminate relevant information and enhance community participation in conservation efforts. Additionally, collaboration between the government, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector should be strengthened to create sustainable and equitable solutions for all stakeholders involved. By taking these steps seriously, we can move towards effective and sustainable solutions to deforestation.

4. Closing

Overall, efforts to address deforestation and protect the environment in Indonesia require strong collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders involved. The measures taken must be comprehensive and well-coordinated, including strict law enforcement, the promotion of sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry, and raising public awareness through education and outreach campaigns. Additionally, it is important to strengthen the role of religious institutions such as the MUI in providing moral and ethical guidance for environmental protection. With solid cooperation between the government, civil society, and the private sector, along with support from religious organizations, we can move towards a more sustainable future and preserve nature for generations to come. In this context, the MUI fatwa on deforestation and the environment plays a significant role in providing moral guidance and direction for Muslims and the general public in safeguarding the environment. The implications of this fatwa include changes in government policy, influence on industrial practices, strengthening public awareness, and inter-institutional collaboration to achieve environmental protection goals. By taking the recommended concrete steps, we can ensure that Indonesia's natural wealth is well-preserved and can be enjoyed by future generations.

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