

**Religious Leadership in Environmental Preservation: Dissemination Strategies for Fatwa
MUI No. 86/2023**

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Abstract

The so-called Fatwa No. 86 of 2023 issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council is a powerful move towards solving the global environmental crisis, especially the current threat of climate change and global warming. It asserts that torment is the stewardship of the environment (*amanah*), which is a duty of faith. This paper discusses how to spread the fatwa in a way that it will be well understood, adopted and utilized by different communities. The normative-theological approach is based on the primary sources, i.e. the Quran, Hadith and Fatwa No. 86/2023, and the secondary ones, i.e. academic sources and reports on environmental practices by religious people. The results indicate how religious leadership (*ulama*, *ustadz*, *kyai*, and *khatib*) played the pivotal role of integrating ecological ethics in daily religious practice. The dissemination strategies are mosque-based sermons, study groups, being embedded in Islamic education programs, virtual *da'wah*, cross-sector engagement with government, nongovernmental organizations and local communities. The case studies of the green retrofit of Istiqlal Mosque, Eco-Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid and waqf-based reforestation works are only a few examples of giving theological direction which may trigger a more practical environmental response. The article concludes that the document of Fatwa No. 86/2023 is not only a statement of theological character, but also a social and educational tool that can influence the ecological consciousness and environmentally responsible behavior on the territory of the Indonesian Muslim community.

Keywords: Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023, religious leadership, environmental preservation, digital *da'wah*, climate change.

Abstrak (Bahasa Indonesia)

Fatwa MUI No. 86 Tahun 2023 merupakan langkah strategis Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dalam menghadapi krisis lingkungan global, khususnya isu perubahan iklim dan pemanasan global. Fatwa ini menegaskan bahwa menjaga lingkungan adalah bagian dari amanah ilahi

(khilafah fil-ardh) sekaligus kewajiban iman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelaah strategi penyebarluasan fatwa tersebut agar dapat dipahami, diterima, dan dipraktikkan oleh berbagai lapisan masyarakat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan normatif-teologis, penelitian ini mengkaji sumber primer berupa al-Qur'an, hadis, dan Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023, serta sumber sekunder berupa literatur akademik dan laporan praktik lingkungan berbasis agama. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan keagamaan (ulama, ustadz, kyai, khatib) memiliki peran sentral dalam membumikan fatwa melalui khotbah Jumat, pengajian, kurikulum hijau di pesantren, dakwah digital, serta kerja sama lintas-sektor dengan pemerintah, LSM, dan komunitas. Contoh praktik di masjid Istiqlal, Eco-Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid, dan program wakaf hutan membuktikan efektivitas integrasi nilai agama dengan aksi lingkungan. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa fatwa bukan hanya pernyataan teologis, tetapi dapat menjadi instrumen sosial, pendidikan, dan kebijakan dalam membangun kesadaran ekologis umat.

Kata kunci: Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023, kepemimpinan agama, pelestarian lingkungan, dakwah digital, perubahan iklim.

Introduction

One of the most urgent issues of the 21st century has become the global environmental crisis that involves phenomena of climate change, global warming, loss of the variety of life, degradation of ecosystems. The scientific evidence shows that global warming, climate change, along with the exposure to ever more frequent extreme weather conditions are a potential big existential threat not only to the human societies but to the viability of the ecological system(s) on the planet.¹ The crisis is no longer a future threat to younger generations, but a present situation, which must be addressed right now with the help of all spheres of society to resolve the issue.

The Indonesian context can be categorized in many forms of environmental degradation i.e. deforestation, air pollution, water pollution, flood, and coastal erosion. Severe urbanization, unsustainable economic growth, and poor implementation of environmental regulations make these environmental problems worse.² Although scientific and policy preventing methods are still of essential concern; it is crucial to understand that Indonesia sociocultural fact demonstrates that

¹ IPCC. Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023.

² UNEP. Emissions Gap Report 2023. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 2023.

religion and religious authority play an extraordinary role in influencing people with regards to their attitudes and behaviors in the society. This is especially applicable through the fact that Indonesia houses the greatest number of Muslims in the whole world and religious leaders (ulama, ustadz, kyai, and khatib) possess considerable moral authority as well as having access to various networks of the community.

It is against this context that Fatwa MUI No. 86 of 2023 by the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) is an innovation project to enshrine the perspective of environmental protection as a moral duty. This fatwa clearly touches on the issue of climate change mitigation, whereby Muslims should take part in environmentally friendly issues like carbon emission, consumption of resources that will not cause wastage and take part in conservation. The fatwa also combines Quranic ideals, Prophetic teachings (hadith) and modern environmental science to emphasize that human responsibility to take care of the Earth is an essential constituent of the divine trust (*Amanah*) placed on humankind and that failure to act on this is a moral and spiritual form of failure.

Importantly, the fatwa is not confined to theological proclamations. It carries tangible implications for public policy, grassroots activism, and individual lifestyle choices. For policymakers, the fatwa provides moral and cultural legitimacy to environmental regulations. For communities, it offers a religiously sanctioned framework that aligns faith-based values with ecological responsibility. For individuals, it reframes environmentally conscious behaviors such as conserving energy, reducing plastic use, and supporting sustainable agriculture—as acts of worship (*ibadah*).

Nonetheless, the declaration of fatwa may not easily imply mass behavioral change. One of the most important issues facing the fatwa is how effectively the fatwa spreads and is comprehended, acknowledged, and adopted to varying social and geographical situations. There is an incongruity between religious teaching and practical follow-through, and this disparity exists most notably in the areas that would demand a long-term involvement and behavior change.³ Strategic dissemination alone can ensure that even the most well-intended, theologically sound fatwas will

³ Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Indonesia). Indonesia's Environmental Status Report 2022. Jakarta: KLHK, 2022.

not be buried in the academic discourse, or in formal documents in religion with little practical effect.

It is at this point that the aspect of religious leadership comes into play. Religious leaders in Indonesia can be seen as not merely interpreters of Islamic religion but also opinion formators, mobilizers and culture enable people. This is because they can interpret religious instructions in a manner that suits the local realities be it urban, rural, coastal or forest communities. Religious leaders can incorporate environmental ethics into the spiritual awareness of the believers through sermons, lectures, study circles, door-to-door education at the mosques, and in non-institutionalized counseling.⁴ More so, they are not limited to pulpit undertakings. Most religious leaders are involved in community-driven programs, such as disaster recovery, poverty eradication, among others, which can be extended to composite climate action and conservation of the environment.

The credentialization of a Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 is the need to apply not only traditional but also innovative actions.⁵ Common historical platforms, like khutbah (Friday sermons), pengajian (religious study sessions), majlis taklim (learning circles) are strongly effective in catering to grass root level of the audiences, particularly in the rural population. Such sites enable repetition, reinforcement, and socializing of environmental message formulations by enabling the community to own the message.⁶ Meanwhile, meanwhile newer methods like digital dawah to social media (YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok and podcasts) can reach younger, urban, and technology-savvy individuals who may not attend some mosque-centered events on a regular basis. Creative storytelling, visual campaigning, and interactive learning are also possible in digital space that can make the message on environment easy to relate and feel encouraging.⁷

Moreover, the ability to maximize the influence of the fatwa can be achieved by involving other sectors into the process of implementation (including government agencies, environmental non-governmental organizations, education establishments, and the business community).⁸ Concrete

⁴ World Bank. Indonesia Country Environmental Analysis 2022. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022.

⁵ Indonesian Ulema Council. Fatwa MUI No. 86 of 2023 on Climate Change Mitigation. Jakarta: MUI, 2023.

⁶ Pew Research Center. The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2015–2060. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2017.

⁷ Harahap, Syahrin. Fatwa dan Lingkungan Hidup. Jakarta: Prenadamedia, 2021.

⁸ Qardhawi, Yusuf al-. Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2001.

actions that such cross-sector partnerships may help to achieve include tree planting programs, waste-reduction campaigns, adoption of renewable energy, and environmental education. These partnerships can transform the ideals of the fatwa into results that are both tangible and quantifiable by fashioning religious motivation beyond the ideals into practical tools and community-based endeavors.⁹

However, there is a huge gap that should be dealt with. These comp materials and of environmental literacy among a section of religious leaders, lack of standardized training module in environmental dawah, cultural disposition of short-term economic profit coupled with long term sustainability and lack of access to technology in some regions.¹⁰ Some of the challenges to overcome are capacity-building programs of religious leaders, developing context-sensitive education materials, and establishing incentive programs on the communities that actively adopt environmentally friendly practices.¹¹

Thus, this research is attempting to identify and examine effective methods of dissemination of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 both along contextual and innovative religious strategies. In studying how religious leadership can help fill the gap between theological thinking and real-world environmental intervention, it seeks to demonstrate the promise of Faith-based efforts in achieving Indonesia goal and indeed that of the world, in achieving climate resilience and sustainability objectives.¹²

Research Method / Approach

The research design that is used in this study is normative-theological research, which is concerned with the intersection between Islamic teachings and the current environmental challenges. The methodology involves interpretation of religious texts and the study of social religious practices of dissemination. Form of Research: Normative-theological, taking the form of values based on the Quran, Hadith and classical Islamic works concerning the issue of environmental guardianship. A textual and contextual interpretation (tafsir and fiqh al-bi'ah) is utilized to interpret Fatwa MUI

⁹ Izzi Dien, Mawil Y. *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000.

¹⁰ Pew Research Center. *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2015–2060*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2017.

¹¹ Bagir, Zainal Abidin. *Religion, Public Policy and Social Transformation in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Springer, 2021.

¹² Foltz, Richard, Frederick M. Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin, eds. *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

No. 86/2023, and the theological and ethical frames are applied to comprehend its consequences of taking environmental action. Primary sources: Quran, Hadith, classical standard texts of Islamic jurisprudence, and Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023. Books, journal articles, and institutional reports, as well as case studies, on religion and environmental preservation in Indonesia and other contexts of Muslim majorities. The analysis of data is carried out qualitatively through the correlation of theological arguments with practical dissemination approaches, which include mosque-based preaching, Islamic education, digital da'wah, and cross-sector collaboration. This approach is a methodological framework that enables the study to fill the gap between theological concepts and environmental interventions, which points out the exceptional value of religious leadership to achieve ecological sustainability.

1. The Role of Religious Leadership in Environmental Preservation

Ulema, ustadz, kyai, and khatib represent a special type of national leaders in Indonesian Muslim society since they are not only providers of religious doctrine interpretation, but they also serve as reliable councilors in social ethical and community structuring, as well as on making moral decisions.¹³ They are in positions of power because of a combination of formal religious training, individual charismas, and a record of community service and this makes them earn the trust of their congregation. This ethical power enables them to control the opinion and norms of behavior among the citizens more than several formal policy mechanisms.¹⁴

When it comes to environmental protection, such characters are vital players in the process of attaining ecological awareness within the religious and moral skein of the community.¹⁵ They can incorporate environmental themes into many da'wah activities, including weekly sermons (khutbah) and other forms of religious lectures (pengajian), as well as less structured visits to homes or the village hall. Framing environmental stewardship as a religious obligation based on the Quran and hadith will enable them to convert climate action into a type of worship (ibadah) and a moral duty.

¹³ Ali, Syed Mohammad. "Religion and the Politics of Climate Change." *Third World Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2020): 397–415.

¹⁴ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Religion and the Order of Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

¹⁵ Saniotis, Arthur. "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics." *Contemporary Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 155–171.

An example is a khatib mentioning verses of the Quran during khutbah that would advise against wastefulness (Surah Al-Asraf 7:31)¹⁶ or warn that people harm the environment through destruction and corruption due to actions they take (Surah Ar-Rum 30:41).¹⁷ These scriptural illustrations, once interpreted through a language that is familiar to people, can connect very well with audiences and trigger behavior change. Among agricultural communities in rural areas, kyai may relate the lessons of moderation (wasatiyyah) and balance advice to farmers concerning sustainable farming process, and in cities, ustadz may concern themselves with problems such as reduction of waste and the use of mass transportation and saving of energy as a matter of environmental piety.¹⁸

Also, religious study groups (halaqah or majlis taklim) provide a more dynamic environment where one could discuss environmental issues at length. These discussions provide avenues to developing question-and-answer discussions, case studies and the expression of local success stories and therefore make the abstract concept of the environment preservation straightforward. These talks will also enable religious leaders to clear the air concerning assumptions like the one where environmental degradation is only a test by God without human responsibility by basing on the Islamic concept of amanah (trust) and human accountability before God.

The other role that the religious leaders can assume is that of a role model. Once a ulema implements a personal practice in a good environmental care and this practice is highly visible, the actions would be very effective in underpinning their sermons. Example: when a ulema uses reusable containers, plants tree or avoids disposable plastics or organizes neighborhood cleanups etc. these will be very useful to support his preaching. Often, it is more effective to copy the personal habits of a respected leader than an abstract policy recommendation of remote officials.

Religious leaders may as well serve as facilitators of interactions between the environmental activists, policymakers as well as the population. They will have the ability to place governmental environmental programs within Islamic frame of values such that the initiatives will be better

¹⁶ Al-Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an and Its Translation. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022.

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an and Its Translation. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022.

¹⁸ Said, Najib, and Husna Ahmad. Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010.

assimilated by the societies which would otherwise be skeptical towards initiatives led by the state.¹⁹ Similarly, they can interpret technical environmental language into easy stories that can be culturally and religiously applicable.

Overall, the normalization of the environmental messages within the religious platforms that are run by the body of religious leaders, such as ulema, ustadz, kyai, and khatib, elevates climate action as a mainstream moral duty.²⁰ This incorporation of the environmentally sensitive attributes into the Islamic way of life, not only improves the knowledge of the people on environmental matters but also creates a sense of shared responsibility through which there are higher chances of long-term behavioral transformation.

2. Dissemination Strategies for Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023

a. Mosque-Based Preaching and Friday Sermons

One of the most strategic and influential channels of communication that environmental messages can be transmitted to the Muslim communities is the Friday sermons (khutbah Jumat).²¹ The congregation of the Friday prayer which consists of vastly diverse spectrum of society- men, youth, elders, professionals, and community leaders- gives religious leaders a rare bottleneck of reaching out to a massive scale of audience that is regularly met. Devoting some of the time in the sermon to environmental conservation, khatib may introduce the conversation about climate change as a normal milieu and make it part of the basic Islamic existence. In its presentation, there must be the use of language that is easy and accessible to be understood by people of different educational levels. Some simpler real-life analogy (saving water when performing ablution (wudhu), minimizing domestic garbage or saving local rivers) can aid in filling the divide between theology and action.

The use of pertinent Quran verses to support these messages strengthens their moral credibility, e.g. Surah Al Araf(7:31) advises against extravagance; and the Quran in Surah Ar Rum (30:41) expressly links the degrading of our environment to human moral behavior. More so, the use of the Prophetic traditions (hadith) e.g. even during ablution when standing in running water, one

¹⁹ Baharuddin, H. *Green Islam: Environmental Ethics and Practices in Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2020.

²⁰ Hidayat, Asep. "Peran Pesantren dalam Pengelolaan Lingkungan." *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2020): 145–161.

²¹ Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia. *Panduan Dakwah Lingkungan Berbasis Islam*. Jakarta: MoRA, 2022.

should not waste water, can also get congregants more into the environmentally friendly habits. Such sermons, when delivered regularly, can change the way society views the situation and inculcate a form of ecological awareness as the religious obligation and the culture of sustainability in faith.²²

b. Green Curriculum in Islamic Educational Institutions

The long-term approach in instilling the concept of awareness to the environment in the younger generation is through the inclusion of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 into the madrasah and pesantren curricula. Since learning institutions are the center of character development in Islam, integration of environmental ethical demands in primary contents like fiqh (jurisprudence), aqeedah (creed), and akhlaq (morality) establishes the responsibility towards the environment as an Islamic legal and ethical duty. Lessons could be taught, in the case of fiqh, the jurisprudential rationale on environmental stewardship such as knowledge on the prohibition of waste (israf), legal framework of public resources (al-milkiyyah al-addah), and requirement of avoidance of harm (daral mafasid).²³ In the context of aqeedah, the issue environmental preservation can be calibrated with the dogmatic meaning of tawheed rububiyah (belief in lordship of God), how environmental by nature is among the creations of God which was entrusted to man. Through akhlaq the students may be instructed on how to take care of nature since that will mean being moderated, grateful and loving to all creations of God.

These teachings can also be enhanced by practical elements of learning. As an example, pesantren may organize the “green practice days” which will include the idea of planting trees, sorting out garbage, and saving water, and madrasah may incorporate the educational theme about the environment into the extracurricular activities like, for instance, scouting or interschool competitions.²⁴ By correlating these activities with Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023, students can know that ecological care is not an optional social good, but it is the part of the faithful Islamic life. This could long term create a generation of environmentally literate Muslims and bring these values with them into their adulthood, changing their family behavior, community practices and even as policy advocates.

²² Setiawan, Adi. “Implementasi Fatwa MUI dalam Pengelolaan Lingkungan.” *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2021): 89–105.

²³ UNESCO. *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives*. Paris: UNESCO, 2017.

²⁴ Sodik, M. *Islam dan Pelestarian Alam*. Malang: UIN Malang Press, 2018.

c. **Digital Da'wah and social media**

The use of digital technologies, including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts, provides an effective way to target younger, and more technologically active people by communicating the message of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023. These media are part and parcel of the daily media consumption patterns of the youth in Indonesia and can therefore be used to influence the attitude and the behavior pattern towards environmental stewardship. Accessible, shareable visual elements as short these 60-second educational clips, animated infographics, or carousel posts may allow the reduction of a complex theological and environmental notion to its essence and put it in a shareable form.²⁵ As another example, a Tik Tok clip could put the verse of the Quran about moderation (*wasatiyyah*) alongside advice about the reduction of single-use plastics, and an Instagram infographic can highlight the hadith with reference to not wasting water even when found in a flowing river and connect it to the current issue of water shortage.

YouTube can provide room to present worthier material, like a series of lectures by trustworthy ulema, a discussion with the representatives of Islamic environmentalism, or a virtual panel discussion to refer the fatwa to the topical environmental issues. Meanwhile, episodes of podcasts serve as an exclusive, personal, more conversational format where it is possible to further continue the discussion of environmental care through theological, ethical, and practical aspects by scholars and practitioners. Such material will have higher moral authority and credibility when quotes, endorsements or involvement of high-ranking religious leaders.²⁶

Moreover, their interactive form permits two-way communication through the comment section, live streams, and question and answer sessions, wherein viewers are allowed to send questions, clarification on what they do not understand, and the presentation of their environmental initiatives. In the long-term, regular digital dawah has the potential to create an online network of religious environmentalists where Muslims consider ecological conservation as a logical extension of their religion.

d. **Cross-Sector Collaboration**

The possibilities to implement the moral obligations stated in Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 come with

²⁵ Egel, Daniel. "Religion and Environmental Behavior in Developing Countries." *Environment and Development Economics* 27, no. 1 (2022): 1–25.

²⁶ Palmer, Martin, and Victoria Finlay. *Faith in Conservation*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003.

the benefits of working with local governments, environmental NGOs, and community organizations to produce and measure the intended change.²⁷ These partnerships fill the gap that exists between faith and action where environmental protection would go beyond discussion to actual work. Local authorities can provide infrastructural measures, permitting structures and spaces to conduct activities, whereas NGOs will provide knowledge of technical skills, environmental information resources, and networks of trained volunteers. Community-based organizations, however, make the initiative relevant, culturally sensitive and endorsed by grassroots involvement.

Some of the joint programs might involve planting trees in both deforested land or flooding prone zones, which would add to sequestration of carbon and in the process also help to enhance air quality and biodiversity of the area. Water clean-up programs have the potential to rehabilitate vital water bodies, sensitize the need to handle waste fluidly producing clean water and instill a collective idea of shared resources care.²⁸ Energy conservation projects, including encouraging energy efficient appliances, solar lighting at mosque, or bike sharing programs all can serve to have a direct lessening of carbon footprints, as well as to be an obvious indicator of Islamic environmental ethics at work.

Religious leaders are an essential part of these alliances because they can mobilize their congregations, provide theological context to their environmental initiatives, and offer a moral authority to collaborative initiatives. That kyai or ustadz has a symbolic power when involved in planting a tree together with local officials and activists embodies a non-political process of strengthening the harmony between religion and civic duties. In the long run, these collaborations will be able to institutionalize environmental ethics practices in the community and form an environmental culture of sustainable practice built upon religious conviction and a sense of civic participation.

Evidence from Indonesian Practice

There are a few examples of Indonesian initiatives of operating the principles of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 at the community level.²⁹ Such is the case, for example, with the Istiqlal Mosque in

²⁷ Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change. Istanbul: OIC, 2015.

²⁸ PBB-UNEP. Faith for Earth: A Call to Action. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 2020.

²⁹ Badan Pusat Statistik. Statistik Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia 2023. Jakarta: BPS, 2023.

Jakarta, which has already undergone a complete environmental retrofit, making it the first house of worship in the world to achieve final certification in the IFC Excellence in Design program greater efficiencies (EDGE) in 2022.³⁰ It is being upgraded to have energy efficient lighting, water saving fixtures, and integration of renewable energy, and is a precedent case to the projects of large-scale mosque sustainability in Indonesia.

Within the pesantren setting, the Eco-Pesantren Daarut Tauhiid in Bandung has institutionalized environmental stewardship in terms of organic farming, waste segregation, composting and integration of various environmental education in their religious curriculum.³¹ This model shows the role of faith-based boarding schools in establishment of environmental ethics in the life of a student (santri). Likewise, a 2025 analysis of the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School claimed that its family-based program to be environmentally conscious led to a 78 percent household participation rate and almost 60 percent decrease in plastic waste available as quantifiable evidence of behavior change associated with religiously crested programs.³²

Peri-urban and urban mosques have been involved in community-led environmental action as well. In the Code River in Yogyakarta, river clean up movements, waste management initiatives and community awareness campaigns in mosque-focused movements have advocated the connection between Quranic teachings on cleanliness (nadhafah) and the practical ecological consequences thereof³³. In the meantime, in Lombok, the Nurul Hakim Pesantren has introduced the best waste management and water conservation practices campus-wide, making environmental care an inherent feature of student's daily life.

Philanthropic activities based on religion have also increased the reach of such actions. An example is that the Mosque at the Al Mahdul Islamic Boarding School set solar system on funding donated by its community to supply the mosque and to give light to the surrounding landscapes and streetlights. At the national level, reforestation programs financed through waqf, as occurred in the case of Bogor Waqf Forest and tree-waqf movements coordinated by Indonesian NGOs including

³⁰ Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). Strategy for Benefiting from Renewable Energy in the Islamic World. Rabat: ISESCO, 2017.

³¹ Darusman, R. Islam, Lingkungan, dan Etika. Bandung: Mizan, 2019.

³² Baharuddin, H. Green Islam: Environmental Ethics and Practices in Indonesia. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2020.

³³ Hidayat, Asep. "Peran Pesantren dalam Pengelolaan Lingkungan." Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 12, no. 2 (2020): 145–161.

Dompot Dhuafa and Muhammadiyah, prove the potential of Islamic charitable instruments to be used in climate mitigation.³⁴

The examples that are given, not only confirm the plausibility of the fatwa in multiple contexts but also demonstrate the direction in which to expand the impact by replicating it and adapting to new environments.

3. Challenges and Solutions

Nevertheless, there are a couple of common obstacles to the efficient execution of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 despite its potent moral and theological basis. The existence of a rather low degree of environmental literacy in certain religious leaders is one of the potential obstacles, especially those whose formal learning in the field has been centered around traditional Islamic sciences to the exclusion of modern knowledge of ecological sciences.³⁵ This disparity could interfere with the disposition of making environmental concerns relate to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and theology (aqeedah) with the current realities.

The second barrier is the state of dawaah media customized environmental themes which are relatively unavailable and have poor access. Current religious literature, preaching, and other educational materials continue to focus more on doctrinal, ritualistic, or socio-political issues to the detriment of the subject of environmental stewardship. In absence of available and effective designed communication tools, the message of the fatwa might fail to infiltrate the wider community of discourse.³⁶

Cultural resistance is another barrier, especially in societies where deep-rooted practices are led by excessive use of plastic packaging, open burning of waste or a larger consumption of natural resources.³⁷ When this happens, calls of behavioral change can even be viewed with suspicion or they are seen as interferences in tradition.

³⁴ Badan Pusat Statistik. *Statistik Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia 2023*. Jakarta: BPS, 2023.

³⁵ Ali, Syed Mohammad. "Religion and the Politics of Climate Change." *Third World Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2020): 397–415.

³⁶ Khondker, Habibul Haque. "Religion and the Environment in Asia." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 41, no. 5 (2013): 579–596.

³⁷ Khondker, Habibul Haque. "Religion and the Environment in Asia." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 41, no. 5 (2013): 579–596.

These challenges will have to be met through a multi-dimensional approach. One is that training programs targeted to religious leaders should be offered that would foster both the scientific knowledge and the theological context to promote the care of the environment.³⁸ Such programs would be possible to be organized with universities, environmental non-governmental organizations, and the training divisions of MUI. Second, the creation of standardized environmental dawah modules, such as sermon templates, aids, and Quran study guides, would make preachers and educators available materials to use. Last, incentive mechanisms, e.g. awards to motives with public recognition, grants to green mosques, community development funds conditioned on environmental achievement may encourage more communities to take part or seek to have competitions which are favorable.³⁹

4. Potential Limitations of Religious-Led Environmental Campaigns

In as much as there is great potential for promoting environmental conservation using religious leadership, this approach has its shortfalls. What seems to come to mind is the danger of overwhelming moral persuasion without proper structural or policy back-ups. Messages of religion can be a motivating factor in the short periods, yet without clear incentives, legal pressure, and easily available sources, the behavior deprived of practice could be hard to maintain.⁴⁰

Also, the ways of understanding Islamic teachings regarding the environment may differ among community and scholars. In other instances, it can indicate theological issues or diverse schools of thought which may cause inconsistencies on messaging which is not effective to the promoting of campaigns.⁴¹ It is also possible that environmental concerns can be superseded by other urgent religious or socio-political arguments which can lessen their prominence in the context of mosque-centered or religious educational practice.

In addition, environmental advocacy might not be a priority to certain communities over and above the urgent economic demands.⁴² Otherwise cast in the wrong light, religious-led campaigns would

³⁸ Faruqi, Yasmin. "Islamic View of Nature and Values." *Islam and Science* 4, no. 1 (2006): 37–55.

³⁹ Shabana, Ayman. "Islamic Perspectives on Climate Change." *Review of Faith & International Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2017): 50–58.

⁴⁰ Esack, Farid. *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1997.

⁴¹ Gade, Anna M. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

⁴² Hasan, Zubair. "Sustainable Development from an Islamic Perspective: Meaning, Implications, and Policy Concerns." *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics* 19, no. 1 (2006): 3–18.

be overridden as either idealistic or off the local socio-economic contexts. This dilemma reflects the need to incorporate solutions in communicating environmental demands which can also be linked to livelihood issues like promoting income-generating activities that are friendly to the environment.⁴³

Lastly, the danger of preaching to the converted exists wherein, the impact of environmental campaigns is reserved to those that have already been hooked up and still, the marginalized or those who are least sensitive groups do not have any affiliation to the cause. Clinching this would demand new outreach activities and alliances that are not limited to conventional religious domain.

44

5. Comparative Insight: Lessons from Other Muslim-Majority Contexts

There are not only Indonesian examples of religious-led environmental movements. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, parallel attempts have shown how it is possible, as well as how difficult, to combine faith with environmental activism.

The Green Mosque program Malaysia initiated by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has attempted to make mosques centers of environmental sustainability.⁴⁵ Such endeavors encompass a solar panel installation as an alternative to fossil energy, use of water consuming connection taps when performing ablutions (wudhu), and waste segregation platforms at mosque yards. Other mosques also have added community gardens to promote local food production and minimize carbon impact of the food transportation. The advantage of the program is that it has institutional support: it is directly associated with the national administration of religion and environmental policy to provide continuous financing, the provision of technical experts, and national uniformity. This religious power and state assets integration have served to ensure that sustainability practices become a part of the mosque management practice causing sustainability to be more than a performance.⁴⁶

⁴³ Al-Alwani, Taha Jabir. *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*. Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993.

⁴⁴ Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003.

⁴⁵ Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). *Green Mosque Guidelines*. Putrajaya: JAKIM, 2018.

⁴⁶ Hashim, Rosnani. *Educational Dualism in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Another example is Pakistan, the Billion Tree Tsunami project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province started in 2014 and was subsequently scaled-up as a country-wide program.⁴⁷ The necessity to consider local culture (as well as religion) and local clerics was recognized; therefore, project organizers involved imams to present the necessity of reforestation as a duty prescribed by the Quran (the principle of *ihsan* as doing good, and the principle of *amanah* as a trust). Spiritual virtue of planting trees was promoted through Friday sermons and was justified by such prophetic traditions as the hadith saying that planting a tree that is used by humans and animals or birds is a charity (*sadaqah jariyah*). The use of religious rewards created alliances by joining environmental action with rural farmers, youth underwings, and women groups, thus broadening the scope of participants to include them other than environmental activists. Nevertheless, the centralized planning aspect and the state-led implementation of the project also surfaced the shortage of uniform follow-up of the project in some areas and lack of local ownership in the project in non-planting seasons. This made it apparent that environmental program planning must be situational and be able to fit into the locality concerning the local culture, religion story and the long-term community interaction plans.

Such instances highlight how significant the relevance of Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 can be to other countries. Like Malaysia and Pakistan, Indonesia can use the moral authority of religious leaders along with technical, legal and policy measures. Nevertheless, the religious environment of Indonesia has a unique set of benefits. This large network of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), *madrasah* and mosque-based institutions offer a decentralized and community-based organization that can offer environmental messages in locally and culturally appropriate manner. This is unlike the highly centralized models as it leaves room to employ strategies that adapt to environmental challenges of the region be it coastal erosion in fishing villages, deforestation in rural Java, or waste management in urban centers. Given the right investment in training, resources and policies, Indonesia stands a good chance not just of catching up but beating these global models, through establishing a much ingrained, faith-based environmental movement that can echo through all strata of society and, indeed, all geographical environments.

Conclusion

⁴⁷ Government of Pakistan. Billion Tree Tsunami Project Report 2021. Islamabad: Ministry of Climate Change, 2021.

Originating in both theological and practical roles toward the practical performance of environmental protection in daily life, Fatwa MUI No. 86 of 2023 has its relevance as the theological imperative based in Islamic-derived principles. It is rooted in the idea of *khilafah fil-ardh*, or stewardship of the Earth, and demands a prudent use of natural resources, in addition to taking deliberate actions to prevent the global warming, pollution and resources over-exploitation.⁴⁸ This fatwa transcends the individual piety and requires the change of policy, education, and societal conduct. It recasts environmental conservation less as a meritorious moral obligation, than as a major pillar of religious service, which all Muslims are obliged to follow.

Relying on religious authority in the form of ulema, ustadz, kyai or mosque administrators, the fatwa is consequently realized, shifting doctrinaire fatwa into practice. Their non-commercialized sense of moral authority, foundational trust between communities and influence on religious discourses give them a critical role in bringing change. They can use sermons, *pengajian*, *majlis taklim*, and management of the Islamic institutions to import environmental ethics into the core of spiritual life so that the care of the Earth becomes part of worship (*ibadah*) and responsibility to God.

Promotion of innovative and multi-level steps is required to ensure practical influence. Digital *da wah* will provide a means of accessing the youth being grounded with technology, and by incorporating environmental modules in *madrrasah* and *pesantrens* the young will be able to grow with the environmental awareness up- ingrained in them. Collaboration between sectors--with local governments, NGOs, university and technical institutions and civic organizations can tie together ethical imperatives with technical skills and spawn visible projects like tree-planting campaigns, river rehabilitation programs, sustainable agriculture programs and adoption of renewable energy in mosques and their facilities. Commitment can then be enhanced further by recognition and incentive plans to reward green mosques and environmentally keen communities to promote healthy competition.

Nonetheless, Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 will only be successful in the long term with collective ownership. Being an environmental steward should become the order of the day and during the worship process practices, community design, and government policies. This demands to be long-

⁴⁸ Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). Strategy for Benefiting from Renewable Energy in the Islamic World. Rabat: ISESCO, 2017.

term, uninterrupted, and continual first-time education and subsequent adaptation by the religious leadership to the changing contexts of the environment and social conditions.

With proper execution, the religious means of environmental protection started in Indonesia might inspire other global communities to combine religion with the sustainability of the environment. It would show that the core principles of Islam, when mobilized in action, not only have the moral science and claim to help solve one of the most burning issues of humanity but also the best versatility. By acting in such a way, Indonesian Muslims would not enjoy fulfilling their covenant solely with the Creator but realize it in terms of environmental benefit to their own descendants, turning moral duty into quantifiable future environmental gains and leaving behind a trail of religion-driven sustainability.

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