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HIZBUT TAHRIR INDONESIA'S (HTI) EFFORTS THE IDEA OF CALIPHATE AND RECRUIT MEMBERS AFTER BEING BANNED BY THE GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines HTI's efforts to spread the idea of the Caliphate (Khilafah) and recruit new members after the government dissolved them through Perppu Ormas No. 2 of 2017. This paper uses qualitative method through data collection by observation, interviews, and literature review. The result of this research is the following: although the government has banned the HTI, the activities of the movement are still being carried out in resistance to the government ban. In maintaining its activities, HTI uses strategic changes to avoid government control. The strategy focuses on changing the movement from offline activities to online activities and using small groups and informal networks. This strategy is manifested in the Khilafah campaign activities on the internet, such as movies and Islamic studies programs on YouTube. The use of informalnetworks is manifested in the activities of the Campus Da'wah Institution Coordinating Board (BKLDK), which recruits HTI members among students. Another group, the YukNgaji community, was also created to attract the youth through their popular figure, Felix Siauw. This paper argues that even though the government has banned the movement, it has not prevented HTI from furthering its goals of establishing the Caliphate.

Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji upaya HTI menyebarkan ide Khilafah dan merekrut anggota baru setelah mereka dibubarkan oleh pemerintah melalui Perppu Ormas No. 2 tahun 2017. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pengumpulan data secara observasi, wawancara, dan kajian literatur. Hasil penelitian ini ialah meskipun status HTI telah dilarang pemerintah, namun aktivitas gerakan HTI masih tetap dilangsungkan sebagai respons atau perlawanan terhadap kebijakan pemerintah yang membubarkannya. Dalam mempertahankan aktivitasnya, HTI menggunakan perubahan strategi untuk menghindari kontrol pemerintah. Strategi yang digunakan berfokus kepada perubahan area gerakan dari offline ke online dan penggunaan kelompok kecil (jaringan informal) gerakan. Strategi ini berwujud pada aktivitas kampanye Khilafah di internet seperti berbentuk film dan kajian Islam di YouTube. Sementara, strategi penggunaan jaringan informal berbentuk pada penugasan aktivis Badan Koordinasi Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (BKLDK) untuk merekrut anggota HTI di kalangan mahasiswa. Pembuatan kelompok lain yaitu komunitas YukNgaji juga dilakukan untuk menarik minat pemuda melalui figur populer HTI, Felix Siauw. Tulisan ini berargumentasi bahwa meskipun suatu gerakan sosial telah dilarang pemerintah, namun tidak menghalangi aktivitasnya untuk melanjutkan cita-citanya. Contoh pada HTI ini membuktikan bahwa meskipun mereka dilarang, namun aktivitasnya untuk mendirikan Khilafah tetap dilanjutkan.

Background

Since the Reformation era, Indonesia has undergone significant changes in freedom of association and expression, which marked the birth of the democratic era.[1] One of the impacts of this new era is the emergence of religious movements that want to implement Islamic law in a comprehensive manner (*kaffah*) manner, both local and transnational

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[1] Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesia, Islam, and Democracy: Dynamics in a Global Context* (Equinox Publishing, 2006); Rabiatul Adawiah and Ihsan Kamaludin, "Dynamics of Law Enforcement of the Islamic Criminal Law in Aceh in the Indonesian Democratic System," *Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2021): 97−111.

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religious movements.[2] One of them is the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) movement. HTI is a transnational religious movement that has existed since the 1980s in Indonesia, but only declared itself as a formal organization in 2000 after the Reformation took place. Since the organization focuses on solving problems such as legal injustice, social pathology, poverty, and political independence based on Islamic teachings, many Indonesians empathize with HTI.[3] This can be seen in their role in influencing policy in Indonesia. HTI was one of the major forces that led to the rejection of the Ahmadiyah sect. They also influenced the Pornography Law and opposed the Miss World pageant.[4] At its peak, the Islamic revivalist movement was one of the major voices demanding that the former vice−governor of Jakarta of Chinese descent, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (Ahok), be jailed in 2016 due to allegations of blasphemy.[5]

However, as Indonesians slowly realized that HTI's goals contradicted the Pancasila ("the Five Principles") as the state ideology, pressure to disband this religious movement began to emerge, especially from moderate religious groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama.[6] In the end, HTI was dissolved by the government on July 19, 2017 through Perppu Ormas No. 2/2017 on Mass Organizations. This Perppu requires that every mass organization adhere to the ideology of the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, HTI has an ideology that is contrary to the Pancasila: wanting to establish an Islamic state (Khilafah Islamiyah) within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.[7]

Therefore, it is essential to see the extent of HTI's development after it was dissolved by the government in 2017, especially in regard to their attempt to spread their ideas and recruit new members. However, research on HTI often only focuses on how the movement is active in Indonesia, such as the study by Osman[8] and Asep and Zulkifili.[9] In addition, observers have only focused on their identity as radical activities because of their ideology to restore the Islamic Caliphate in the world.[10] The study of HTI is also crucial because, as an organization with transnational characteristics, HTI has optimal resources and multinational reach.[11] This is evidenced by its presence in more than 40 countries which is quite an achievement.[12]

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[2] Noorhaidi Hasan, "Reformasi, Religious Diversity, and Islamic Radicalism after Suharto," *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2008): 23−51.

[3] M Najib Husain, La Husen Zuada, and Dewi Anggraini, "Political Primordialism Post−Reformation in Indonesia," in *ISSHE 2020: Proceedings of the First International Seminar Social Science, Humanities and Education, ISSHE 2020, 25 November 2020, Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia* (European Alliance for Innovation, 2021), 313.

[4] B. Muhtadi, "The Quest for Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37, no. 4 (2009): 623−45.

[5] D Peterson, *Islam, Blasphemy, and Human Rights in Indonesia: The Trial of Ahok* (Routledge, 2020), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007814.

[6] By Alexander R Arifianto, "Banning Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia : Freedom or Security ?," *RSIS*, no. 099 (2017).

[7] Masdar Hilmy, "The Rise and Fall of 'Transnational' Islam in Indonesia: The Future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)," in *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia* (Routledge, 2020), 133−45.

[8] M. N. M. Osman, *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and Political Islam: Identity, Ideology and Religio-Political Mobilization* (Routledge, 2018).

[9] Asep Muhamad Iqbal and Zulkifli, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Nationstate and Global Citizenship: The Case of Hizb Ut−Tahrir," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 6, no. 1 (2016): 35−61, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v6i1.35−61.

[10] Ken Ward, "Non−Violent Extremists? Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 2 (2017): 149 164; Fisher Zulkarnain, "The Political Thought and Movement of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)," *Journal of Critical Reviews* 7, no. 1 (2020): 478−82.

[11] Gregory Fealy, "Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia: Seeking a'total'Muslim Identity," in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West* (IB Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007).

[12] Delphine Alles, *Transnational Islamic Actors and Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2015), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315764986.

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Studies of HTI after the dissolution by the government have been carried out by Burhani,[13] who discussed the wider community's response to the HTI dissolution process. Despite violating the applicable law, which was not carried out through the courts, the decision to dissolve HTI was widely supported by the moderate majority. However, the ban has 'tarnished' democratic culture. Aswar et al. (2020) regard HTI as a mass organization that the state has repressed. Therefore, when the government disbanded it, the solution was to resist state policy through political and legal strategies.

This paper will discuss HTI after they were dissolved, especially in regard to their activities in spreading the Khilafah idea and recruiting new members. These movement activities are carried out through membership mobilization in various spaces, such as the Internet, college campus, and the wider public. In addition, these activities show that HTI are a religious movement that tries to resist government policies, even though the strategy is carried out clandestinely. Therefore, the main topic of this research is the following: the activities of the HTI movement after being banned by the Indonesian government, especially in spreading the idea of the Khilafah and efforts to recruit new members?

In the face of government policy, especially legal bans, social movements have two choices, namely: first, to cease activities without resisting, and second, to change strategies and methods.[14] Social movements actively resist and use different tactics to avoid sanctions and strict government control. Hence, this second type of social movement usually carries out strategies secretly outside the government and society's control.

Some resistance strategies or tactics that can be adopted by social movements to respond to state prohibitions are to alter the arena of resistance, to change the issues or demands advocated, and to use other groups.[15] These strategies are adopted in order for the banned organization to continue their activities under a certain policy regime. Through the internet, courts, hiding places, and exile, banned groups can escape state control. Changes in tactics on issues or demands can take the form of changing the movement's focus to gain more public support and continue its resistance. Meanwhile, the strategy of using other relevant groups is the use of similar organizations or groups in carrying out their activities on its behalf. This alternate group can be a vehicle for the banned social movement to survive. Wiktorowicz[16] proposes informal networks as another method of survival. Informal networks are small groups connected to a leading organization in a closed (authoritarian) political system.

The concept of a social movement's response to a government ban is an appropriate framework to use in this study. This study focuses on HTI's efforts after the government banned them. After they were disbanded in 2017, HTI refused to give up. They kept mobilizing members to spread their idea of the Islamic Caliphate (Khilafah Islamiyyah). They also adjusted their strategies and tactics after being banned. To spread its Khilafah ideology, HTI used the internet as its new strategy. In its efforts to recruit new members, HTI uses other unbanned groups. In conducting recruitment among students, HTI assigns its members to infiltrate and eventually take over student *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) institutions. In expanding membership in the public, HTI forms other organizations or movements that do not have HTI identity but take advantage of trends in people's lives, such as the YukNgaji and *hijrah* movement of the well−known HTI figure, Felix Siauw.

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[13] Ahmad Najib Burhani, "The Banning of Hizbut Tahrir and the Consolidation of Democracy in Indonesia," *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 71 (2017): 1−10.

[14] Alberto Melucci, "The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach," *Social Science Information* 19, no. 2 (1980): 199−226.

[15] Melucci, "The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach," *Social Science Information* 19, no. 2 (1980): 225.

[16] Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Indiana University Press, 2004).

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This movement takes advantage of the *hijrah* (religious "emigration") trend in of youth in urban areas.

This paper uses a qualitative method.[17] It uses observations, interviews, and literature review techniques to collect the research data. Observations were conducted in West Java province, especially in two major cities, Bandung and Bogor, from May 2022 to January 2023. Observations were made by visiting study circles and discussions held by HTI, especially in Bandung, in addition to visiting HTI schools and study circles in Bogor. Observations were also made on campuses where there are HTI branch movements, such as the Campus Da'wah Institution (LDK), the Coordinating Body of Campus Da'wah Institutions (BKLDK), and the Liberation Student Movement which is also tasked with recruiting students. At the same time, interviews were conducted with HTI activists in the Bogor and Bandung areas of West Java. Interviews were mainly conducted with HTI leaders in various cities in West Java, such as Bandungand Bogor, as well as LDK HTI activists, namely members of BKLDK and Gema Pembebasan.

From the literature review, data collection focused on HTI's literature, both mandatory literature and books written by HTI figures. Books such as Mafahim Hizbut Tahrir, Takatul Hizbi, Ad－Daulah, and Nizamul Islam as mandatory HTI books are the review's focus. A literature review was also conducted on HTI media, namely Media Umat, al－Islam, Kaffah, Al－Wa'ie, and Teman Surga. In reviewing HTI's activities on social media, the author also observed and reviewed the websites and social media of HTI and its members, such as YukNgaji.com, Khilafah Channel, Felix Siauw, and participated in online discussions provided by HTI.

History of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia

HTI is part of the international Hizbut Tahrir organization. Hizbut Tahrir was founded by an Islamic scholar, Taqiyudin An－Nabhani, in Jerusalem in 1953.[18] An－Nabhani founded the organization as a political party to revive the Islamic Caliphate. Hizbut Tahrir was formed to advance the revival of the Muslim World from its current downturn, liberate Muslims from the domination of Western thought, systems, and laws, and restore the Islamic Caliphate. An－Nabhani believes that political parties should emulate the methods used by the Prophet Muhammad in tak over the leadership in Medina.[19]

An－Nabhani divided the method of establishing the Caliphate into three levels, in imitation of the methods of the Apostle. First, the acculturation stage *(tasqif)* aims to produce people who believe in the ideas and techniques of the party. It involves forming small groups that are accustomed to the HTI culture. This stage focuses on educational institutions through which students are recruited and educated. Second, the stage of interaction *(tafa'ul)* with the wider Muslim community. This stage produces a personality that is committed to Islamic teachings and work to uphold them in their life. Third, compromise with power and authority *(istilamu al-hukmi).* HTI wants to form an Islamic government that applies Islamic law comprehensively. It approaches officials, politicians, judges, and the military to help realize its goal of an Islamic government.[20]

The emergence of Hizbut Tahrir (HT) in Indonesia can be traced through the activities of two Islamic religious figures, Abdullah Bin Noah and Abdurrahman al－Baghdadi, who played an essential role in the growth and expansion of the organization in Indonesia.

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[17] Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (SAGE Publications Inc., 2011).

[18] David Commins, "Taqi Al－Din Al－Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," *The Muslim World* 81, no. 3－4 (1991).

[19] Taqiyudin An－Nabhani, *Takatul Hizbi* (Jakarta: HTI Press, 2004).

[20] Taqiyuddin An－Nabhani, *Mafahim Hizbut Tahrir* (Hizbut Tahrir Publications, 2001).

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Abdullah Bin Nuh was a cleric who owned a pesantren in Bogor. Many of his students were graduates at the Bogor Agricultural University (IPB).[21] In the late 1970s, Abdullah Bin Nuh met several HT members in Australia, including Al－Baghdadi, while visiting his son, who was studying in Sydney.[22] Most HT members in Australia were immigrants from the Middle East who migrated to Australia to escape persecution from Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes. Noah was deeply impressed by HT's methodology, which he felt offered sustainable and practical solutions to the problems of the Muslim World. In 1982, he invited Al－Baghdadi to teach at his pesantren in Bogor.

The history of HTI can be divided into two main periods. The first period was during Suharto's New Order regime when Indonesia was still an authoritarian state. The second period was in the post－New Order period when Indonesia began transforming into a democracy. During the New Order, HTI maintained a low profile and used informal networks to spread its influence. This is not entirely surprising as social movements often use informal networks to recruit and express their demands in authoritarian countries. Wiktorowicz argues that using informal networks is a common strategy for subversive Islamic movements.[23] As such, these movements are often perceived as less threatening to the regime. Thus, it was appropriate for HTI to use various Muslim student organizations to expand its network and support. At this stage, its organizational structure was still shadowy and operated behind the scenes in the form of informal networks. One of the first informal networks was the Student Islamic Spirituality Board (BKIM) of the Bogor Agricultural University.

The fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 led to a period of democratization and easing of political control. However, it took about two years for HTI to react to the changes, since its leaders were unsure how best to respond. Baghdadi differed from other HTI leaders by agreeing to form a formal organization to express his ideas. In July 2000, HTI officially launched itself as a legal organization. This was mainly due to the belief of HTI leaders that the organization was strong enough to be formally established.[24] As part of this renewal initiative, HTI relaunched the Al－Islam Bulletin in July 2000.

Subsequently, in August 2000, HTI organized its first international *hilafah* conference to formally bring the organization to the public sphere. The meeting was held at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Senayan, Jakarta. Five thousand HTI activists attended the event. The event received media coverage and transformed HTI from a static elite－based movement into a broad－based mass organization with a dynamic outlook. Speakers at the event included Sheikh Ismail al－Wahwah (Hizbut Tahrir Australia), Ustaz Syarifuddin Md Zain (Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia), and Muhammad al－Khaththath (Indonesia). After that, HTI began to organize activities openly and campaigned fervently for the implementation of Sharia law in Indonesia and the rise of the Caliphate.[25]

Spreading the Idea of Caliphate hrough the Internet

After being dissolved by the government in 2017, HTI underwent transformation, especially in terms of the their online presence. The dissolution of HTI caused the organization to be increasingly under pressure and no longer have a place in society.

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[21] Agus Salim, *The Rise of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (1982-2004) Its Political Opportunity Structure, Resource Mobilization, and Collective Action Frames* (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2005).

[22] Muhammad al－Khaththath, "Amanah Kepemimpinan," *Al-Wa 'Ie* 8, no. 82 (2007): 7－8.

[23] Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*.

[24] Hafidz Abdurrahman, *Diskursus Islam Politik Dan Spiritual* (WADI Press, 2002).

[25] M. N. M Osman, "The Transnational Network of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 18, no. 4 (2010): 735–55.

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Therefore, their *da'wah* were carried out secretly through social media. One of the *da'wah* carried out by HTI is related to the expansion of the Khilafah idea. For example, the US National Intelligence Council released a prediction on the state of global political power in 2020. The report states that there will be solid political power from Islamic countries during year, especially in the form of cooperation between the Petrodollar countries.[26] On social media, HTI members interpreted the dominance of Petrodollar countries as theestablishment of a new Islamic caliphate.

Figure 1. The spread of the idea "Khilafah will be established in 2020!" according to HTI.
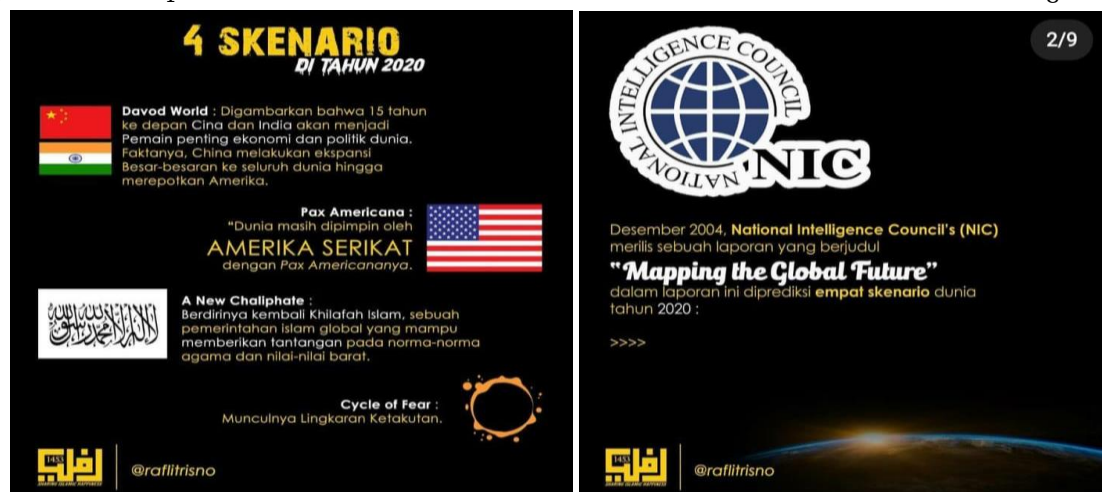
Source: Instagram.com.

The HTI movement on the internet can also be traced in various social media networks. If previously HTI activities were openly carried out in the physical world (offline), now HTI focuses on various internet platforms. Movement activities are carried out clandestinely, like in the New Order era. Discussions previously held on campuses and urban mosques have now switched to YouTube Live or Instagram live broadcasts. For example, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's Year－End Muhasabah program, which was always held in large buildings or halls or even in stadiums such as the 2013 International Caliphate Conference, is now held on social media and online conference media (Zoom Meeting). After being dissolved, getting the required permit to organize physical activities has been complicated to obtain.

Other programs held by HTI's Campus Da'wah Institution (LDK), which were usually held on campuses, are now on digital media. In addition, there are LDKs whose official statutes have been revoked by the campus rectorate. For example, LDK Harmoni Amal and Titian Ilmu (HATI) ITB were disbanded by the ITB rector in 2018 for being affiliated with HTI.[27] Nevertheless, LDK continued to be active by recruiting members and carrying out HTI campaigns in a covert manner. It also started to focus more on online content through infographics and videos. However, they still use leaflets, posters, and magazines on a limited basis.

HTI also produced a number of films. A movie produced by HTI that has attracted public attention is *Jejak Khilafah di Nusantara* (JKDN; "Footsteps of the Caliphate in Nusantara"). The film was not distributed through social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook due concerns that the government would block the

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[26] National Intelligence Council, *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project, Based on Consultations with Nongovernmental Experts Around the World* (US: US Government Printing Office, 2004).

[27] Tia Mariatul Kibtiah and Muthia Rahima Putri, "The Existence of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia: Strategies for Engaging in Indonesian Politics," *Indonesian Journal of Political Research (IJPR)* 2 (2021).

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film. Hence, it wasdisseminated and watched with a special ticket through a certain movie player application. Nonetheless, the advertisement to watch the movie was spread across all of HTI's social media accounts.

The JKDN film (figure 2) attempts to link the Islamic Caliphate to the Islamic kingdoms of the Indonesian archipelago.[28] The historical claims of the film were refuted by academic historians such as Alwi Alatas, Azyumardi Azra, Peter Carey, and others. Alatas, for example, said that the JKDN movie is ridden by historical speculation. Some facts are deliberately manipulated with the use of scientific. The film was intended todisseminateHTI's ideology, and had little regard for historical accuracy.[29]

Figure 2. JKDN movie screening campaign

Source: Instagram.com/jejakkhilafahdinusantara)

Another effort made by HTI is the use of several official HTI channels on YouTube, one of which is the Khilafah Channel (figure 3). The central leadership of HTI manages this channel. The content of the Channel is Islamic studies and the dissemination of the ideas of HTI leaders and scholars, such as Ismail Yusanto, Rakhmat Labib, Yasin Mutohir, Hafidz Abdurrahman, Yuana Tresna, and others. The Khilafah Channel subscribers have reached 82.2 thousand with 320 videos. In terms of consistency and the number of visitors, this channel deserves to be called one of the largest mass organization YouTube channels after NU Channel and Muhammadiyah TV. Like other religious mass organization channels, Khilafah Channel also presents a variety of creative content. This channel also provides its subscribers and visitors with learning programs that are broadcasted live.

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[28] Mochammad Nginwanun Likullil Mahamid, "Gerakan Ideologi Islam Transnasional Di Indonesia Dalam Film JKDN Karya Nicko Pandawa," *Muslim Heritage* 7, no. 1 (2022): 83−109.

[29] Deden Gunawan, "Pakar Sejarah Jawa Sebut Film Jejak Khilafah Khayalan," *Detik.Com*, 2020.

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Figure 3. Front view of Khilafah Channel's YouTube channel

Source: Youtube.com/khilafahchannel

HTI also spreads their ideology on Twitter. This can be seen from the frequent use of several hashtags that have been designed by HTI and have become the talk of netizens on Twitter. A hashtag that becomes the main topic of conversation on Twitter is usually spread through HTI members following the instructions of the *mushrif*, the person in charge of a particular region, and the central leadership council.

Figure 4. HTI's Control of Opinion on Twitter
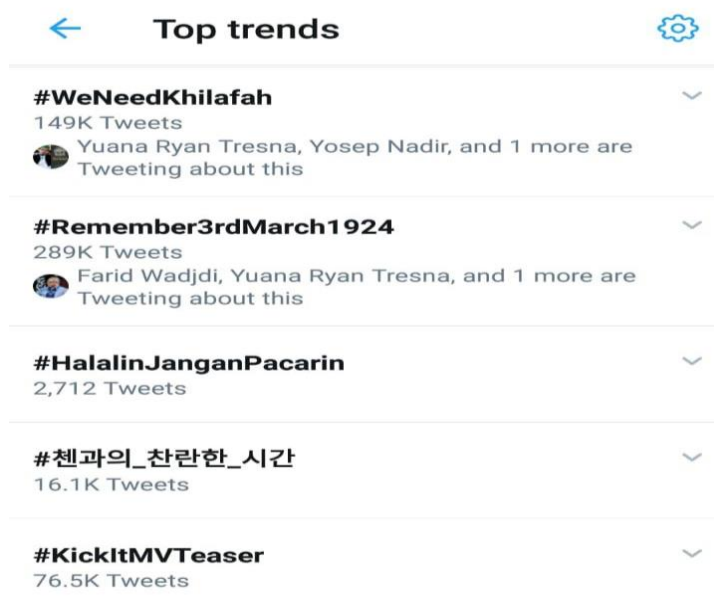
Source: Twitter.com, 2021.

A hashtag usually represents a specific campaign message that HTI has planned. Usually, a campaign message contains HTI's views and solutions to a certain issue or event that is currently being discussed nationally and internationally. One of the issues that became a trending topic on Twitter in 2020 was the case of violence against Muslims in India,[30] which HTI responded to by using the hashtag #WeNeedKhilafah. HTI wanted to show that the Khilafah is the only solution to protect Muslims worldwide, including in India. More than 100,000 people on Twitter tweeted the hashtag. Therefore, HTI's movement on Twitter influenced public opinion on these two topics.

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[30] Musarat Javed Cheema, "Pakistan−India Conflict with Special Reference to Kashmir," *South Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2020).

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HTI's efforts in spreading the idea of Khilafah on social media, especially after being dissolved by the government, are a form of resistance to government policies that have banned it. Before being banned HTI was very active in public life, such as in mosques, campuses, schools, and public spaces; after being banned it decided to focus on cultivating a presence on the internet and social media. This change in strategy aims to keep its activities away from government control and pressure fromopposing community groups. Although many people have recently recognized HTI's activities on social media, the government and the public cannot intervene. To this point, Melucci[31] has stated that this change is an effort to resist government.

Recruiting New Members through the Campus Da'wah Movement (LDK)

Although the government has banned HTI, their branch movement still operates on campuses. This can be seen from the BKLDK movement on several campuses in West Java, which is still actively recruiting students. BKLDK, or the Coordinating Body for Campus Da'wah Institutions (BKLDK), is a campus *da'wah* organization that is either under HTI or is affiliated with HTI. This campus *da'wah* movement was founded in 2006 in Bogor to spread the idea of Khilafah and recruit new members on campus.[32] Before HTI was disbanded, BKLDK was very active on campuses in West Javaheld discussion groups, and displayed its HTI identity.[33] However, after HTI was disbanded, BKLDK was automatically banned from campuses.

To adjust to the ban, BKLDK changed its strategy. They no longer show off their identity on campus, rather, they infiltrated LDK institutions on campus.[34] LDK is an intra−campus institution whose existence is not affiliated with a particular religious movement. This institution is usually recognized as a legitimate student activity group on campus. Therefore, LDK activities are not banned like BKLDK, which is affiliated with HTI. BKLDK members in a city from several campuses will be dispersed and assigned to become members of the LDK and gradually take over its leadership positions. Once this occurs, they would integrate HTI ideals in every LDK program. This facilitates the recruitment of new members.

By using LDK as a front, BKLDK members use the strategy of trying to appeal to students who do not want to be disturbed from their studies and lectures. This is in contrast to other student organizations whose focus on organization activities often forces their members to neglect their studies. LDK, conversely, is more oriented toward discussing ideas, religious studies, and other intellectual engagements. As a result, LDK has cultivated the reputation of a student group that does not engage in useless social activities.[35]

However, BKLDK also experienced a downward trend in membership. Apart from the HTI ban, another factor that led to the decline in members was the cautiousness of students when choosing to join Islamic student groups on campus.[36] This is mainly due to the widespread rejection of the ideas of HTI, namely the Khilafah. A survey by Mata Air

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[31] Melucci, "The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach."

[32] BKLDK, "Selayang Pandang BKLDK Badan Koordinasi Lembaga Dakwah Kampus," *BKLDK Jawa Tengah*, 2016.

[33] Agung Sumartono, "BKLDK Tolak Keras Penaikan Harga BB," *Media Umat.News*, 2017; Izan Ihwan, "Aliansi Pemuda Dan Mahasiswa Turun Ke Jalan Tolak Perppu," *Media Umat.News*, 2017; Bangkitpos, "Tolak Perppu Ormas, Mahasiswa Gelar Aksi Di DPRD DIY," *Media Umat.News*, 2017.

[34] Lufaefi, "Mewaspadai Gerakan Khilafah Pasca Bubarnya HTI," *Suaraislam.Co*, 2017.

[35] Hafidz Abdurrahman, "Bagaimana Cara Khilafah Membina Generasi Muda?," *Media Umat.News*, 2021; Ahmad Fatwa, "Rajab: Pemuda Dan Peradaban Islam," *Media Umat.News*, 2022.

[36] Agung Sumartono, "Ratusan Mahasiswa Terjerat Pinjol, Siyasah Institute: Akibat Sistem Kapitalisme," *Media Umat.News*, 2022.

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Foundation and Alvara Research Institute[37] showed that only 17.8 percent of students support the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Indonesia. On the other hand, most of the students surveyed, namely 82.2 percent, still upheld the idea of the Republic of Indonesia. They consider radical movements as threatening the integrity of the nation. The increasing economic pragmatism among students also supports this phenomenon. Students want to complete their studies quickly and join the job market, because new university regulations limit the study period to only a few years. They will be expelled from campus if they fail to fulfill this requirement.

The strategy of infiltrating LDK has allowed HTI to continue its movement even after government banThrough internal networks in campus, the movement was ableto carry out its activities.

Popular Figures: Felix Siauw

Felix Yanwar Siauw (Siauw Chen Kwok), better known as Felix Siauw, was born in 1984 in Palembang, South Sumatra. He was Catholic before becoming a Muslim in 2002 after learning about Islam through his friends who were HTI activists at the Faculty of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), West Java. Felix Siauw explained that his encounter with HTI changed his negative perception of Islam and convinced him that Islam is a great religion, so he decided to convert. Since converting and becoming a member of HTI, he has been active in *da'wah* activities and has become the head of the *da'wah* group of the Faculty of Agriculture, IPB. Because of his straightforward style of communication, Felix Siauw became known as a famous preacher with millions of followers.[38]

Felix Siauw has consistently argued that Hizbut Tahrir's Khilafah ideology cannot accept the separation between Islam and politics. He openly states his political views, such as his disapproval of non−Muslims becoming state leaders in Muslim−majority societies like Indonesia.[39] However, such dogmatic views have not prevented him from being invited to speak frequently in Indonesia and abroad. International students and migrant workers have invited him to lecture in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, and the United States.[40] He also has various businesses to promote and sustain his *da'wah* activities. Together with his wife, he runs Hijab Alila, an Islamic fashion brand. At the same time, he also works with Hajj and Umrah travel agencies to offer pilgrimage tours and religious holiday packages. His wife also had her own publishing house, Al Fatih Press, where she published many of her books, which deals with trendy topics, such as *Beyond the Inspiration* in 2010, *How to Master Your Habit* in 2012, *Khilafah Remake* in 2014, *Udah Putusin Aja* in 2013, *Yuk Berhijab* in 2015, and *The Art of Dakwah* in 2017.

As of May 2023, Felix Siaux has more than four million followers on Facebook, two million followers on Twitter, five million followers on Instagram, and over one million subscribers on YouTube. That makes him one of the leading social media preachers in Indonesia today. As such, he is frequently invited by television programs and community organizations to discussions on Islam. Before HTI was banned, he often proposed the idea of Khilafah openly as a solution to Muslim problems. His congregation accepted this

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[37] Hasanuddin Ali, *Radicalism Rising Among Educated People? Research Findings on Professionals, College and High Schools Students* (Jakarta: Alvara Research Institute, 2017).

[38] Wai Weng Hew, "THE ART OF DAKWAH: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 61−79.

[39] Hew Wai Weng, "Conservative Inclusivity and Hierarchical Diversity," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 47, no. 3 (2019): 387−407.

[40] Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, "Ideologization of Hijrah in Social Media: Digital Activism, Religious Commodification, and Conservative Domination," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 2023.

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because there was no ban on HTI. However, after the government ban, he was still pushing the Khilafah message but obliquely and in private. He also rarely accepted invitations to appear on TV or in the general public.

However, Felix Siauw's role after the HTI ban remained strong due to his vast following. His advocacy of the Islamic Caliphate was expounded mainly on social media. Felix has become the leading trendsetter for HTI missionaries (*da'i*).

Felix Siauw's expertise is also seen in his use of trends of religious lifestyles in Indonesia, such as his work in forming the YukNgaji community due to the *hijrah* ("religious emigration") youth trend. The *hijrah* youth trend was a lifestyle trend that was popular in 2015−2019 in major urban centers. Many young people felt the need to "emigrate" from bad behavior to good behavior. Felix utilized this trend to form an Islamic study community, YukNgaji, in Bogor, West Java.[41] YukNgaji interprets the term "ngaji," derived from "kaji," as equipping oneself with an Islamic foundation and determining solutions to life's problems from an Islamic perspective.

Because the method is catered towards the youth and teenagers, primarily through Islamic studies on social media, it has developed into a large community whose members come from all over Indonesia, from Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, to Sulawesi.[42] In addition, Felix's previous successful work in the campus *da'wah* movement allowed him to design the appropriate strategy of giving *da'wah* to youth. He also draws heavily from his experience as a convert to Islam to help convince people of his Islamic authority and modern personality. Moreover, Felix is adept at delivering *da'wah* with visual persuasion through social media accounts, especially Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Currently, Felix is one of the crucial figures in the YukNgaji community. He has inspired many millennial Muslims.

The presence of YukNgaji came at the wake of the dissolution of HTI in 2017. The movement is one of HTI's main vehicles in recruiting members and spreading the Khilafah idea. YukNgaji's strategy of hiding its HTI identity has led many young people to join this community. Most members of the YukNgaji community do not care about Felix Siauw's status as a HTI figure. This is because what is conveyed on social media by YukNgaji is not related directly to the Khilafah but focuses on the importance leading an authentic Islamic life.

Figure 5. YukNgaji Instagram
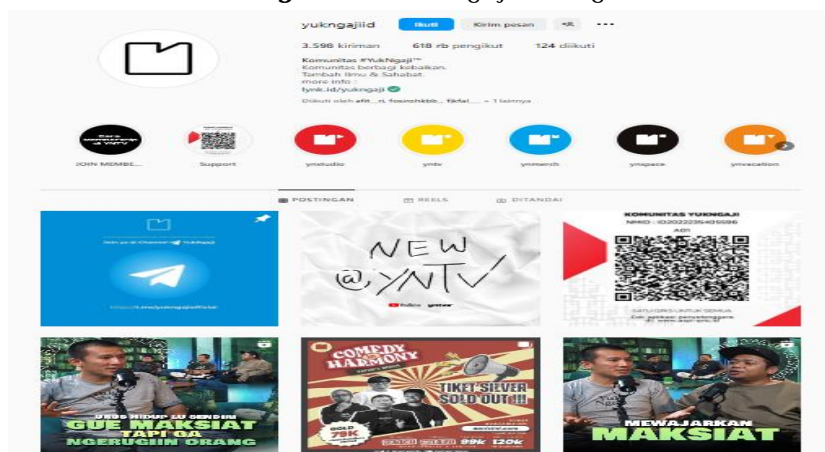
Source: Instagram.com/yukngajiid

[41] Juliansyahzen, "Ideologization of Hijrah in Social Media: Digital Activism, Religious Commodification, and Conservative Domination," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 2023.

[42] Hew Wai Weng, "Packaging, Persuasion and Propaganda: Popular Preaching and Islamic Counter−Publics in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review*, 2022, 1−16.

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The *da'wah* method carried out by YukNgaji is very identical to the HTI method. For example, YukNgaji uses the methods of *da'wah bil-lisan* (*da'wah* through speech), *da'wah 'ammah* (general *da'wah*), *da'wah bil-kitabah* (*da'wah* through writing), and *da'wah bil-hal* (*da'wah* with examples of good deeds).[43] These methods follow HTI methods, including the concept of *tasqif* or *da'wah*, inviting people to get to know Islam from an HTI perspective which prioritizes oral invitations and good character *(akhlak karimah).*[44] The main target of YukNgaji's *da'wah* are millennials. YukNgaji usually start their study programs online, designing exciting video and audio content for the audience. It posts photos, infographics, quotes of the Prophet Muhammad, comics, and memes about Islam that follow the current trends among its audience.

To spread to other communities, YukNgaji invites participants on social media to offline events. The first type of event is the weekly study group organized by the core members of the YukNgaji community. This method is similar to the *halaqah* (study circle) model of HTI. Another type is a monthly study group attended by many members, followed by special study groups held on certain occasions. In HTI, this type of study program is called monthly Daurah Islamiyyah.[45] It discussespublic debates and proposes Islamic solutions. The intention is to invite the attracted student to eventually enter HTI. This modelhas attracted many young people.

> "I am lucky to be a YukNgaji member and later became a *shabah* (female HTI member). While participating in YukNgaji, I gained Islamic knowledge different from other study programs. Especially for me, who was originally a non—practicing person, YukNgaji was a solution. After a long time, I felt suitable for this study. That's what makes me believe in embracing Islam in a comprehensive manner (*kaffah*)."[46]

HTI's strategy of utilizing other communities, namely YukNgaji, is quite effective in maintaining the HTI movement after the government. By concealing the HTI identity through other organizations, HTI has been effective in entering the youth market. The *hijrah* trend developing in young people in Indonesian society was used to reorient the message from politics to focusing on personal religious behavior. The *hijrah* trend has proven successful because it attracts many young people. Young people seem to forget that Felix Siauw was an influential HTI propagator. However, because of the large interest in the *hijrah* trend among young people, his past involvement was easily forgotten by the YukNgaji members.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that a social movement that has been banned by the government does not necessarily stop and disappear from the public sphere. HTI proves that although the government has revoked its organizational permit through Perppu Ormas No. 2 of 2017, its activities are still being carried out through different strategies and forms. These changes are necessary for HTI to avoid government control and to avoid public pressure against them. Two strategies that are carried out, namely changing the arena of social involvement and forming other relevant communities. These two strategies allows HTI to spread their Khilafah ideology on the internet, use BLDK on campus as a new vehicle of operation, and use its famous figures in a different capacity. The use of the internet allows

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[43] Hew, "THE ART OF DAKWAH: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw."

[44] Taqiyudin An—Nabhani, *The Khilafah* (Mesir: Al—Khilafah Publications, 1998).

[45] Taqiyuddin An—Nabhani, *Sistem Pemerintahan Islam; Doktrin, Sejarah Dan Realitas Empirik* (Jakarta: Al—Izzah, 1996).

[46] NHA, HTI members, Interview, May 2022.

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HTI to shift their activities online, which is more difficult to control by the government. Using BKLDK and famous figures aims at forming other communities or groups that conceal HTI identity, while maintain its core teachings. Through BKLDK and the YukNgaji community, HTI's identity is hidden, but it can still recruit new members and spread its core ideology of the Khilafah.

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