

The Shackles of Free Trade Regimes in Muslim Frontier Lands

News:

In early October, Attorney General St. Burhanuddin visited the Riau Islands province, which is a frontier area in Indonesia. He requested that the prosecution for the Drugs & Human Trafficking cases in Riau Islands provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrators in the Riau Islands (Kepri) region. He demanded the provisions can be maximized. This was conveyed by St. Burhanuddin during his working visit at the Riau Islands on 7 October. Burhanuddin wants legal actions related to the emergence of transnational crimes, such as illegal fishing, human trafficking, smuggling of goods and narcotics, to export and import issues.

Meanwhile last September, it was reported that the Riau (mainland) Police together with the Dumai Police managed to round up 16 suspected drug gangs with as much as 203 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine and 404,491 ecstasy pills confiscated in just 4 days (11-14 September 2022). This is the biggest achievement achieved by the Riau Police in disclosing drug cases.

Comment:

The number of criminal cases of drugs, smuggling and human trafficking in Indonesia's border areas shows the weakness of border defense in this largest Muslim country. The rise of syndicated actors and crime mafias at the frontier areas is an indicator of the weakness of state defense in the outermost border areas, whereas the east coast of Sumatra is very vulnerable to being exposed to the drug trade chain originating from the Indo-China region with its supply chain route from the Mekong River to the Malacca Strait. Not to mention the existence of trafficking syndicates from Cambodia and Vietnam.

The existence of underground drug mafias and human trafficking syndicates – also benefits from the establishment of the FTZ (Free Trade Zone on Batam, Bintan and Karimun Islands), which requires duty-free and easy entry of imported goods, even illegal ones into Indonesia lands, plus the archipelagic topography which allows many rat ports for smuggling. All of this started in the name of the investment and trades since 2006, Indonesia and Singapore have FTZ joint agreements in Batam, Bintan and Karimun, whereas Singapore - a non-Muslim country is known as a close partner of the US and the Jewish entity and is very aggressive in carrying out economic invasions and culture to the surrounding area.

Hoping for a deterrent effect on many crimes at the border is like shooting for the moon, if a country does not have a strong and correct vision and paradigm in guarding its borders due to its submission to the WTO and GATTs trading systems and the weakness of its bargaining position against kuffar countries. The deterrent effect is certainly insufficient through downstream curative steps with merely administrative sanctions, but strategic steps are also needed from upstream, namely

the application of correct Islamic trade politics and Islamic foreign policy that will upgrade Indonesia's bargaining position in the eyes of foreign countries.

In fact, Islam provides a striking indicator of the failure of border management with the kuffar freedom to freely move in Islamic lands to exert their influence and seize the wealth of the people. ﴿لَا يَغُرَّتْكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَاؤَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ﴾
“Do not be deceived by the prosperity of the disbelievers throughout the land. It is only a brief enjoyment. Then Hell will be their home—what an evil place to rest!” [TMQ Al-i Imran 196-197].

Today's condition is exacerbated by the more massive division of the Ummah through the notion of nationalism and the nation-state system. The picture of how the Islamic Sharia manages borders economically and defensively is fading. *Thaqāfah* (culture) regarding the borders and *Ribat* land has been eroded. Naturally, the geopolitical condition of the Ummah is at its lowest culmination point in the history of Islamic civilization. Islam has special laws regarding border areas and how human qualifications must guard them.

The Islamic paradigm is strikingly different from the West in terms of setting state borders. The sovereignty of a country does not only rest on the territoriality of a country, but on the application of Allah's laws and guarantees for the security of a country, as a result, territorial discussions become very dynamic and flexible; it is even said that the blood of Mujahid determines the boundaries of Muslim lands.

We need a state that adopts a strong border vision and paradigm that only comes from Islam, and can only be carried out by the Khilafah (Caliphate) - a state that is in accordance with Islamic guidance and prophetic *manhaj* (method). That way, the Khilafah will place its best humans on the border because Islam also demands the best qualifications for border guards who will be able to confront and frighten the enemy, because the border areas are areas of friction with the outside that function as a base for spreading civilization when it is at its peak of strength and crossing points for enemy troops when they are weak. Islam demands best human qualities with their faith, awareness of space, sharpness of eagle eyes who is on guard at the border.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“O believers! Patiently endure, persevere, stand on guard (watching over the borders of homeland) and be mindful of Allah, so you may be successful.”
[TMQ. Al-i Imran: 200]

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