



Freedom on Whose Terms? A Decolonial Re-Examination of Religion in Indonesia

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Abstract

Restrictions on freedom of religion in Indonesia lead to discrimination against religious groups and generate social pressures reinforcing practices of intolerance. This situation highlights the urgency of rethinking the decolonial process in the legal framework of religious freedom, particularly regarding the recognition of the rights of indigenous belief systems (*aliran kepercayaan*) and religious minorities. This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in decolonial theory, drawing on data from Setara Institute reports spanning from 2014 to 2024. It addresses three central questions: How can decoloniality be interpreted within the context of religion in Indonesia; How does religious freedom challenge contemporary manifestations of colonialism, and; How do colonial legacies continue to shape current religious expressions and legal structures? First, colonial-era thought structures still influence the persistence of religious intolerance in Indonesia; Second, the existing legal framework continues to reproduce exclusive interpretations of religious freedom, contributing to the ongoing marginalization of minority groups, and; Third, dominant political-legal frameworks perpetuate conditions that lead to the violation of religious freedom. These findings suggest that freedom of religion in Indonesia has terms and conditions that must be critically examined.

Keywords: Freedom, Decolonial Re-examination, Religion, and Indonesia.

Introduction

Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right, enshrined in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Constitution of Indonesia (Rahman, 2021; Uddin et al., 2023). The UDHR, a comprehensive document comprising 30 articles, outlines the basic rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, or other social backgrounds (Howard-Hassmann, 2022; Manzoor et al., 2010; Mowbray, 2016). Its core objective is to promote and protect human rights globally and to establish universal norms that guide states in building a just and civilized society. However, the realization of religious freedom often encounters significant challenges, especially in highly diverse societies such as Indonesia. Since its independence, Indonesia has faced a range of issues



related to religious freedom, from interreligious conflicts (Fakhruddin et al., 2023; Koçak, 2021; Mosinyan, 2023; Pabbajah et al., 2021) to various state-led initiatives aimed at promoting religious harmony (Geraets et al., 2015; Kizilova et al., 2023; Kolczyńska, 2020). In this context, a critical question arises: freedom on whose terms? This question compels a deeper reexamination of the relationship between religion and the state, particularly through a decolonial lens in post-2014 Indonesia.

Studies on decolonizing religion in Indonesia remain relatively limited within academic discourse. Some scholars contend that decolonialization is an ongoing and dialogical process that necessitates the active engagement of both the colonizer and the colonized (Debora & Kessler, 2020). In religious contexts, decolonialization can be understood as an effort to reassert the existence and spiritual authority of indigenous beliefs that have long been marginalized within state structures. As Yountae (2024) argues, decolonialization entails a rearticulation of the “sacred,” which has often been erased from collective consciousness as a result of colonial legacies. Other scholars emphasize that this process involves a critical reconstruction of epistemological frameworks, enabling individuals to reclaim awareness of their own belief systems (Meyer, 2020; Omer, 2020b, 2020a; Tayob, 2018). In the field of Islamic studies in Indonesia, Woodward (2025) highlights the complexities of adopting a decolonial approach. This approach includes criticizing colonial paradigms as tools of domination in knowledge production, as discussed by Kuhn (1996) in relation to the “norm of science,” and recognizing how such paradigms can be transformed to inform postcolonial and post-orientalist forms of knowledge (Woodward, 2025).

Nevertheless, critical awareness of the restrictions on religious freedom in Indonesia has not fully addressed the root causes of the underlying structural problems. In many cases, these restrictions reflect a new form of colonialism that manifests through the regulation and social control of religion. Religious freedom is often framed as a threat to state stability, thereby legitimizing the state’s authority to regulate religious expression through various forms of legislation and surveillance. This social control is evident in policies that compel religious leaders to conform to the official religious narrative, which tends to marginalize alternative systems of belief. This raises a crucial question: Whose terms of freedom are prevailing in Indonesia? Therefore, this research aims to examine the decolonial approach to religion in Indonesia, particularly in relation to religious freedom. It explores the dynamics of legal discrimination, territorial marginalization, the restriction of belief, and the politicization of religion as experienced by indigenous communities, the Ahmadiyya, and other minority faith groups.

Colonial structures inherited from the past continue to shape Indonesia’s political and religious systems, particularly through the restriction and conditional recognition of indigenous religions and minority faith groups. Local belief systems, traditional religions, and communities such as the Ahmadiyya remain marginalized both within the legal framework and in broader social life. This persistent marginalization raises concerns that religious prohibitions and limitations are remnants of colonial legacies that have yet to be dismantled. Moreover, the concept of religious freedom in Indonesia remains ambiguous (Kristanto & Salurante, 2023; Marshall, 2018; Suprianto et al., 2023), both in terms of rights protection and legal recognition. In light of this, a critical reassessment of the decolonization of religion

in Indonesia is necessary. This study offers a decolonial analysis of religious freedom in Indonesia. It examines emerging patterns of coloniality that manifest in ongoing violations of the right to religious freedom. Beyond identifying these violations, this study interrogates colonial legacies that continue to shape the relationship between the state and religion, such as the privileging of officially recognized religions, the ambiguous application of religious freedom, and the persistent discrimination against minority religious groups.

Dynamics of Religious Intolerance in Indonesia: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Realities

During the Dutch colonial period, Muslims in Indonesia endured a dark chapter of history marked by systematic violence, discrimination, territorial dispossession, and extrajudicial killings. The Dutch colonial administration exercised extensive political authority and legal control in the Dutch East Indies, which it utilized to suppress religious movements. One manifestation of this repression was the massacre of students (*santri*) and scholars (*ulama*) in various Islamic educational institutions (*pesantren*) who were perceived as resisting colonial domination.

The colonial government exhibited little to no tolerance toward the indigenous population. Dutch rule was firmly grounded in the domination of territory, legal authority, and religious affairs. Protestant Christianity, as the official religion of the colonizers, was granted protection and privileged status. In contrast, the religious freedoms of Muslims—and even Catholics introduced earlier by the Portuguese—were systematically restricted. This unequal treatment fostered a pattern of intolerance rooted in religious, racial, and ethnic hierarchies, the effects of which continue to resonate to this day.

Despite Indonesia's independence in 1945, religious intolerance persists with notable frequency. In the contemporary context, various forms of restrictions on freedom of religion and belief continue to occur. Annual reports compiled by the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace (2024) covering the period from 2014 to 2024 reveal significant trends and recurring patterns of violations. While these are no longer characterized by large-scale physical violence, such as the mass killings of the colonial era, they now manifest through administrative discrimination, limitations on religious practices, and social pressure directed at minority groups.

The Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace (2024) notes that such discrimination originates from both state and non-state actors. The state, either through direct policy or passive inaction, often plays a role in restricting religious freedom. Simultaneously, community groups contribute to this dynamic through actions such as rejecting the construction of houses of worship, prohibiting religious gatherings and disseminating hate speech targeting specific religious communities.

This persistent trend of violations indicates that religion continues to function as an instrument of social control within the relationship between citizens and the state. Although the constitution formally guarantees freedom of religion, the reality on the ground reveals a significant gap between legal norms and social practices. These patterns reflect the historical continuity of colonial legacies that remain deeply embedded in Indonesia's legal framework and political culture. The colonial legacy demonstrates that religious regulations not only

foster discriminatory attitudes toward religious communities, but also give rise to ongoing acts of religious intolerance. This is evident in numerous incidents and discriminatory acts experienced by religious minorities. Such events and actions threaten the social fabric of these communities and impede the exercise of their religious practices. The following is a summary of the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace's (2024) findings on the dynamics of religious freedom restrictions in Indonesia over the past decade.

Table 1
Trends and Patterns in Violations of Religious Freedom or Belief
between 2014-2023

Year	Prominent Cases (Trends)	Patterns
2014	Jakarta case: Ahok's discrimination, and the dilemma of dissolving FPI.	Symbolic Violence
	Yogyakarta case: Attacks and dissolution of worship in the City of Tolerance.	
2015	Cases against minority Muslim minorities (Ahmadiyah, Shi'ah, and Muslim minority in Tolikara Papua.	Stigmatization of religious minorities
	Christian minority (church closure).	
2016	Violation of constitutional rights for Gafatar, Ahmadiyya congregation, Christians, Shia, religious sects, and religious sects.	Violation of religious freedom
2017	Violations of the constitutional rights of minority groups (Christians, Shia, Ahmadiyah congregations, religious sects, Catholics, Confucianists, Buddhists, and Hindus.	Structural violence against religious minorities
2018	Cases of discrimination, intolerance, blasphemy, rejection of religious activities and rejection of the establishment of houses of worship.	Discrimination of religious freedom
2019	Blasphemy cases, especially violations of the rights to religious freedom or personal belief for women.	Gender discrimination
2020	Discrimination from state actors, intolerance from non-state actors, and reporting on blasphemy.	Structural violence by the state
2021	Discrimination, discriminatory policies, blasphemy convictions (by state actors), intolerance, hate speech, refusal of activities, attacks, assaults and destruction of places of worship (by non-state actors).	Discrimination against religious freedom regulations
2022	Cases of disruption of places of worship, blasphemy, and rejection of lectures.	Social-communal and legal violence
2023	There have been numerous cases involving the disruption of places of worship, acts of intolerance by	Discrimination by state elements

	societal actors, and discrimination by elements of the state. Minority groups continue to face significant breaches of their constitutional rights.	
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Source: (Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace, 2024).

Trends in violence against freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia from 2014 to 2023 reveal a variety of case patterns, yet share a common thread: the exercise of power and control over religion by both state and non-state actors (see Table 1). In this context, freedom of religion is frequently constrained by political and social forces that instrumentalize religion as a means of influence and domination. The data presented in the table above provides several illustrative examples of this trend, which can be summarized as follows:

First, domination and the beginning of symbolic violence. In 2014, one of the most prominent cases was the discrimination against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), who faced strong opposition from certain groups seeking to prevent him from running for Governor of Jakarta based on his non-Muslim identity (Mazrieva, 2019). This opposition was not grounded in legal or administrative considerations, but rather in a normative belief that a non-Muslim should not lead a Muslim-majority population. Such a stance represents a form of symbolic violence, in which religious identity becomes a tool for exclusion and political marginalization (Setijadi, 2017). Intertwined with the religious orthodoxy, the case of Ahok illustrates how identity politics can be employed to deny individual’s political rights and participation in public office based on their faith, rather than merit or constitutional entitlement.

Second, stigmatization of religious minorities (2015–2017). The year 2015 was marked by a significant rise in discrimination against religious minorities in Indonesia. Denominations such as Shi’a and the Ahmadiyya communities and the minority Muslim societies in Tolikara, Papua, faced multiple violations of their religious freedom, ranging from stigmatization as heretical sects to restrictions on their right to worship (Irawan & Adnan, 2021). Christians have also experienced similar forms of discrimination, most notably through the forced closure of churches under the pretense of administrative or communal objections (Harsono, 2020).

This pattern of marginalization persisted in 2016 and 2017. In West Kalimantan, members of the Gafatar movement were forcibly evicted in large numbers following widespread accusations of heresy (Fachrudin, 2016). Although Gafatar adhered to an inward-looking and non-confrontational form of Islamic spirituality, societal suspicion and discrimination led to their victimization. Rather than serving as a neutral arbiter, the state often appeared complicit by failing to safeguard minority rights and, in some cases, by legitimizing acts of exclusion (Suhadi et al., 2024). These incidents reflect a broader pattern of structural violence, rooted in unequal power relations between the state and dominant religious or social groups. In such a context, the state functions not as a guarantor of constitutional freedoms, but as an enabler of religious discrimination, perpetuating the marginalization of communities deemed “deviant” or outside the mainstream;

Third, widespread intolerance and gender discrimination (2018–2019). In 2018 and 2019, violations of freedom of religion became increasingly widespread, encompassing various forms such as discrimination, intolerance, restrictions on religious activities,

accusations of blasphemy, and the rejection of applications to build houses of worship (Hertanto et al., 2024). During this period, violations of women's rights to practice their faith also came to the forefront, indicating that threats to religious freedom are not solely theological in nature but are deeply intertwined with broader social and gender-related issues;

Fourth, structural violence by state and society (2020–2021). Entering 2020 and 2021, discrimination against religious minorities became increasingly evident, both through active and passive involvement of state actors. This form of discrimination was manifested in restrictive regulations, reports of blasphemy, and policies that curtailed the religious rights of minority groups (Puspaningrum & Adhi, 2023). At the same time, intolerance from non-state actors intensified, suggesting an indirect collaboration between the state and segments of society in perpetuating violence and exclusion (Pratiwi, 2024). This situation reinforced a pattern of structural violence, in which the state not only failed to act as a neutral protector but also contributed to unequal treatment under the law. The absence of fair and consistent legal protection highlights the systemic nature of religious discrimination during this period;

Five, socio-communal violence and legal discrimination (2022-2023). In 2022 and 2023, violence against religious freedom resurged, particularly through the disruption of houses of worship, rejection of religious lectures, and acts of intolerance carried out by community groups, often with the tacit support or inaction of state elements (Sukirno & Natalis, 2025). Minority religious groups once again faced violations of their constitutional rights, indicating that discrimination remains not only persistent but also systemic. These developments underscore the ongoing entrenchment of religious intolerance in both societal behaviour and state structures, highlighting the state's continued failure to ensure equal protection for all citizens regardless of faith.

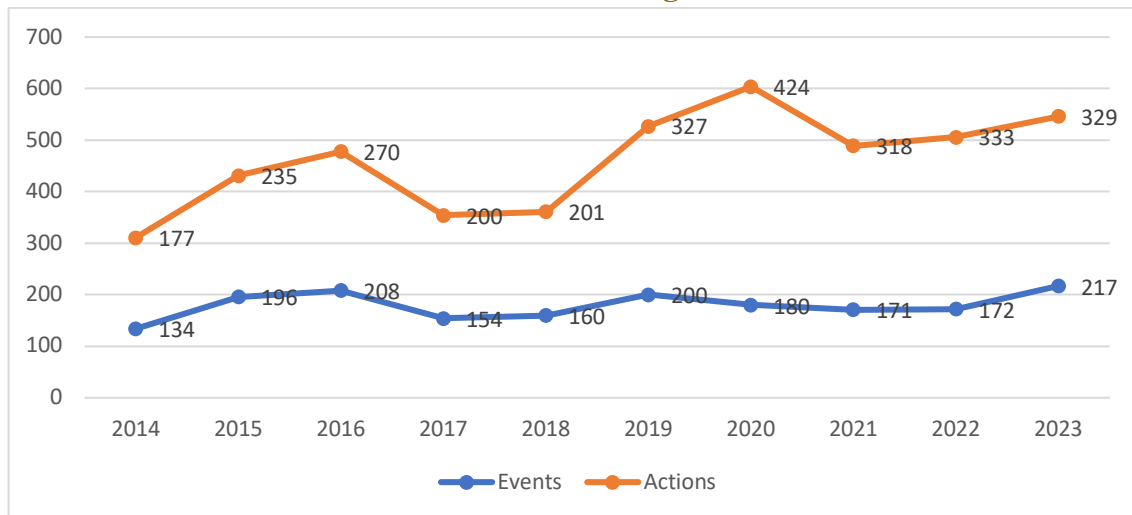
In general, the trends and patterns of violence against religious freedom in Indonesia between 2014 and 2023 indicate that intolerance remains a persistent and serious challenge (Al Qurtuby, 2025). Such violence does not occur spontaneously but rather emerges from a combination of factors, most notably, the misinterpretation of legal frameworks concerning belief, and entrenched power relations between state actors, political forces, and dominant religious groups seeking to control religious expression in the public sphere.

Although there are fluctuations in the number of cases from year to year, these variations are relatively minor, indicating that violence against religious freedom is a sustained and systemic phenomenon. The following graph illustrates the trend in violations committed by both state and non-state actors over the past decade. Furthermore, the data reveals that the yearly changes in the number of violations are not substantial, reinforcing the conclusion that such acts are not isolated events, but rather part of an ongoing pattern. The graph below provides a visual representation of the scale and consistency of these violations across time.

The Graphic 1 illustrates that violence against freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia continues to occur frequently. In 2014, there were 134 recorded incidents of religious freedom violations, with a total of 177 acts of violence committed by both state and non-state actors (Halili, H & Naipospos, 2015). These cases were geographically dispersed, affecting numerous provinces including Aceh (7), Bali (6), Banten (2), DKI Jakarta (13), West Java (27), Central Java (16), East Java (21), and others. Of these 177 actions, 86 were attributed to state actors and 122 to non-state actors (Halili, H & Naipospos, 2015). More

specifically, 62 incidents involved state apparatus, while 115 were carried out by non-state groups (Halili, H & Naipospos, 2015). These figures demonstrate that violations of religious freedom are not only rooted in civil society but are also facilitated—directly or indirectly—by state institutions.

Graphic 1
Number of Violation of Religious Freedom



Source: (Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace, 2024).

The highest number of violations occurred in 2020, with 180 incidents and 424 acts of violence documented across 29 provinces (Sigit & Hasani, 2021). The most affected regions were West Java (39), East Java (23), Aceh (18), DKI Jakarta (13), and Central Java (12), among others (Sigit & Hasani, 2021). The remaining provinces accounted for 40 additional acts, illustrating the broad geographical scope of the problem. Of the total acts, 239 were committed by state actors, while 185 were the result of actions by non-state actors (Sigit & Hasani, 2021). This marked increase in state involvement suggests a deepening structural issue in the governance of religious freedom in Indonesia.

From 2014 to 2023, the data reveals that violations of religious freedom are both persistent and widespread, with consistently high numbers despite year-to-year fluctuations. This ongoing trend reflects a broader problem of religious intolerance, driven by two primary factors: first, the role of the state in producing discriminatory policies or failing to protect religious minorities; and second, the social pressure exerted by dominant religious groups and communities, which often leads to the marginalization of minority beliefs. These dynamics create a structural imbalance in power, where the state not only fails to act as a neutral protector but actively regulates religious expression in ways that reinforce exclusion and inequality.

Furthermore, this persistent intolerance echoes the colonial legacy in which religion served as a tool of control for state authority. In today's context, the remnants of that system remain embedded in the legal and political structures that govern religious life. Addressing this issue requires a process of legal decolonization—one that challenges and dismantles

outdated power hierarchies and affirms the equal rights of all religious communities in a pluralistic society.

Problematizing the Dominant Politico-Legal Conception of Religious Freedom in the Colonial Contexts

The dominant politico-legal conception in Indonesia is deeply rooted in the legacy of European colonialism, particularly since the 19th century. During this period, colonial powers not only introduced systems of governance and economy but also imposed a legal framework that positioned religion as a tool of social control (Quijano, 2000). One of the most evident remnants of this colonial legacy is the *Wetboek van Strafrecht voor Nederlands-Indië* (Swie, 1920), which was later adopted and adapted as Indonesia's Criminal Code.

During the colonial period, religious freedom was severely curtailed. Individuals who adhered to indigenous belief systems were introduced to officially recognized religions through missionary efforts, which functioned as a means of controlling religious expression on behalf of the colonial government (Yountae, 2024). Although post-independence Indonesia enshrined freedom of religion as a constitutionally guaranteed right, in practice, state policies continue to regulate citizens' choices of belief. A prominent example is the legal requirement for individuals to identify with one of the state-recognized religions in order to be administratively acknowledged, resulting in the continued marginalization of indigenous and non-recognized faiths.

This phenomenon can be analyzed through Quijano's (2000) theory of coloniality of power, which highlights how colonial legacies persist in contemporary power structures through systems of racial, ethnic, and religious classification. These power dynamics operate not only at the institutional level but also deeply influence the material conditions and subjective experiences of everyday life.

In the context of Indonesia as a multicultural and multi-religious nation, the challenge of ensuring religious freedom has become increasingly complex. The state has undertaken various efforts to strengthen this right, particularly since the Reform Era, including constitutional amendments and the enactment of human rights legislation (Bagir, 2017). However, a significant gap persists between legal provisions and their implementation on the ground. One regulation frequently criticized in this regard is Law No. 23/2006 on Population Administration. Although the constitution was intended to reinforce civil rights and religious freedom (Hefner, 2023), its implementation has often resulted in discriminatory treatment toward adherents of indigenous faiths. Bagir observes that the law fails to uphold equality, as evidenced by the difficulties faced in obtaining official identification documents and the exclusion of registering one's belief in the religion column of national identification (Bagir, 2011). Such cases of the forced displacement of Ahmadiyya congregations in various regions underscore the state's weak protection of religious minority groups (Maarif, 2018).

The Religious Harmony Bill Plan (*RUU Kerukunan Umat Beragama*) has been particularly controversial due to its potential to restrict the freedoms of vulnerable religious groups. Although it is framed as a measure to promote interfaith harmony, scholars such as Pamungkas, (2014) argue that the bill may, in fact, legitimize exclusionary practices against minority religious communities and reinforce the dominance of the majority. Article 28E of

the 1945 Constitution guarantees every citizen the freedom to embrace a religion, to worship, and to choose their education, occupation, citizenship, and residence (Indonesia, 2015). It also affirms the right to express thoughts and beliefs in accordance with one's conscience. However, these constitutional protections are not always reflected in inclusive derivative policies. Administrative-level regulations often give rise to subtle forms of discrimination, thereby undermining the very constitutional rights they are meant to uphold.

Therefore, although a legal framework appears to guarantee freedom of religious belief, its implementation reveals that colonial legacies remain deeply embedded, particularly in the form of systems that regulate and control religion and belief. This condition reflects a continuity between colonial governance and contemporary legal practices, wherein the state continues to act as the primary arbiter of religious legitimacy. In this context, decolonizing religion becomes essential to dismantling power structures that are still shaped by colonial logic. Such a realization is crucial for driving legal and policy reforms that are more inclusive and aligned with the principles of pluralism and human rights as enshrined in the Indonesian Constitution (Aziz et al., 2023; Goswami, 2022).

The Colonial Legacy in the Legal Construction of Religion

Scholars note that the legacy of Dutch colonial administration and legal framework has deeply rooted Indonesia's legal system, particularly in how the state regulates religion and religious freedom (Noor, 2016; Powers, 1986). Colonial rule not only introduced Western legal frameworks but also shaped the state's perspective of religion as something to be formally regulated, recorded, and controlled by law. Consequently, freedom of religion in Indonesia continues to be limited by legal interpretations and structures that trace back to the colonial period (Prianti, 2019).

During the colonial period, the Dutch administration classified the population based on religion and race for administrative purposes and social control (Yazid, 2014). This social division among ethnic groups contributed to a sense of separation between free individuals and slaves (Kehoe, 2015). Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), the Dutch East India trade company, actively promoted ethnic divisions among slaves to secure the city against slave rebellions (Kehoe, 2015). Kehoe notes that although slaves lived in the same areas after 1664, their social status remained segregated according to origin, religion, and status (Kehoe, 2015). Thus, religion was used as a category that required formal administration rather than merely being a personal expression of faith. Consequently, the Dutch colonial administration marginalized indigenous communities, which lacked formal religious legitimacy and were forced to adopt officially recognized religions. For instance, Tuhri et al. identify that the colonial construction of local customary law (*adat*) has had a profound impact on religion in Indonesia. However, the concept and practice of *adat* was contested and utilized by colonial authorities, diminishing the religious dimension of Indonesian customary practices (Tuhri et al., 2020).

The construction and disposition of *adat* in relation to religion have been influenced by various factors, including Indonesia's colonial policies (Tuhri et al., 2020). There are three dominant discourses regarding *adat* as a political construction during the colonial times: First, *adat* as animism was regarded as non-religious, uncivilized, and primitive practices; Second,

the mainstream adat law focused primarily on the secular aspects of *adat* while neglecting its religious dimension; Third, the construction of *adat* as non-religion reinforced Islamic identity and emphasized *adat* as opposed to Islam (Tuhri et al., 2020). These discourses aimed to control religious freedom among indigenous communities in Indonesia.

After Indonesia gained independence, the government modified the colonial worldview into a more modern perspective. Religion was no longer seen as a sacred aspect of an individual's identity but rather as something that must be officially recognized by the state. This is clearly reflected in the practice of listing six recognized religions on the national identity card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*), which grants holders the right to legal acknowledgment, protection, and services (Maarif, 2018). As a consequence of this modern legal construction, indigenous ancestral beliefs face discrimination because they are not legally recognized on the identity cards (Maarif, 2018). This has contributed to the formation of a more exclusive understanding of religious freedom in Indonesia. Followers of indigenous beliefs experience social discrimination due to the absence of official recognition on identity documents such as the KTP, which negatively impacts indigenous communities. This lack of recognition leads to difficulties in accessing education, employment, marriage registration, and even funeral rites, posing complex challenges for followers of these traditional beliefs.

Decolonizing the study of religious freedom is a crucial aspect of rethinking religious rights within society. This is because decolonization is a process of recognizing (Debora & Kessler, 2020) the colonial legacy and the Western perspectives that have developed post-colonially. It aims to create large-scale transformation across all levels of academia, including disciplines and institutions (Nye, 2020; Tayob, 2018). Decolonization brings awareness to the enduring Western constructions embedded in the legal recognition of the six official religions. These Western legal frameworks have resulted in discrimination against minority religions and indigenous belief systems within local communities, ultimately reproducing a new form of colonial-style construction in the realm of religion.

Conclusion

Efforts to decolonize the legal framework governing religious freedom in Indonesia are an ongoing process. Belief systems and religious expressions in practice remain constrained by enduring colonial legacies, particularly through entrenched power relations between the state and religion. The Indonesian state continues to exert its dominant role in regulating religious life, a dynamic rooted in the Dutch colonial legal system. These restrictions have contributed to the formation of a political structure that significantly shapes the everyday realities of religious communities.

This study finds that the decolonial approach should not merely be seen as an attempt to reform religious life, but also as a critical strategy to confront the dominance of Western epistemologies and the lingering colonial logic embedded within the post-independence state apparatus. Acts of violence in the name of religious freedom have persisted over the years, indicating the emergence of a neo-colonial model of religious governance in contemporary Indonesia. Data spanning from 2014 to 2024 demonstrate that the Indonesian state continues to adopt mechanisms of religious control that closely resemble colonial-era practices. This underscores the urgent need to revisit and reinvigorate decolonial approaches

to religion in Indonesia. A decolonial lens enables a more critical interrogation of the ongoing challenges to religious freedom and positions coloniality as a system of domination that must be dismantled in order to liberate religious life from inherited structures of control.

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