

“Fear Mongering” Campaign against Rohingya Ruins Muslim Solidarity

News:

A wave of rejection of Muslim-Rohingya refugees occurred in a number of areas in Aceh. The rejection came as the influx of Rohingya refugees in the province starting mid-November – due to the worsening security situation in the Cox's Bazaar refugee camp, Bangladesh. This rejection sparked public debate on social media. The community is divided into two, between who supporting either rejecting the arrival of refugees from Myanmar.

The stance of the Acehnese people is not without basis. Recently, Aceh residents complained about the behaviour of Rohingya refugees in the field. It was reported that several Rohingya were noticed throwing some food aid into the sea, some also ran away from refugee camps, or did not comply with existing local wisdoms.

However, apart from incidents in the field, negative issues, disinformation, hoaxes and even hate speech on a number of social media platforms regarding Rohingya refugees in Indonesia also have a big influence. Referring to a report obtained by CNN Indonesia from a UN source, the hate narrative regarding Rohingya refugees began on November 21. Drone Emprit's social network analysis found that false information and hate narratives against Rohingyas on social media were deliberately spread by fanbase accounts or forums which usually anonymous without clear identity of the sender. This method, said the founder of Drone Emprit, Ismail Fahmi, is very significant in increasing the conversation, so it easily attracts national attention.

Comment:

Horizontal conflict like this has never happened before. In previous years, the news we often heard instead, that the people of Aceh, especially fishermen, were known to be sincere and ready to help Rohingya Muslims, even though they themselves had poor facilities. We must admit the situations this year are quite bizarre and the negative sentiment that occurs seems odd. Moreover, this happened in the midst of a strong current of opinion defending Palestine.

There is confirmation that there are indeed parties who deliberately carry out disinformation through fake UNHCR accounts and many accounts whose identities are unclear spread narratives of hatred against the Rohingya - further strengthens the suspicion that there was a deliberate attempt to weaken Muslim solidarity and divide the Ummah's focus on the Palestinian issue. Who benefits from this chaos between the Acehnese and the Rohingya? Of course, those who don't like the solidarity and unity of Muslims, including those who hate Indonesian Muslims' support for Palestine.

In terms of the Rohingya crisis, it should not only be borne by the people of Aceh, but there should be a role from the Muslim state in giving them full asylum, i.e. citizenship rights, not just half-hearted assistance by placing them in refugee camps without any rights to education, health and security. This is the root of the Rohingya

problem, none of Muslim countries (Bangladesh, Malaysia nor Indonesia) has been willing to give them clear citizenship status, for almost two decades. So now we are dealing with a second generation of Rohingya who were born in uninhabitable refugee camps without education, teachers and a decent future. So that - what can we expect from their morals, literacy and behaviour?

The recent chaos over the Rohingya this time is closely related to the fragile situation in Cox Bazaar, Bangladesh, one of the chain-causes that we need to address. This needs to be one of the perspectives that we have to consider, rather than swallowing wild narratives that exacerbate the horizontal conflict between sincere Acehnese and Rohingya Muslims.

In relation to Cox Bazaar; smugglers are also taking advantage of this situation by offering travel to Indonesia or Malaysia. Arakan Project Director Chris Lewa said many refugees felt hopeless about the security situation in these camps which located on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border area, which was getting worse. Increasing crime trends in the form of human trafficking syndicates, drugs and conflicts between gangs have made the 1.2 million Rohingya people living in 34 Rohingya Cox Bazaar camps - very vulnerable to individual and collective security threats. This situation was exploited by smugglers to offer passage to Indonesia or Malaysia. The refugees are said to have paid \$1,100 (Rp. 17.1 million) per person for this trip.

The vulnerable condition of these refugee camps is a card that can be played by certain political forces for their geopolitical gain by carrying out fear mongering campaigns against Rohingya Muslims. A Harvard University study entitled 'Geopolitical strategies of refugee camps' revealed and concluded, "Developing countries that host refugees together with developed countries, have either concentrated refugee in squalid camps near borders or spread them across many places in the country of origin depending on differences in their geopolitical interests. In most cases, they used the notoriously poor living conditions in these squalid concentration camps to foment civil war (or horizontal conflict) in the region in their favor."

As a result, it is important for Muslims to first understand the roots of the Rohingya problem and the various tragedies that befell Muslims in other parts of the world. Not to mention Muslims must be more observant in consuming news and spreading it, because Allah Ta'ala says: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾ ***"O believers if an evildoer brings you any news, verify 'it' so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done"*** [TMQ. Al Hujurat: 6].

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