II. *Jus ad bellum*

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Violence in Contemporary Indonesian Islamist Scholarship: Habib Rizieq Syihab and 'enjoining good and forbidding evil'

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Abstract: Violence can be construed as 'action that inflicts, threatens, or causes injury', and it is worth asserting that 'injury may be corporal, written, or verbal' (Hall 2013: 364). In line with this, Stewart and Strathern (2013: 376) understand violence as 'harmful acts whose legitimacy is contested or ambivalent'. For Stewart and Strathern, the contested legitimacy is an essential element in categorizing hurtful action as violence.

The underlying idea of the founding of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) is the notion of 'commanding good and forbidding evil' (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). The founding fathers of FPI (most notably Habib Rizieq Syihab) thought that the government of Indonesia remained silent about evil events which occurred throughout the country, and accordingly felt the necessity of 'commanding good and forbidding evil', by organizing some necessary actions to stop evil in Indonesian society.

Syihab is considered as one of the authorities who define the canon of Islamist scholarship in contemporary Indonesia. This authority includes his lineage that can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad, as well as his mastering of classical Arabic and Islamic texts. This study will focus on Syihab's book entitled *Hancurkan Liberalisme, Tegakkan Syariat Islam* (Destroy Liberalism, Enforce Islamic Law, 2011), and will address the following problems: (a) How does Syihab justify the violence in the corpus of Islamic doctrines and national constitution? (b) What agency does Syihab use to transmit his idea of 'commanding good and forbidding evil'? and (c) What are the socio-political factors which surround Habib Rizieq Syihab's ideas on violence?

1. Introduction

This paper is devoted to investigating the notion of violence in contemporary Indonesian Islamist scholarship, as it is presented in Habib Rizieq

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Syihab's elaboration of *al-amr bi al*-ma'ruf *wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding good and forbidding evil). The accounts of 'religion and violence', 'the notion of authority', 'Islamism and Indonesian Islam' and 'commanding good and forbidding evil in Islamic scholarship' are considered in the first part of this paper, to give a general context for the topic under discussion. The next part of this paper deals with the Islamic Defenders Front. The main parts of the paper comprise a discussion on Habib Rizieq Syihab and religious authority, the notion of ma'ruf and *munkar,* the conditions of performing 'commanding good and forbidding evil', violence and freedom of conscience, the anthropological and constitutional logic of 'commanding good and forbidding evil', the constitutional and cultural circumstances of 'commanding good and forbidding evil', and the axiological basis of 'commanding good and forbidding evil'.

2. *The intricate interplay between religion and violence*

Violence can be construed as 'action that inflicts, threaten, or cause injury', and it is worth asserting that 'injury may be corporal, written, or verbal'.[1] In line with this, Stewart and Strathern[2] understand violence as 'harmful acts whose legitimacy is contested or ambivalent'. For Stewart and Strathern, the contested legitimacy is an essential element in categorizing hurtful action as violence.

Pertaining to the relationship between religion and violence, we may observe at least two contrasting opinions among scholars. Some specialists do not ascribe the potential for violence to particular religious structures, whilst others do. The French scholars Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and René Girard (b. 1923) belong to this latter group. Durkheim argues that in religious tradition, sacred and profane are clearly distinguished, and 'it is well within religious possibility that violence can become a sacred duty'. It is worth remarking that Durkheim reveals instances of violence driven by religion, namely extreme asceticism, martyrdom and holy war.[3]

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1 Hall, John R. 'Religion and Violence from a Sociological Perspective.' In: Mark Juergensmeyer/ Margo Kitts/ Michael Jerryson (Eds.). The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence. Oxford, 2013, p. 364.

2 Stewart, Pamela J./ Strathern, Andrew. 'Religion and Violence from Anthropological Perspective.' In: Juergensmeyer et al (Eds.). The Oxford Handbook. p. 376.

3 Hall, p. 364.

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In line with Durkheim, Girard points out that 'scapegoating - killing of a 'surrogate victim' standing in for wider evils - is a primordial religious act to sustain the sacred in the face of pollution'.[4] Sacrifice is accordingly a ritual in which the community offers up a replacement of itself for the sake of protecting the community from its own violence. This allows us to comprehend that for Girard 'violence is always implicit, and indeed, lies at the heart of ritual'.[5]

In response to these contrasting positions, Hall[6] suggests his own thesis, namely, 'that manifestations of violence in relation to religion are diverse'. He goes on to stress that these manifestations 'hinge on alternative circumstances wrought by different historical moments, institutional formations, and cultural meanings. In other words violence is situational'. Hall[7] concludes that it is religious formations and their contextual situations, not religious traditions *per se*, which mould their potential embodiments with violence. For Hall,[8] 'the complex array of possible developments will be conditioned - and, in turn, shape - specific kinds of religious organizations involved. In unfolding events of violence, both of a religious group and of a social order, may be very much in play, and historical circumstances and, thus, trajectories of group and their collective actions may shift'.

Hall[9] highlights four categories of violence that occur within a religious domain. *First*, scapegoating and other forms of boundary maintenance are performed in order to affirm the sacred. *Second*, strict and detailed boundaries, most particularly in sectarian religious organizations, may contribute in the emergence of 'conflicts over identities and allegiances of individuals'. *Third*, religions are concerned with the possibilities of salvation, and accordingly wield a strong influence to its members, 'in part by offering or withdrawing the blessings of the group'. *Fourth*, charismatic figures and religious functionaries may attain a high degree of trust or 'command a degree of hero worship' from their respective religious communities.

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4 Ibid. p. 364.
5 Bowie, Fiona, The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction. Oxford, 2010, pp. 178-179.
6 Hall. p. 366.
7 Ibid. p. 373.
8 Ibid. p. 366.
9 Ibid. pp. 367-368.

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3. The notion of authority

For the purpose of my analysis, I adopt Zambrano's[10] definition of authority as 'a relation that exists between individuals' in which 'one individual, prompted by his or her circumstances, does as indicated by another individual what he or she would not do in the absence of such indication'. Zambrano goes on to assert that 'the legitimacy of an authority relation is what keeps the relationship from breaking down', and is the response to the question: why does the subject of authority do as prescribed by the holder of authority?[11] This authority relation is deemed to be a part of 'a wider web of practices and beliefs' that renders meaning to all relations in a given community.[12]

The question of legitimacy involves the perspectives of both the holder of authority and the subject of authority. The former perspective is concerned with the authority claims that are asserted by the holder of authority. Max Weber[13] indicates three types of authority and their respective grounds for asserting obedience: (a) traditional authority, 'obey me because it is what our people have always done', (b) charismatic authority, 'obey me because I can transform your live', (c) legal-rational authority, 'obey me because I am your lawfully appointed superior'. The latter perspective, i.e. the subject of authority, deals with the question of what justifies the command in the eyes of the subject.

Drawing inspiration from game theory, Zambrano[14] assesses the legitimacy of an authority relation, and considers the perspectives of both the holder and the subject of authority. He points out that 'an individual can be in a position of authority with respect to another individual to the extent that there are equilibrium beliefs that support choices that an analyst of the relation' designates as 'commanding' or 'ruling' for the superior and 'following' or 'obeying' for the subordinate.

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10 Zambrano, Eduardo. 'Authority, social theories of.' In: Neil J. Smelser/ Paul B. Baltes (Eds.). International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Amsterdam, 2001.

11 Zambrano. Authority.

12 Ibid. p. 209.

13 Jones, Liz Bradbury and Shaun Le Boutillier. Introducing Social Theory. Cambridge, 2011, p. 86.

14 Zambrano, Authority.

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Zambrano[15] further develops his argument by identifying 'equilibrium beliefs' as: (a) 'at the interpreted level of the social interaction', (b) functioning 'as the common ground that sustains an authority relation', (c) ascertained with respect to both the holder's and the subject's situation, and (d) 'part of the web of practices and beliefs' that yield meaning to all relations in a given community.

Friedman's[16] distinction of 'being in authority' and 'being an authority' is worth remarking. Friedman indicates that the claim to authority of a person 'in authority' is merely based on the fact that he/she has been 'put "in authority" according to established procedure, rather than his decisions are, on independent grounds, sound, meritorious, or superior decisions'. What is generated by someone 'in authority' is 'a decision to be followed, not a statement to be believed'. The legitimacy of an individual who is an authority is grounded on the belief that he/she possesses 'special knowledge, wisdom, or insight or to be recipient of a revelation or unique experience not available to other men'. What is represented by the person who is an authority is 'not merely a decision to be followed, but a statement to be believed'.

Further, Friedman[17] classifies being an authority into two sub-clusters: (a) 'authority over beliefs' and (b) 'authority over conduct'. Religious scholars, experts and parents are instances of those possessing 'authority over beliefs', while judges, generals and legislators possess 'authority over conduct'.

4. Islamism and 'Indonesian Islam'

'Indonesian Islam' is believed by many specialists to have distinct features, of which the most striking is the compatibility between Islam and democracy. This distinct characteristic is considered to be able to explain why the process of democratization in Indonesia persists and is likely to succeed, differing from the experience of Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa, which encountered the 'Arabic spring' of democracy, but found it to be short lived.

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15 Ibid.

16 Friedman, R.B. 'On the Concept of Authority in Political Philosophy.' In: Joseph Raz (Ed.). Authority. New York, 1990.

17 Friedman. On the Concept of Authority in Political Philosophy. p. 57.

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Indonesian Islamic Civil Society Organizations are distinct to those in some Muslim countries (most notably the Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), in the sense that Indonesian civil society organizations (most notably the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah) demonstrate their commitment to Indonesian nationalism and constitutional governance.[18]

Azra[19] explores the notion of 'Indonesian Islam' and comes to conclusion that Indonesian Islam possesses distinct characteristics. These features include: (a) the peaceful spread of Islam, (b) Islam is culturally embedded, in the sense of undergoing cultural enrichment without losing its own cultural traditions, (c) the rich heritage, (d) it is a Pancasila state, (e) women enjoy a greater role in public life, (f) the existence of mainstream organizations, most notably the Nadlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, (g) the radical groups are small in number, but relatively outspoken, (h) the empowerment of moderates, as a balance to outspoken radicals.

The existence of radical groups in Indonesia is worth drawing attention to. Radical Islamic groups are also found in other Muslim countries. In Indonesia, radical Islamic groups are found during the Old Order, New Order and Reformation Era, but it is most particularly during the Reformation Era that radical Islamic groups became more visible. What is specific to Indonesia is that the number of these radicals is relatively small, and that there are counter-discourses and praxis made by the moderate Muslim personages and groups. These discourses and praxis play a significant role in shaping the nature and future of Indonesian Islam.

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to making 'Indonesian Islam' better known in international academia. As some specialists argue, Indonesian Islam is in some ways distinct from Islamic religiosity which developed in the Middle East, in the sense that Indonesian Islam can easily connect with and conform to the ideas of democracy, human rights, and pluralism. Although we are aware of the existence of radical groups within Islam, we notice that their number is relatively small, and that there are counter-discourses and actions made by moderate Muslim individuals and

18 Hefner, Robert W. 'Indonesia in the Global Scheme of Things: Sustaining the Virtuous Circle of Education.' In: Jajat Burhanudin, Kees van Dijk (Eds.). Islam in Indonesia: Contrasting Images and Interpretations. Amsterdam, 2013, p. 58.

19 Azra, Azyumardi. 'Distinguishing Indonesian Islam: Some Lessons to Learn.' In: Jajat Burhanuddin, Kees van Dijk. (Eds.). Islam in Indonesia: Contrasting Images and Interpretations. Amsterdam, 2013.

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groups which play a strong role in moulding the nature and future of Indonesian Islam.

5. *'Commanding good and forbidding evil' in Islamic scholarship*

The notion of violence in Islamic scholarship is found, for instance, in the discourse on *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding good and forbidding evil). The Persian scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (d. 1111), for instance, reveals the levels (*darajat*) in conducting *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf.* Al-Ghazzali puts these levels in the following order: (a) 'seeking information', (b) 'informing', (c) 'exhortation', (d) 'harsh language', (e) 'physical action', (f) 'the threat of action', (g) 'actual violence', and (h) 'armed helpers'. In addition to this, al-Ghazzali highlights three qualities that the performer of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf* should have, namely: (a) knowledge (*'ilm*), (b) scrupulousness (*wara'*), and (c) an even temperament (*husn al-khuluq*).[20]

Some Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the performance of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf* with the tongue is most particularly the responsibility of scholars - though many other scholars disagree with this point of view. Above all, we should perceive this standpoint from an alternative angle. This particular standpoint implies that the performance of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf* by the scholars is due to their social role, and serves to exercise a moral authority[21]. Moral authority refers to:

> 'the relative credibility and weight of a source's moral judgments, beliefs, principles, rules, intuitions, and value-commitments. For millennia, moral authority was thought to belong to religious texts and leaders. In theocratic nations, and in some social circles elsewhere, this is still assumed. From such a perspective, for example, a judgment has moral authority only if found in the Bible as interpreted by the Vatican. In mystical traditions, moral authority may be given to those who claim to possess supernatural insight into the universe or who, as with prophets, are believed to commune directly with gods'.[22]

20 Cook, Michael. Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought. Cambridge, 2000, pp. 438-442.
21 Ibid. pp. 488-489.
22 Potter, Michael K. 'Moral Authority'. In: Deen K. Chaterjee (Ed.). Encyclopedia of Global Justice. London 2001, p. 2011.

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Michael Cook highlights the political aspect of forbidding evil. He argues that, 'while forbidding wrong can express the claims of rebels to political authority, it can also provide an alibi or those who do not wish to challenge an incumbent state too openly or directly'.[23]

6. The Islamic Defenders Front

6.1 The Islamic Defenders Front and its theological tendency

The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) was founded by twenty Muslim figures, most notably Habib Rizieq Syihab, Cecep Bustomi and Habib Idrus Jamalulllail. These individuals are known as hard line preachers. Cecep Bustomi, for instance, was jailed in the 1980 s due to his sermons, which criticized the evil of the authoritarian Soeharto governance. On 17 August 1998, these preachers gathered at the Pesantren al-Umm, Ciputat, South Jakarta, to declare the existence of the 'Anti-Evil National Movement' and an organization called 'The Islamic Defenders Front'. The Islamic Defenders Front, which was established three months after the fall of Soeharto in May 1998, advocates 'moral reformation'. [24]

The FPI maintains that it is a movement based on Islamic teachings according to Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah. It is worth mentioning that the FPI's understanding of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah is closely related to that of Indonesian Salafism, as it is represented by the Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Communication Forum of Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah) under the leadership of Ja'far 'Umar Talib. Salafism rejects the assumption that the *Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah* originated from the teachings of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. They would rather maintain that the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* originated from the Companions (*sahabah*) of the Prophet, and accordingly they strive to follow the examples of the Companions pertaining to their

23 Cook. p. 497.

24 Hasani, Ismail/ Naipospos, Bonar Tigor. *Wajah Para 'Pembela' Islam* (Faces of Defenders of Islam). Jakarta, 2011, p. 148.

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understanding and implementation of religion. This includes sticking to the symbolic aspects of religion [25](Ngatawi 2006: 96-98).

Although in many respects the FPI share their teachings with Indonesian Salafism, they also differ from Salafism in some other respects. This can be seen for instance in the fact that Indonesian Salafism (as they represent their position) is strict in terms of understanding and implementation of Islamic teachings as well as symbolic aspects of Islam, and accordingly they are intolerant towards diversity. Such an attitude often triggers conflict within local communities. This is to some extents distinct from that of the FPI, which is slightly more liberal in implementing Islamic teachings, most particularly in terms of the symbolic aspects of Islam. The FPI tolerate members who do not dress as laid down by the Prophet, most particularly during Islamic gatherings (*pengajian*). The FPI applies strict regulation pertaining to dress code only during demonstrations or sweeping actions, when it is for a practical reason, namely in order to exclude non-members from an action.

Interestingly, the American Foreign Policy Council [26] includes the FPI as an Islamist group, most particularly due to the fact that this organization aspires to bring Islamic law into the national constitution. This can be observed, for instance, at FPI's assemblies that demand the espousal of the Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta), which would render constitutional status to Islamic law. Moreover, the FPI calls for the abolishment of the government policy of 'sole foundation', which imposes the acceptance of the state ideology (Pancasila) on all political and social organizations in the country.

It seems to me that the American Foreign Policy Council's standpoint, which includes the FPI in the category of Islamist groups, is also to some extent motivated by the fact that the FPI is one of the bodies behind the campaigns against the US in the Indonesian public sphere. This is apparent, for instance, in Syihab's book,[27] which makes the point that the FPI

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25 Ngatawi, Al-Zastrouw. *Gerakan Islam Simbolik: Politik Kepentingan FPI* (The Movement of Symbolic Islam: the Political Interest of Islamic Defenders Front). Yogyakarta, 2006, pp. 100-101.

26 American Foreign Policy Council, The World Almanac of Islamism. Philadelphia, 2014, p. 88.

27 Syihab, Habib Rizieq. *Dialog FPI Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar: Menjawab Tuduhan terhadap Gerakan Nasional Anti Ma'siat di Indonesia* (Dialogue with Islamic Defenders Front on Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil: Answering the Accusations on Anti-Evil National Movement in Indonesia). Jakarta, 2008, p. 8.

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ran a major campaign against the US after the US's invasion of Afghanistan, 7 October 2001.

One publication highlights two types of Islamism in post-Suharto Indonesia. The first is embodied in struggless to win power through electoral competition. The Crescent Star Party (PBB) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) belong to this first category. The second type is manifested in cultural and social activism. This second category includes the FPI, the Council of Indonesian Muslim Holy Warriors (MMI) and the like.[28]

Islamism, according to Olivièr Roy, is 'a new movement of thought that endeavoured to define Islam primarily as a political system', more specifically 'in keeping with the two major ideologies of the twentieth century. This movement, which is mainly initiated by the Egyptian scholar Hassan al-Banna and the Indo-Pakistani scholar Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi, justifies this new vision by the notion of a 'return', namely 'a return to the texts and to the original inspiration of the first community of believers' (*al-salaf*). Roy goes on to explain that nowadays Islamism has undergone a change in its outlook. It has been transformed into a type of 'neo-fundamentalism', which aims primarily at re-establishing the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law), 'without inventing new political forms'.[29] In this regard, the FPI falls into the category of neo-fundamentalism.

6.2 The Islamic Defenders Front and the mission of 'commanding good and forbidding evil'

The FPI has been inspired by a popular prophetic saying (*hadith*), 'If any of you sees evil, he/she has to change it with his/her hands. If he/she is not able to do so, he/she has to change it with his/her tongue. If he/she is not able to do so, he/she has to change it with his heart; and this is the weakest faith'. The FPI's activism in suppressing evil using physical force can be understood in this context, since they do not want to be considered as those of the weakest faith. [30]

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28 Hilmy, Masdar. Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia: Piety and Pragmatism. Singapore, 2010, pp. 101-102.

29 Oliviér Roy. The Failure of Political Islam. Carol Volk (Trans.). Cambridge, 1994, pp. viii-ix.

30 Hasani and Naipospos. *Wajah Para 'Pembela' Islam*, p.149.

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The FPI's programmes to suppress evil are not entities in themselves, but rather serve as strategies to achieve a higher goal, namely the enforcement of Islamic law. The FPI was founded because in 1998 there was no Islamic mass organization deeply concerned and involved with suppressing evil (Hasani and Naipospos 2011: 149).

The FPI's mission in prohibiting evil is mainly performed by its offshoot organization, the Paramilitary Force for Defending Islam (*Laskar Pembela Islam*). This force is responsible for exerting physical pressure in order to eradicate evil. Candidates for this force normally have to undergo training for about three days. In the last day of training they undergo an initiation, the text of which reads that they must be, 'ready to abandon evil, ready to defend the oppressed Muslims and ready to become a martyr in the cause of God' (Hasani and Naipospos 2011: 151).

In addition to the Paramilitary Force for Defending Islam, the FPI has other wing organizations which have respective strategies for conducting *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*. These offshoot organizations include the Female Strugglers for Defending Islam (*Mujahidah Pembela Islam*) and the Islamic Student Front (*Front Mahasiswa Islam*). The Female Strugglers for Defending Islam was established to facilitate the aspirations of Muslim women regarding the performance of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*. This offshoot organization has many opportunities to defend women's rights in accordance with the rulings of Shari'ahh. The Islamic Student Front aims to conduct itself using its intellectual capacity.[31]

It seems to me that the FPI's offshoot organizations (with their respective strategies for dealing with *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) are established in response to the *hadith* that necessitates that Muslims perform *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* with physical force and power (*bi al-yadd*), their capacity to be articulate (*bi al-lisan*), and their disapproval of evil (*bi al-qalb*). The establishment of these subgroups also serve as a response to the Qur'an (Al-Nahl: 125) implying the stages of the performance of *da'wah* and al-*amr bi al-ma'ruf*, namely wisdom (*hikmah*), good advice (*maw'izah hasanah*) and dialogue (*mujadalah*).

The FPI has been involved with mobs urging for the dissolution of the Ahmadiyyah. In February 2008, at the 'big gathering' in Banjar, Shobri Lubis, one of the FPI's national board declared war against the Ah-

31 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*. pp. 200-202.

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madiyyah. He said, 'we must make war against the Ahmadiyyah, kill the Ahmadiyyah, in every place we find them we must kill them'. [32]

During the years 2003-2004, the FPI stuck to a policy that they would perform necessary actions if there were requests from the respective local communities. Accordingly during these years there was a limited number of sweeping actions performed by the FPI. It is recorded that there were only two sweeping actions performed by the FPI in Jakarta. Since then the FPI have been involved in mass demonstrations pertaining to various issues ranging from defending the Tempo Magazine, which was in conflict with the conglomerate Tommy Winata in 2003, and objecting to the visit of the US President George W. Bush in 2004.[33]

The FPI's mode of action in forbidding evil have been opposed by some elements within Indonesian society. The National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Conscience (AKBB), for instance, posted an advertisement in some national newspapers:

> Indonesia guarantees the citizens to exercise their respective religions. This is the human right which is guaranteed by the constitution. This is also the essence of 'Unity in Diversity' (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), which constitutes the pillar of our Indonesian-ness. But lately there is a group of people which strives to eliminate this human right and to threat the unity. This group also spreads hate and fear in the society. They even commit violence, like their violence against the Ahmadiyyah, which have lived side by side with other faith communities since 1925. Let us guard our republic. Let us preserve these human rights. Let us maintain our unity. [34]

7. Habib Rizieq Syihab and the 'enjoining good and forbidding evil'

7.1 Habib Rizieq Syihab and religious authority

The underlying idea of the founding of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) is the notion of *al-amr bi al-ma'ru wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*. The founding fathers of FPI (most notably Habib Rizieq Syihab) thought that the government of Indonesia remains silent about the cases of evil that spread throughout the country. In response, the FPI felt the necessity of 'commanding good and forbidding evil', and accordingly they organized some

32 Hasani and Naipospos. *Wajah Para 'Pembela' Islam,* p.156.
33 Ibid. p.155.
34 Ibid. p.157.

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necessary action to stop evil in Indonesian society. FPI's action in sweeping the restaurants that remained open at midday during the Ramadan-fasting month can be seen in this light. In this regard, one may see the FPI as an anti-evil organization, which strives to take over the authority of the state apparatus in enforcing the law and stability.

Syihab runs an official website, namely www.habibrizieq.com. This website carries a tagline 'Islam is the religion of blessing, which is against evil'. On the front page of this website, Syihab reveals his three main positions, namely, the great *imam* of Islamic Defenders Front, the grand *mufti* of Sultanate Sulu Darul Islam (today part of Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippine), and the President Director of 'Markaz Syariah' (an institution which promotes and defends the Sunnite theology in Indonesia).

Syihab is considered as one the authorities who define the canon of Islamist scholarship in contemporary Indonesia. His credentials for this authority include his mastering of Arabic and classical and contemporary Islamic texts (which he learned in traditional Islamic institutions in Indonesia, the King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as well as the Malaya University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). His genealogical roots, which can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad, also strengthen his authority among Indonesian Muslims, the people who respect descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Syihab's authority is gained from these three major positions, held in three institutions: the Islamic Defenders Front, the Sultanate Sulu Darul Islam and the 'Markaz Syariah'.

This paper focuses on Syihab's book entitled *Dialog FPI Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar: Menjawab Tuduhan terhadap Gerakan Nasional Anti Ma'siat di Indonesia* (Dialogue with the Islamic Defenders Front on Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil: Answering the Accusations against the Anti-Evil National Movement in Indonesia). This book comprises of three chapters: the essence of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, the Islamic Defenders Front and *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, and the Anti-evil National Movement. Syihab wrote this book during his imprisonment in Salemba, Jakarta, from April - November 2003. He chose the title of this book *Dialog FPI* because the contents resulted from questions that he encountered on various occasions.[35]

35 See: Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, pp. 8-10.

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7.2 *Ma'ruf, munkar, and the conditions of performing 'commanding good and forbidding evil'*

According to Syihab, [36] *ma'ruf* means what is known, what is good. He goes on to explain the parameters of *ma'ruf*, by asserting, 'good according to Shari'ah, which draws its doer near to God'. *Munkar* means what is denied, or evil. As for the parameters of *munkar*, he says, 'evil according to Shari'ah which makes its committer far away from God'. In the terminology of Islamic jurisprudence, *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* is known as *hisbah.*

Syihab proposes a classification of evil. *First*, 'individual evil', namely the evil which is committed by the individual. To cope with this kind of evil, a soft approach is preferable. *Secondly*, 'structural evil', namely the evil which has been embodied in a system, or a syndicate. To cope with this latter type of evil, firmness is to be preferred. [37]

The FPI was initially known as an anti-evil movement. From 1998 - 2002 the FPI performed sweeping actions in several places of entertainment, which mostly took place during the month of Ramadan. Nowadays the intensity of these sweeping actions decreases, and as a substitute, the FPI is now more concerned with activism against religious liberty. This can be seen from the FPI's action in attacking the Ahmadiyyah and the Christianity[38]. In this regard, one may suppose that the FPI's definition of evil (*munkar*) becomes broadened so as to include religious liberty.

There is an indication that Syihab and the FPI are expanding their definition of evil. Evil is not only something to do with alcoholic drink, gambling and prostitution, but also to do with deviant sects like the Ahmadiyyah, and with groups which injure Islam like the Network of Liberal Islam. In July 2005, the FPI closed the Ahmadiyyah centre in the Mubarok Campus, Bogor. In August 2005, the members of FPI gathered and planned to ransack the centre for the Network of Liberal Islam, but it failed to achieve this.[39]

When we read through Syihab's book entitled *Dialog FPI* we begin to realize that he seems to consider any practice and system that runs counter to Shari'ah as evil. Accordingly, he condemns the *Counter Legal Draft of*

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36 Ibid. p. 36.
37 Ibid. p. 19.
38 Hasani and Naipospos. *Wajah Para 'Pembela' Islam*. p.154.
39 Ibid. p.156.

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Compilation of Islamic Law, which has been introduced by some Indonesian activists in order to include the idea of 'gender equality' and 'human rights' in Indonesia's *Compilation of Islamic Law.* Syihab argues that the idea of gender equality does not conform to the principles of Shari'ah.[40]

According to Syihab,[41] there are four prerequisites to be met before taking up physical action in the course of *al-nahy 'an al-munkar*. *Firstly*, the existing evil has to be agreed as *haram* (prohibited). This rules out things that have been disputed by a Muslim scholar – when, in other words, their status has been contested. For example, cigarettes are considered as *haram* by a number of Muslim scholars, but regarded as *makruh* by other Muslim scholars. *Secondly*, that the evil is clear and provable. This rules out unclear evils, like things that fall into the category of *al-munkarat al-batiniyya* (heart evils) - such as *riya'*, *takabbur* and *hasad* - and things that fall into the category of *al-munkarat al-masturiyya* (hidden evils) – such as evils which have been committed within people's houses. *Thirdly*, the evil cannot be solved by a soft approach. *Fourthly*, a firm reaction towards the evil will not trigger any greater harm. In this vein, Syihab bases his argument on a single principle of Islamic jurisprudence, namely, *al-'amal bi-akhaff al-dararayn* (one should take things which have the smaller number of harms).

Syihab's four conditions are in line with al-Ghazzali's standpoints. Al-Ghazzali puts forward four conditions of 'committed evil' or the object of *al-amr bi al*-ma'ruf *wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (*al-muhtasab fih*). *Firstly*, it is embodied in the form of '*munkar*' (evil) rather than a kind of '*ma'siyyah'* (sinful conduct). For al-Ghazzali, when a small child drinks alcohol, it is a kind of 'munkar' although it should not be considered as '*ma'siyyah*' for that child. *Secondly,* the evil is ongoing. *Thirdly*, the evil is done in public. Fourthly, the status of evil is agreed by Muslim scholars.[42]

According to Syihab, the FPI is ready to undertake any negotiation pertaining to the eradication of evil, except in relation to two things: apostasy and sorcery, since these two are considered as clear infidelity and *shirk*. This negotiation is mostly concerned with the gradual process of eliminating outbreaks of evil.[43]

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40 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*. pp. 449-451.
41 Ibid. pp. 258-271.
42 Ibid. pp. 122-123. See also: al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid. Ihya' 'Ulum al Din. pp. 117-122.
43 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, pp. 492-494.

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Syihab is aware of the existence of hadith, which suggests the performance of 'commanding good' in a good manner. This hadith reads, '*man amara bi al-ma'ruf fal-yakun amruhu ma'rufan*' (one who commands good should perform his command in a good manner). Syihab interprets the word *ma'ruf*an (in a good manner) as 'the good and true way which is in accordance with Shari'ah'. He explains further that the performance of 'commanding good' should stick to the principle of allowing the halal (allowed) and prohibiting the haram (prohibited) [44]. In other words, the performer of 'commanding good' should be aware of the distinction of halal and haram, and should not do anything to prohibit the halal and allow the haram.. [45] His opinion is based on the saying of the *salaf*, namely, '*unsur al-haqq bi al-haqq*' (help the truth by way of truth).

7.3 Violence and freedom of conscience

For Syihab, violence reflects two things: (a) firmness in principle and attitude and (b) rudeness and cruelty. He is convinced that firmness in principle and attitude falls into the category of 'praiseworthy violence'. He goes on to elucidate that rudeness and cruelty fall into the category of 'disgraceful violence'.[46] It seems to me that that Syihab's classification of 'praiseworthy and disgraceful violence' is comparable with the notion of 'legitimate and illegitimate violence'. In this regard, Syihab's grounds for legitimacy has been the rulings of Shari'ah.

Syihab argues that this 'praiseworthy violence' is in line with God's commands. QS Al-Tahrim 9 and QS Al-Taubah 73 order the Prophet to show his firmness of attitude towards the infidels and hypocrites.[47] This kind of violence is a follow up from 'commanding good and forbidding evil', which cannot be solved with a soft approach. He argues that whenever 'commanding good and forbidding evil' cannot be achieved except by firmness of principle and attitude, the principle of Islamic jurisprudence applies, namely, '*ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi fa-huwa wajib*' (things that are essential to complete the obligation are also obligatory).[48]

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44 Ibid. p.63.
45 Ibid. p.64.
46 Ibid. p.18.
47 Ibid. p.18.
48 Ibid. p.68.

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Syihab[49] justifies his violence towards evil doers, 'Let the people cry out that "commanding good and forbidding evil" by destroying evil, is a kind of violent act that harms the property of other persons. But these people forget, or pretend to forget, that evil itself is a kind of violence that does harm to people's morality, which is more valuable than property'.

Elsewhere Syihab argues, 'Let the people cry out that 'commanding good and forbidding evil', by destroying evil is an anarchic act, which may turn into other greater harmful actions (*darar*). But these people forget, or pretend to forget, that evil is more than anarchic, since its presence inflicts harm, and it has the potential to inflict more harm if its existence is tolerated' [50]. It seems to me that in this case Syihab is striving to apply a principle of Islamic jurisprudence, namely '*al-darar yuzal'* (harm is to be eliminated).

Syihab[51] is aware that there are rulings in the Qur'an and the *hadith* that recommend violence, but there are also rulings which suggest tolerance and a gentle approach. In this case, Syihab does not take up one approach and abandon the other, but rather takes both into consideration. He argues that both rulings are valid since they come from God and the Prophet. As for apparent contradictions in the two rulings, he sticks to the opinion that the contradiction exists only on the surface. For this purpose he is in agreement with Abd' al-Wahhab Khallaf in his book *Usul al-Fiqh,* that in the case of a contradiction between two rulings, one has to apply such principles as: *takhsis al-'amm, taqyid al-mutlaq, tafsil al-mujmal,* and *nasikh al-mansukh*.

The FPI is aware of the many perspectives on terrorism and evil. This can be seen from their criticism of US double standards. Syihab[52] expresses this in the following words:

> When the US chased Osama ben Laden with the accusation of terrorism, the US made use of the United Nations and designated this act as 'the US's policy which deserves respect'. But when this statement was responded to by Osama, by declaring that they would fight the US for its crimes against humanity in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US made use of the United Nations and designated this as 'Osama's evil which should be fought'. In another case, when Israel bombed Palestine and killed many civilians, the US exploited the United Nations and designated this as 'Israel's policy to defend and protect

49 Ibid. p.20.
50 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, p. 20.
51 Ibid. pp. 75-76.
52 Ibid. pp. 196-197.

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> their citizens'. But when Hamas fought to defend their religion and their country, the US exploited the United Nations and labelled this as 'Hamas's evil which should be condemned'.

Syihab[53] perceives the phenomenon of freedom in Post-Suharto Indonesia from his particular angle. For him, the negative side of this freedom includes the mushrooming of deviant sects and a variety of evils. The positive side of this freedom includes the flowering of systems and methods in disseminating the Islamic faith (*da'wah*). For Syihab, this freedom of *da'wah* is undermined and hated by the West, since for them this will nurture Islamic militancy, and accordingly they suppress this kind of freedom.

7.4 Epistemological foundation of the 'commanding good and forbidding evil'

Syihab maintains that the rulings of the Qur'an and *hadith* on *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* employ the 'imperative form' (*sighat al-amr*) without any limitation (*taqyid*). He specifically refers to two principles of *usul al-fiqh*, '*al-asl fi al-amr li al-wujub'* (in principle, command designates the obligation) and '*mutlaq al-amr yaqtadi al-wujub'* (command without any limitation imposes obligation).

Syihab[54] sticks to Wahbah al-Zuhaili's standpoint in his book *Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami*, 'the majority of Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the command indicates the obligation to perform what is asked for. The obligation will not be turned to another form except when there is evidence that leads to that conclusion'.

Syihab[55] explains that the *maslahah* and *madarrah* of 'commanding good and forbidding evil' are to be evaluated by the standards of Shari'ah, not merely rational consideration. There should also be a balance between 'commanding good' and 'forbidding evil', so that they will come into fruition. Syihab compares 'commanding good' with planting rice, and 'forbidding evil with eradicating pests.

53 Ibid. pp. 28-29.
54 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, p. 43.
55 Ibid. p. 58.

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7.5 Anthropological and constitutional logic of 'commanding good and forbidding evil'

Syihab[56] felt the necessity to organize what is required for 'commanding good and forbidding evil', and this is based on a well-known adagio '*al-haqq bi-la nizam yaghlibuh al-batil ma'a al-nizam*' (unorganized truth will be defeated by an organized lie). He points out that in Indonesia evil has been organized as syndicate since the country's independence in 1945, and this syndicate of evil became stronger after the reformation (1998 until today). He argues further that this syndicate has also exploited the 'campaign against violence' to protect their evil practices in the country.

Syihab likens the solution to 'evil fever' with the dengue fever, which can only be treated by not only curing those infected by *aedes aegypti* mosquitoes but also by destroying the mosquito nests and by killing the mosquitoes. A similar act needs to be performed to solve 'evil fever'. The problem of evil fever cannot be dealt with merely by curing the patient but there also needs to be a destruction of the 'nests' of evil, as well as the 'mosquitoes of evil'. Mosquitoes of evil include the sellers of alcoholic drinking, sex workers, drug sellers, corrupt officials and thugs who back up the evil, porn VCD sellers, and the like. Nests of evil cover the producers of alcoholic drinking, porn VCDs, drugs and the like.[57] It seems to me that evil according to Syihab is a kind of social pathology, which requires strict treatment.

Syihab refers to the Indonesian constitution pertaining to the necessity of performing 'commanding good and forbidding evil'. He argues that the mosquitoes of evil are those that violate and denigrate both religion and the constitution. He specifically refers to the first pillar of the Indonesian constitution, namely belief in one God. These mosquitoes of evil, according to Syihab, violate Indonesian Criminal Law, most specifically the Psychotropic Act, Narcotics Act, and the like.[58] Syihab argues that 'commanding good and forbidding evil' serves to protect the human rights of the Muslim community in terms of *'aqidah* and religiosity. [59]

In addition, Syihab justifies the performance of 'commanding good and forbidding evil' with the Presidential Decree of Soekarno, issued on 5 July

56 Ibid. p. 14.
57 Ibid. p. 11.
58 Ibid. pp. 12-13.
59 Ibid. p. 451.

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1959. This decree states that, 'the Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta), dated 22 June, 1945 is the spirit of the 1945 National Constitution (UUD 1945) and is an extricable element of that constitution'. It is worth remarking that the Jakarta Charter also states that 'the state is based on the belief in One God, with the obligation of performing the Shari'ah for Muslims. Syihab argues that this presidential decree serves as a constitutional basis for the enforcement of the Shari'ah as well as the enactment of 'commanding good and forbidding evil'.[60]

7.6 Constitutional and cultural circumstances of the 'commanding good and forbidding wrong'

Syihab[61] is conscious of the necessity to comprehend the national constitution and other national regulations, so that the FPI's actions in performing *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* do not run counter to the constitution and these other regulations. For that purpose, he sticks to the following procedures, (a) collecting facts which could serve as proofs of the existence of evils, which runs in counter with both religious teachings and national regulations, (b) seeking support from the local community which has been disturbed by that evil, (c) writing reports and making claims to the state apparatus. Syihab maintains that only after sticking to these procedures, can the FPI undertake necessary further actions to carry out *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar.*

Syihab goes on elucidate two strategies in the performance of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, most particularly by looking at the existence of support from the local community. *First*, there is that which necessitates *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf.* This pertains to an area that is full of evil and where the existence of this evil is supported by the local community, or at least the local community are not disturbed by the existing evil. In this case, the FPI is not allowed to conduct *al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, since such an action will elicit conflict with the local community. As a substitute, the FPI is to perform *al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, to enlighten the society pertaining to the noble messages of Islam. *Second,* is what necessitates *al-nahy 'an al-munkar.* The second case relates to the area that is full of evil

60 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, p. 478.
61 Ibid. pp. 242-243.

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and where the existence of this evil is rejected by the local community, or at least the local community is disturbed by this evil. In this case, the FPI is obliged to assist the local community to conduct *al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, to eliminate evil that harms the community.

In this regard, we may perceive Syihab's classification from two angles, (a) he is aware of socio-cultural condition in performing *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* and (b) he would like to justify the FPI's actions in conducting *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* are showing that they are in accordance with the socio-cultural condition of the local community in question.

7.7 Axiological basis of the 'commanding good and forbidding evil'

Syihab argues that the FPI cannot be neutral about 'good' and 'evil', since neutrality in this respect also falls into the category of evil. He bases his argument on the existence of two opposing forces, (a) *'hizb Allah'* (party of God) and (b) '*hizb al-shaytan*' (party of Satan). Syihab's distinction of *hizb Allah* and *hizb al-shaytan* originates from the Qur'an (al-Mujadilah: 19 and 22), and he employs this categorization to portray and simplify social groups, and the FPI's position towards these groups. Syihab goes on to explain that it is forbidden for the FPI to stay neutral about '*hizb Allah*' and '*hizb al-shaytan*', but it is allowed for them to remain neutral between two groups belonging to *hizb Allah*.[62]

At the axiological level, Syihab's performance of *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* is based on the consideration that evil does harm to the lives of individuals, society and the nation. For that purpose, he quotes the sayings of the *Salaf*, which were written in Isma'il Muhammad al-'Ajluni's *Kashf al-Khafa'*. These sayings include, (a) *al-ma'asi barid al-kufr* (sinful conducts are the currier of infidelity) and (b) *al-ma'asi tuzil al-ni'am* (sinful conducts will eliminate God's grace). [63]

In addition, Syihab refers to the *hadith*, which was transmitted via al-Tirmidhi. This *hadith* reads, 'wa-lladhi nafsi bi-yadih, lata'murunna bi al-ma'ruf wa tanhawna 'an al-munkar, aw la-yushikuna Allah an yab'atha 'alaykum *'iqaban minhu, thumma tad'unahu fa-la-yustajab lakum'* (With

62 Ibid. pp. 205-206.
63 Syihab, *Dialog FPI*, pp. 419-420.

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the Being that my soul in His hand, you are to command good and to forbid wrong, or God will put punishment on you, that that you pray for Him and he would not hear you). He also quotes the Qur'anic verse: 'And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much (al-Shura: 30). In this regard, we may see that, according to Syihab, the spread of evil will trigger God's punishment, such as in the form of disaster.'

Concluding remarks

'Indonesian Islam' is in some ways distinct from the Islamic religiosity that developed in the Middle East, in the sense that Indonesian Islam can easily connect and conform to the ideas of democracy, human rights, and pluralism. Although we are aware of the existence of radical groups within Islam, we notice that their number is relatively small, and that there are counter-discourses and actions made by moderate Muslim personages and groups which play a strong role in moulding the nature and future of Indonesian Islam'.

The notion of violence in Islamic scholarship can be observed for instance in the discourse on *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding good and forbidding evil). The performance of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf* by scholars is due to their social role, and serves to exercise a moral authority.

The Islamic Defenders Front was founded by twenty Muslim figures, most notably Habib Rizieq Syihab, Cecep Bustomi and Habib Idrus Jamalullail. These figures are known as hard line preachers. The Islamic Defenders Front, which was established three months after the fall of Soeharto in May 1998, advocates 'moral reformation'. The underlying idea of the founding of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) is the notion of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*.

Syihab is considered to be one of the authorities who define the canon of Islamist scholarship in contemporary Indonesia. His credentials include his mastering of Arabic as well as classical and contemporary Islamic texts.

Syihab explains the parameters of *ma'ruf*, by asserting, 'good according to Shari'ah, which draws its doer near to God'. As for *munkar*, he says, 'evil according to Shari'ah which makes its perpitrator far away from God'. We observe that after 2002 there has been an indication that Syihab

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and the FPI have expanded their definition of evil. Evil is not only something to do with alcoholic drink, gambling and prostitution, but also to do with deviant sects like the Ahmadiyyah and with groups that undermine Islam, like the Network of Liberal Islam.

Syihab's classification of 'praiseworthy and disgraceful violence' is comparable with the notion of 'legitimate and illegitimate violence'. In this regard, Syihab's source of legitimacy has been the rulings of Shari'ahh. Syihab[64] is aware that there are rulings of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, which recommend violence, but there are also rulings that suggest tolerance and a softer approach. In this case, Syihab would not take one and abandon another, but rather take both into consideration.

Syihab argues that *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* is obligatory for Muslims. His arguments are grounded on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*). Evil according to Syihab is a kind of social pathology, which is in need of strict treatment.

In addition, Syihab justifies the performance of 'commanding good and forbidding evil' with the Presidential Decree of Soekarno, which was issued on 5 July, 1959. This decree states, 'the Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) dated 22 June, 1945 is the spirit of the 1945 National Constitution (UUD 1945) and is an inextricable element of that constitution'. It is worth remarking that the Jakarta Charter states that 'the state is based on the belief in One God, with the obligation of performing the Shari'ah for Muslims'.

Syihab is conscious of the necessity to comprehend the national constitution and other national regulations, so that the FPI's actions in performing *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* do not run counter to the constitution and these regulations. At the axiological level, Syihab's performance of *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* stems from the notion that evil harms the lives of individuals, society and the nation.

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64 Ibid. pp. 75-76.

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