

# Indonesia-Egypt Diplomatic Relations: Non-State Actors Perspective

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# Indonesia-Egypt Diplomatic Relations: Non-State Actors Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to answer the role of diplomacy conducted by Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding school with Al-Azhar University in Egypt as a non-state actor in the field of education. Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School as one of the Institutions of Islamic Education and Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia has had a major part in educating the lives of the people and fostering the nation. In addition, Gontor has a significant role in maintaining relations with Al-Azhar University and the Egyptian Government. In this study, the method used is Data collection by conducting direct interviews with relevant sources (primary data) and using secondary data obtained from Journals, Books and News. The results of this study show that the role of diplomacy by Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School and Al-Azhar University in Egypt has made relations between the two institutions very harmonious and far from tensions. Therefore, Al-Azhar University in Egypt views Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School as an important institution and collaborative partner in Indonesia. Therefore Al-Azhar provides an additional scholarship quota for alumni students at Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School to continue their studies at Al-Azhar.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Egypt, diplomacy, Darussalam Gontor Boarding School, Al-Azhar University

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Darussalam Gontor Boarding School is an Educational Institution in Indonesia that was established in 1926. This educational institution has played an active role in conducting international relations with educational institutions in the world. Among them are Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Syanggit University in Mauritania, Santiniketan University in India and Aligarh Islamic University in India. In the history of the establishment of the Darussalam Gontor Boarding School, all four universities were used as a Synthesis of boarding school in implementing the values of Islamic education. As a non-state actor in international relations, Darussalam Gontor Boarding School, since its establishment, has been playing a significant role in carrying out diplomatic efforts, cooperation, and building networking with one of the four syntheses namely Al-Azhar University, Cairo, especially in the field of education. The Egyptian government, through Cairo's Al-Azhar University annually offers scholarships to Indonesian students to continue their studies at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Studies on diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Egypt have been done by experts and researchers. A.M. Fachir's research in 2015 entitled Inequality in Indonesia-Egypt Relations in 1950-2010: The Study of the Reciprocity Theory aims to describe Indonesia's foreign policy towards Egypt while explaining the reality of the imbalance between Indonesia and Egypt. The results in this study indicate that

the relations between Indonesia and Egypt, since the opening of the Indonesian representative in Cairo and the Egyptian representative in Jakarta, have been really tight, harmonious and there is no tension between the two, let alone the termination of diplomatic relations. However, only few people realize that behind harmony there is an imbalance between them. Indonesia views Egypt as an important country whereas Egypt only looks at Indonesia in one perspective.

The second study was also carried out by Rudi Candra. In his thesis entitled The Role of people to people Diplomacy in Indonesian Diplomatic Relations, examined the function of soft power in relations between the two countries in 1998-2011. [1] The research which was written in 2013, seen that before the formation of a sovereign state, the people of Indonesia and Egypt have similarities in the fabric of society. The two civilizations of this nation are formed from small kingdoms which are then united into a large kingdom. From this great empire, a country began to emerge. Then in terms of religion and belief, similarities are also experienced by the two countries. Where both have a belief in dynamism and animism that believes in inanimate objects and supernatural powers. In addition to religion and beliefs, the two countries also have a majority of the Muslim population. Although there are also other religions in the two countries. It is for this reason that these identity equations ultimately form an emotional connection between the two, especially after the two countries have struggled against colonialism [2].

Subsequent research was also carried out by the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo and successfully published a book titled Portrait of Indonesia-Egypt Relations. The book was successfully published in 2009. The book explains the relations between Indonesia and Egypt since the first

relationship between the two nations, long before the Indonesian independence in 1945 to 2008. This book became the main reference in Indonesia-Egypt relations which is exhaustive and supported by sources from rich and strong references, both from Indonesia and Egypt. Because it was written and published by the Indonesian government, in this case, the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo, this book contains data, records, and documentation without being accompanied by an opinion. [2]. Researchers want to show that the relationship between Indonesia and Egypt has been existing since a very long time, namely before Indonesia's independence.

The three previous studies that have discussed Indonesian relations with Egypt, conclude that the relationship between Indonesia and Egypt has been going on for a long time, been quite close, harmonious, and had begun before the independence. Until now, relations between the two countries are going very well and never been any tension. While the relationship of diplomacy in the field of education especially at Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia is a novelty in research. Therefore, researchers want to take the theme of Indonesia-Egypt diplomacy relations in the field of education in Islamic boarding schools.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used by researchers in this study is conducting interviews with speakers. To get accurate, relevant and reliable sources, the researcher conducted interviews and met face-to-face with the speakers, including Mr. Ahmed Diplomat Second Secretary of the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Jakarta, [1] Prof. Dr. Mustafa Dasuki Kesbah from Al-Azhar University, Cairo and Dr. KH. Ahmad Hidayatullah Zarkasyi, M.A, one of the founding sons of Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School, KH. Imam Zarkasyi. Whereas the location for data collection was carried out at Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School, as a role model that had established relations with the Al-Azhar University of Egypt in the field of education. While the next location is the Embassy of the Egyptian Arab Republic in Jakarta.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Starting from the ideals of the founders of Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding KH. Ahmad Sahal, KH. Zainuddin Fananie and KH. Imam Zarkasyi or known by Trimurti that they wanted Gontor Boarding School to have a different concept in learning Arabic with Salaf/ traditional lodges in Indonesia at that time. Where the teaching system used by the lodges in Indonesia still uses the sorogan method or the bandongan method and studies the Yellow Book. It is with the ideas and concepts promoted by Trimurti that Gontor Boarding School is guiding international educational institutions known as the Gontor synthesis. These include Al-Azhar in Egypt, Syanggit in Mauritania, Aligarh in India and Shantiniketan in India. These international institutions which have good values were studied by Trimurti, the founder of Gontor Boarding School, to be implemented in education in Gontor. So that in the founding of Gontor the

Arabic learning method and its education system integrated the methods, systems, and education of the four Institutions. Relations between the two institutions have started from the beginning of the founding of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. The founders of Gontor Modern Boarding School or also known as Trimurti had aspirations to establish a boarding school with a waqf system so that the cottage was not owned by the Boarding School's family alone. It was because many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia had not implemented a waqf system, therefore when the founders passed away, they would no longer be able to survive or function. Trimurti did not want to see Gontor Boarding School suffer the same fate as other Boarding Schools in Indonesia. Therefore, the Gontor founders learned from Al-Azhar Cairo University in the field of waqf and sustainable development.

#### 4.1. Implementation of the Value of Waqf from Al-Azhar

One of the reasons behind the relationship between Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School and Al Azhar University in Cairo Egypt is the waqf system developed by Al-Azhar. This waqf system has created sustainability in the development of the University. From the beginning of the establishment of Al-Azhar to the present day the university can still stand strong and continue to carry out the process of Islamic education. Although Al-Azhar's age is already thousands of years. This system eventually became the example of the founders of Gontor at that time. Because in Indonesia itself at that time was still in the colonial period, a difficult time in normal life. This is where the ideas and ideals of the Trimurti are implemented in Pondok Gontor until now. Exactly on October 12th 1958, at the Darussalam Modern Boarding School's Hall, Gontor Ponorogo, witnessed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Indonesia and his staff, the founders of Gontor (Trimurti) donated the land and buildings of the Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School to the Modern Boarding School Family Association (IKPM) [1].

At that time Gontor was also represented and did not belong to an individual or family, but it belongs to Muslims. From there the founders of Gontor imitated the Waqf system in Al-Azhar. For the Boarding School to continue standing and not die because of its leadership, it is necessary to implement the waqf system. Where at that time the Boarding Schools in Indonesia had not implemented the waqf system but Gontor had done it as Al-Azhar did. In its development, Gontor Boarding School has added and completed buildings according to educational needs. Since the 1970s, the increase in quantity and quality of the building has been continuous. Means of transportation are also very much and quite diverse. Besides, the Boarding School also has several business units such as rice milling machines, bread makers, bottled water producers, bookstores, printing companies, etc [1].

The development of Gontor's relationship with Al-Azhar from day to day seemed to be increasingly harmonious and very close. This relationship continues to be maintained by both institutions well, and of course, respect each other. The establishment of this harmonious relationship was begun

with Al-Azhar University which sent 2 teachers to teach at Gontor Boarding School in the 1960s [2]. Then, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor also always sends cadres, students, to continue their education at Al-Azhar University. The cadres and students were sent here to go to school starting from first, second to third strata. After their education period was finished from Al-Azhar they returned to serve at Pondok Gontor and also serve at Darussalam Gontor University (UNIDA) Gontor. This process is carried out continuously every year until now, these were students who received scholarships from Al-Azhar. Besides that, Gontor Boarding School also always plays an active role in sending students who have the advantage to attend training/training in Egypt for more or less within two weeks [2].

#### **4.2. Similarities in Ideology and Education Values**

Egypt, which is well-known for its Al-Azhar, has given birth to well-known figures and Islamic scholars in the world, such as Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, and Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar Ahmad M al Thayyib, etc. Especially the Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar of Egypt who always made his visit to the country of Indonesia. The visit was significant, where Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim majority population in the world. It has been recognized by Sheikh Azhar himself that Indonesia is a pluralistic country or has a diversity of cultures and religions but has been integrated into a nation. That is one of the visits from Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar [3]. Besides, Indonesia is also seen as a moderate country or Wasathiyah where Muslims in Indonesia are Muslims who have a middle ground view and a moderate approach in Islam, not extreme against other schools and upholding tolerance in religion. So, this is in line with what is taught by Cairo's Al-Azhar University. Where Al-Azhar wants to re-enhance the views of Wasathiyah which became the teachings of Al-Azhar. This is also because of foreign policy Republic of Indonesia "free and active policy" as a mandatory to implemented relations with every country especially Egypt. Free policy was carried out impartially in the Egyptian conflict and active policy was implemented by maintaining other issues such as in education, cultural, diplomacy and trade cooperation with Egypt [4]. Gontor itself has a big hand in Indonesia in the field of education such as implementing moderate Islamic education or Wasathiyah and instilling other Islamic values. Where since its establishment until now Gontor Boarding School has scored its alumni having a Gontor world view and spread across all lines in Indonesia. As the Motto of Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School becomes, that "Gontor stands above and for all groups" then "There is the sky above and ground below". Gontor's role in educating and implementing Wasathiyah Islamic values in Indonesia has become strategic for Al-Azhar because both have similarities and harmonious relationships in maintaining these values. Therefore, every time Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar visits Indonesia he is made to visit Pondok Gontor. The relationship between Gontor Modern Darussalam and Al-Azhar Cairo University is very harmonious and very close. As stated by Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar in his speech

during a visit to Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School at the opening ceremony of 90 years of Gontor. He said that Darussalam Gontor Boarding School is a miniature of Al-Azhar Cairo University to form a generation of young Indonesians who hold firm to the teachings of Islam. Gontor has a vital role in shaping moderate soul and mind through education, teaching and culture. Where this business is the most strenuous, that some countries in the world have not been able to carry out until now [6]. This is in line with the statement of Prof. Dr. Ahmad Dasuki Kesbah during a visit to UNIDA Gontor in 2019 of Gontor as an Islamic educational institution that has the principle of Islamic Wasathiyah. These two institutions have also organized the Robitah Al-Islamiyyah Conference held in Gontor Darussalam. With the arrival of the International Conference, countries, especially in the Middle East, will become more familiar with Gontor University and Darussalam University. Gontor Boarding School has been built from the values of the goodness of sincerity, generosity by its founders so that it gives birth to the soul, the spirit of the struggle of Islam. It teaches how Islamic values are implemented in our daily lives, starting from waking up to sleeping again. And this becomes significant with the presence of Darussalam University Gontor especially with the International Relations Study Program that studies international interaction [7].

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Egypt was the first country to recognize Indonesian sovereignty. The recognition of Egypt is conducive to Indonesia in Indonesia's status as a sovereign country. Where when at the beginning of independence, Indonesia was in dire need of support from other countries in the world. The relationship between Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School and Al-Azhar University is an international relationship made by non-state actors. This relationship has been operating for a long time and harmonious. There was never a crisis between the two institutions. The fact that both have a corresponding relationship can be seen from the forms of cooperation and collaboration that have been carried out by both. When Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar visited Indonesia, he always took the time to visit Gontor Boarding School. Gontor is considered to have the same ideology and educational value, namely the implementation of waqf values, teaching about Islamic principles and their application in daily life where these are the principles taught by Al-Azhar. As well as the many alumni of Gontor who take part and become leaders in Indonesia both in the Government sector and in the Private sector. That is what makes Egypt is contented to provide scholarships to Gontor as well as providing additional scholarships to students and cadres Gontor to study at Al-Azhar University of Cairo.

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