

Manipulative Regimes and Global Disinformation Order

News:

Tempo Daily's review on October 1, 2019, entitled "Time to Control Buzzers" revealed the dark side of social media as the presence of buzzers - whose job is to secure Jokowi's government policy by spreading various false news to influence public opinion. Tempo also mentioned these paid buzzers once attacking Novel Baswedan - an Indonesian prominent investigator known to be persistent in investigating various jumbo corruption cases- with a label as the accomplices of the Khilafah. When support arose for the Corruption Eradication Commission, they attacked the supporters by giving them the label of supporters of the Khilafah.

Apparently, the phenomenon of disinformation flows in Indonesia through the buzzer movement is a global phenomenon. This was confirmed by a research report by The Global Disinformation Order, 2019 Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation from the Oxford Internet Institute, which was worked on by duo of Oxford University scientists, Samantha Bradshaw and Philip N Howard.

The report revealed that Governments and political parties around the world are increasingly using social media to manipulate public opinion, according to a recent report by researchers from the University of Oxford. There is evidence of organised social media manipulation campaigns in 70 countries and territories, said the report. That is up from 48 countries in 2018 and 28 in 2017. The study focused on what it called "cyber troops", which it defined as government or political actors tasked with manipulating public opinion online. In particular, there is evidence that fake accounts – including bots and those manned by humans - are being used by cyber troopers to spread pro-government propaganda, censor freedom of speech, mount smear campaigns or to drown out dissenting opinions.

Comment:

When the rapid flow of information can no longer be controlled by the authorities, what they do is create a 'chaos' of information by letting the disinformation flow flood social media, including maintaining digital hit man who are called "buzzers" to do their job of "killing the messenger" i.e., silencing the bearers of the truth including the bearers of Dawah Islam. Like Tempo's review, the buzzers even easily get the profiles who considered as opponents, such as identity cards, telephone numbers, and even the type of cellular telephone used.

This new phenomenon actually implies the despair also intellectual defeat against Islam because these regimes are not only trying to silence Islamic da'wah, but also wearing dirty manipulative ways to discredit Islam and Khilafah messengers. Previously they tried to block, censor, and obstruct the flow of communication, but this method was not successful in stopping Islamic da'wah. Now they are leading to a co-optation strategy that betrays their own values by using social media to control people and sow confusion, ignorance, prejudice, and information chaos.

Indeed, it is true the words of the Prophet (saw): **«سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ سَنَوَاتٌ خَدَاعَاتٌ يَصْدَقُ فِيهَا الْكَاذِبُ وَيَكْذِبُ فِيهَا»** *“There will come to the people years of endemic deception, when the liar will be regarded as honest, and the honest man will be regarded as a liar; the deceiver will be regarded as truthful, and the truthful man will be regarded as a deceiver; and the Ruwaibidhah will talk freely”* ‘Who are the Ruwaibidhah?’ His companions enquired. He replied **“vile persons (i.e. persons of little worth) talking on public affairs.”** (Narrated by Hakim)

This blatant criminality shown by the Ruwaibidhah regimes is just another proof of their desperation facing Islamic uprising, including signal of their imminent collapse and failure of secular system they worship. On the other hand, this is also the reason why more and more Muslims reject secular capitalism and embrace Islam as a capable system to determine their social, political, economic future.

The increasing pressure and persecution of Muslim activists is a sign that victory is drawing near. In this phase, the courage and determination of Muslims is increasingly needed to show Allah that we are worthy for the true victory of Islam, Insha Allah, Allah (swt) says: **«يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ»** *“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it.”* [TMQ. Ash Saff: 8]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Fika Komara
Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir