

Why does Indonesia's abundance of water still leave millions of citizens without a supply?

News:

On the 27th of August, the BBC uploaded a film investigating the current drought situation gripping Indonesia. It is affecting millions of residents even though there is an abundance of water in the nation. It is reported that supply is not able to meet the demand in the summer months when many natural sources in areas dry up.

Comment:

This is not a new matter; for the Indonesian government who had full advance awareness of the impending disaster. On 25 July 2019, the National Agency for Disaster Management of Indonesia announced that 55 districts and cities in Indonesia have declared a drought emergency readiness status. The 55 districts out of 75 districts and cities have been identified as affected by drought. Presently, 6 weeks later the nation is still in the grip of the same problem with no comprehensive solution for those that are suffering. For some villagers, water is delivered once or twice a month, which of course is ridiculously below the drinking needs of human beings before we assess the sanitary and cooking demands. This lack of appropriate response has put great stress and hardship upon the citizens who often have to travel many miles to find clean natural water supplies. One woman from Klepu in East Java is discussed in the BBC report. Like her fellow villagers, she must carry her water by bucket load from a 10-meter deep cave 1 kilometer away from home.

On the 30th of July 2019, the Asia and Pacific news agency reported that Mr Dody Usodo (Deputy of Social Vulnerability and Disaster Impacts Coordination Government Body) stated that the total areas exposed to drought were 11,744,437 hectares. He informed the press that "Residents exposed to drought risks are estimated to reach 48,491,666 in number". From this information, it is clear that the problem is very widespread and needs an urgent and swift solution as water is a life and death matter, particularly in relation to disease management as many vulnerable children can be exposed to consuming infected water.

Drought is a natural occurrence from Allah (swt), but like all problems in society, there are specific responses that Allah (swt) has ordered in the context of an Islamic State. In the time of the Khilafah (Caliphate), areas that had natural disasters were sent supplies and aid in a coordinated system where all of the resources of the neighboring regions of the Khilafah were mobilized. For example, under the authority of Umar Ibn Al Khattab (ra), the year of ashes was a time of severe drought. During this period, punishments were lifted for the Hudud due to the human suffering and need. Also the Khalif refused to eat other than what was available to every other citizen. Camel trains were organized to different regions to make sure that the needs of the people were met.

Today with nationalism dividing the Muslims lands, these measures are not employed. Furthermore, the foreign intervention and selling of natural resources makes our lands under the control of outside agents that have no concern for the lives of the local population. Our governments all subscribe to this political slavery and to non-Islamic values so the economic system of Islam is not implemented together with all of the other measures that give full relief to the problem of the Muslims. Allah (swt) forbids this status in our lands as revealed in Surah 4 verse 59, **يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ** وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا
"O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination."

As Muslims, we can only refer to the solutions of Allah (swt) and this applies to the Indonesian government who cannot take the people out of this crisis unless they implement the complete system of the Khilafah (Caliphate) in the method of the Prophet (saw).

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