

# Rethinking the Case of Blasphemy in Contemporary Indonesia : A Case of Tanjung Balai's Conflict

*by* Mega Hidayati

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## Rethinking the Case of Blasphemy in Contemporary Indonesia: A Case of Tanjung Balai's Conflict

Mega Hidayati  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
Email: mega.hidayati@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the case of Tanjung Balai by applying discourse analysis on several local and national newspapers. This exploration finds that Meilana, a Chinese Buddhist Indonesian, is considered doing blasphemy when she asked to decrease the volume of the mosques speaker in the time of prayer calling. This incident brings to the issue of pluralism, religious violence, and religious freedom which not only demand society to have opened, tolerant, and peaceful attitudes, but also urges the state to take any action. However, this case demonstrate that there is a problem of relation among people from different religions. Finally, we need to rethink what the crucial problem on blasphemy issue which in turn lead us to take a serious action for religious freedom issue.

**KEYWORDS:** Blasphemy, religious freedom, religious pluralism, Tanjung Balai

### INTRODUCTION

Tension and conflict among the followers of different religions occurred several times during Indonesian history. The case of violent conflict in Ambon is one of significant examples, while other cases relates to the issue of blasphemy and deviation. Tanjung Balai case is started when Meilana, a chinese budhist indonesian, asked mosque manager to decrease the volume of the speaker. It is not need a much times, this actions spreadt to society outside Tanjung Balai, then tension between Meilana's familiy and communal group which then leads to violence. This case arises the question on how religious pluralism and religious freedom are regarded by Indonesian society.

Data of this research are from local and national newspaper which wrote about the case of tension, conflict, and violent in Tanjung Balai. The data are analyzed by using discourse analysis, especially by observing wordings used by media and certain public figures in the case of Tanjung Balai. By applying this method, it is found that the case of Tanjung Balai relates to the discourse of religious pluralism, violence, and freedom in Indonesian society.

### Chronology of Conflict

In July 28-29, 2016, a tension between indigenou and Chinese Indonesian which in turn led to a riot occurred in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatera. The tension began when a female Chinese Indonesian, Meliana (41 years old) reprimanded / protested / asked ([waspada.co.id/merahputih.com/sumut.pojoksatu.com](http://waspada.co.id/merahputih.com/sumut.pojoksatu.com)) the mosque manager (*takmirmesjid*) of al Maksu to turn down the volume of the mosque speaker for it disturbed her ([sumut.pojoksatu.com](http://sumut.pojoksatu.com)). The mosque manager, then, conveyed this reprimand to man-

agers of other mosques.

In July 29, 2016 at 8 PM the mosque managers and Muslims around the mosque (*jamaah*) came to Meliana's house to confirm the information. Nevertheless, the meeting became heated and made *Kepling* (village head) secured Meliana and her husband in village office and then went to Sectoral Police of South Tanjung Balai. Based on the investigation of Human Right and Legal Council of regional Muhammadiyah leader in North Sumatera, Tegus SyuhadaLubis, the situation heated up since the answer from Meliana's family unsatisfied and Meliana's son answered the question in high tone. This led to debate and heard by many people. In addition, Meliana was reluctant to apologize and said it in high tone (sumut.pojoksatu.id, July 30, 2016).

In Sectoral Police office, the meeting involving the leaders of Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), village head and public figures was conducted. At the same time, mass gathered in front of the office and did oration led by university students. They dispersed because of police's command. However, the mass gathered again at 22.30 PM. It seems because they got information from face book. The mass came to Meliana's house and intended to burn it, but it was prevented by the residents around for fear the fire will spread to another house. The mass then went to Juanda Monastery which is located 500 meters from Melianas' house and attempted to burn it, but it was unsuccessful because it was intercepted by police personnel of Tanjung Balai. The mass vented their emotion by pelting the monastery with stones. Then, the destruction and burning of the monastery continued into other monasteries. At least 8 monasteries and pagodas were destructed or burned. The mass dispersed at 4.30 and the regional police guarded the monasteries and pagoda (sumutpos, 30 Juli 2016, waspada.co.id, 30 Juli).

The regional police investigated 36 witnesses related to looting and destruction cases (sumut.pokoksatu.id, July 31, 2016). Based on police investigation, it was defined 19 suspects. According to, sub head of sub field of public information, AKBP MP Nainggolan, among these 19 suspects, 8 were the suspects on looting, 9 were the suspect on destruction, and 2 were provocateur (waspada.co.id, August 3, 2016). Meanwhile, based on urine test, 4 of the suspects were positive used drugs (Sumutpos.com, August 3, 2016). In addition, from these suspects, there was no one from the district of Tanjung Balai. This showed that the information spread rapidly. Therefore, the police believed that the information spread through short messages and social media. (republika.co.id, February 17, 2017)

Conversely, Meliana who is considered as trouble maker of the riot was not specified as a suspect since it requires information from linguist (Sumutpos.com, 3 August 2016). Then 2 months later, Meliana status was specified as the reported since "expert witness stated that Meliana could not be a suspect." (sumut.pokoksatu.id, October 24, 2016).

### Group Discussing the Tensions and Conflict

Tanjung Balai riot became a discourse not only at the local level, but also at the national level. Some groups provided their stand points concerning the causes of riot, solutions, anticipation of repeating such case, role of social groups, etc.

From the government side, the Governor of North Sumatera, HT Erry Nuradi, asked people in Tanjung Balai both Muslim and Buddhist to think rationally, not to have uncontrolled emotion, and not to be easily provoked in facing issues which are potential to damage harmony of different religious followers. The governor considered that FKUB (Forum

of Harmony among Religious People) had a very important position.

FKUB is the frontline in anticipating horizontal conflict. If there is a problem, religious and public figures that join FKUB can directly take a strategic step to anticipate and mitigate so that it will not become mass anger (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016)<sup>3</sup>

In other occasion, the governor stated that tolerant, harmonious, and peaceful attitudes can avoid trauma in society and stabilize business investment in Tanjung Balai.

Let us hand in hand to build Tanjung Balai. Society of Tanjung Balai have to be able to demonstrate tolerant, harmonious, and peaceful attitudes in order not to emerge trauma in society or to lead bad impact in business investment atmosphere. (waspada.co.id, October 30, 2016)<sup>4</sup>

In line with the governor, Mayor of Tanjung Balai, M. Syahrial, emphasized that people need to recreate harmony among different religious followers and the process of law have to be conducted for the actors of riot. (waspada.co.id, October 30, 2016).

The president of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, also responded the case of Tanjung Balai. He stated that he directly commanded Police Chief of Indonesia Republic to go to Tanjung Balai to solve the case, especially by meeting religious and public figures to localize the case. The president stressed that "majority protects minority, minorities tolerate each other, because our power is plurality."<sup>5</sup> For President, SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, Groups) issues needs to be erased to make Indonesia more developed. Besides, the President affirmed that the Indonesian government will take a firm action to people who conduct anarchist actions. (Waspada.co.id, August 1, 2016).

Still from the government side, the Head of Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN), Sutyoso observed that the riot in Tanjung Balai was spontaneous in nature. Therefore, he convinced that the riots would not spread to other regions. In addition, Sutyoso explained that such incident was experienced by Papua society and handled properly. According to Sutyoso, society has to hold themselves and respect each other in light of Indonesian consist of various ethnicities and religions (Sumutpos.com, July 30, 2016). Sutyoso found that this kind of sensitive issue occurred multiple times, there are those who were offended and angry. Nevertheless, it must be able to discuss well. In his point of view, religious solidarity is well preserved (waspada.co.id, July 30, 2016). He also stressed actions conducted by BIN:

Of course we made coordination with military/police to directly coordinate their personnel to remain maintaining security in the location so that the riot will not spread as well as to do any effort to stop provocateurs who heated the situation.<sup>6</sup>(waspada.co.id, July 30, 2016)

3 merupakan garda terdepan dalam mengantisipasi konflik horizontal. Jika ada masalah, tokoh agama, tokoh masyarakat yang tergabung dalam FKUB dapat langsung mengambil langkah strategis untuk mengantisipasi dan meredam agar tidak pecah menjadi amuk massa.

4 Mari kita bergandeng tangan bersatu membangun kota Tanjung Balai. Masyarakat Tanjung Balai harus bisa menunjukkan sikap toleran, rukun, dan damai sehingga tidak menimbulkan trauma bagi masyarakat atau berdampak buruk bagi iklim investasi usaha. (waspada.co.id, 30 Oktober 2016)

5 yang mayoritas mengayomi minoritas, yang minoritas juga saling bertoleransi, karena kekuatan kita ini adalah keberagaman.(Waspada.co.id, August 1, 2016)

6 tentunya kita sudah melakukan kordinasi dengan pihak TNI/Polri untuk langsung mengkoordinir personennya untuk tetap melakukan pengamanan di lokasi agar tidak melebar dan berusaha megheentikan para pelaku2 provokasi yang membuat suasana semakin panas. (waspada.co.id, 30 Juli 2016)

A little bit different with above discussion, the Indonesian Police Head, General Tito Karnavian, stressed the role of social media in creating a trigger the incident in Tanjung Balai. He called society to be cautious on negative issues in social media which provoked social riots. According to Tito, the riot in Tanjung Balai occurred because of a misunderstanding among neighbors. However, it became a big incident since someone posted the incident in social media with negative issues (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016). Tito considered this case as individual problem and asked society not to involve. Therefore, he reminded society not to be provoked and ask them to think clearly in responding the case. He invited society to maintain the North Sumatera as a place of tolerance among different religious followers in Indonesia. (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016)

The incident in Tanjung Balai, certainly, led religious groups in Indonesia to respond. Leader of Muhammadiyah District Office in East Kotawaring of Central Kalimantan, for instance, state that "the incident that occurred in Tanjung Balai do not happened again, we are very concerned and deplore the incident since as the impact, it brings a feeling that our nation is divided."<sup>7</sup> (Waspada.co.id, August 1, 2016)

Still from Muhammadiyah organization, vice head of Human Right and Legal Council of regional Muhammadiyah in North Sumatera, Tegus Syuhada Lubis, considered Meliana as trouble maker of the riot, but the police still gave her protection. Police should handle this case by using Regulation no 7/2012 which is strengthened by President Regulation no. 2/2015 on Handling social conflict (pojoksumut.com, 3 Agustus 2016). Teguh emphasized that action must be for two parties, those who made a trigger of conflict and those who did riot.

If it is only regarded through criminal perspective, it will arise scars in the community. As the result, such incident will occur in other time. Principally, this incident is not seen from one side. We must see the root of other problems. It means both parties get the same action. Do not only arrest actor of the riot but the actor of blasphemy was not arrested.<sup>8</sup> (pojoksumut.com, August 3, 2016).

He continued. "From social side, for instance, there will be a gap if Meliana was not arrested and detained. Such treatment to minority ethnicity can create and lead to social jealousy."<sup>9</sup> (pojoksumut.com, August 3, 2016). Teguh also observed the position of social media in contributing to worse situation.

Social media also spreads information on ethnicity, religion, and race issues. It means social media campaigns that Chinese in Tanjung Balai do not like to hear Allah's words from mosques."<sup>10</sup> (sumut.pojoksatu.id, 3 Agustus 2016).

In line with above views, Leader of Regional Muhammadiyah of the North Sumatera, Abdullah Hakim Siagian stressed that the government might solve the conflict until

<sup>7</sup> "insiden yang terjadi di Tanjung Balai itu jangan sampai terjadi lagi. Kami sangat prihatin dan menyangkan kejadian itu karena dampaknya dirasakan seolah-olah bangsa kita terpecah belah." (Waspada.co.id, 1 Agustus 2016)

<sup>8</sup> Kalau melalui pidana, akan timbul bekas luka di masyarakat. akibatnya akan ada kericuhan lainnya. Prinsipnya tidak hanya satu sisi melihat itu. Harus lihat akar persoalan lainnya. Artinya, harus ada perlakuan sama. Jangan hanya menangkap pelaku kerusuhan tapi pelaku penistaan agama tak ditangkap.

<sup>9</sup> Ia melanjutkan, "dari sisi sosial misalnya, akan ada kesenjangan jika Meliana tidak juga ditangkap dan ditahan. Bagaimana nanti perlakuan etnis minoritas itu dapat memberikan dan membuat kecemburuan sosial."

<sup>10</sup> Media sosial pun turut menyebarkan informasi berbau suku, agama, ras. Artinya media sosial juga mengkampanyekan jika etnis tionghoa di Tanjungbalai tak senang mendengar lafadz Allah dari mesjid

the root of problem so that it did not spread to other regions. He firmly stated that “we will watch the development of condition in Tanjung Balai together and hoped the government to solve the problem and if it was not solved, we will conduct action with other elements of society.” (waspada.co.id, August 1, 2016)

Meanwhile, the General Leader of the General Committee of Nahdatul Ulama (PBNU), MarzukiSuhud, regretted the incident. For him, Indonesian society from the beginning always leaves together. If a problem arise society, it is solved through dialogue. Burning or destruction will not solve a problem. Therefore, he hoped that people remain to be careful, do not follow the provocateurs who intend to destruct condition.(Waspada.co.id, July 30, 2016)

From political party side, at least two parties gave their responses on the incident, i.e. Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/PKS) and the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan/PPP). Politician from PKS who was also former chairman of commission 1 Indonesian Legislative, Mahfudz Siddiq considered that the government needed to take 2 actions. Firstly, the government enforces the law against all parties who are involved and are responsible in the incident and conducts preventive step to make conflict not to spread to other regions (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016)

General Leader of PPP, H. DjanFaridz, stated that he is concerned with the incident of riot and destruction in Tanjung Balai. Faridz reminded the need of mutual respect to avoid dispute in society. In addition, society must protect right and obligation among each other. He also explained the meaning of *adzan* and emphasized the need for tolerance culture.

For Muslims, Adzan is not only a call for prayer, but also holy teaching on Allah's names. It is very evocative for Muslims. Therefore, demand or forbid it means disturbing inner faith of Muslims.<sup>11</sup> (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016)

He continued that every religion has different cultures on ordinance of worship. Here is the place where people need to understand and tolerate. If people understand, the incident in Tanjung Balai will not be happened. Faridz also in particular invited Muslims not to be easily provoked, reactive, and anarchist, “Let us show friendly, polite, and loving face of Islam as the Prophet provided an example in religious and state living in Madinah because Islam is *Rahmatanlilalamin* (grace for all human beings).” (waspada.co.id, July 31, 2016)

Beside religious groups and political parties, one of social groups gave a response for the incident. Coordinator of Volunteer Coalition of Jokowi and JK, Amirullah Hidayat, emphasized the need for professional and persuasive actions for the case in Tanjung Balai. Police must be careful so that legal action will not make condition heated and used by certain parties to provoke society since the incident involved SARA issues. These issues are very sensitive for Indonesia society. Amirullah said,

We support the Head of Indonesian Police that took firmly action for the action, but we asked police to prioritize persuasive action although legal action is very important. We do not want the riot to be happened again.<sup>12</sup> (waspada.co.id, August 3, 2016)

11 Adzan bagi umat Islam bukan sekedar panggilan sholat tapi juga syiar suci atas nama asma Allah, sangat menggugah batin umat Islam, karenanya menggugatnya atau melarangnya berarti mengusuk batin keyakinan umat Islam.

12 kita mendukung Kapolri yang mengambil tindakan tegas kepada pelaku tetapi meminta pihak

Other source which is possible to have a discourse on the conflict in Tanjung Balai is social media. Although the posting of face book which led to the riot, in social media not many people discussed the incident. However, one of face book status brought its owner to problem. The content of the status invited people to do a riot. Ahmad Taufiq (41), the owner of the face book account, wrote in his status: "Tanjung Balai is chaotic in July 30, 2016...! 6 monasteries were burned. For my Muslim brother, let us close rank... We make the tragedy 98 happened again #Allahu Akbar." When police asked his motivation, he said that he wrote the status since he is disappointed by the government, and because of economic condition related to an expensive living cost. (detiknews.com, August 2, 2016)

### **Efforts to Mitigate the Conflict and Consequency of Conflict**

Some efforts to mitigate tensions and conflict were started from the beginning of the tension. These efforts involved action for security, dialogue, and also preventive action as listing below,

1. Police dispersed the mass that made oration in front of the sectoral police office. (sumut.pojoksatu.id, July 30, 2016)
2. Military and Police protected the location and localized the conflict in order not to spread to other regions as well as made any effort to stop provocateurs that made situation heated. (waspada.co.id, July 30 2016)
3. Regional Police of the North Sumatera hunted several actors who posted SARA words or provocation in their face book (waspada.co.id, August 3 2016)
4. Police searched for the actors of cyber crime (jawapos.com, August 2, 2016)
5. Meliana met religious and public figures such as head of MUI, FPI, sub district head, village head in the sectoral police office (sumut.pojoksatu.com, July 30, 2016)
6. The Chief of Indonesian National Police met several religious and public figures in Regional Police Headquarters of the North Sumatera. Regional Chief of Police directly led military members to secure the location. He stayed in Tanjung Balai for several days (waspada.co.id, 30 July, 2016)
7. Tanjung Balai Police coordinated with security apparatus as well as religious and public figures (sumut.pojoksatu.id, July 30, 2016)
8. Governor of the North Sumatera conducted the Forum of Leader Coordination (Forum Koordinasi Pimpinan Wiyah/FKPD) with the government of Tanjung Balai. (solopos.com, July 31 2016)
9. Ten elements of community signature the statement of attitude and commitment both religious and public figures (solopos.com, July 31, 2016)
10. One month after conflict, Military-Indonesian National Police and Regional Government conducted social service i.e. free medical treatment, the provision of basic food (1.250 packets), and community service at religious worship houses such as mosque, church, monastery, and pagoda. (waspada.co.id, October 30, 2016)

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kepolisian lebih mengutamakan tindakan secara persuasive walaupun penindakan hukum sangat penting. Sebab kita tidak mau kerusuhan ini terulang kembali.

The Governor of the North Sumatera regarded that the conflict in Tanjung Balai is potential for a rift of the relationship among people with different tribes, ethnics, and religions in Indonesia. Besides, the Governor also related the consequence of conflict to investment, "Security is one of requirements in development. Such conflict can affect the investment into Indonesia. Moreover, at this time, the North Sumatera is being aggressive in developing various sectors." (Solopos. July 31, 2016). Meanwhile, politician from PKS, Mahfudz Siddiq, regarded that the riot brought a big consequence since it is potential for chaos. "There is potency of bigger and wider conflict explosion. If this is happened, it will become new political and economic disorder." (waspada co.id, July 31, 2016)

### **Religious Pluralism Society and Potency of Conflict**

The discussion above demonstrate that the tragedy arose the issue of violence, religious pluralism, minority and majority, and religious freedom. During Indonesian history, tensions and conflicts related to the issue of religious diversity occurred in several times and various types. The type of case above, i.e. blasphemy issues is not the first time happened. The reference for damending a punishment for person who was regarded doing blasphemy is Law No.1/PNPS/1965. In governmental view, this Law talks about the Government's protection of religious defamation. In addition, the Law is really needed and it provides the guarantee and protection of religious freedom in Indonesia. In addition, it provides an opportunity for civil society to practice their religious teachings. However, in some cases such violence to groups regarded as deviant as well as the case above occurred by referring to this law. Thus, if this law has been considered to be needed for Indonesian religious pluralistic society, it needs to be revised to avoid the potency for being used as legitimation of violence against certain minority groups.

From groups discussing the violent conflict, it implies that some followers of religions are not think rationally, uncontrolled emotion, easily provoked when it relates to sensitive religious issue. The calling of prayer for Muslims are regarded as a part of their religious practice, therefore it is a part of religious freedom. However, if the practice of religion becomes the cause of violence, it means that people have not taken religious freedom seriously, as August said

The fact of religious diversity leads us to religious pluralism, and this, in turn, to call for religious freedom. I want to argue that, if we take religious freedom seriously, and if we also take a gentler and more accommodating stance regarding our religious convictions and look at the other religions with understanding, openness, and respect, then, the practice of religion need not be, as it often has been, a reason or cause of violence. (August, 2006:67)

Dealing with the issue of religious freedom has been faced by religious pluralistic countries. For these countries, managing religious pluralistic societies has been a challenge. Bielefieldt (2013: 41-53) recorded several challenges for states in religious freedom issues. The first challenge is defamation of religion. Bielefieldt called this as the best known political challenge. The second challenge is the demand for respecting and protecting religious identity. According to Bielefieldt, this is one of the causes of misunderstanding since it is related to the issue of majority and minority and the language of identity can deal with a country's religious hegemony or project for promoting religious plurality. The third challenge is the association between religious freedom and religious harmony.

Bielefieldt depicted that this association brings a possible confusion between 'a peace based on recognizing people's most diverse deep convictions and concomi-



tant practices hardly fits with authoritarian ideas of a state imposed societal harmony between communities.' Last but not least, the challenge concerns the issues of equality, non-discriminatory, and neutrality. Concerning non-discriminatory, Bielefeldt suggests the state takes three actions namely create a consistent policies of non-discrimination; fight against discriminatory practices in society; and promote societal openness and tolerance. Meanwhile, Bielefeldt observed that for many people the concept of neutrality is not always attractive since it relates to something sterile, merely procedural and lacking moral commitment so that neutrality can be an excuse for states to take no commitment, no involvement, as well as to be passive with any question of religion. Bielefeldt clarified that neutrality stands for high normative aspiration in making states to consistently act fairly, inclusively and nondiscriminatory.

Freedom of religion or belief presents different practical challenge to the state, human rights organization religious communities, and society at large. As the formal guarantor of human right, the state is supposed to actively protect and promote freedom of religion or belief while, at the same time, exercising a specific self restraint in order to respect freedom and equality of all in their different convictions. (Bielefeldt, 2013:67)

Concerning the issue of religious freedom, Indonesian government always refers to the Consitution 1945 verse 29 article 2: 'the State guarantees all citizens to embrace their own religion and to practice according to their religions and beliefs.' In Tanjung Balai case, for Muslims the calling of prayer is a part of what the state has guaranteed. But, for Meilana, the speaker is too loud. If we look at the reason, it is not related to the issue of religious freedom or blasphemy, but more on practical issue, i.e. the volume of speaker. However, for some people, it is regarded as blasphemy. From this case also, the groups have arisen the key for avoiding the conflict, such as respect each other, religious solidarity, not to be provoked, think clearly, harmonious and peaceful attitudes and control emotion. All these are truly related to deal with religious plurality.

As mentioned above, the issue of religious freedom indeed relates to the issue of pluralism. Banchoff (2008:4-5) regards the term pluralism arose in the middle of twentieth century when the United States dealt with the fact of religious diversity in society. He emphasizes that definition of pluralism is various and can be seen from several perspectives. In theological perspective, pluralism means interreligious harmony, convergence, and compatibility. In sociological perspective, it means 'the diversity of different religious traditions within the same social or cultural space.' Pluralism is not only a positive response of religious plurality but also a peaceful interaction. In addition, pluralism ends when violence is involved. Based on this thought, Qurtuby (2009:186) believes that pluralism needs knowledge and understanding.

Still in line with the above thoughts, according to Noer (2001:224), 'pluralism is an attitude of acknowledging as well as respecting, maintaining, and developing or enriching the pluralistic condition.' Or as Suseno (2010:349-352) said, pluralism mean 'willing to accept and appreciate social diversity,' 'a positive attitude toward social plurality,' 'the ability to live and to function in a plural environment,' and 'a positive tolerance and to grant them the same social, cultural, and political right as one's own religion.'

Beside the requirement of religious pluralism, Eck provides several characteristics of pluralism. Firstly, pluralism is active engagement with plurality (2003:191). Secondly, pluralism is 'active seeking of understanding across line of difference' (2003:182-183).

Thirdly, pluralism is the encounter of commitment (2003: 184). Fourthly, pluralism is mutual respect (2003:184). Fifthly, pluralism is dialogue among the followers of different religions (2003: 166-199). The emphasis on differences also comes from Machacek (2003:155), 'Pluralism is more than just diversity; pluralism is meaningful diversity.' According to him, pluralism leads to create something new and to remake our world. In this process, previous existing values will be eroded (Machacek, 2003:150).

If we relate to the case of Tanjung Balai, we realize that there is something to do with the believers attitudes. It is not enough just mentioned about respect each other, religious solidarity, not to be provoked, think clearly, harmonious and peaceful attitudes and control emotion, but we need active engagement with people from the other religions. The engagement will bring to understanding each other which in turn leads to avoid negative prejudice, provocation, and violence. Thus, this case lead us to rethink the engagement of different religious followers in Indonesia.

Besides the issues of religious freedom and pluralism, the other issue that can be observed is the nature of violence in the case of Tanjung Balai. Putting it simply, Duverger states, conflict theoretically can be divided into two, conflict without violence and conflict with violence (Arifin, 2009:245). Still in the same line with the above thought, Amin Abdullah observed three roots of conflict i.e. strong loyalty, personal involvement and actor language (in Arifin, 2009:92). Suseno emphasizes that the conflicts are not religious and not ideological in nature, they are communalistic. This also demonstrated socio-psychological phenomenon i.e. the inability in viewing that they are human beings and brothers of state. They focused more on 'we' and 'they' which in turn 'we' is so tiny and 'they' are so big. In other words, they become more exclusive (Suseno, 2001:71). Communalism was caused by transformation process where people think about the threatened identity, disorientation of traditional values. Communalism was also caused by the closeness of the New Order System where conflicts were finished through threat and oppression. Then, the Reformation era showed weak government with unconfident army (Suseno, 2001:72-73). Nevertheless, as Jayant (2000:822) said, the cases of fundamentalism and communalism are not an issue of pluralism problem but the lack of genuine religious pluralism. In addition, Noer (2001:236) added that education in Indonesia is only a decoration of curriculum. It is only for the sake of satisfying religious group. Therefore, violence and chaos is a part of the failure of religious education. (Noer, 2001:239-240)

From the thoughts above, the tragedy of Tanjung Balai included as conflict with violence, while the root of conflict is more on the actor language. The violence was done against Meiliana, while the language of Meilana becomes the root of conflict. Wordings about Meilana asked for decreasing the volume of speaker, high tone or voice of her family proved that language becomes the root of conflict. In addition, based on the chronology, the conflicts and violence in Tanjung Balai are not religious and not ideological in nature, they are communalistic.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

By using analyzing discourse on the case of Tanjung Balai tension and conflict, several main themes are arisen. Firstly, Meilana has been considered conducting blasphemy since she asked to decrease the volume of prayer calling which is regarded as a part of Islamic teaching by some Muslims. For this reasons, she has to be jailed. Secondly, the case of Tanjung Balai led police, military, religious group and governmental apparatus gave

some responses. From their wordings, they observed that society is easily provoked, has uncontrolled emotion, and not think rationally. They also remind society about religious solidarity, tolerant and peaceful attitudes. Thirdly, the case of Tanjung Balai leads to discourse of religious freedom, pluralism, and religious violence in Indonesia. Not only how the discourse in society, but also how the state deals with such issues.

When this paper is writing, the court states Meilana gets 18 months in jail. Several protests come from several groups and public figures in society. They convince that the case of Meilana cannot be included as blasphemy. The punishment of Meilana still brings pro and contra in society, but it is a good step when the state finally issued the rule of speaker. Thus, people who feel the speaker is too loud can protest.

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