MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY TO ERADICATE THE ISLAMIC HERETICAL SECTS

Mujar Ibnu Syarif¹, Arip Purkon²

Abstract
This article aims to examined policy of Malaysian Government to eradicate the Islamic heretical sects. The research method used in this research is qualitative research with normative legal study and oral history approach. The main data sources is fatwas issued by the Ulama Council in Malaysia. This research concluded 3 results, namely: first, the criteria for Islamic deviant sects used in Malaysia are sects that adhere to contradictory beliefs about the true teachings of Islam as outlined in Quran and Hadith. Second, the pattern of ijtihad fatwas issued by the Ulama Council in Malaysia based on the concepts of theology, sharia and morality in the school of ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā’ah. Third, there are two kinds of policies by the Malaysian Government to tackle the spread of misleading religious teachings. First, preventive policies, such as designing educational curricula against heretical teachings and preparing a Friday sermon on the need for Malaysian Muslims to avoid heresy. Second, curative policies, namely building faith restoration centers in order to guide followers of heretical teachings who have repented so that they can live according to true Islamic tenets.

Keyword: Malaysia, Malaysian Government, Heretical Sects, Ulama.

INTRODUCTION
This article examined Policy of Malaysia Government to eradicate the Islamic heretical sects. The research method used in this research is qualitative research with normative legal study and oral history approach. The main data sources is fatwas issued by the Ulama Council in Malaysia.

Heretical sects have been recognized in the Muslim world as a form of distraction that is troubling the Islamic followers. Countries, whether the population is majority Muslim or Muslim minority, cannot be separated from the emergence of heretical sects. The sects that deviate from the true teachings of Islam may highly divide the unity of

¹ Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia, mujar@uinjkt.ac.id
² Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia, arippurkon@gmail.com
the Muslims. Most of the heretical sect teachings clearly show beliefs or practices that contradict and deviate from Islamic teachings practiced by the majority.

Various forms of heresy have emerged and seeped into Islamic society. Some of them have even succeeded in influencing not only ordinary people, but also intellectuals and people with Islamic knowledge (Alwi, 2007).

Heretics are splinter groups who are able to create and develop well-formed unions. Their fighting spirit (ghīrah) to consistently spread their understanding to the wider community can be assumed to be quite high. Some of their groups are currently able to recruit thousands of followers over several regions (Majalah Ikhlas Beramal, 2010).

The method of member recruitment is considerably quite simple. Usually, these splinter groups tend to use individual da’wah methods. They come to visit the house of the object of preaching; it is followed by discussions and Islamic recitations with a relatively small number of congregations. These are effective means of recruiting members who are generally young teenagers. It is a common knowledge that young people highly like dynamic and contemporary concepts. Based on an immature religious understanding, these young people will smoothly be swayed by offers of atypical and gratuitous teachings (Majalah Ikhlas Beramal, 2010).

The existence of these splinter groups will be a kind of disturbance for mainstream Muslims. This is because the content and teaching material presented are not in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the source of Islamic teachings, referring to the Quran and Sunnah authentically (Majalah Ikhlas Beramal, 2010).

In Malaysia, the current heretical cult is considered a phenomenon that can threaten the harmony of Malaysian society. This heretical sect is rather difficult to define because each teaching has a different background, ritual, and origin. It does not only exist in Islam, but also in other religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and others (Clarke, 1988). The most important question, “what is the Malaysian government’s policy to crush heretical sects?” This article is primarily focused on answering this very fundamental question.

**METHODOLOGY**

The research method used in this research is qualitative research in the form of case studies with a normative legal study approach. The case study in this research is considered relevant because it will answer the question “how” and researchers do not manipulate the object to be studied (baxter, 2008).
The data sources in this study are: first, the primary data sources in this study are: (1) Fatwas issued regarding heretical sects; (2) The laws and secondary data source in this research is scientific writings related to heretical sects in Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Definition of Heretical Sects
In English, the word heresy comes from Greek hairesis which means choice of belief or faction of resisting adherents. Van Bruinessen explained that this dichotomy took place between a new sect and mainstream religious groups. Groups like this have the potential to become a problem when dealing with established religious groups known as orthodoxy. This relationship then emerges the term heretical or splinter group. On the other hand, the emergence of deviant sects is often seen as an indicator of anomalies in society. The anomaly in question is the occurrence of abnormalities in the community. These abnormalities can take the form of demographic, social or psychological forms (Kartono, 2004).

Heresy in Arabic vocabulary is called al-dalāl; a word which comes from the word, dalla-yaḍillu-dalālān/dalālatan. Therefore, everything that deviates from the intended (correct) path, and everything who walks is not on the right path, as defined by religion, is heresy. In the Quran, it is stated that truth only comes from Allah. And everything that is outside the truth outlined by Allah is heretical (Quran Surah Yūnus: 32). Thus, what is meant by the term heresy in this paper is to deviate from religious truth or from actual religious guidance.

Particularly in the Malaysian context, what is meant by a heretical sect is a sect that has ideas and / or practices that are contrary to the ideas and practices of ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah. Therefore, if the context is outside of Malaysia, there are certain parties who are still in doubt or are debating whether or not the Shi’a sect is deviant. However in Malaysia, on the other hand, it will be certainly stated that Shia is heretical and misleading. Therefore, Muslims in Malaysia are forbidden to follow the teachings of the Shiites. And if they already believe in the doctrines and practices taught by the Shi’ites, then they are asked to immediately return to the true way of Islam and repent and ask for forgiveness from Allah SWT.

In the context of Malaysia, heretical teachings are also referred to a false teachings, slander of faith and deviation of faith. Etymologically, teaching means, everything that is taught, advice, instructions, theories, schools or punishments. While "misguided" etymologically means, not following the right path, wrong way, wrong or deviating from the right path (Kamus Dewan, 2007). The combination of the
expression "deviant teachings" means teachings that deviate from the Islamic faith or sharia.

Meanwhile, in terminology, among experts on deviant sects in Malaysia, there are various definitions. According to Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi, heretical teaching means, a teaching or action that is supported, both by Muslims and non-Muslims who believe the teachings or actions are based on Islamic teachings. In fact, in essence these teachings and practices are in addition to contradicting the two main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah, they are also contradictory to the Islamic creed and are also at odds with the mu'tabar school of thought, namely the Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah school of thought (Alwi, 2007). Meanwhile, according to Prof. Dr. Abdul Fatah Haron Ibrahim, heresy means teachings and practices that are contrary to Islam (Ibrahim, 1994). To be precise, the teachings of Islam according to the Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah school of thought (Che Pa and Sulong, 2018). Meanwhile, according to the Panel for the Design and Investigation Section, Jabatan Progress Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), (Jakim, 2010) heretical teachings mean, teachings or practices brought by Muslims or non-Muslims that they admit are based on Islamic teachings or believe that they are not contrary to the basic principles of Islam. Islamic teachings. However, in fact these teachings or practices are contrary to Islamic creed and sharia as outlined in the Qur'an and As-Sunnah.

Based on several definitions as quoted above and taking into account the religious beliefs and practices that exist among the Malaysian people, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) defines heretical teachings as a teaching that is supported, both by Muslims and non-Muslims, because it is believed that the teachings of Islam are deviant. It is based on Islamic teachings. In fact, in fact, these teachings contradict the two main sources of Islam, namely the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah, they are also contrary to ijma', qiyas and the hold or views of the Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, both in terms of aqidah, sharia and morality (MAIS, 2014).

The Early History of Heretical Sects

The earliest heretical teachings that emerged in Malaysia were those of Ahmad Matahari who pioneered the Taslim teachings in Seronok Village, Bayan Lepas Pulau Pinang at the end of the 19th century. In the 1930s, several teachings that deviated from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah creed emerged, such as the Qadiani or Ahmadiyah teachings which reportedly started in Selangor, namely in Jeram, Sungai Tua, Sungai Buluh and Kampung Nakhoda. This situation forced the authorities to issue several laws to stop its spread. Around the year 195-0s also, appeared the Teachings of Subud and the Teachings of Seven Dignity in Kelantan. These teachings especially the Seven Dignity Teachings have spread in almost every region in Malaysia. Subud’s
teachings were then crushed down to the roots. Thus, the influence becomes weaker. Furthermore, in the 1960s, there was the Mufarridah Tariqa, the Samaniah Ibrahim Bonjol Order, and then in the 1970s, the Naqsyabandiah Kadirun Yahya Tariqa, and the White Nordin Teachings emerged. In the early 1980s, three new deviant sects emerged, namely the Anti-Hadith sect, Shi’ite teachings, and Al-Arqam.

The emergence of heresies in Malaysia is, at least, due to two factors. First, due to the emergence of groups of enemies of Islam who want to undermine the teachings of Islam by changing, distorting and destroying Islamic teachings. The enemies of Islam will not remain silent, but on the contrary, they are always trying to destroy Islam. However, Allah SWT always keeps the religion that pleases Him. Second, because there are certain individuals who have an interest in attracting benefits for themselves, such as to gain position, influence, rank, property and so on (Syarif, 2018).

Types of Heretical Sects

Disseminators of heretical teachings according to the Federal Territories Sharia Crimes Deed 1957, Deed 559 (Akta Kesalahan Jenayah Syariah Wilayah-wilayah Persekutuan 1957, Akta 559), may be subject to several alternative sanctions as follows: (1) Worship that goes against the teachings of Islam is fined as much as RM3,000 or imprisonment of 2 years or both. (2) Teaching doctrines or ceremonies contrary to Islam or fatwas is fined as much as RM5,000 or imprisonment of 3 years or both. (3) Spreading doctrines and beliefs of other religions within the Islamic community is fined RM3,000 or 2 years imprisonment or both. (4) Make a confession that he or someone else is a Prophet, Imam Mahdi or wali or admits to knowing
Policy to Eradicate Heretical Sects

There are two kinds of policies by the Malaysian government to tackle the spread of misleading religious teachings, namely preventive, and curative policies. At least, there are four kinds of efforts that can be taken to prevent the emergence of deviant sects in Malaysia, namely:

1. Issuance of fatwas containing prohibitions on activities that contain elements of heretical teachings (Buang, 2018).
3. Raise awareness among the community from an early age about the dangers of heresy through the distribution of brochures, preparation of special sermon texts on the dangers of deviant sects so that they can be delivered by preachers at the pulpits for Friday sermons, public lectures, seminars, exhibitions, and so on, both in schools, mosques, and other public spaces. Specific themes about heretical teachings can also be included in the educational curriculum, from elementary school to university levels (Khalid, 2018).
4. Conducting courses on heretical teachings to community agents such as priests, village leader, and community representatives. So that incidents of aqidah deviation can be immediately identified and reported to the competent authorities to take action. The four kinds of efforts should not be carried out separately, but must be carried out as a whole and are interrelated with each other (Syarif, 2018).

As a curative measure, the victims of a deviant sect in Malaysia, will be sent to the Faith Recovery Center (PPA) to follow a rehabilitation program, through a court order (mahkamah). In addition, victims can also voluntarily come to participate in the faith restoration program at the Faith Recovery Center. As an example of the success of this program, after attending training for approximately 6 months at the Islamic Religious Service Center for the Restoration of Faith in Selangor, the majority of participants in the restoration of their faith, 80 percent to be exact, had their faith restored. Furthermore, after the end of the rehabilitation program at the Faith Recovery Center, their activities are still monitored through their families.

One example of the restoration of faith is that which was followed by one of the proponents of a deviant sect, namely Abdul Kahar bin Ahmad. According to the name of its founder, the heretical sect taught by Abdul Kahar Ahmad was called the Teaching of Abdul Kahar bin Ahmad. The distribution center of this sect is located in Kamesah Village, Hulu Kelang, Selangor. There are only 20 followers of this sect, all of them come from the Kelang Valley.
The elements of this sect’s heresy are as follows: 1. Refuse the obligation to pray Friday, 2. Refuse the obligation to pray five times a day, 3. Do not believe in the holy book al-Qur’an that exists today as the actual holy book. Because what is believed to be the true Qur’an is that which is located at Lauh al-Mahfuzh, 4. Rejecting the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, because he considers it to be only a human invention made after the Prophet’s death, 5. Performing the pilgrimage does not need to be in Mecca. However, it can be done anywhere on earth of Allah SWT, 6. Claiming to have a miracle, namely not getting wet when exposed to rain water and not feeling hot when the weather is hot.

Finally, Abdul Kahar has been indicted at the Shah Alam Sharia High Court. In the indictment, 72-year-old Abdul Kahar was found guilty of five wrongdoings according to the Enakmen Jenayah Syariah 1995 (1995 Sharia Crime Act of Selangor), viz teaching false doctrines, insulting or causing Islam to be despised, insulting religious authorities, committing acts contrary to fatwas, and make false statements.

Because of these five crimes Abdul Kahar has been sentenced to ten years in prison, a fine of RM 16,500 and six times a ban. The Sharia Court has also ordered Abdul Kahar to be sent to the Faith Purification Center, Baitul Iman, Hulu Yam Baharu, Selangor to participate in a faith restoration program for 6 months before his prison sentence ends. Abdul Kahar has undergone the process of restoring his faith through an order to repent (istitabah) issued by the Shah Alam Sharia High Court for 6 months in Kajang prison (Dimon, 2019).

The restoration of faith activities includes four stages of recovery, namely: first, clinical screening phase which involves examination at the clinic. While the spiritual filter uses a punch approach using a wooden stick (viz kayu nona). This method is named Method of Detecting Demons and Jinns (MMSJ). This aims to ensure that participants in the purification of the faith are free from interference from magic or jinn.

Second, Islamic spiritual care phase and Islamic counseling (syar’i counseling). Physical treatment involves mental, physical, and psychological health problems. In the phase of physical and mental treatment, participants who recover their faith are referred to general medical staff. While in the psychological treatment phase, he attended a Syar’i counseling session. General practitioners who treat participants in creed recovery need to provide a health report at the end of each phase. During the Islamic spiritual treatment, the participants in the restoration of their faith were accompanied by a Muslim clergyman and several Islamic religious teachers. In this phase, participants in the restoration of faith are trained to pray, read the Koran, perform sunnah prayers, and explore religious principles. The
counseling process is carried out every week and is guided by a certified Syar’i Counselor. It aims to continuously monitor the psychological development of participants in the recovery of faith so that they can avoid emotional disturbances throughout the recovery process.

Third, the strengthening and stabilization phase (pre-free). In this session, recovery participants were given a module containing an introduction to Islamic teachings, romance in Islam and theology. During the creed restoration activities, the participants will be assessed whether they deserve to be released or not. If it is feasible, they will enter a solemn support session and if not, they will repeat the phases from the beginning.

Fourth, the solemn phase of support (post-free). Participants who have been released will receive a post-free module for three to six months. This module contains spiritual, social, psychological, occupational, economic and social guidance. It aims to help participants who have been released to continue their normal daily lives (Dimon, 2019).

CONCLUSION

There are two kinds of policies by the Malaysian government to tackle the spread of misleading religious teachings, namely preventive policies, such as designing educational curricula against heretical teachings and preparing a Friday sermon on the need for Malaysian Muslims to avoid heresy. Second, curative policies, namely building faith restoration centers in order to guide followers of heretical teachings who have repented so that they can live according to true Islamic tenets.

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