



## Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf

Yahya Cholil Staquf is a distinguished Muslim scholar, General Secretary of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)—the world's largest Muslim organization, with over 50 million members and 14,000 *madrassahs*—and co-founder of a global movement ("[Humanitarian Islam](#)") that seeks to restore *rahmah* (universal love and compassion) to its rightful place as the primary message of Islam.

Shaykh Yahya is also [Emissary for Indonesia's largest Islamic political party](#), PKB, to the largest political network in Europe and the world, Centrist Democrat International (CDI). In addition, he serves on [Indonesia's Presidential Advisory Council](#), with a protocol rank equivalent to Minister of State, where he advises President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) on religious, domestic and international affairs.

Descended from a long line of Javanese *ulama*, including the renowned Bisri family of Rembang, Central Java, Shaykh Yahya was educated from earliest childhood in the formal and esoteric (spiritual) sciences of Islam—by his father, grandfather and uncle. Mr. Staquf later served as presidential spokesman to Indonesia's first democratically-elected head of state, [Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid](#), and as a member of Indonesia's National Electoral Commission during that nation's successful transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, work instrumental in Nahdlatul Ulama's [nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize](#).

Inspired by President Wahid's vision to bring Islamic teachings into alignment with the modern world of freedom, democracy and human rights, in 2014 Shaykh Yahya co-founded the U.S.-based religious entity [Bayt ar-Rahmah li ad-Da'wa al-Islamiyah Rahmatan li al-'Alamin](#) (Home of Divine Grace for Revealing and Nurturing Islam as a Blessing for All Creation), to serve as a hub for the worldwide expansion of NU operations.

Shaykh Yahya has [mobilized](#) a large body of Sunni Muslim authorities to engage in a wide-ranging, concerted and [explicit project of theological renewal](#) (i.e., reform) for the first time since the late Middle Ages. A series of [historic declarations](#) drafted by Shaykh Yahya form the basis for this renewal, and have been [officially endorsed by CDI](#), which praised their "universal principles and aspirations" and called for their "widespread dissemination and study" in a [resolution](#) unanimously adopted by its Executive Committee.

In the past year, Shaykh Yahya has shaped government policy and discourse about Islam in the [UK](#), [European Union](#), and during a [substantive bilateral meeting](#) with US Vice President Michael Pence. His [message of compassion](#) in Israel/Palestine was recognized with an [Asia Society Game Changer Award](#). In Indonesia, Mr. Staquf has moved with President Jokowi to [block the political weaponization of Islam](#), and led the NU in its [decisive](#) support for Jokowi's re-election.

Mr. Staquf's global engagement is part of a systematic effort by the spiritual leadership of Nahdlatul Ulama—who are [spearheading](#) the [Humanitarian Islam movement](#)—"to prevent the political weaponization of Islam, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims, and to curtail the spread of communal hatred by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being." ~ [Nusantara Statement](#)