



## Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf

KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf is a distinguished Muslim scholar and co-founder of the global Humanitarian Islam movement, which seeks to recontextualize (i.e., reform) obsolete and problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy that may be readily weaponized to foster religious hatred, supremacy and violence. Humanitarian Islam restores *rahmah* (universal love and compassion) to its rightful place as the primary message of Islam. As General Chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama, Mr. Staquf is working systematically and institutionally to bring the civilizational wisdom and spiritual authority of *Islam Nusantara* (East Indies Islam) to the world stage, where a harsh, repressive and all-too-often violent understanding of Islam has predominated for decades.

Mr. Staquf is descended from a long and illustrious line of Javanese *ulama* (religious scholars), including the renowned Bisri family of Rembang, Central Java. Educated from earliest childhood in the formal and esoteric (spiritual) sciences of Islam — by his father, grandfather and uncle — Mr. Staquf later became a disciple of venerated Islamic scholar and Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council, Kyai Haji Ali Maksum (1915 – 1989), studying classical Islamic sciences under his direct tutelage at al-Munawwir Krapyak *madrasah* in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. KH. Ali Maksum was himself a disciple of Shaykh Umar Hamdan al-Makki (1858 – 1948) and Shaykh Hasan Masshat al-Makki (1900 – 1979) of Mecca, and mentored several of Indonesia's most influential modern figures, including President Abdurrahman Wahid, and KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf's uncle, the widely revered religious scholar, public intellectual, painter and poet, KH. A. Mustofa Bisri.

Inspired by President Wahid's moral and spiritual vision, Mr. Staquf co-founded *Bayt ar-Rahmah* (Home of Divine Grace) in 2014; and the Institute for Humanitarian Islam and Center for Shared Civilizational Values in 2021. Together, these closely affiliated organizations seek to prevent the political weaponization of identity; curtail the spread of communal hatred; promote solidarity and respect among the diverse people, cultures and nations of the world; and foster the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

A former member of Indonesian President Joko Widodo's Presidential Advisory Council, with a protocol rank equivalent to Minister of State, Mr. Staquf is regularly consulted on a wide range of domestic and international affairs. From 2020 – 2021 he served on Policy Exchange's 16-member Indo-Pacific Commission — chaired by former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper — whose landmark report was praised by current and former Prime Ministers of Japan; Australia; and the United Kingdom for its compelling vision of “a sustainable rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific that is resilient but adaptable to the great power realities of the 21st century.” Mr. Staquf also serves GP Ansor's Emissary to the Islamic World and as Emissary for Indonesia's largest Islamic political party, PKB, to Centrist Democrat International and the European People's Party — the largest political networks in Europe and the world. International observers increasingly regard Mr. Staquf as a potential linchpin in efforts to forge a global, values-driven alliance dedicated to strengthening the rules-based international order at a time of rising geopolitical uncertainty and widespread human rights abuse.