

## MUHAMMADIYAH'S VIEWS AND ACTIONS ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS DURING THE JAPANESE INVASION OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIES, 1941-1942

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### Abstract

*Studies of Muhammadiyah largely ignore Muhammadiyah's perceptions of war. This study explores Muhammadiyah's thoughts and practices on the protection of civilians in a so far neglected chapter in World War II, the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies in 1941-1942. Using a historical research method, this study scrutinizes previously unexamined primary sources, the weekly magazine Adil, which was published by the Surakarta branch of Muhammadiyah, in editions between 1941-1942. By examining edicts from the Central Board of Muhammadiyah as well as the writings of individuals affiliated with Muhammadiyah published by Adil, this study argues that Muhammadiyah was highly attentive in its efforts to protect civilians in times of war, by basing its thoughts on the interplay between Islamic principles and modern ideas about the rights of non-combatants in battle. Muhammadiyah strongly emphasized that during the war civilians must be protected by the state. It moreover advised people to build spiritual and mental strength so that they could survive war and advocated a self-protection of civilians by encouraging every resident of the Indies to help each other during the war. It campaigned for the protection of civilians with various methods and by establishing a special agency to organize the protection efforts. This study elucidates the role of Muhammadiyah in providing information, religious guidance, and practical supports to its members and the Indonesian people in general regarding the*

*protection of civilians in war that finally overthrew European colonial powers in Southeast Asia.*

*[Studi-studi tentang Muhammadiyah masih mengabaikan tema persepsi Muhammadiyah tentang perang. Kajian ini mengeksplor pandangan dan tindakan Muhammadiyah terkait perlindungan warga sipil di masa perang, dalam konteks yang selama ini terabaikan, yaitu invasi Jepang ke Hindia Belanda pada 1941-1942. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah, studi ini mengkaji sumber-sumber primer yang belum pernah diteliti sebelumnya, yaitu majalah mingguan Adil yang diterbitkan oleh Muhammadiyah cabang Surakarta, di edisi antara tahun 1941-1942. Dengan menelaah maklumat-maklumat Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah serta tulisan individu-individu yang berafiliasi dengan Muhammadiyah yang diterbitkan oleh Adil, penelitian ini berargumen bahwa Muhammadiyah menaruh perhatian besar pada upaya melindungi warga sipil di masa perang, dengan mendasarkan pemikirannya pada saling interaksi antara prinsip-prinsip Islam dan ide-ide modern tentang hak-hak non-kombatan dalam pertempuran. Muhammadiyah sangat menekankan bahwa selama perang warga sipil harus dilindungi oleh negara. Selain itu, Muhammadiyah mengajak masyarakat untuk membangun kekuatan spiritual dan mental sehingga mereka dapat bertahan dari perang dan menganjurkan agar warga sipil berupaya melindungi diri mereka sendiri dengan mendorong setiap penduduk Hindia untuk saling membantu selama perang. Muhammadiyah mengkampanyekan perlindungan warga sipil dengan berbagai metode dan dengan membentuk badan khusus untuk menyelenggarakan upaya perlindungan. Kajian ini menjelaskan peran Muhammadiyah dalam memberikan informasi, panduan keagamaan, dan dukungan praktis kepada anggotanya dan masyarakat Indonesia pada umumnya mengenai perlindungan warga sipil dalam perang yang akhirnya menggulingkan kekuatan kolonial Eropa di Asia Tenggara.]*

**Keywords:** Muhammadiyah, protection of civilians, Japanese invasion, humanitarian law, Islamic law of war

## **A. Introduction**

International Humanitarian Law, especially regarding the protection of civilians, is an important theme both academically and for the public that has come to the forefront recently, especially with the end of the

20<sup>th</sup> century, which saw the bloodiest century in human history. Various armed conflicts still occur in various parts of the world in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People can reflect by asking big questions about the nature of war and man's role in it. When discussing war, people not only pose questions about military strategies or who won and lost, but also about the fate of civilians. Several scholars who discuss the history of conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the dynamics of conflicts in the recent decades argue that the study of the protection of civilians should concentrate on themes such as what are the moral and legal foundations in carrying out the protection of civilians, who is responsible for protecting civilians, and what forms of civil protection should be provided. A few major studies have thus focused on the definitions, concepts and practices of protection of civilians in various historical contexts<sup>1</sup> and the experiences of international institutions advocating for greater protection of civilians in armed conflicts, particularly the United Nations (UN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).<sup>2</sup>

However, the extant studies on the protection of civilians have still largely ignored the thoughts and actions of the protection of civilians carried out by religious-based mass organizations on a national scale and in the context of the war that occurred in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Southeast Asia. There appears to have been no serious study exploring the important role of religious mass organizations in Indonesia as initiators and actors who promoted, advocated and carried out the protection of civilians in major armed conflicts. One of them is about the views on war of the oldest—and currently the largest—modernist

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<sup>1</sup> R. Charli Carpenter, *Innocent Women and Children: Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006); David W. Lovell and Igor Primoratz (eds.), *Protecting Civilians during Violent Conflict: Theoretical and Practical Issues for the 21st Century* (Farnham; Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2012); Robert Schütte, *Civilian Protection in Armed Conflicts: Evolution, Challenges and Implementation* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014); Haidi Willmot (ed.), *Protection of Civilians*, First edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Meinrad Studer, "The ICRC and civil-military relations in armed conflict", *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 83, no. 842 (2001); Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps, "Dealing with 'genocide': the ICRC and the UN during the Nigeria-Biafra war, 1967–70", *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 16, nos. 2–3 (2014), pp. 281–97; Miriam Bradley, *Protecting Civilians in War: The ICRC, UNHCR, and Their Limitations in Internal Armed Conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Islamic organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah. Scholars in Islamic studies have not taken seriously enough the theme of Muhammadiyah's views on armed conflict. In fact, when the Japanese invasion occurred, Muhammadiyah was well-established and conducted various public activities, although limited. There are many scholars who have discussed Muhammadiyah, but their focus has almost entirely been on its works in purifying Islamic teachings, providing Islamic and modern educational institutions, establishing healthcare facilities, and implementing programs for empowering people who are socially and economically disadvantaged.<sup>3</sup> These themes are very broad, but almost all of them have discussed the socio-religious role of Muhammadiyah in peaceful times in Indonesia in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. With the paucity of studies on the role of religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah in terms of protecting civilians in wartime, we may have overlooked the thoughts and practices of Muhammadiyah on the protection of civilians in a historical context when the civilian protection was most needed: at a time when the Indonesian people were in great danger, in this case in times of war.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There are too many studies on Muhammadiyah to mention here. Some main studies can be presented here. For the birth and development of Muhammadiyah and the dynamics of its thoughts in the colonial period, see Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of A Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989); Herman L. Beck, "The Rupture between the Muhammadiyah and the Ahmadiyya", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 161, no. 2/3 (2005), pp. 210–46; for Muhammadiyah's works as a philanthropic institution, see Hilman Latief, *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam dan Ideologi Kesejahteraan Kaum Modernis* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2010); Hilman Latief, "Health Provision for the Poor: Islamic Aid and the Rise of Charitable Clinics in Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2010), pp. 503–53. For the role of Muhammadiyah in the process of Islamization of Indonesian society in the 20<sup>th</sup> century see Hyung-Jun Kim, *Reformist Muslims in Yogyakarta Village: the Islamic Transformation of Contemporary Socio-religious Life* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2007); Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town, c. 1910-2010* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012); Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For Muhammadiyah's influence outside Indonesia see Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The 'other' Muhammadiyah Movement: Singapore 1958—2008", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2011), pp. 281–302.

<sup>4</sup> To my knowledge, there is only one serious article discussing the theme of Islamic organizations and the Japanese invasion, namely on the position and views of

This study fills this gap in the literature by examining Muhammadiyah's views on the protection of civilians in the context of war, which has rarely been studied in Indonesian historiography, namely the Japanese invasion of the Dutch colony, the Dutch East Indies, at the end of 1941 to early 1942. The invasion of Southeast Asia marked Japan's involvement in the Pacific War, which was known as the Asian and Pacific theater of the Second World War (1939-1945), the bloodiest war in human history. Japan finally conquered most of the Dutch East Indies and occupied it from March 1942 to August 1945. In the late colonial era, by the time of the Japanese invasion, Muhammadiyah had already spread to various regions in the Indies, including Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. This study focuses on the views, attitudes, and actions of Muhammadiyah towards the protection of civilians during the Japanese invasion. The research questions posed are: 1) Why did Muhammadiyah view that it was important to protect the civilians during the Japanese invasion of the Indies?; 2) What ideas did Muhammadiyah hold, and what actions did it take to protect civilians during the Japanese invasion of the Indies?; and 3) How did Muhammadiyah promote its thoughts and efforts to protect civilians, both to Muhammadiyah members and to the general population?

Using a historical research method, this study examines a primary source that scholars have barely explored, namely the weekly magazine published by the Taman Pustaka (Department of Publication and Library) of Muhammadiyah branch of Surakarta (Solo, Central Java), *Adil*, especially the December 1941-February 1942 editions, the months when Japan invaded and held most of Southeast Asia, including the Dutch East Indies.<sup>5</sup> The views of Muhammadiyah referred to herein are the perspectives of Muhammadiyah as an organization (especially those

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'Aisyyiah (the women's wing of Muhammadiyah) during the Japanese invasion between late 1941 and early 1942. This study discusses further how the official magazine of 'Aisyyiah, *Soeara 'Aisjijah*, advised the women of the Indies, especially the Muslim women, to prepare for the Japanese invasion. Muhammad Yuanda Zara, "Soeara 'Aisjijah Magazine and the Preparation of Indonesian Muslim Women to Anticipate the Arrival of Japanese Occupation Forces (1941-1942)", *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2021), pp. 391-411.

<sup>5</sup> The magazines can be viewed at "Adil 1933-1942", *perpusnas.go.id*, <https://khastara.perpusnas.go.id/landing/detail/831395>, accessed 28 Apr 2021.

represented by the Central Board of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, Indonesia) and the views of individuals or institutions affiliated with Muhammadiyah (including journalists and contributors to *Adil*, as well as writers and religious scholars associated with Muhammadiyah).<sup>6</sup> Taman Pustaka had the task of publishing various reading materials and instructions on Islam and Muhammadiyah and played a major role in spearheading literacy for Muhammadiyah members and Dutch East Indies Muslims in general in an era when very few native people could read or write. This paper examines various news, views, editorials, instructions, and pictures related to the protection of civilians. The phrase ‘the protection of civilians’ here means all thoughts, attitudes and actions taken by the government, mass organizations, and individuals in their efforts to protect the society and their environment from the destructive effects of war. ‘Civilians’ here refers to Indigenous people of what today is modern Indonesia, who were not members of the Dutch colonial army and largely did not take part in the war against Japan.

Published every Thursday, *Adil* was led by Soerono Wirohardjono, with Muhammad Dimyati as its editor. Soerono was a key figure in *Adil*. Born into a noble family in Solo, he completed Dutch and Islamic education and in his youth was a member of the Muhammadiyah scouting group, Hizbul Wathan.<sup>7</sup> He was affiliated with Muhammadiyah and during the colonial period was imprisoned by the government for his anti-colonial stance. *Adil*'s office was located in Darpoyudan, Surakarta. Various branches and groups of Muhammadiyah in the Indies subscribed to *Adil*, although the exact numbers and scope of distribution are unknown. However, the contents of *Adil* were discussed in Muhammadiyah's biggest annual event, the Muhammadiyah congress,<sup>8</sup> and this indicates that *Adil* had significant influence both within Muhammadiyah circles and among Muslims of the Dutch East Indies.

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<sup>6</sup> All English translations of Indonesian and Javanese texts in this paper are mine, unless otherwise stated. Insertions in square brackets are also mine.

<sup>7</sup> Sutrisno Kutoyo, *Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan dan Peryarikatan Muhammadiyah*, Cet. 1 edition (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1998), pp. 283–4.

<sup>8</sup> “Adil kita perloekaskan”, *Adil* (1942).

## B. Muhammadiyah, the Second World War and the Japanese Invasion

The Japanese bombing of the US naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, marked the involvement of the Dutch East Indies and its mother country, the Netherlands, in the Pacific theater war against Japan. In Europe, Japan's ally, Nazi Germany, had already invaded and occupied neighboring countries and were trying to gain territory in the Soviet Union. The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, several countries, including the US, the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, officially declared war on Japan. Japan continued its attacks across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, including Hong Kong, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, and the Dutch East Indies.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies began on January 10, 1942, but air raids had been carried out since late 1941. In the various battles that followed it was evident that the Japanese troops were unstoppable. In the battle in the Java Sea at the end of February 1942, Japanese troops succeeded in defeating Dutch, British, Australian and US troops. The Dutch finally surrendered to the Japanese on March 8, 1942, and over the next 3.5 years the Dutch East Indies was under Japanese military occupation.<sup>10</sup>

One of Muhammadiyah's earliest perspectives on the Second World

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<sup>9</sup> For the Japanese invasion and occupation of Southeast Asia, see Nicholas Tarling, *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia* (London: C. Hurst, 2000); Keat Gin Ooi, *The Japanese occupation of Borneo, 1941-45* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011); Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore, 1941-45: A Social and Economic History* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018); Nakano Satoshi, *Japan's Colonial Moment in Southeast Asia 1942-1945: The Occupiers' Experience* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> For the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies, see for instance Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958); Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972); Nugroho Notokusanto, *The Peta Army during the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* (Tokyo: Waseda University, 1976); Aiko Kurasawa, "Mobilization and Control: A Study of Social Change in Rural Java, 1942-1945", PhD. Dissertation (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1988); Shigeru Sato, *War, Nationalism and Peasants: Java Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-45* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994); Peter Post and et al (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); J. Kevin Baird and Sangkot Marzuki, *War Crimes in Japan-Occupied Indonesia: A Case of Murder by Medicine* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

War emerged in early December 1941, a few days before the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. On December 3, 1941, M. Moesa'l Mahfoedl, a cleric in Surakarta apparently affiliated with Muhammadiyah, held a lecture at the Poernama Siddhi Qur'an recitation at the Great Mosque of Surakarta. As of that date, war had engulfed Europe, and the Japanese had commenced its invasion of Southeast Asia. He opened his lecture with a quote from Ar Rum verse 41 ('Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people's hands have done, so that Allah may cause them to taste the consequences of some of their deeds and perhaps they might return to the Right Path').<sup>11</sup> The recitation at that time aimed to provide a contextual interpretation of the verse. He stressed that some people considered the world order at that time 'was depraved' and no longer able to contain 'the devil of war and the devil of misery' who at that time 'were raging to burn the world and spread havoc with savages, which had no equal in history.'<sup>12</sup>

What he meant by the 'depraved world order' was the world view espoused by Tokyo and Berlin, essentially fascism. According to him, fascism degraded other human beings and subordinated them to the role servants, like horses. He then called for anyone 'who still [had] his own human dignity' to reject the new world order imposed by Berlin and Tokyo.<sup>13</sup> He persuaded the Dutch East Indies population to accept and support the third model of the new world order, which he referred to as the Atlantic Charter model, introduced by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He was convinced that this third model respected all human beings, including Indonesians, and aiming for global welfare and the safety of all human beings.<sup>14</sup>

Muhammadiyah regretted the outbreak of war, although it also knew that from a historical perspective, war was one of the events that inevitably occurred from time to time, including in Islamic history.

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<sup>11</sup> Mustafa Khattab (tran.), "Surah Ar-Rum-41", *Quran.com*, <https://quran.com/30?startingVerse=41>, accessed 26 Sep 2021..

<sup>12</sup> "De Nieuwe Wereldordening", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



This idea was reflected in *Adil's* editorial entitled 'War and War'.<sup>15</sup> This editorial answered one big question: 'Why are we at war?' The author's initials were Md. D., which was most likely the initials of the editor of this magazine, Muhammad Dimiyati. The author contrasted the war with the idea that humans actually had a common origin and nation, namely the 'human nation' and were also the descendants of Adam and Hawa. The author mentioned that despite that from the philosophical point of view war was a bad thing, it had been going on for a long time. He gave examples of wars over the last several thousand years, such as in the time of Alexander the Great, in the time of the Prophet Musa and Pharaoh, in the Roman era, in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and the era of the caliphates. He included the wars in Europe, the American Civil War, and finally the First World War. He then put forward the reasons behind the war, ranging from what he saw as a plausible legitimate justification for the benefit of mankind, as well as ideological, religious interests and for the sake of 'the desire to expand the territory of one's country for the sake of glory, a war to seize the property of others.'<sup>16</sup> He believed, however, that man could prevent war.

Since the Pacific War had already broken out, the author believed that what could be done to mitigate its harmful effects was to minimize casualties and material damage. He advocated several measures to protect civilians in times of war. First, he asked the Indies people to comply with instructions from the occupying authorities relating to efforts to maintain public safety. Second, he appealed to the government to cooperate with indigenous nationalist movement organizations, in this case GAPI (Federations of Indonesian Political Parties), to achieve public safety. Third, he emphasized that as a Muslim, safety can be achieved by maintaining the right attitude as previously recommended by MIAI (Great Islamic Council of Indonesia), that every MIAI family 'should do their best to help secure the *ummah* in their respective places.'<sup>17</sup> MIAI members were also asked to actively provide instructions regarding public safety to its branches and call Muslims across the Dutch East Indies to

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<sup>15</sup> "Perang dan perang", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

increase obedience to and ask for protection and blessing from Allah.<sup>18</sup>

### C. Muhammadiyah Support for the Protection of Civilians by the Colonial Government

Muhammadiyah, especially the Taman Pustaka section, was aware that the people of the Dutch East Indies needed information about the course of the war and, more importantly, guidance on how to survive the war. Therefore, *Adil* provided considerable column inches for the instructions of the colonial government to the people for the safety of the people in times of war. This shows that Muhammadiyah believed in the colonial authority, with its modern defense and protection strategies, as the party responsible for the safety of civilians of the Dutch East Indies. *Adil* featured announcements and instructions from the colonial authorities, including for example a call from the governor general for every member of the society in the Dutch East Indies, male and female, and from any nation and religion, to carry out their obligations as citizens in times of war.<sup>19</sup> Second, the call from the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina to the people of the Dutch East Indies to support the Dutch and the Allies in resisting the Japanese invasion.<sup>20</sup>

*Adil* published instructions for national defense and public safety issued by the commander of the Dutch East Indies army. This demonstrates *Adil's* trust in military institutions, rather than only in the colonial civilian administration. First, the military asked the people to assist in conducting searches of persons, vehicles, luggage, and photography equipment. Second, the military instructed everyone to carry proof of identity with a photo, such as a travel pass or driving license, when out in public. Third, the military asked the public to inform them of any infiltration by Japanese paratroopers or the fifth column (Japanese spies). The army allowed the people to attack enemies who were dressed in plain clothes but committed acts of violence. Fourth, the army ordered the people to secure their valuables, such as bicycles and cars. Fifth, the military instructed the public to refuse any food given by untrustworthy people. Sixth, the military asked the public not to believe rumors and

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> “Proclamatie Wali Negeri. Mengangkat sendjata”, *Adil* (1941).

<sup>20</sup> “Sabda Seri Ratoe”, *Adil* (1941).

only believe in official information from the government or instructions from parties whose identities can be trusted.<sup>21</sup>

*Adil* believed that comprehensive and correct instructions would help guide the Dutch East Indies people to survive the Japanese invasion. It published the air raid protection guidelines created by the military. The guidelines mainly consisted of information about *luchtalarm* (air-raid sirens). It stated that there were still many residents of the Indies who did not know the meaning of the air raid sirens. This would be dangerous because the population would be unaware of enemy attacks, the population falling victim to their own lack of knowledge. Therefore, continuous education was needed to provide residents with an understanding of the situation, especially about the types of sirens, including sirens that signal the beginning and end of an enemy attack.<sup>22</sup>

Equally important is what the population needed to do to survive during enemy air raids. Many fell victim to the raids because of air strikes in various places in Southeast Asia, which was bombarded by Japan. The main cause was the unawareness or ignorance of the population about proper self-protection when enemy warplanes dropped bombs. Accordingly, the government provided safety guidelines to the public, one of which was through publications in *Adil*. The government recommended two types of action during an air strike. First, if an air strike occurred during the day, everyone was allowed to continue their activities, including on the highway. It was up to them to choose whether to stop the vehicle or not or in choosing a shelter. Second, if the attack occurred at night, activities in public places, especially traffic, must be stopped.<sup>23</sup>

*Adil* moreover emphasized the need to protect not only people's lives, but also their mental health in the midst of this difficult situation. It encouraged people to avoid panic and tension that arose as a result of conjecture containing predictions about the course of the war which was unpleasant for the colonial government. It conveyed instructions from the attorney-general of the Dutch East Indies that the police had been given orders to stop the spread of misinformation and severely punish

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<sup>21</sup> "Oentoek Keselamatan Ra'jat", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>22</sup> "Boenji Sirene Waktoe Moesoch Ada Dioedara", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

anyone who spread it.<sup>24</sup>

The Japanese invasion also disrupted the course of school education in the Dutch East Indies. Panic spread among school administrators and students. To address this, *Adil* assisted the government in calming the students and their parents in the midst of the chaotic situation. It even provided a special column containing the text of a speech by the director of Department of Education and Religion of the Dutch East Indies which was previously delivered on the radio station Nirom, on December 9, 1941, or two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>25</sup> This speech, entitled 'For the Safety of Children and Students,' was in response to an incident when a school administrator made a unilateral decision to order his students, who had just arrived at school, to return home. It was obvious that he was worried about the safety of the children in wartime.<sup>26</sup>

The director believed that there was no sufficient reason to send the children home so early, and that this was an arbitrary decision and that would only cause panic.<sup>27</sup> In order to prevent this incident from being followed by other schools and to keep parents, teachers, and students from overreacting, the director conveyed his instructions. He called on parents, school principals, teachers, and students to 'remain calm under any circumstances' and 'do not act like people who have lost their minds.'<sup>28</sup> Schools could only be closed by permission of the governor and residents. Closures were also permitted if the military ordered, especially if it required school buildings for defense purposes. If a school was closed, for the sake of safety, it was instructed that the teachers whose schools were closed were to remain in their respective places. Additionally, they were required to help maintain national defense and public safety amidst the threat of war.<sup>29</sup>

Muhammadiyah via *Adil* believed in the thoughts and actions taken by the colonial government regarding efforts to protect the civilian population from war atrocities. This can be seen from a complete copy of

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<sup>24</sup> "Djangan Menjebarkan Kabar Angin!", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>25</sup> "Oentoek Keselamatannya Anak dan Moerid-Moerid", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

the speech by Director of the Justice Department, N.S. Blom, published by *Adil* in the February 5, 1942. Primary consideration of the government was the responsibility for taking care of two groups of people, people whose bodies were injured or disabled directly due to acts of violence in wartime or because of the situation caused by the war situation, and the families of the people who died due to the causes mentioned above.<sup>30</sup> There were several types of assistance provided to these groups by the government. The most important thing was that the victims of war had the right to medical treatment, access to doctors, and special care was given to victims of the war. However, they still had to pay for the medical care according to their monthly income levels.<sup>31</sup>

In some cases, Muhammadiyah paid closer attention to the protection of groups that were more gender and age specific. This can be seen from another guide from the government published by *Adil*. This guide aimed to lead the public efforts to protect civilians, especially three groups who were most vulnerable to being victimized, namely pregnant women, seriously ill individuals, and children. *Adil* initially received a question from one of its readers who asked how to aid those who were pregnant, sick, and/or children if there was an air strike. The questioner also asked about what to do when a bomb was dropped while a Muslim was praying. *Adil* considered these questions important. To answer, *Adil* asked an expert in that field, namely J. Nomes, an official of the LBD (Lucht Beschermingsdienst, Air Raid Protection Unit).<sup>32</sup>

Nomes responded that:

We must remember that we must help all people who are *hulpeloos* (so sick that they can't walk, deaf, blind and so on) to seek shelter in times of danger. We, who are healthy, will be punished if we do not do it, and indeed the law has been provided to punish, if we do not help the helpless, or if we leave them in a dangerous place. We have to help them.<sup>33</sup>

He then recommended specific actions.<sup>34</sup> The first thing he

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<sup>30</sup> "Memelihara Korban Perang", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> "Perempoean hamil, orang sakit keras, anak2. Bagaimana tjara kita menolong apabila ada alarm tanda bahaja oedara", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

suggested was that people should see where he/she was, whether inside or outside the house. If one was outdoors, he/she was advised to hide in a *schnilkelder* (air-raid bunker). Otherwise, people could hide in ditches. If there was no trench, one could lay down on the ground with their chests and faces not directly on the ground while lying ears had to be covered and the mouth had to be biting a rubber. When indoors, people were to stay there and seek shelter under benches, beds, or other strong structures. The house could be in danger when a bomb fell directly on it. To help pregnant women, he recommended that pregnant women immediately prepare several things at home in which to always stay so that they could remain indoors when the alarm sounded, a strong bed (Javanese: *amben*) at home to shelter under when the alarm sounded, and prepared sandbags, water and medicine under benches. Seriously ill people were also treated the same as pregnant women, namely by encouraging them to stay at home and taking shelter under a bed with a strong frame. Nomes stressed that the most important thing to remember was not to place the benches too close to walls, doors or windows, because they would be dangerous if the walls fell or if bomb shrapnel penetrated the doors, walls, or windows. In other words, the safest place was in the center of the house.<sup>35</sup>

Equally important were suggestions for protecting children, especially if the family had many children. Nomes held that the father was responsible for organizing this domestic protection effort. He suggested protective measures by giving the example of a family with seven children in one house, each aged 14, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 years old, and a newborn baby. The father had to educate his eldest child by asking him/her to take care of a 6-year-old child, then a 10-year-old child to take care of a 4-year-old child, and an 8-year-old child to take care of a 2-year-old child. The mother looked after her newborn baby. With this division of labor, children worked together to take care of their younger siblings and not make their parents panic. Nomes stressed that ‘this is all for the safety of our own household and children.’<sup>36</sup>

Nomes, however, did not provide an answer about the correct action regarding if a bomb that fell while a Muslim was praying. Rather,

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

this question was answered by the author of the magazine's humorous and satirical column, Sikoet (literally meaning 'elbow'). Sikoet was the pen name of *Adil's* main chief, Soerono Wirohardjono. For Sikoet, this was an important question because it concerned the obligatory worship for Muslims as well as the importance of self-preservation efforts when bombardments occurred. In addition, Sikoet also heard news that the Japanese bombings in fact destroyed places of worship, such as the bombing in Minahasa where it was reported that many victims died while worshiping in the church. Sikoet was saddened by the victims at this place of worship. Learning from the case, he expressed his views on performing prayers in the midst of an air strike. He essentially encouraged people to try to save themselves when an enemy attack occurred, and not to just surrender to fate.

Sikoet explained:

When one is praying, he is actually facing God. This depends on the degree of faith of each person. However, in this bombing affair, people with strong faith are those who are the first to try to save themselves. So, if a person is praying and a bomb is dropped and he continues to pray with the belief that he is a martyr because he dies while praying and is hit by a bomb, then it can be said that he did not follow God's command, namely that we must always make an effort.<sup>37</sup>

In other words, Sikoet advised that if people were praying and there was a bombing, then they should first stop praying and seek shelter for their own safety. Prayers could be resumed when the 'all clear' alarm sounded. Interestingly, Sikoet marked that there were advantages for those who prayed in an open field, namely when they heard the alarm, they could immediately prostrate, and while on their stomach they could continue praying, like the prayer of a sick person.<sup>38</sup>

The Muhammadiyah Central Board delivered an official decision on the protection of civilians in February 1942. This decision was entitled 'Calls for Charity to Muslims in Particular and the Indonesian Population in General for the Benefit of Places of Worship.' This decision was issued on behalf of Muhammadiyah by the chairman of Muhammadiyah, Mas Mansoer, and his secretary, H. Mh. Wazirnoeric.

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<sup>37</sup> "Kalau sembahjang. ....kena bom??", *Adil* (1942)..

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Muhammadiyah emphasized that Muslims needed to be calm at that time, considering that the war that ongoing and extremely destructive. Muhammadiyah labelled it the war ‘without mercy and humanity,’ a war that ‘really makes everyone experiences goosebumps and hurts religious and humanitarian feelings,’ and not only killed soldiers and demolished military target, but also had the potential to destroy schools, hospitals, major and village mosques, and could cause the death of children, women, and other innocent people.<sup>39</sup> With the enormous scale of the war and its extraordinary cruelty, Muhammadiyah urged the Indonesian people to try to protect themselves and not to stay silent or just give up.

Muhammadiyah wished that the public would have trust in the authorities, especially in the military who tried to prevent Japanese troops from occupying the Dutch East Indies, and in the police and LBD in terms of guarding the cities. The public was also asked to follow the instructions of the authorities designed for the protection of civilians. However, no less important, Muhammadiyah also urged Muslims in the villages pay attention to efforts to protect and enliven Muslim places of worship, such as mosques and *langgar* (smaller mosques in the villages) as well as Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas and Islamic boarding schools.

Muhammadiyah stated:

Therefore, it is recommended that every *kampoeng*, village, hamlet and every place where many Muslims gather, to establish a body to maintain the existence places of worship and think of ways to enliven them by inviting Muslims to be active in doing good deeds. Please collect aids in the form of money, manpower, goods, and so on for that need in their respective places, and if necessary please ask for support from the authorities.<sup>40</sup>

The Central Board of Muhammadiyah also requested that the people of the Dutch East Indies take part in protecting civilians by providing sandbags to reduce the impact of aerial bombs, whitewashing the walls of houses made of bamboo and painting them so they would not be visible to the enemy from the air, blackening roof tiles, and also

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<sup>39</sup> “Opisil dari H.B. Mochammadijah: Panggilan ber’amal”, *Adil* (1942).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



by providing shelter around the residences.<sup>41</sup>

#### **D. Muhammadiyah, Islam and the Idea of Protecting Civilians**

In addition to the modern and knowledge-based views on the protection of civilians promoted by the colonial government as examined in the previous section, Muhammadiyah based its ideas for protecting civilians on Islamic teachings and its understanding on Indonesians' sociocultural landscapes. Muhammadiyah had been discussing aspects of civilian safety since mid-December 1941, when the Allied countries, including the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, declared war on Japan. In its editorial, *Adil* stated that as of mid-December 1941, there were two elements that became the focus of the attention of the Indonesia people, namely 'the victory of the army in defending Indonesia' and 'the safety of the people during the war.'<sup>42</sup> In short, Muhammadiyah hoped that the Dutch could defeat the Japanese and the Dutch East Indies population could survive the ferocity of war.

There were several key views held by Muhammadiyah regarding the protection of civilians as reflected in the editorial published by *Adil*. First, given that as of mid-December, the Pacific War had not yet reached Indonesian soil, *Adil* wished that Indonesia would not become another victim of the Japanese bombardment. It realized that at that time the effects of war had already been felt in Indonesia, but it hoped that the war would end before reaching the Indonesian archipelago. Second, *Adil* emphasized to the Dutch East Indies society the importance of protecting themselves, even though the war had not yet come. What was crucial, according to *Adil*, was preventing panic in the midst of conflicting news about the progress of war. Peace of mind, for *Adil*, was the key to being surviving the various ill effects of war. *Adil* also asked the public to help the military and obey the instructions of the military so that public safety could be maintained. This was an important call because at that time the natives, especially in the villages, still feared the army. Third, *Adil* criticized those who were still thinking about how to save their property and wealth in the middle of war. *Adil* encouraged the rich to help the country and the public during wartime. Fourth, *Adil* urged people to

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> "Hidoep dikantjah peperangan", *Adil* (1941).

shelter in place, and not flee to a place they deemed safe. Living in one's residence would make it easier for the government to provide protection to the community. *Adil* underscored that the population must stay away from '*paniekstemming*' (mode of panic) and apply '*beheersing van geest*' (soul control) because both attitudes would 'lighten the burden of maintaining safety and achieving victory.'<sup>43</sup>

This message about public safety was also expressed by *Adil* wittily through the Sikoet column. Sikoet mocked the rich people who frantically ran around in their cars in order to seek shelter. For Sikoet, this attitude was wrong because people could die from bomb attacks anywhere. Sikoet emphasized that what was needed for personal protection was peace of mind, trust in God, and support for the government's defense efforts. Sikoet hoped that no one would die from 'too much pacing around and headaches from thinking about his wealth.'<sup>44</sup>

In its February edition, *Adil* in its column 'Religious Fatwa' presented a view on war and death from an Islamic perspective.<sup>45</sup> The author, Asna, opened the article by explaining that the war had been going on for two months, causing the destruction of property and the death of thousands of people, including '*orang pereman*' (civilians). This last term referred to 'innocent people who have been swept away in the flood of blood caused by modern war.'<sup>46</sup> He accentuated that the war was very cruel and similar to the '*kejamat ketjil*' (minor doomsday), which was more violent than the cruelty of Pharaoh and King Namrud who persecuted Musa and Ibrahim respectively. The war was also said to be a way to imitate the ancient wars waged by Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon Bonaparte. He even mentioned that the war was a proof of the devil's promise—that the devil will lead greedy people in wicked directions—which it made when it was sent out of heaven. He then told a story in the Islamic tradition, namely when Allah was about to create the first human, Adam, when the angels wondered why God created a creature that shed blood. He quoted the bloody story of Qabil and Habil and emphasized that now the Japanese were the ones who

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> "Gara-gara perang", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>45</sup> "Kalau mati 'korban' perang....!", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

were bringing back such bloodshed.<sup>47</sup>

Asna reminded people to not be afraid to die, because everyone will surely die. What people don't and didn't know is when or how. The important thing was that people had tried to protect themselves, including by following various guidelines for staying safe during the war that had been prepared by the government. Asna continued that one should try to keep his heart at peace and not be defeated by his anxiety. For Muslims, he said, the war was the perfect moment to test their faith. If a Muslim is afraid of death, it means that he has very little faith in Allah, even though he knows that life is not eternal. So, the era of war, he continued, was the right moment to remember Allah.<sup>48</sup> This provided spiritual protection and strength as well as inner peace for the Muslims.

The Sikoet column in *Adil* was Muhammadiyah's way to educate the Dutch East Indies people how to protect themselves in the event of a Japanese aerial attack. In the January 8, 1942, edition, Sikoet offered several instructions for the people of the Dutch East Indies to follow in order to avoid the dangers of bombing. This was a lengthy treatise, and one of the few elaborative treatises available in the Indonesian language between 1941-1942 on the protection of civilians. The main point was a call to Muslims in particular and the Dutch East Indies people in general to try hard to find practical, rational, and structured ways to stay safe. This was to avoid people being desperate let alone surrendering to the situation. At that time, the Japanese had already conducted air raids in some parts of the Dutch East Indies, but had not yet reached Java, the center of the colonial government and Muhammadiyah. At that time, the Japanese had bombed a number of areas such as Pontianak, Minahasa, and Medan, killing civilians and destroying property.<sup>49</sup>

Sikoet conveyed his points in an interesting, lighthearted, sometimes funny way, but still substantive and focused on self-protection in times of war. Considering that most people in Java had never heard of a bomb explosion, Sikoet made an analogy with the sound of boisterous firecrackers on the night of Eid.<sup>50</sup> The horror of the Japanese aerial

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> "Kalau ditempat kita kena bom.....?", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

bombing must have been well known at that time given the news about deadly Japanese air attacks from Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

After providing an understanding of what a bomb sounded like and the potential damage it could cause, Sikoet provided guidance on what to do in response to aerial bombardment. First, he called on people not to be nervous when they heard explosions. This was not easy considering that after the bombing there would be billowing smoke, burning houses and the sounds of people screaming. An uneasy heart and mind in the midst of this situation, Sikoet said, would only make people panic and confusion. Second, Sikoet stressed that when the siren signaling an air raid sounded and bombs dropped, people should immediately look for air-raid shelters. Sikoet encouraged people to immediately enter shelters in an orderly fashion. If a shelter was full, Sikoet recommended that people find other ways to stay safe, for example by taking shelter in ditches. He emphasized the importance of pre-planning and protecting children. Sikoet suggested that children be taken to find shelter and that they should not be allowed to run to and fro aimlessly out of fear.<sup>51</sup>

Sikoet taught how to protect oneself while at home. The inner part of the house would be a very dangerous place if the house was hit by a bomb. A house could collapse on its occupants. According to Sikoet, this information was based on the experience of those who had been hit by air bombardments elsewhere. Death or injury inside a house could be caused by the house collapsing or being hit by shrapnel. Accordingly, the best option was to run outside and find shelter. If not, then the option was to take cover under a strong structure inside the house, such as under a chair, table or bed. Sikoet wittily did not advise people to hide in the *brandkast* (fireproof box), ‘because later they would not die from a bomb, but they would die because of suffocation *keplepegen* [Javanese: die from running out of oxygen],’<sup>52</sup>

Sikoet also shared experiences from other bombing victims, most of whom suffered injuries above their knees, mainly due to being hit by shrapnel. He educated his readers in ways to save themselves from such potential injuries. After listening to sirens for air raids or bomb explosions, people should immediately lie down on their stomachs and bite down

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

on rubber or cork if possible. Sikoet warned that people should not let their faces or chests stick to the ground, because an explosion on the ground would shake their faces and chests, and it would be very painful. According to Sikoet, biting rubber or cork was a method to prevent the upper and lower molars from colliding and to keep the mouth open to prevent injury to the mouth.<sup>53</sup>

Interestingly, Sikoet displayed a diagram illustrating how a bomb damaged objects or injured people in the vicinity. The diagram was very simple, consisting of only three lines, but easily understood. The first vertical line represents the dropping of the bomb. The second and third lines point 45 degrees to the left and right, and these represent the paths of the shrapnel in various directions. To survive, one must have been on the 45-degree side at the bottom of the shrapnel. This position was usually lower than the knee. That was why Sikoet emphasized the importance of lying down. If one was standing when a bomb dropped, there was a possibility that the torso, including the face, would be hit. However, Sikoet also reminded that even if someone was lying on their stomach, it was possible that he/she was still unsafe. If so, said Sikoet, it was his fate of being hit by a bomb even though he had tried various safety measures. Sikoet once again emphasized that the two most important things to do to be safe were to try as best as possible to protect one's body and always pray for safety.<sup>54</sup>

Sikoet gave his readers 10 methods of self-defense from aerial attacks: 1) carrying cotton wool every time people travel so that if a bomb attack occurred people could immediately cover their ears; 2) bringing pieces of rubber, *kaumgom* (chewing gum) or confectionery to bite into so that they could keep their mouths open during the bombing; 3) if a bombing occurred, people should not lean on walls or wooden planks, because the shockwaves could cause people faint or even die; 4) about 4-5 minutes after a bombing, people who were near the explosion site, although not hit by a bomb, would be unable to think fully; 5) one should know that a medium-sized bomb may only take half a minute to reach the ground after being dropped from a plane seven kilometers above the ground; 6) when one heard a rather long 'syuuuuut' sound after the

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

explosion, it meant that he/she was about 800 meters from the explosion; 7) if one heard a short ‘syuuuuut’ sound while the explosion sounded, then it meant he/she was close to the source of the explosion; 8) if one heard an air raid siren, then for 20 minutes later he/she did not hear the sound of the anti-aircraft gun, then that meant the enemy aircraft had moved away. One could only come out of hiding after he/she heard the ‘all clear’ sign; and 9) if one heard a siren and an anti-aircraft gun, then he/she could expect that in half a minute there would be a bomb explosion. The last one, number 10, was a joke about another ‘bomb,’ this time about a natural ‘bomb.’ Sikoet used this gag to ease the tension of his readers after reading horrific matters about the bombings. In point 10, Sikoet wrote: ‘I’m not afraid of bomb; what scares me is another bomb hiding in air-raid shelters. You know, the temperature in the air-raid shelters is cold, so of course a lot of people *mangsoek angin* [catch a cold], right?’<sup>55</sup>

Sikoet even provided guidance on what to do after a bombing was over. First, people should listen for the ‘all clear’ siren. When the siren sounded, it meant the bombing was ended. Survivors must not be selfish. They had to aid other people who were injured in the attack. Sikoet emphasized the importance of social solidarity among residents to help each other in their efforts to protect themselves at critical times. Finally, once again Sikoet encouraged Muslims in the Dutch East Indies to persevere and pray for safety during the war.<sup>56</sup>

Some natives, especially in Java, sought refuge and tranquility in their syncretic traditions, by relying on the predictions and spells of the traditional healers or sacred clerics. However, Muhammadiyah, who had fought religious syncretism since its birth, via *Adil* reminded natives, especially the Muslims of the Java, not to rely on shamans or fortune-tellers who overconfidently said that the war would not reach there. According to *Adil*, this would only have given birth to a false sense of security and even make people careless so that they could become victims of war. It used an agrarian analogy to make it easier for its readers to understand that what they had to do was try to save themselves and put their trust in Allah, writing, ‘be happy when planting rice, make strong safeguards against all kinds of pests, then put the safety of the rice in

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

God's hand and.....do not be careless!<sup>57</sup>

*Adil* emphasized that the war had exposed two of society's characteristics in responding to a crisis. The first were views that the war as a '*bebendoe*' (Javanese: calamity, torment), while the second was considering it a '*tjoba*' (Indonesian: the trial of God). Holders of the former view were considered people who were far from God, and as a result they became confused, panicked, and always in fear of death, constantly imagining the destruction of homes, lost souls and lost property. The second were those who were close to God because they realized that this was a test from God that aimed to assess the degree of one's *tauhid* (belief in the oneness of God). As a result, they did not fear of war, and even their belief in the oneness of God grew stronger. According to *Adil*, the main key to being able to escape the test was a combination of an inner effort to preserve faith and an outward effort to save body and property, saying, 'The way to escape from the ordeal is *shalat dan sabar* [to pray and be patient]. People should always try [to save themselves] and never give up.'<sup>58</sup>

### **E. Muhammadiyah and Its Activities to Protect Civilians**

Muhammadiyah took swift actions to protect the public during the Japanese invasion, not only in the form of thoughts but also in its practices. The first big step it took was to cancel the Muhammadiyah congress. The congress was the most important and biggest annual event for Muhammadiyah. This was an event where Muhammadiyah members discuss many important issues related to the organization, Muslims and the public of the Dutch East Indies (nowadays, Indonesians), and is also an opportunity where Muhammadiyah members from all over the Dutch East Indies interacted directly. The congress, which was held in different cities every year (nowadays, once every five years), was and remains a special attraction for the host city's residents because of the various interesting events that had religious, modern, and national nuances. Muhammadiyah planned to hold a congress at the end of December 1941 in Purwokerto, Central Java. All preparations had been made. The local committee had already prepared a venue for the congress and envoys

<sup>57</sup> "Pengaruhnya 'Sidik Peningal'", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>58</sup> "Bebendoe dan tjoba", *Adil* (1942).

from all over the Dutch East Indies were also prepared to attend.

However, because the war was approaching the Dutch East Indies, the Central Board of Muhammadiyah took strategic steps to protect the safety of Muhammadiyah members and the population in general. Muhammadiyah canceled the congress. *Adil* stated that public safety and security was Muhammadiyah's main considerations. First, outside Java there were restrictions on transportation due to the war, so Muhammadiyah was worried that congress participants from Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and other islands outside Java would not be able to reach Java. Second, even if a special congress was held for Muhammadiyah members in Java, it would not necessarily be possible, given that the population of Java, out of concern for their safety, had been instructed by the government to stay at home and not to travel far. *Adil* wrote that for Muhammadiyah, the security and safety of the Indonesian people was more crucial than the congress. It suggested that Muslims ask God more for patience and strength to stay safe and have peace of mind during the war.<sup>59</sup>

Another article in *Adil* called on women, especially Muslims, in the Dutch East Indies to protect civilians. The suggestion was expressed in a letter written by a woman named Zoebaidah to her younger sister, Soepartinah. She discussed the government's call to women in the *'Burgerdienstplicht Boeat Perempoean'* (Obligations for Women) program. It stated that women, taking into account their age and physical health, were obliged to assist the government in times of war. Zoebaidah then explained that women's contributions were needed during the war, and they were no less important than men. He agreed with the statement in the *Burgerdienstplicht*, that the government did not mandate that all women must do work like men. The work that was required for women was what was considered in accordance with the spirit and characteristics of women. This was particularly the case with supporting jobs, such as telephone operators and clerks in offices as well as jobs directly related to protecting civilians including 'assisting doctors in hospitals' and 'helping war victims.'<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> "Hidoep dikantjah peperangan"; "Congres Moehammadijah moendoer!", *Adil* (1941).

<sup>60</sup> "Kaoem kita dimasa perang", *Adil* (1942).



Zoebaidah stressed that women should emulate one of the most prominent female figures in the history of Islam, Aisha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad. She set an example for Muslim women by being a *verpleegster* (nurse) of Hilal Achmar (Red Crescent) in wartime during the prophet's time, and emphasized the many roles in protecting civilians, that Dutch East Indies women could play during the war against Japan, including 'helping war victims, aiding victims in bombarded cities, organizing the evacuation process, and so on.'<sup>61</sup> Zoebaidah moreover explained that in every city it was expected that there would be female workers who acted as 'helpers for bombardment victims.'<sup>62</sup> She considered this important because she suspected that during the bombardment many women would become victims. She then explained that under Islamic law, it would be better if a woman who was a victim of war was also helped by a fellow woman.<sup>63</sup>

The threat felt by the natives in the Dutch East Indies was not only coming from foreign enemies, but also from 'friendly parties,' in this case the Allied troops, who assisted the Dutch in defending the Dutch East Indies from Japanese invasion. The threat was related to the fact that the Allied soldiers stationed in Indonesia were adult men, many of whom had to leave their families, especially their wives. Due to the long separation from the wives, there were fears that they would assault native girls. For the natives, most of whom were Muslim and adhered to traditional customs that had different moral standards from Western nations, this was a matter of concern. A few reports in mid-February 1942 stated that in several places in the Dutch East Indies a number of Allied soldiers euphemistically 'did bad things' to women and commoners.<sup>64</sup>

Because of these tragic stories, there were various questions and suggestions raised to maintain order and security in the Dutch East Indies and to maintain good relations between the Allied forces and the Indonesian people. The first were concerns raised by several native representatives in the *Volksraad* (Parliament of the Dutch East Indies), which urgently called the attention of military commanders to address this

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> "Soldat-soldat dan.....perempoean", *Adil* (1942).

issue. Second, were concerns from Muslims, including Muhammadiyah, as reflected in a report by *Adil*. *Adil* urged the military leadership as well as the civilian authorities to immediately find a solution to the problem. Otherwise, there would be many bad consequences that could occur regarding the safety and tranquility of the local population. For example, there would be feelings of insecurity among the villagers who had daughters. Resentment among the villagers could ignite a fight between the locals and the Allied soldiers. For *Adil*, religiously and traditionally, native Indonesians could not accept the so-called ‘glamorous girls’ or women who were tasked with accompanying foreign soldiers and providing them with various kinds of entertainment.<sup>65</sup>

The Dutch East Indies people who became victims of the war were not only those who were staying in their own hometowns, but also those who were in faraway places for various reasons, including work or education. One of them was the so-called ‘*anak rantau*’ (young migrants). This referred to young men and women who came from the ‘*tanah seberang*’ (outside Java) and attended schools in Java. There were two types of education they entered in Java, namely government education (e.g., HBS and MULO) and religious education run by Islamic organizations (e.g., Muallimin Muhammadiyah and Zuamma Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, as well as Islamic boarding schools in Gontor, Jombang, and other parts of East Java). Their lives were supported by money sent by their parents every month. Around mid-February 1942, these money transfers were no longer available, because the Japanese had bombed and occupied the students’ hometowns, especially in Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Thus, some students lost their main source of financial support. Several measures had been taken to address this problem, particularly for students in government schools. The government planned to set up a special fund to help these students and their older classmates also tried to help.<sup>66</sup>

The fate of students in Islamic schools (the term used by *Adil* at the time was those from the ‘*kealangan surau*’ [surau circles]) was worse. Until mid-February 1942, with the Japanese already controlling parts of the Dutch East Indies, neither the national activists nor the administrators of Islamic schools commented on this issue. Out of solidarity, initiatives

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> “Nasib anak rantau”, *Adil* (1942).

emerged from the migrants themselves to help each other. One example was in Yogyakarta. In that city, there were at least three student aid institutions that were founded, one of which by Latjoeba, B.A. for Sulawesi students, a relief agency founded by Tom Olil (consul of Muhammadiyah in North Sulawesi), and the *Comite Penolong Anak Rantau Mataram* founded by young journalists A. Karim D.P. and Abdoel Thomas. The first two institutions made a proposal to the government to provide financial assistance to migrant students in the city.<sup>67</sup>

*Adil* asked the government not to show favoritism to students in government schools and ignore the needs of students in private and Islamic schools. While waiting for the government's response to the request, it invited Dutch East Indies Muslims to work together to help these migrant students during the war. It asked the students to be patient in dealing with the situation and asked for help, mercy, and love from Allah to stay safe. In addition, *Adil* hoped that young migrants' educations would not be abruptly stopped, and they would still be able to have their daily needs met in the midst of the crisis, one of which was by releasing the so-called '*spoed fonds*' (emergency funds), where students from Islamic schools raise money to help their classmates who came from outside Java.<sup>68</sup>

## F. Muhammadiyah and the Protection of the Community and Mosques by Muslims

Muhammadiyah, through *Adil*, encouraged the Dutch East Indies Muslims to take the initiative and protect civilians, especially Muslims without relying on other parties. A lengthy elaboration on this idea was propounded by Md. D. in a column in early February 1942.<sup>69</sup> The author opened his writing by reminding readers that war caused drastic changes in society, including the cessation of the nationalist political struggle, for instance, due to the prohibition on political activities and restrictions on public meetings. The author appreciated that the nationalists did not remain silent even though the situation was difficult for them. They turned to social movements, one of which was forming *Penolong Korban*

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> "Kalau masjid2 dan langgar2 hantjoer.....?", *Adil* (1942).

*Perang* (Pe-Ko-Pe, War Victims Helper). This institution helped victims of war, provided assistance to ordinary people who were victims of war, and maintained the safety of villages. The author praised what these nationalists had done and urged the Dutch Indies Muslims to emulate them.<sup>70</sup>

The author criticized Muslims:

Now....let's look at the Muslims themselves. It is a pity because from our own community, among the surau circles, there are still many people who are still ignorant and don't care about the dangers of war. Many of them have surrendered to fate. If later there is a bomb that falls in their village, they will give themselves up to LBD and Pe-Ko-Pe, which are organized by those outside the surau circles.<sup>71</sup>

The author said that there were no *surau* circles who took the initiative to prepare themselves in case a bomb fell on their villages, mosques, or *langgar*. Their efforts consisted only of 'reciting Surah Ya-Sin many times, Surah Al-Kahf many times, reciting this prayer and that prayer;' in other words, they 'escape from physical endeavors to inner defense only.'<sup>72</sup> While non-Muslims only focused on outward endeavors, Muslims only focused on spiritual endeavors. Both were wrong according to Md. D. He criticized people who only believed in destiny and thought that if people recited prayers all the time, their mosques would be protected from bombing. He cited the examples of bomb attacks that occurred in Malaya, which caused the destruction of mosques and the loss of Muslim lives there.<sup>73</sup>

He then asked rhetorically, if a bomb fell on a mosque, who would help the victims in it, and did the Muslims of the Dutch East Indies have a special institution like Pe-Ko-Pe that would work to help victims or extinguish fires that burned mosques? According to him, it would be a disgrace and irony if the mosques, which were sanctified by Muslims, were then hit by bombs, and those who attempted to rescue the victims inside them were outsiders (in this case LBD) while Muslims just stood idly by.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

He offered recommendations to the Dutch East Indies Muslims. First, Muslims must adopt a way of thinking to 'try first, then *tawakkal* [put trust in God]'. According to him, this was what God commanded. He gave the example of a group of people in caravan traveling in the desert with their camels. When they are going to pray, they must tie their camels first so as not to run away. Only then could they *tawakkal*. Even if the camels ran away, it means that there was something beyond the control of the camels' owners. According to the author, this was the true meaning of *tawakkal* according to one of the prophet's hadiths. This idea was important because it encouraged Muslims to cooperate with one another to help victims of war and deal with the physical devastation caused by enemy bombardments. He wished that Muslims would not be too confident that bombs would not fall on mosques or *langgar*. He therefore encouraged Muslims to establish a special organization to help victims of war. According to him, this effort needed to be considered by the administrators of the *djami'* (Friday) mosque and mosque caretakers.<sup>75</sup>

Second, according to him, was the need for Muslims to immediately build facilities to protect people from enemy attacks and to reduce the impact of the war. One method he put forward, was suggesting that Muslims dig shelters in the yards of mosques or *langgar*, especially for the protection of the congregation of the mosques or *langgar*. This was important so that later when Muslims were reciting the Qur'an or praying in the mosques and the air raid alarm sounded, the worshipers could immediately seek shelter. Other items that also needed to be prepared were sandbags to reduce the impact of bombs and chalk to reduce fires on walls ignited by bombs. He suggested that funds from the mosques' treasuries be used to build shelters and to help victims of war, especially Muslims.<sup>76</sup>

He emphasized the reasons why Muslims needed to be active in helping to protect civilians:

Are we, Muslims, a people who in the sight of God are among the "chosen" ones, willing to depend on the mercy of outsiders when calamity comes to us? We should be the ones who help outsiders a lot, and we should not be the ones who need help from outsiders! We should be the

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

ones to give help, and not be the ones asking for help! This is the best attitude!<sup>77</sup>

### G. Muhammadiyah and the Central Committee Calls for Charity

A number of Muhammadiyah members became victims of Japanese aerial bombing, with their houses were destroyed, for example in Surabaya in early February 1942.<sup>78</sup> The intensification of the Japanese attacks and the increasing number of casualties prompted the Central Board of Muhammadiyah to increase its calls and efforts to protect civilians. One of them was its recommendation to establish a special committee to protect the community, both physically and mentally, across various regions.<sup>79</sup> In early February 1942, Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta established *Central Comite Panggilan Ber'amal* (Central Committee for Calls to Charity). This committee had four objectives:

- 1) Calming the population, so that their faith remained strong in Allah; 2) Preserving the honor of Islam, including places of worship and places of Islamic learning; 3) Enlivening worship, promoting Islamic learning and proselytization; and 4) Encouraging unity, love for others, and cooperation to alleviate hardship.<sup>80</sup>

The committee's management consisted of Kg. Kjai Pengulu R. H. Mohd. Noeh Kamaloediningrat (main chairman), Kj. R.H. Hadjid (chairman), M.J. Anies (vice chairman), and several clerks, treasurers, and general assistants. Muhammadiyah hoped that this committee could establish itself throughout Indonesia. Thus, civilians could be better protected nationwide in the midst of that crisis.

*Adil* supported the establishment of this committee and recommended that Muslims throughout the Dutch East Indies participate in it for the sake of public safety. In an editorial, *Adil* stated that it was grateful for Muhammadiyah's decision because even though the war was getting more and more brutal, Muslims, especially Muhammadiyah,

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> "Beberapa orang Moehammadijah di Soerabaja mendjadi koerban bombardemend", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>79</sup> "Central Comite Panggilan Ber'amal", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

were still fulfilling their obligations to God, including maintaining their faith and safeguarding places of worship. *Adil* quoted a hadith of the Prophet to confirm its point. On one occasion, the Prophet had just returned from a war, then stated that Muslims would face a more severe war, namely the 'true war,' the war between 'two passions that are always burning in our chest,' between the 'desire for goodness' and 'the lust of the devil.'<sup>81</sup> *Adil* emphasized that during the war that was engulfing the Dutch East Indies, the devil had the opportunity to destroy human faith and sanity, as seen from the chaos that occurred in communities, such as people behaving erratically and panicked people fleeing to the tops of mountains, people who wavered in their faith and lost their appetite for thinking about their money and possessions when war broke out in their city.<sup>82</sup> This was the impetus for *Adil* recommending that Muslims immediately prepare the so-called 'Islamic home front' so that there could be comprehensive efforts to protect the physical and mental state as well as the faith of Muslims. It reminded that the protection of life, faith, and religious facilities was a shared responsibility of Muslims, espousing 'Let the war continue, we cannot stop it. But worship, mosques, faith, and all things related to our religion, we must guard it as best as we can.'<sup>83</sup>

Muhammadiyah advised Muslims to enliven places where the religious spirit was weakening, for example by holding recitations of the holy Qur'an.<sup>84</sup> The aim was to bring Muslims closer to Allah and to keep them away from actions that had the potential to disrupt the security and tranquility of the villages in the war era. Muhammadiyah recommended that each village look to Muhammadiyah representatives or local ulama figures as advisors. Cooperation with local civilian leaders was also encouraged so that efforts to protect the public could be even stronger. In addition, Muhammadiyah paid attention to the issue of public enlightenment, by encouraging the delivery of accurate information via speeches, in writing, as well as remotely through press and radio broadcasts.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> "Opisil dari H.B. Mochammadijah: Panggilan ber'amal".

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

Muhammadiyah's efforts to protect civilians were also carried out by employing a well-known nationalist leader who was also affiliated with Muhammadiyah, Soekarno (who in 1945 became the first president of the Republic of Indonesia). At the time of the Japanese invasion, Soekarno was being held by the colonial government in Bengkulu for his anti-colonial political activities. There, he became chairman of the Teaching Council of Bengkulu branch of Muhammadiyah as well as a teacher at a local Muhammadiyah school. On January 8 and 9, 1942, The Bengkulu branch of Muhammadiyah held a public course entitled '*Luchtbescherming*' (Self-Protection from Air Attacks).<sup>86</sup> Muhammadiyah wished to educate its members and the people of Bengkulu about the dangers of air raids and what measures could be taken so that people could protect themselves if the Japanese dropped bombs on the city. Around a thousand people reportedly attended the course which was held at the *langgar* complex of the Bengkulu branch of Muhammadiyah, indicating that the public was enthusiastic about surviving the dangers of air strikes. As the main speaker, Soekarno explained about the types of Japanese fighter aircraft, then explained how people could protect themselves. In addition to physical safety, Soekarno also encouraged the Bengkulu people to maintain peace of mind, including avoiding listening to radio broadcasts that only caused panic and by helping each other through strengthening faith and by *tawakkal* to Allah.<sup>87</sup>

Muhammadiyah, through *Adil*, emphasized the importance of a well-organized evacuation in wartime. This could be seen from the Sikoet column. Sikoet indicated that at that time many people were talking about evacuation to protect themselves. He said he understood this because Solo, in the city where *Adil* was published, was flooded with people fleeing from larger cities such as Semarang, Batavia (now Jakarta), and Surabaya. He told a unique story at the time of the evacuation. It was reported that a pregnant woman, desperate to evacuate and in the middle of the evacuation, gave birth to her child, who was later named Sitti Epakoewasi.<sup>88</sup> *Adil* moreover displayed a picture showing a rather excessive act of evacuations carried out by the native people, including

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<sup>86</sup> "Doenia Moehammadijah: Benkoelen", *Adil* (1942).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> "Rame rame waktoe perang", *Adil* (1942).



the types of items brought during the evacuation, from basic needs such as clothing to trivial and somewhat pointless things such as beds.<sup>89</sup> This image sent a message that people were allowed to evacuate, but must remain calm and only bring essential items.

In Sikoet's view, efforts to protect oneself should not only be done for physical protection, but also with faith and peace of mind. Sikoet appreciated the establishment of the Muhammadiyah Committee for Calls to Charity in Yogyakarta. It called on people to remember Allah often, for example by sticking the words '*lailahailallah*' (no god but Allah) on people's homes, and also calming themselves down by reading words of wisdom. The committee also advised Muslims to read the prayer that was relevant to the so-called '*waktoe riboet*' or '*waktoe bingoeng-bingoeng*' (chaotic times), namely the prayer recited by Prophet Yunus while in the belly of a whale, a prayer intended to ask God for patience in facing severe problems.<sup>90</sup> This prayer is found in Surah Al-Anbya: 87 ('There is no god worthy of worship except You. Glory be to You! I have certainly done wrong').<sup>91</sup>

## H. Concluding Remarks

This research aimed to examine Muhammadiyah's perspectives on the protection of civilians during one of the most important events in modern Indonesian history, the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Dutch East Indies from 1941-1942. Based on an analysis of the weekly magazine published by the Surakarta branch of Muhammadiyah, *Adil*, especially in the December 1941-February 1942 editions, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah paid great attention to protecting civilians during the Japanese invasion. The research shows that Muhammadiyah strongly emphasized that during the war the civilians must be protected, both physically and mentally, through various measures that could reduce the danger of war for civilians.

Muhammadiyah, *Adil*, and individuals affiliated with Muhammadiyah believed the Japanese invasion, driven by the Japanese ambition to

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Mustafa Khattab (tran.), "Surah Al-Anbya-87", *Quran.com*, <https://quran.com/21?startingVerse=87>, accessed 11 Oct 2021.

conquer other areas and exploit the natural resources of the Dutch East Indies, killed and injured many innocent people and destroyed property. Meanwhile, some natives of the Dutch East Indies still ignored the dangers of war due to their ignorance of global geopolitical developments, about the dire consequences of Japanese attacks and about the ways to protect themselves and their communities from Japanese bombing. Others were overly confident that Japanese troops would never reach Java. The characteristics of Muhammadiyah as an Islamic organization, which since its inception had been committed to efforts to protect and empower native people as well as its knowledge of the destruction, death, and other dreadful impacts caused by the Japanese invasion, encouraged Muhammadiyah to consider that efforts to protect civilians were a crucial act to do during the Japanese invasion.

There were several key Muhammadiyah ideas about protecting civilians. First, the indigenous civilians of the Dutch East Indies, most of whom were illiterate and lacked knowledge, had to realize that in modern wars such as the Japanese invasion, the civilian population was the most vulnerable. Therefore, Muhammadiyah advised the people of the Dutch East Indies to be aware of the potential destruction and death that would occur in the Indies if the Japanese bombarded this area, which in turn encouraged people to look for ways to save themselves. Second, the government, mass organizations and society itself were responsible for protecting civilians from the atrocities of war. Muhammadiyah appreciated the ideas and efforts of the colonial government to protect civilians (for example by building shelters) and called on the people of the Indies to trust and support the government's efforts. Third, every civilian must have spiritual and mental defense to survive the war. Without these strengths, people would easily be panic, stressful and lose their minds, which could have had a negative impact on their safety. Fourth, self-protection efforts must be carried out rationally and based on knowledge. Muhammadiyah explained logically what the impacts of the bomb were, where people could take shelter, what tools could be used to protect themselves, and what had to be done to stay safe during and after bombing raids. Fifth, Muslims of the Dutch East Indies had a responsibility to protect the civilians of the Indies, both Muslims and non-Muslims. By quoting various verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths

of the Prophet, Muhammadiyah convinced the Muslims of the Dutch East Indies that they were a people who had been given a mandate by God as the ones who should be able to provide help to people who were suffering because of war. Muhammadiyah, moreover, constantly emphasized that Muslims must always make *ichthiar* (efforts), and only then they could *tawakkal* (trust in God). Muslims must not just give in to fate. Muhammadiyah actualized its ideas of the protection of civilians by, among others, providing continuous advice to strengthen faith in Allah, holding educational courses on self-protection from air attacks, the establishment of a special committee to persuade the public to jointly protect civilians, and the cancellation of its largest annual public event, the Muhammadiyah congress.

Muhammadiyah used various media and persuasion techniques to convince its members and the public of the Dutch East Indies about the importance of efforts to protect civilians during the Japanese invasion. Print media (e.g., magazines), verbal communication channels (e.g., through lectures and courses), and visual media (e.g., pictures) were utilized to convey stories about the cruelties of the Japanese troops so that the people of the Indies realized that their lives were in danger and therefore every citizen of the Indies would participate in any attempts to save themselves. Various narratives derived from Islamic teachings, history and traditions were discussed to convince the Indies Muslims that they had a religious and historical foundations as a group that was able to make a major contribution to saving human lives during war. Muhammadiyah persuaded every civilian in the Indies, regardless of their religion, gender, and age, to contribute according to their ability, and by following the recommendations of the government, Muhammadiyah and other authorities, to protect themselves and their communities during the war.

This research contributes to the study of International Humanitarian Law, especially by examining the role of Muhammadiyah, the oldest—and at present the largest—modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia which so far has mostly been studied by scholars in terms of its religious, educational, and healthcare activities, in the protection of civilians during an important yet lesser known period in Indonesian history, the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands Indies from late 1941

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to early 1942. This study sheds light on the role of Muhammadiyah in informing, educating, guiding, and helping its members and the Indonesian people in general regarding the protection of civilians in a war that finally overthrew European colonial powers in Southeast Asia, including the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia.

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