

The Rise and Fall of Muslim States in The Nusantara (Malay World)

News:

On 28th Rajab 1342H (3rd March 1924), the Uthmani Khilafah fell, ending a governance system that had unified and protected the Muslim Ummah for over 13 centuries. This monumental event deeply impacted the Malay world, as the Khilafah had long served as a symbol of Islamic authority and solidarity. The Malay states derived strength and guidance from their connection to the Khilafah. The sultanates of Johor, Aceh, and Brunei upheld Islamic governance and formed alliances with the Uthmani Khilafah, fostering a sense of global Muslim unity.

Comment:

The history of the Malay sultanates highlights the profound impact of Islam on the region's political, economic, and social structures. The Malacca Sultanate for example, exemplified how Sharia could be institutionalized to build a prosperous and unified civilization. By adopting laws like the *Hukum Kanun Melaka* and *Undang-Undang Laut Melaka*, Malacca established a framework that governed trade, diplomacy, and administration in line with Islamic principles. This had attracted Muslim merchants from across the globe and cemented the region's status as a significant hub in the Islamic world.

Following Malacca's fall to the Portuguese in 1511, sultanates like Johor, Aceh, and Brunei took on the mantle of Islamic leadership in the Nusantara. These states not only maintained Islamic governance but also established strategic relationships with the Uthmani Khilafah. Aceh, for instance, received military and logistical support from the Khilafah during its campaigns against Portuguese colonization. In 1568, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah of Aceh led a significant offensive against the Portuguese in Malacca with assistance from the Khilafah, though the campaign ultimately failed. Similarly, the Brunei Sultanate benefited from the aid of the Khilafah in resisting Spanish aggression in 1578. These alliances demonstrated the strength of global Muslim solidarity, where the Uthmani Khilafah acted as a protective umbrella for Muslim nations worldwide.

The relationship between the Malay states and the Uthmani Khilafah was not merely one of military cooperation. It symbolized a shared commitment to preserving Islamic governance and resisting external threats. The Khilafah's recognition of the Malay sultans as legitimate Islamic rulers strengthened Nusantara's connection to the broader Ummah, fostering unity of faith and politics. The support provided by the Khilafah reinforced the Malay states' resilience against colonial forces, ensuring the preservation of Islamic identity in the region. However, the eventual decline of both the Uthmani Khilafah and the Malay sultanates underscores the perils of disunity and reliance on external powers without internal consolidation. The fall of the Khilafah left the Muslim world fragmented and vulnerable, a reality that deeply affected the Malay states. With the loss of a central Islamic authority, the Malay world struggled to resist the encroachment of colonial powers like Portugal, Spain, and later Britain and The Netherlands.

The rise and fall of the Muslim states in the Nusantara serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of unity and adherence to Islam. The relationship between the Malay states and the Uthmani Khilafah demonstrates how global Muslim solidarity can strengthen and protect individual nations. As Umar Al-Khattab once remarked, "We are a people whom Allah has honored with Islam. If we seek honor in anything else, Allah will humiliate us." This profound wisdom emphasizes the need for Muslims to remain steadfast in their faith and united in their purpose.

In conclusion, the legacy of Islam in the Nusantara is a testament to the transformative power of faith and unity. The connections between the Malay states and the Uthmani Khilafah exemplify how Islamic governance and solidarity can lead to resilience and prosperity. At the same time, the decline of these institutions serves as a cautionary tale, urging contemporary Muslims to learn from the past and prioritize Islam in addressing modern challenges.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Dr. Mohammad – Malaysia