



Research Article

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Received: 24 January 2023 / Accepted: 12 April 2023 / Published: 5 May 2023

## The Dakwah Communication Model of the Post-Persecution Muslim Minority: The Case of the Restoration of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation (JAI)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2023-0077>

### Abstract

Ahmadiyya is a Muslim minority with distinctive teachings contradictory to mainstream Islam that has been entrenched in Indonesia since the Dutch colonial era. After independence, the sect enjoyed the freedom of religion and belief under the law's guarantee and the state's power during the reign of the first two presidents (1945-1998). However, the power of orthodox Muslims strengthened during the Reformation Order, and in 2005, a fatwa regarding the heresy of the Ahmadiyya was issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This was followed by the Joint Decree of the Three High State Institutions, which limited the movement of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation (JAI). Regional regulations emerged, followed by a violent crusade against this sect. Consequently, this research examined the communication model used by the Ahmadiyya Muslim minority to preach post-persecution. The qualitative methods employed for data collection were observation, interviews, and documentation, which intensively occurred in October-December 2019 and August 2022. The respondents were six JAI central/branch managers and three missionaries. The research results show that the Ahmadiyya teachings naming Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (MGA) as a prophet are the trigger for persecution. Although orthodox Muslims allow the unhindered performance of activities, providing Ahmadiyya is labeled a religion and not a part of Islam, JAI refused because it believes MGA is the non-shari'at Prophet. After the persecution, JAI proposed four models of dakwah communication that internally strengthen Ahmadi beliefs and invite sympathy and new converts.

**Keywords:** Jemaat Ahmadiyya Indonesia (JAI), Ahmadi, mainstream Muslims, persecution, JAI restoration, dakwah (missionary) communication model

## 1. Introduction

Ahmadiyya, in full *al-Jamā'ah al-Islāmīyah al-Aḥmadiyyah* (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community), is the most persecuted Islamic sect amid the hegemony of Sunni Muslims in the world, particularly Pakistan (Khan, 2003; Malik, 2013; Saeed, 2012; Jayanto, 2022), Punjab, India (Ahmad, 2013), Africa (Haron, 2018), and Indonesia (Connley, 2016; Alnizar, 2019). Conversely, it has experienced comfort in Western countries, especially Germany (Nijhawan, 2010), the United States (Bowen, 2010), and London, England, the location of its headquarters (Burhani, 2014).

The group was founded in nineteenth-century British India by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (MGA), who identified himself as the Muslim community's long-awaited Imam Mahdi and Messiah. The belief of followers of Ahmadiyya, called Ahmadi, in MGA as a prophet contradicts the faith of mainstream Muslims in Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the last Prophet. This belief has resulted in the rejection of Ahmadiyya by mainstream Muslims to the point of percussion (Malik, 2013). Martin and Nakayama (2004), in *Communication in Contexts, Intercultural Communication in Contexts*, emphasized that religious differences and interpretations are often the roots of cultural conflicts.

Ahmadiyya has been entrenched in Indonesia since the Dutch colonial era. After independence, the sect enjoyed the freedom of religion and belief under the law's guarantee and the state's power during the rule of the first two presidents (1945-1998). However, the power of orthodox Muslims strengthened during the Reformation Order, and in 2005, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued a fatwa regarding the heresy of the Ahmadiyya. This was followed by a Joint Decree of the Three High State Institutions, limiting its movement, as well as the emergence of regional regulations and a violent crusade against this sect.

## 2. Persecution of Ahmadiyya in the Islamic World

The birth of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in India and other Muslim nations occurred when these countries were in a slump and harbored poorly developed science, technology, military, and all fields. Muslims also questioned *khilafiyah*, which refers to differences due to sects and religious beliefs. Conversely, the West had a progressive mindset due to their mastery of science, technology, and the military, leading to their rule over the Muslim nations and the British colonization of India.

The situation of the Indian Muslims worsened, particularly after the Mukhtinya rebellion in 1857 (Ensiklopedia-Islam, 2008). This made the British suspicious and reactionary towards Muslims, unlike the Hindus who cooperated with the colonialists. This is visible in the present condition of the Hindus compared to Indian Muslims, who are increasingly drowning in backwardness and disputes with fellow believers as well as *khilafiyah* issues (id.wikipedia.org, 2019, 2020).

These were the conditions surrounding the birth of the Ahmadiyya sect, which was founded by MGA (1835-1908) in 1889 in British India, precisely Qadyan, Pakistan. From a young age, MGA was discontent with the condition of Muslims, who were backwards and detached from the original teachings of Islam. At the age of 40, he had a revelation and began to identify as Imam Mahdi and Messiah, which was eagerly awaited by Muslims. Ahmadi, followers of Ahmadiyya (Ahmadi-Qadyan), consider MGA a prophet contrary to the belief of mainstream Muslims that Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the last Prophet (Balzani, 2004; Lago, 2011: 312). As a result, the group has been rejected and persecuted by mainstream Muslims since its inception in Qadyan (Dhume, 2017).

Pakistan's constitution defines Ahmadis as non-Muslims. Hundreds of Ahmadis died in the 1953 Lahore and the 1974 Anti-Ahmadiyah riots. Also, the May 2010 attack on the Ahmadi mosque, known as the Lahore Massacre, resulted in the death of 84 worshippers (en.wikipedia.org, 2022). According to some observers, the Pakistani Ahmadis are South Asia's most persecuted religious minority, as the sect has experienced increased violence under the draconian blasphemy laws, including terrorist attacks and the death penalty (Khan, 2003; IRB, 2016; Dhume, 2017; Jayanto, 2022).

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), during its second congress in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, between 22 and 28 December 1985, decided that the Ahmadiyah were apostates that had

departed Islam (MUI, 2005). Indian Muslims also condemned the group as non-Muslims. For instance, the exhibition of the Quran by Ahmadiis at the Delhi Constitution Club was canceled due to protests by mainstream Muslim groups in September 2011. In February 2012, Andhra Pradesh Waqf Council decided to seize the Ahmadi Mosque and graveyard, and in March 2012, the Ahmadi Mosque in Saidabad, Hyderabad, was attacked. There were reports of "communal violence" in September 2015, the kidnapping of Ahmadiyya missionaries by mainstream Muslim groups while operating in towns and villages across India, as well as other forms of violence (IRB, 2015).

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (2021) reported that Ahmadiyya faces persecution and discrimination in various Muslim-majority countries, including Algeria, Pakistan, and Malaysia. The sect has been targeted through hate and violence-inciting speeches, denial of citizenship, restriction of their right to worship, and occasional punishment as blasphemers. In 2010, the Egyptian government detained 9 Ahmadiis under emergency law and subjected them to torture, verbal abuse, beatings, and electric shocks (Christian Today Australia, 2010).

Previously, the Ahmadiyya Headquarters was located in Qadyan (British India) before the movement to Rabwah (Pakistan). In the 1990s, they moved to London (England) due to persecution. There are over 150 million Ahmadiyya members across 213 countries (id.wikipedia.org, 2021).

### 3. Persecution of Ahmadiyya in Indonesia

Ahmadiyya entered Indonesia in 1925 through Sumatra, and the group initially comprised 13 followers in Tapaktuan, Aceh (Crouch, 2011; Burhani, 2014). Subsequently, the movement spread to various provinces, including Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and other islands. In 1928, a cousin to the founder of Nahdhatul Ulama and the son of the founder of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations, established the Indonesian Ahmadiyya. The Dutch East Indies government recognized the existence of the Ahmadiyya in 1930 (Kompas.com, 2021). Presently, the sect has 542 branches with 400,000-500,000 followers (Vaughn, 2011; the ARDA, 2020; en.wikipedia.org, 2022).

After independence, the Ahmadiyya enjoyed the freedom of religion and belief. In 1953, the Decree of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Indonesia No. JA. 5/23/13 (March 13, 1953) confirmed that the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation (JAI) was protected by law (Ahmadiyyah.id, 2022). The first and second presidents (1945-1998) defended the freedom of religion and belief during their reigns. Also, the government ignored the MUI fatwa issued in 1980 regarding the heresy of the Ahmadiyya and the letter sent in 1984 requesting the government to review the 1953 Decree of the Minister of Justice.

During the Reformation Order, the power of orthodox Muslims strengthened, and in 2005, the MUI issued a fatwa regarding the heresy of the Ahmadiyya in support of the 1980 Fatwa (MUI, 2005). This was followed by a Joint Decree of the Minister of Religion, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General, better known as the SKB-2008, which essentially prohibited the JAI from spreading its ideas (SKB-2008).

According to the Equivalent Institute, the execution of Fatwa-MUI-2005 (Alnizar, 2019) resulted in increased violence against Ahmadiyya during the rule of President SBY and a decrease during the reign of President Jokowi. The SKB-2008 was issued under President SBY in 2008, restricting JAI's movement. Violence and Regional Regulations prohibiting the sect activities also came in succession. The Setara Institute reported yearly mass attacks against the congregation, with 15 cases after the Fatwa-MUI-2005, which sharply rose to 238 cases after SKB-2008 (tribunnews.com, 2010; Setara-Institute, 2021).

Since President Jokowi's rule (2014-2024), the frequency and quality of acts of persecution against Ahmadiyya have decreased drastically (Amal, 2020). The treatments proffered by the central and regional governments are essentially different, with the former being firm and the latter making slower and more lenient judgments in defending the rights of minorities (Suryana, 2017).

#### 4. Material and Methods

The research used a qualitative approach, which interprets the views and behaviors of humans in certain situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). People within a specific region are interacted with to understand their perception of their environment (Nasution, 1996). The problem investigated in this research was the restoration of the JAI after its persecution. Borrowing Berger's term (Berger, 1985), elements of anthropology were employed to observe Ahmadiyya citizens, who were considered foreigners, as well as sociology, which regarded these persons as strangers in their community. The research team are lecturers of Communication, Comparative Religion/Madhab, and Islamic Religious Education, who are closely related to the Ahmadiyya Congregation.

The respondents must consist of people with knowledge and experience (DePoy & Gitlin, 2015). This research examined six central/branch managers and three JAI preachers with deep knowledge of Ahmadiyya teachings and the condition of its persecuted congregation. The data of the respondents are presented in the following table.

**Table 1:** Research respondents

No.	Initials name	PB-Grand Manager/PC-Branch Manager/Preacher	Address
1.	PB-Bas	PB - General Manager, <i>Umur kharijiyyah</i> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Bogor
2.	PB-Yen	PB - General Manager, Press Secretary, and Congregation Spokesperson	Jakarta
3.	PB-Sab	PB - General Manager, Preacher Centre	Bandung
4.	PC-Den	PC - Bandung Branch Manager	Bandung
5.	PC-Yus	PC - Depok Branch Manager	Depok
6.	PC-Ded	PC - Bekasi Branch Manager	Bekasi
7.	PC-Asp	PC - Sukabumi Branch Manager	Sukabumi
8.	Mu-Bog	PC - Preacher	Bogor
9.	Mu-Kun	PC - Preacher	Kuningan

Due to difficulty interviewing the managers of Pandeglang (Banten) and Mataram (NTB – West Nusa Tenggara) branches, data were obtained from the central management, which provided information about the congregation and persecution cases in these areas. Intensive research was conducted from October–December 2019 and August 2022.

The data collection techniques used were structured interviews, observations, and documentation studies to explore three main problems:

- a. What are the reasons for the persecution of JAI, and how are its impacts classified?
- b. What is the role of JAI in rehabilitating its existence?
- c. What is JAI's post-persecution organizational communication model?

#### 5. Research Findings

##### 5.1 Causes of Persecution of JAI and Classification of Impacts

The respondents affirmed that the teachings of Nubuwaat (Prophecy) were the main trigger for persecution. Other triggers were teachings about Al-Qaim, Al-Mahdi, and Divine Revelation, which are considered controversial by mainstream Muslims, particularly Wahhabis/Salafis. Following assessments, the impacts were classified into severe, moderate, and mild. The severe category includes killing, expelling congregations from their hometowns, and the destruction of mosques and residents' houses by burning. The moderate or medium class entails the burning/destruction of mosques and the homes of administrators/citizens. Finally, the mild category includes the prohibition of religious activities, minor damage, and the sealing of mosques and Ahmadiyya

religious facilities. The results of interviews with respondents are as follows:

*The Lighter of Persecution*

*PB-Sab: "[...] Anti-Ahmadiyah advocates, particularly the Wahhabis/Salafis, accuse the sect of believing MGA to be the same as Prophet Muhammad PBUH. This baseless accusation is the reason we are persecuted. [...] We have repeatedly explained that MGA is only a prophet who preserves the Islamic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. [...] We believe in his prophethood because the arguments and facts show that he received Divine Revelation as Al-Qaim and Al-Mahdi." (Interview with PB-Sab).*

Other respondents, PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers as PB-Sab but in different words.

The belief in MGA as a Prophet (XIX century) is Ahmadiyya's most controversial teaching. Mainstream Muslims, particularly the Wahhabis/Salafis, reject this teaching because they believe Prophet Muhammad PBUH (seventh century) is the last Prophet, and there is none after him. This is the main reason for the persecution of the Ahmadiyya. Meanwhile, JAI distinguishes between two types of prophethood, the Prophet *shari'at* (bearer of *shari'at*) and *ghair-shari'at* (without *shari'at*). Prophet MGA is *ghair-shari'at*, the preserver of Islamic teachings brought by Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Subsequently, the respondents were questioned about their thoughts regarding acceptance by mainstream Muslims supposing they declared Ahmadiyya as a separate religion, not Islam.

*PB-Sab: "[...] How can we not be Muslim? Our reference is the Quran and authentic hadiths. [...] The only difference is in understanding prophethood. MGA is not a prophet of shari'at, unlike Prophet Muhammad PBUH, and did not bring any new shari'at. [...] However, we also respect the different views of other Muslims." (Interview with PB-Sab).*

Other respondents, PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers as PB-Sab above.

The following answers were given in response to the question of why the organization, by claiming to be Muslim, is rejected, accused of heresy, misleading teachings, and apostasy (renunciation of Islam):

*PB-Sab: "[...] We regret the baseless accusations and lament their unwillingness to understand our argument. [...] We don't want to be persecuted, and desire all Muslims to live peacefully, side by side with us. [...] Our wish is not to label Ahmadiyya as a separate religion. [...] We still maintain that members of this group are Muslim. [...] Prophet Muhammad PBUH also received similar accusations, and these strengthen our faith that our beliefs are true." (Interview with PB-Sab).*

Other respondents: PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers as PB-Sab above.

The respondents affirmed that Ahmadiyya is Islam based on their use of the Quran and authentic hadiths as references. The difference in understanding prophethood was explained by emphasizing that MGA was a *non-shari'at* prophet and the only custodian of Islam was the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. They also declared their respect for the different views of other Muslims. The responses showed that the group is unwilling to designate Ahmadiyya as a religion outside Islam. Although allegations of heresy, misleading beliefs, and apostasy made the sect uncomfortable, they realized it was a risk to their faith. They believed that Prophet Muhammad PBUH also received accusations and this strengthened their belief in Ahmadiyya as true Islam.

*Classification of Persecution by weight*

*Severe*

*PB-Yen: "[...] The events of West Lombok (NTB), Pandeglang (Banten), and East Lombok (NTB) were the worst forms of oppression. [...] The suffering of the Ahmadiyya congregation in NTB began in 1999, during which the Lombok Ahmadiyya were attacked by people who wanted the group to renounce its*

faith. The Ahmadiyya Mosque in Bayan (West Lombok) was burned, leading to the death of a resident and the eviction of all other citizens. [...] In 2001, the Ahmadiyya Pancor (East Lombok) became the target of attacks, and the people were also forced to leave their hometowns. [...] Since then, the Ahmadiyya congregation has moved about Lombok and Sumbawa to earn a living. [...] Although some family heads had bought land and built houses in the Ketapang area, the mob again targeted their homes. [...] In 2006, about 30 families of the Ketapang Village (West Lombok) residents were evicted and placed in barracks measuring 2x3 meters and 3x3 meters in Mataram (NTB), though they owned houses and agricultural lands in their hometowns.

[...] Ahmadiyya entered Cikeusik Pandeglang (Banten) in 1994, and their activities were run peacefully. [...] In 2011 (February 11, 2011), thousands of FPI (Frant Defenders of Islam) mobs attacked the residents in Cikeusik (Pandeglang). Three Ahmadis were brutally murdered, five were hospitalized, and several houses, alongside two cars and motorbikes, were burned. [...] The local government promised to investigate the perpetrators of violence thoroughly, [...] and 10 days later (February 21, 2011), the Regent of Pandeglang issued a decree banning Ahmadiyya.

[...] On 19-20 May 2018, the residents of Sakra Timur (East Lombok) were attacked by a mob. The three attacks resulted in damage to 8 houses, four motorbikes, and the displacement of about 24 families to the Transito (Mataram) shelter." (Interview with PB-Yen).

#### Medium

Mu-Kun: "[...] Manis Lor Kuningan Village (West Java) has a population of over 3,000, of which 80% are Ahmadiyya. This village has one mosque (Masjid An-Nur) and seven prayer rooms, where Ahmadi residents from the neighboring village, Manis Kidul, often conduct their religious activities. [...] In 2002, the local government banned Ahmadiyya religious activities in the Kuningan Regency area, including marriage registration. [...] The mosque was sealed by the local government in 2004, though residents were able to perform their five daily prayers and recitations. [...] In 2007, the mosque was attacked, leading to its closure for a second time as well as the sealing of three prayer rooms. [...] A few days later, the disgruntled mob attacked again, destroying 14 houses and one prayer room, where the dome and carpet were burned. [...] In 2010, the mosque and prayer rooms were vandalized and burned to char. One of the residents was seriously injured, while six others had minor knife stab injuries. However, the attackers were unrecognized because they were foreigners" (Interview with Mu-Kun).

PC-Asp: "[...] Parakan Salak Sukabumi (West Java) has 220 Ahmadiyya congregations. The worshippers built the Al-Furqon Mosque and a madrasa (religious school) and lived peacefully with non-Ahmadi people. [...] After a mob burned down the mosque on April 28, 2008, as well as the madrasa [...], religious activities were held in homes, while the Fajr prayer was conducted on the remains of the mosque. [...] Apparently, some public members hated our performance of the prayer, and on July 25, 2016, the local government sealed the burned mosque." (Interview with PC-Asp).

PB-Bas (Mu-Bog): "[...] Cisalada village, Bogor (West Java), is the first Ahmadiyya area in Indonesia. The residents of this village have converted to Ahmadiyya since 1934, and these beliefs were imitated by four other villages in Bogor. One of the monuments in this region is the At-Taufik Mosque, which was established in 1935. [...] The number of Ahmadis in Cisalada village at the time of this research was 350, plus 25 believers banished from other villages. [...] On October 1, 2010, a mob comprising thousands stormed the village, destroying the kindergarten-elementary school building, the official house of the missionary, and the mosque, as well as five houses, a car, and a motorbike. Our children were intimidated by their teachers and school friends, ridiculed, and even stoned." (Interview with PB-Bas).

#### Light classification persecution

PC-Den: "[...] On October 25, 2012, the Ahmadiyya mosque, An-Nasir, in Astanaanyar Bandung (West Java) was damaged by FPI. They came screaming and slammed items around the mosque, breaking two windows with blocks. [...] The police were on guard around the mosque, including representatives of the sect and the masses. Subsequently, the police arrived, and a day after, mediated between the representatives and the crowd at the police station. Regardless, congregational prayers and recitations are still conducted in mosques." (Interview with PC-Den).



PC-Yus: "[...] Since the Al-Hidayah Mosque in Sawangan Depok (West Java) was established in 1990, it experienced peaceful religious activities and life. [...] After the issuance of the 2008 decree, the community began to hinder religious activities. In 2013, the local government sealed the mosque, though it was still used for performing the five daily congregational prayers and recitations. [...] Although the sealing was repeated up to six times, we kept using the mosque because it's our right." (Interview with PC-Yus).

PC-Ded: "[...] On April 4, 2013, 36 persons worshiped at the Al-Misbah Mosque, located in Pondok Gede Bekasi, West Java. These worshippers were evicted by local government officials but they continued to worship. As a result, the mosque was sealed, while the congregation performed a prayer in the mosque's courtyard in front of the police. [...] The people have continued to perform their religious activities, despite the closure of the mosque again sealed on May 16, 2014." (Interview with PC-Ded).

The persecution of the Ahmadiyya can be classified into three groups, namely severe, moderate, and light. The perpetrators consist of parties from outside the region, highly organized under the command of FPI or similar intolerant mass organizations (the government dissolved FPI on June 21, 2019). The suffering and persecution of the Ahmadiyya congregation began during the 1999 Reformation Era in Bayan (Lombok Barat). The Ahmadiyya Mosque was burned, the worshippers were forcibly evicted, and one death was recorded. In 2001, Ahmadiyya Pancor (East Lombok) was attacked, and the residents were also forced to leave their hometowns. Since then, the NTB Ahmadiyya congregation has moved around Lombok and Sumbawa to earn a living. Even the land and houses that were subsequently acquired by some family heads in the Ketapang Mataram (NTB) area were attacked by mobs.

The mass riots from 2008 to 2019, particularly after the Fatwa-MUI-2005 and the SKB-2008, were categorized into severe, moderate, and mild. Severe persecution involved the murder and expulsion of residents, as well as the burning of mosques and houses owned by residents, which occurred in Pandeglang Banten (2011) and East Lombok NTB (2018). Moderate persecution entailed the burning of mosques, madrasas, and houses of residents, which ensued in Sukabumi (2008), Kuningan (2010), and Bogor (2010). Meanwhile, light persecution involved minor destruction of religious facilities, sealing of mosques, and prohibition of open religious activities, which occurred in Bandung (2012), Depok (2013), and Bekasi (2013). All these events transpired in West Java. The cases of severe persecution occurred in the provinces of NTB and Banten, while moderate and mild persecution ensued in the West Java area.

## 5.2 The role of JAI in rehabilitating the existence of Ahmadis and related organizations

The respondents stated that the existence of Ahmadi and JAI was shaken and persecuted because they had been forced to abandon their beliefs or convert to new religions, which was refused. Consequently, rehabilitation is primarily aimed at strengthening the faith of Ahmadis.

### *Rehabilitating the existence of Ahmadis*

PB-Sab: "[...] Although anti-Ahmadiyya parties are generally intolerant, harassing, and persecutory, some groups defend our rights. The strength of faith and defense is the basis of our continued existence. [...] After the issuance of the Fatwa-MUI-2005 and SKB-2008 and the peak of violence against mosques, madrasas, and Ahmadis in many JAI branches, we conducted intensive tarbiyah (Islamic education). [...] Families whose members were brutally murdered and residents who were expelled from their hometowns were the priority of tarbiyah. We have provided economic support to these victims as well as religious guidance by preaching from the book of Tiryâq al-Qulûb that life is filled with trials and struggles. [...] The book is also the main material for recitations in all JAI branches and congregational communities. Alhamdulillah, many Ahmadis feel stronger in their faith and belief." (Interview with PB-Sab).

Other respondents: PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers.

The intolerance, harassment, and persecution of JAI and Ahmadis by opposing groups were also reported. In addition, the respondents acknowledged other parties that defended the rights of their members, stating the strength of faith and defense as the essential capital of their beliefs.

The Fatwa-MUI-2005 and the SKB-2008 were perceived as ostracizing and violence-inciting against the Ahmadis. In many JAI branches, 2011 was the peak of violence against mosques, madrasas, and worshippers.

Hence, the respondents conducted intensive *tarbiyah* to rehabilitate its citizens, while prioritizing Ahmadi families whose relatives were brutally murdered and persons expelled from their hometowns. They received economic compensation and religious motivation by holding recitations of the book *Tiryâq al-Qulûb*, with the main message that life is laden with trials and struggles. This book is the primary material for recitation in all JAI branches and even small congregational communities. According to respondents, this rehabilitation increases the assertiveness of Ahmadis in their faith and belief.

The tendency of believers to leave the faith after persecution was also questioned.

*PB-Sab: "[...] Some worshippers indeed left. Some persons converted because of economic factors as they worked for Ahmadi employers and returned to their original beliefs after leaving their jobs. [...] However, those who joined because of spiritual reasons, not economic factors, were more in the faith. [...] We have noted that more people are converting to Ahmadiyya." (Interview with PB-Sab).*

Other respondents: PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers. Respondent Mu-Bog added, "[...] a non-Ahmadi wife was married to an Ahmadi man and converted to his beliefs. After the divorce, his wife returned to her original faith." (Interview with Mu-Bog).

The respondents confirmed that several residents left Ahmadiyya after persecution. This particularly involved converts due to economic factors or marital relations, who returned to their original beliefs after leaving the employ of their Ahmadi employers or a divorce. Conversely, persons who joined the faith due to spiritual reasons, not economic factors or marriage/divorce relationships, are more solid Ahmadi believers. They also noted more new entries than departures.

### 5.3 JAI's post-persecution organizational communication model

This research discovered four models of post-persecution organizational communication used by JAI, namely accommodative, collaborative, compromising, and competitive.

#### *Accommodative communication model*

*PB-Bas: "[...] We have good relations with the (central) and local governments that protect JAI. The sect adheres to SKB-2008. [...] It does not spread the belief in MGA as a non-shari'ah prophet to the public but strengthens the faith of the Ahmadis. [...] About 80 new prospective preachers and 30 Quran memorization students are trained annually. [...] In times of persecution, we obey Huzur, who instructed "Love for all hatred for none." [...] The group does not retaliate but only engages in legal defense via Humanitarian Institutions, Legal Aid Agencies, and the police." (Interview with PB-Bas). Respondents PB-Yen and PB-Sab shared the same opinion as PB-Bas.*

The respondents also enquired about the aim of JAI preaching, either believers or non-Ahmadi.

*PB-Sab: "[...] The existence of new Ahmadis is not because of invitation, as the sect obeys SKB-2008. These persons joined the faith because of their quest and consciously declared themselves to be Ahmadiyah. [...] They read social media articles about MGA and Ahmadiyah teachings, and others were curious about the persecution of the group and joined the faith after reading literature. More than 300 people joined the group per month between March and August 2022, making a total of over 3,600 people annually, compared to 1,235 new converts per year before and recently after the issuance of the Fatwa-MUI-2005 and SKB-2008" (Interview with PB-Sab). Respondents PB-Bas, PB-Yen, Mu-Bog, and Mu-Kun*



had similar answers as PB-Sab.

Another respondent stated that "[...] people converted to Ahmadiyya in our area because they read articles about MGA and the teachings on social media. Some asked their acquaintances questions. [...] They were interested and came to JAI many times. Subsequently, interested persons ask for Bai'at to become Ahmadi, showing that new converts are the ones who actively come to us." (Interviews with Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp)

#### *Collaborative communication model*

PB-Bas: "[...] We mapped out the defenders and oppositions of Ahmadiyya. The collaborative communication model is used to interact with open and tolerant parties, particularly NU, Banser, and Ansar. [...] At the "7th International Conference: Religious Freedom in Islam" on May 17, 2019, the PBNU Chairman, Said Aqil Siraj, invited dialogue and communication between the respondents and non-Ahmadiyya. This invitation was honored by our Amir, who visited the PBNU office for humanitarian cooperation on December 18, 2019. Banser and Ansar often protect the group, and during humanitarian disasters, Lajnah Imaillah (the women's wing of the Ahmadi) collaborates with Fatayat NU to help victims" (Interview with PB-Bas).

Mu-Kun: "[...] The social relations between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi residents in Manislor Kuningan Village are quite good. [...] Minor conflicts occur, particularly among village elites, because of other differences besides theology. Regardless, Ahmadi always win the battle during local political moments, such as village head elections. [...] The conflict is moderate because the local government complicates the process of issuing ID cards and the KUA/Office of Religious Affairs declines marriage certificates to residents. [...] Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Manislors maintain good relations during the nitip tradition rites through the voluntary donation of building materials, such as stone, sand, cement, wood, and others to construct houses. There is also good cooperation during daily activities, such as fieldwork, sports, and inter-village sports competitions" (Interview with Mu-Kun).

PC-Den: "[...] Despite the small explosions and anti-Ahmadiyya groups from outside the village, the cooperation between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi in Tenjowaringin Salawu Village and Cipakat (Tasikmalaya) is excellent. [...] Tasikmalaya JAI owns several schools, including SMA Plus al-Wahid, Tenjowaringin Village, Salawu District, and appointed NU followers to become teachers" (Interview with PC-Den).

#### *Compromising communication model*

PB-Yen: "[...] Since 2010, thousands of our residents in Manislor (Kuningan) have had difficulty obtaining ID cards. The Kuningan Regency Population and Civil Registry Office issued Family Cards for Ahmadiyya residents several years ago. [...] Our members are forced to marry in other areas to obtain rights as citizens." (Interview with PB-Yen).

PB-Sab: "[...] We regret that many local governments refuse our citizens the right to ID cards and/or marriage certificates. [...] A certain KUA refuses to provide marriage certificates because our residents lack ID cards, which is a result of difficulties caused by the local government. [...] Even members with ID cards have difficulty obtaining marriage certificates. In Manis Purwakarta, the residents obtained certificates after receiving assistance from the Bandung Legal Aid Institute. [...] Those in Tasikmalaya City had to marry in Purwokerto (Central Java) because the local government in that region acted fairly towards Ahmadi." (Interview with PB-Sab).

Other respondents: PB-Bas, Mu-Bog, Mu-Kun, PC-Den, PC-Yus, PC-Ded, and PC-Asp, gave similar answers.

#### *Competitive communication model*

PB-Bas: "[...] We pioneer humanity-focused programs and cleaned the city without using the JAI flag. [...] Every Sunday morning, we conduct medical tests, checking blood pressure and heart rates, as well as cheap book exchanges at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta. [...] In addition, our members provide social assistance, cheap necessities, and eye cornea donations from Ahmadi volunteers." (Interview with PB-Sab).

Following the 2008 SKB, the respondents implemented four models of da'wah communication. First, the central and local governments are tolerant, and respondents communicate accommodatively. They obey the 2008 SKB as well as Huzur (Worldwide Ahmadiyya Imam), who instructed, "Love for all hatred for none," and urged the sect to refrain from retaliation. Instead, they utilize legal defense mechanisms by communicating accommodatively with Humanitarian Institutions (Komnas HAM and Komnas Perempuan), Legal Aid Institutions, and the police. The respondents also strengthen the beliefs of their citizens by training 80 prospective preachers and 30 persons to memorize the Quran. As a result, the number of Ahmadi is growing, indicated by an increase of 1,800 new residents in March-August 2022, or 3,600 per year. This is in contrast to 2001-2010, where only 1,235 new converts were recorded annually.

Second, the group engages in communicative collaboration with open and tolerant parties, such as NU, Banser, and Ansar. At the "7th International Conference: Religious Freedom in Islam" on May 17, 2019, the PBNU Chairman Said Aqil Siraj invited the respondents to dialogue and communicate with non-Ahmadiyah. On December 18, 2019, Amir JAI honored the invitation and visited the PBNU office for humanitarian cooperation. The respondents also communicate collaboratively with Banser and Ansar because these two mass organizations defend the Ahmadiyah. Lajnah Imaillah (the women's wing of the Ahmadi) often collaborates to help humanitarian disaster victims with Fatayat NU. The respondents emphasized that their citizens maintained good relations with non-Ahmadi residents in persecution-intensive areas through various methods, such as the *nitip* tradition in the construction of houses.

Third, compromising communication with local governments. The residents are expected to fulfill certain obligations when required to obtain ID cards and marriage certificates. In difficult situations, the respondents ask for legal assistance from the Constitutional Court or the Legal Aid Institute or are asked to marry in more tolerant areas.

Fourth is competitive communication, namely social and humanitarian activities. The respondents initiated humanity-focused and city cleaning programs without using the JAI flag. Every Sunday morning, they hold medical tests, check blood pressure and heart rates, and perform cheap book exchanges at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout, Jakarta. The respondents also provided social assistance, affordable necessities, and eye cornea donations from Ahmadi volunteers.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The main trigger for the persecution of Ahmadiyya is the Nubuwaat teachings (Prophecy), namely MGA as a Prophet (non-*shari'at*). The impact classification is severe, moderate, and mild.

Theoretically, the existence of a non-*shari'at* prophet is *ikhtilaf*. Ibn Araby mentioned two types of prophethood, namely legislative, which is appointed by Allah through the angel Gabriel, and general, a saint who attains the dignity of a prophet. The legislative prophethood has been closed by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, while the general prophethood is incomplete (Takeshita, 2005: 145). Shaikh Habib Luthfi (2012), Chairman of the Indonesian Mu'tabarah Tarekat, quoted a hadith: "*ulama'i ka an-nabi bani isra'il*" (ulama from among my ummah like the prophets among the children of Israel). The name of a general Prophet or an Ulama who occupied such high dignity was not mentioned. The Shi'a believe that their Imams have prophetic knowledge because they succeeded Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Zulkifli, 2009; Siradj, 2013; Almakin, 2017). NU respects Shia Imams, and even the Murshid Gurus accord them regard using a chain of *tarekat* or Sufi order lineages (Khotimah, 2014; Yahya et al., 2022). Meanwhile, mainstream Muslims reject the existence of prophets after Prophet Muhammad PBUH (MUI-2005, SKB-2008). Hence, they persecute Ahmadiyya in various countries (Khan, 2003; Balzani, 2004; Christian Today Australia, 2010; Logo, 2011: 312; IRB, 2015, 2016; Dhume, 2017; The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2021; Jayanto, 2022), including Indonesia (tribunnews.com, 2010; Suryana, 2017; Alnizar, 2019).

The persecutors of Ahmadiyya are Wahabi/Salafi extremists from outside the region, such as FPI and other similar mass organizations (Mudzakkir, 2011; Hakim, 2012; Connely, 2016; Yosarie et al.,

2021). Wahhabis/Salafis also persecute Shias as other Muslim minorities in various nations (Ismail, 2012; Musa, 2013; Khaleeli, 2016; Mirza, 2017a, 2017b) as well as Indonesia (Wahid, 2014; Suryana, 2017; Olsson, 2020; Yahya & Rahmat, 2021; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Masduki et al., 2022). They even reject Sufism (Wagemakers, 2017; Rahmat & Yahya, 2021; Munawar et al., 2021; Yahya et al., 2022; Fahrudin et al., 2022). The Shiites are more fortunate because (1) NU and Muhammadiyah consider Shia-Sunni as Muslim (Siradj, 2013; Syamsuddin, 2017), (2) MUI only warns of the development of extreme Shia (Junaidi, 2015), and (3) the sect has a reasonably strong backing country, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the World Conference of Scholars in Amman, Jordan, determined that Shiites and Sunnis are both Muslim groups (Risalah-Amman, 2005). Also, the Sufis are fortunate because NU oversees the *tarekat*, and the belief is justified by the Muhammadiyah (Beck, 2014; Yahya et al., 2022). The main assets of the Ahmadiyya congregation in Indonesia are (1) the Decree of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Indonesia No. JA. 5/23/13 (March 13, 1953), which confirmed that JAI was protected by law (Ahmadiyah.id, 2022), (2) NU, Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, which protects their human rights (Ahmad, 2010), and (3) Legal and humanitarian institutions that defend their religious beliefs and rights (Ummah, 2016; Yosarie et al., 2021).

The most massive persecution by Muslim extremists occurred after Fatwa-MUI-2005 and SKB-2008 were issued, causing intolerant local governments to publish decrees prohibiting JAI (Yosarie et al., 2021). For comparison, there were 15 cases of persecution in 2007, which increased to 238 after SKB-2008 (tribunnews.com, 2010). These cases can be categorized into severe, moderate, and mild. The following years were characterized by light and moderate persecution, and the frequency and quality of these acts have decreased drastically since the rule of President Jokowi (2014-present) (Amal, 2020). Meanwhile, the persecution of Ahmadiyya is perpetrated by extremist Muslims from outside the region (Hakim, 2012; Fatoni, 2018). This implies that Muslims within the same area do not question their beliefs, particularly because many local governments protect their rights (Fatoni, 2018; Yosarie et al., 2021). Regional MUIs, such as Semarang City, involve the Ahmadiyya (Yosarie et al., 2021), and the local people, even at the location of persecution, are friendly with the sect (Sulistyati, 2017; Fatoni, 2018).

After its persecution, JAI implemented four communication models to maintain its existence and strengthen its members' beliefs, rather than preach to non-Ahmadi communities. The accommodative model was used to interact with the tolerant central and local governments. JAI obeyed Huzur, who instructed, "Love for all, hatred for none." The organization held recitations of the book of *Tiryāq al-Qulūb* for persecuted members, with the main message that all facets of life are filled with trials and struggles. This book is the primary material for recitation in all JAI branches as well as congregational communities. As a result, Ahmadiis feel more assertive in their faith and belief. The persecution of the group, which is similar to the act experienced by Prophet Muhammad PBUH and MGA, serves as a motivation and has facilitated an increase in the number of Ahmadiis. This is not due to evangelism, as JAI has consistently obeyed the SKB-2008 and refrained from preaching to non-believers. The addition of new members was precisely due to curiosity about the persecution of the group, which motivated people to read the teachings of MGA and the Ahmadiyya on social media, as well as inquire about the faith from established believers.

Meanwhile, the sect conducts collaborative communication with open and tolerant Islamic organizations, such as NU, Banser, Ansar, and Fatayat. At the "7th International Conference: Religious Freedom in Islam" on May 17, 2019, the PBNU Chairman, Said Aqil Siraj, invited JAI to dialogue, communicate, and cooperate in the field of work and humanity with non-Ahmadiyya groups, particularly NU. Based on this invitation, Amir JAI visited the PBNU office for humanitarian cooperation on December 18, 2019. Banser and Ansar often assist JAI, and Fatayat NU collaborates with Lajnah Imaillah (the women's wing of the Ahmadi) to help victims of humanitarian disasters. In areas of persecution, the organization encourages its citizens to maintain good relations with non-Ahmadi residents. For example, JAI has schools in Tasikmalaya, such as SMA Plus al-Wahid in Tenjowaringin, where its schoolteachers include believers from NU circles. The sect also preserves the *nitip* tradition in Kuningan by offering voluntary donations of building materials like stone, sand,

cement, wood, and others, for the construction of houses.

In its engagement with the local government, mainly village and sub-district heads as well as KUA, JAI employs the compromising communication model. The members are expected to fulfill certain obligations to obtain ID cards from the village, and in situations where complications abound, the group will seek legal assistance from the Constitutional Court. Conversely, difficulties obtaining marriage certificates from the KUA are resolved by asking the Legal Aid Institute for help or urging its citizens to marry in lenient areas, such as in Purwokerto Regency.

The last model is competitive communication, namely da'wah, which involves the performance of social and humanitarian activities without using the JAI flag. The humanity first and clean the city programs are pioneered by the organization. Medical tests, such as blood pressure and heart rate examinations every Sunday morning, and cheap book exchanges at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta, are some of the activities performed. JAI provides social assistance, affordable necessities, and eye cornea donations from Ahmadi volunteers. In addition, the Lajnah Imaillah (Ahmadiyah) arm made donations using the Fatayat (NU) flag during natural disasters.

These four communication models have proven to be very effective. This is indicated by an increase from 1,235 new Ahmadiyah converts before and after the issuance of SKB-2008 between 2001-2010 to a monthly average of 300 persons between April-August 2022, or 3,600 people annually.

## 7. Acknowledgment

The authors thank the Rectors Universitas Islam Bandung (UNISBA - Bandung Islamic University), the Rector Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI - Indonesia University of Education), and the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research and Technology, who support and finance this research.

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