

Deconstruction of Patriarchal Authority in Religious Interpretation (Analysis of Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin Umar's Statement on the Monopoly of Religious Interpretation in Indonesia in 2025)

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini menganalisis pernyataan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia, Nasaruddin Umar, pada Maret 2025, yang secara terbuka menolak monopoli tafsir oleh ulama laki-laki dan mengakui adanya bias patriarkal dalam struktur bahasa Arab dan praktik tafsir Islam. Dengan pendekatan teori power atau knowledge dari Michel Foucault, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pernyataan tersebut berfungsi sebagai intervensi wacana penting yang mampu menggeser dominasi epistemik tafsir keagamaan yang patriarkal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa negara berperan aktif dalam membongkar otoritas tunggal tafsir dan memberi legitimasi simbolik bagi keterlibatan perempuan dalam proses produksi pengetahuan keagamaan, meskipun belum ada implementasi kebijakan yang konkret secara menyeluruh, pernyataan ini membuka ruang diskursif bagi perubahan struktural yang lebih inklusif di masa depan, seperti reformasi kurikulum tafsir, partisipasi perempuan dalam forum bahtsul masā'il, serta penguatan tafsir berbasis pengalaman perempuan. Pernyataan Menag dapat dibaca sebagai titik awal menuju reformasi epistemik dalam diskursus Islam Indonesia, yang menandai keterlibatan negara dalam mendorong keadilan gender dalam wacana keislaman kontemporer.

This study analyzes the statement delivered by Indonesia's Minister of Religious Affairs, Nasaruddin Umar, in March 2025, in which he explicitly rejected the monopoly of religious interpretation by male clerics and acknowledged the patriarchal bias embedded within Arabic language and Islamic exegetical traditions. Using Michel Foucault's theory of power atau knowledge, this research finds that the statement acts as a significant discursive intervention capable of disrupting patriarchal epistemic dominance in Islamic interpretation. The findings reveal that the state has begun to take an active role in delegitimizing the sole authority of male interpreters and symbolically legitimizing women's inclusion in religious knowledge production. Although comprehensive policy changes have yet to materialize, the Minister's statement opens a discursive space for structural reform, including potential curricular revisions, female participation in formal religious councils, and the emergence of interpretations grounded in women's experiences. Thus, this moment can be read as the beginning of an epistemic reform within Indonesian Islam, marking the state's involvement in advancing gender justice within contemporary Islamic discourse.



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INTRODUCTION

In the context of Indonesian Muslim society, gender issues remain a complex arena of epistemic struggle, marked by tension between traditional values, religious norms, and the demands of social justice. Women often find themselves in an ambiguous position on one hand, they are symbolically honored in religious texts as mothers, wives, and moral pillars of society, yet on the other hand, they are systematically marginalized from knowledge production, decision-making processes, and religious authority. Inequality is the result of a long history of domination by masculine and patriarchal religious interpretations a system that restricts women's space in interpreting sacred texts and normalizes submission as a natural destiny.

The problem of gender in religious interpretation becomes even more apparent when these interpretations are used as the basis for social and state laws such as in matters of women's leadership, domestic roles, inheritance distribution, and even in narratives about husband-wife relations. Many religious texts are read and taught in ways that perpetuate male dominance, such as the verse "*ar-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala an-nisā'*" which is commonly interpreted as affirming the superiority of men over women. This interpretation does not only exist within academic spaces or Islamic boarding schools, but also becomes a social framework that determines the fate of women in the household, public sphere, and religious institutions. In reality, women are often prohibited from engaging in interpretation because their spiritual and intellectual capacity to approach sacred texts is questioned.

This situation illustrates that the problem of religious interpretation is closely tied to structures of power and access to knowledge production. When interpretation is carried out exclusively by a small group of male scholars with specific social backgrounds and ideological leanings, the resulting religious discourse inevitably reflects their gender biases. Women who attempt to enter this domain are often labeled as deviant, overly liberal, or even as threatening the purity of religion. Thus, the presence of women in the discourse of interpretation concerns a fundamental epistemic right who has the authority to voice the truth, and who is silenced by structures that speak in the name of religion.

Criticism of the dominance of patriarchal interpretation is not new. Female scholars and academics such as Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Riffat Hassan have long highlighted how classical interpretations tend to reproduce patriarchal structures rather than liberate them. The problem does not stop at the production of interpretation alone but lies within the institutions that sustain and disseminate it religious institutions, Islamic education, fatwa councils, and the state's religious bureaucracy. In Indonesia, Islamic feminist discourse is often perceived as foreign, even suspected of being a Western agenda that undermines local values. Yet, gender inequality is undeniably present in everyday religious practice from restricting women's roles in mosques to the absence of female voices in official interpretive forums such as the Indonesian Ulema Council or *bahtsul masā'il* forums in Islamic boarding schools.

In this context, the statement made by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Dr. H. Nasaruddin Umar, on March 4, 2025, during the Studium Generale of the Ulama Cadre Education Program at Istiqlal Mosque (PKU-MI), marked an important moment that deserves to be noted as a critical point in the history of Islamic and gender discourse in Indonesia. In his public lecture, the Minister stated:

"There must be no monopoly of interpretation in understanding the teachings of Islam. Verses such as 'ar-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala an-nisā' have been read in a patriarchal way for far too long. In fact, the Arabic language itself contains patriarchal nuances, which is why we must think critically when reading religious texts. Interpretation must not be carried out by a single type of authority especially not exclusively by men. Women also have the full right to interpret religion."

This statement marks an important shift in the state's official discourse. It represents an acknowledgment of the patriarchal bias embedded in both language and religious interpretation, as well as an institutional call to open up a more democratic and inclusive space for interpretation. Until now, such criticism has mostly been confined to academic discussions or alternative religious activism. Now, that voice is coming from the highest level of a state institution long perceived as conservative on gender issues.

Nasaruddin Umar's statement opens a rhetorical gap within the epistemic structure of Islamic interpretation in Indonesia. He does not reject the religious texts themselves but questions who has the

authority to interpret them and from what position of power those interpretations are constructed. In the context of the nation-state, this statement carries both political and theological significance it challenges the deeply rooted patriarchal structures within interpretive institutions and proposes the inclusion of women in the production of religious meaning as a form of substantive justice. If this call were to be realized through concrete policies such as involving women in national interpretive forums, funding research on feminist exegesis, or reforming the interpretation curriculum in Islamic boarding schools and universities then we would be witnessing the beginning of an epistemic revolution in Indonesian Islam.

To gain a deeper understanding of this dynamic, we need a theoretical framework capable of linking religious interpretation with the structures of power that sustain it. This is where Michel Foucault's theory of power or knowledge becomes relevant. Foucault argues that truth does not exist as something neutral and independent but is instead produced and disseminated through mechanisms of power. In the context of religious interpretation, religious knowledge is legitimized by the institutions and systems that uphold it. Thus, the dominance of male interpretations over women is a manifestation of epistemic power, not merely a difference of opinion. Using this approach, this article will analyze how the 2025 statement of the Minister of Religious Affairs serves as an effort to deconstruct the patriarchal structure of religious interpretation, while simultaneously opening new possibilities for gender justice within Indonesian Islamic discourse.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design in order to explore how the statement of the Minister of Religious Affairs reshapes the discourse of Islamic interpretation and gender justice in Indonesia. The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of discourse, power relations, and institutional dynamics rather than merely measuring variables.

Data collection techniques consist of (1) document analysis, which includes reviewing the transcript of Nasaruddin Umar's public lecture, official statements from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, fatwas, and relevant policy documents; (2) literature review, which draws from academic works on Islamic feminism, tafsir studies, and Michel Foucault's power/knowledge framework; and (3) media analysis, which examines news coverage, social media discussions, and public responses related to the statement to capture its discursive impact.

The data analysis technique follows a Foucauldian discourse analysis, focusing on how power operates through religious interpretation, who is granted authority to speak, and how knowledge is legitimized or contested. The analysis proceeds in three steps: (1) identifying key discursive elements in the Minister's statement, (2) mapping the institutional and social actors involved in supporting or resisting the statement, and (3) interpreting the findings within Foucault's theoretical lens to reveal the underlying power or knowledge dynamics and the potential for gender-just transformation of religious interpretation in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Monopoly of Interpretation and the Absence of Women's Representation in the Production of Religious Knowledge

The monopoly of religious interpretation by male authorities is a historical fact deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, including in the context of contemporary Indonesia. The construction of interpretations of the sacred texts of Islam has historically been dominated by masculine perspectives that emerged from patriarchal social structures. This is clearly evident in formal religious institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), bahtsul masā'il forums in Islamic boarding schools, as well as in the curricula and leadership of Islamic educational institutions—most of which are occupied by men as holders of scholarly authority. This situation results in the systemic exclusion of women's participation as epistemic subjects in the process of producing religious knowledge.

The absence of women's representation within formal clerical structures has a direct impact on the formulation of fatwas, the process of making legal decisions in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), and the

development of religious education curricula, all of which inherently reflect masculine perspectives. As a result, women's experiences have rarely, if ever, been treated as authoritative sources in interpretation, leaving many issues concerning women's bodies, roles, and social experiences underrepresented or unfairly articulated in religious discourse. This inequality creates an epistemological asymmetry that reinforces the hegemony of patriarchal knowledge within the realm of Islamic interpretation and law.

Qur'anic verses that often serve as the foundation for shaping social norms and family law such as Surah An-Nisa: 34, which contains the concept of *qawwāmūn* (male leadership over women), or Surah At-Talaq: 1–2 concerning the right of divorce are frequently read and interpreted in ways that affirm male dominance within household relations. The prevailing interpretations typically emphasize the authority of men as heads of households and decision-makers, while positioning women within a framework of obedience and dependency. Such interpretations construct a hierarchical relational structure that restricts women's agency, both within the domestic sphere and in the public domain.

The issue of the monopoly of interpretation manifests itself in the form of moral surveillance over women's bodies and behavior. Religious discourse concerning the boundaries of *aurat*, the obligation to cover oneself, and the imperative to preserve the purity of women's bodies is almost always framed within a context of control and restriction. Women's bodies become sites of religious interpretation burdened with unequal moral values, rendering women objects of regulation rather than subjects with authority over their own bodies. This condition demonstrates that male dominance in the production of religious knowledge is not merely a quantitative issue but an epistemological problem concerning who is granted the authority to speak on behalf of religion and who is recognized as possessing the power to determine interpretive truth. When only one type of experience namely, male experience is elevated as an authoritative source for interpreting sacred texts, what occurs is a systematic silencing of women's experiences. This, in turn, perpetuates gender-biased interpretations that are difficult to challenge, as they have already been legitimized by dominant religious authorities.

Criticism of the monopoly of masculine interpretation has been voiced by many Muslim women scholars, both in academic settings and through religious activism. Thinkers such as Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Riffat Hassan have demonstrated that women's experiences can and should serve as legitimate sources of knowledge in the construction of interpretation. They emphasize the importance of contextual and ethical hermeneutical approaches to challenge patriarchal dominance in the reading of texts. This effort is not aimed at replacing the old authority with a new one, but rather at opening up epistemic space that allows women's experiences to become an integral part of the process of religious meaning-making.

The absence of women's representation in the production of religious knowledge is not merely a matter of social injustice but also a threat to the diversity and depth of interpretation within Islam. Achieving gender justice in religious discourse requires a paradigm shift that makes room for the plurality of experiences and paves the way for interpretations that are more socially and spiritually just. Only in this way can religion truly become a source of mercy for all humankind, without exception.

The Statement of Minister Nasaruddin Umar as a Turning Point in Gender Discourse within State Institutions

The statement of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Dr. H. Nasaruddin Umar, delivered on March 4, 2025, during a national forum on gender justice in religion, can be marked as a turning point in the shift of religious discourse that has long been dominated by masculine perspectives at the level of state institutions. His assertion that "there must be no monopoly of interpretation" and that "the Arabic language itself contains patriarchal nuances, and interpretation must not be carried out by a single type of authority, especially not only by men" serves as both a critique of patriarchal tendencies in Islamic discourse and a symbolic declaration that the state can no longer turn a blind eye to gender inequality in the production of religious meaning.

This statement represents a discursive intervention by a state actor into a field of religious knowledge that has long been controlled by male clerical elites. Interpretations monopolized by conventional religious authorities have traditionally been regarded as sacred and untouchable, making any criticism of them often branded as an insult to religion. However, with the Minister's statement directly addressing both the structure of language and the authority of interpreters, the legitimacy of masculine-dominated interpretation has been publicly and explicitly challenged. In this context, the statement is not merely the personal opinion of a government official but a symbolic articulation carrying

institutional weight. Through a high-ranking minister, the state is beginning to position itself as a mediator for gender-just religious discourse an unprecedented stance for the Indonesian government.

This declaration also signals a significant transformation in the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia, where the state now acknowledges that Qur'anic interpretation is neither a neutral nor immutable entity but a discursive space that is historical, political, and subject to change according to socio-cultural context. Interpretation is no longer viewed as a divine, final product but as a human construction that is inevitably shaped by subjectivity, including patriarchal bias. This awareness strengthens the position of female scholars and progressive Muslim activists who have long advocated for the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in the interpretive process. If the state begins to voice its support for interpretive inclusivity, then pressure on the monopoly of religious authority becomes increasingly legitimate both politically and morally.

The power of Minister Nasaruddin Umar's statement lies in its symbolic dimension. It critiques and opens the possibility for intervention in religious epistemology from outside the framework of classical ulama structures. The state acts as a cultural actor capable of reproducing religious meaning within the framework of social justice. In doing so, the state begins to take part in deconstructing the patriarchy institutionalized in Islamic interpretation. The statement challenges the status quo of religious authority that has long been considered unquestionable, while simultaneously encouraging the emergence of a new arena in Indonesian Islamic discourse an arena that is inclusive, participatory, and responsive to the complexity of women's experiences.

This statement has the potential to trigger structural reforms within religious educational institutions and fatwa councils. When interpretation is no longer viewed as the monopoly of a single group, the involvement of women as interpretive subjects becomes increasingly possible. Institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council, Fatwa Commissions, and Islamic Higher Education Institutions are now being challenged to open equal spaces of participation for women and other non-traditional actors. This awareness serves as a corrective measure to the long history of women's exclusion from the construction of Islamic knowledge, while simultaneously shaping a new paradigm for reading religious texts one that is more ethical, contextual, and humane.

Deconstructing Interpretive Discourse Through a Gender Perspective

Religious interpretation, particularly within the Islamic tradition, is often perceived by the general public as a sacred and scientific activity, carried out by knowledgeable individuals who are neutral and objective. However, in modern critical studies, this assumption has long been challenged. One of the key figures in dismantling the myth of knowledge's neutrality is Michel Foucault, through his concept of power or knowledge, which asserts that knowledge cannot be separated from power; rather, the two permeate and shape one another.

In the context of religious interpretation, this concept is highly relevant for understanding how religious meanings are constructed, legitimized, and used to maintain certain social structures particularly patriarchal structures. Interpretation becomes part of a discursive field that is bound up with power relations: who is allowed to interpret, who is deemed worthy of understanding the text, and who is excluded from the process of meaning production. Throughout Islamic history, Qur'anic interpretation has been conducted almost exclusively by male scholars from particular social, political, and class backgrounds. The result of this process is the formation of a religious discourse that is hierarchical and masculine in character, where women are frequently portrayed as secondary, complementary, or even as temptresses and sources of chaos.

When male scholars interpret religious texts to claim that women possess deficient intellect and faith, this becomes part of the production of social truth that shapes society's worldview about women. Such statements are not merely rhetorical but have real consequences in the form of legal and social regulations imposed on women's bodies: prohibition from leading prayer, restrictions on leadership roles, discrimination in inheritance rights, and strict surveillance over dress codes and behavior. All of this is rooted in religious interpretation that has become part of what Foucault calls a regime of truth a discursive system produced by and serving the interests of power.

Foucault explains that discourse is an instrument of power, operating through repetition and institutionalization. When patriarchal interpretations are continuously taught in religious schools, preached from pulpits, and printed in religious textbooks, they cease to be merely one interpretation and instead become the only legitimate interpretation. In other words, a naturalization of power occurs: a

patriarchal interpretation that was once simply one possible reading becomes solidified as absolute truth. This is what Foucault refers to as normalization the transformation of something historical and ideological into something that appears natural and final.

Patriarchal interpretation creates what can be called symbolic domination, where women are discriminated against both legally and representationally. In religious texts, women are often portrayed as rebellious (as in the narrative of Eve), emotional beings, or sources of temptation (as in the story of Joseph and Zulaikha). Such interpretations shape the affective structure of society, leading people to unconsciously believe that male domination over women is not injustice but rather the will of God. This is precisely how power operates not through coercion but through the internalization of belief.

Deconstructing patriarchal interpretation means dismantling the entire network of power that sustains it. It is not enough to simply produce alternative interpretations by women; it requires a restructuring of religious education systems, curriculum design, authoritative forums such as fatwa councils and *bahtsul masā'il* assemblies, and even the distribution of power within religious bureaucracies. This project is closely aligned with Foucault's genealogical approach, which does not merely examine what is said but investigates how it is said and within what relations of power. In religious interpretation, women's voices are systematically marginalized through intellectual and spiritual mechanisms that conceal gender bias under the cloak of theological authority.

Through a Foucauldian lens, interpretation is revealed as a site of power struggles. Every meaning produced is the result of epistemic political contestation: who has the right to speak, in which forum, with what logic, and under whose legitimacy. In societies accustomed to viewing patriarchal interpretations as the sole truth, alternative voices (especially those from women or Islamic feminist groups) are often branded as heretical, deviant, or even blasphemous. This is not because their arguments are weak, but because they do not belong to the power structure that legitimizes truth.

In this situation, challenging patriarchal interpretation means confronting a deeply entrenched power network comprising institutions, titles, education systems, and religious authority structures. Therefore, feminist interpretation and gender critique in Islam are not merely academic projects or social activism but part of a larger epistemic struggle: the struggle to transform the regime of truth from one that is exclusive and oppressive into one that is open, critical, and just. Reading interpretation as a site of power allows us to see that changing interpretations cannot be achieved through new narratives alone; it requires transforming the entire discursive system that shapes and sustains them. This means reforming religious education institutions, opening interpretive spaces for women, and supporting state interventions that guarantee gender justice in religious practice as has been signaled, for instance, in the 2025 statement by Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin Umar.

State, Gender, and the Reproduction of Religious Discourse

State involvement in religious affairs, particularly in matters of interpreting religion related to gender justice, has always been a field of contestation between power, discourse, and moral legitimacy. In the context of Indonesia as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, state religious institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs play a strategic role in shaping the direction of Islamic discourse—whether through formal religious education, the empowerment of scholars, or the legitimization of fatwas and interpretations circulating in society. Thus, when Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin Umar publicly stated on March 4, 2025, that “there must be no monopoly of interpretation in understanding Islamic teachings” and that “women also have full rights to interpret religion,” the statement became both a personal voice of a prominent figure and a representation of a state institution with the power to reproduce national religious discourse. In the context of Foucault's theory of power or knowledge, the state in this case acts as a producer of truth that can reshape the discursive field of power within society.

Nasaruddin Umar's statement can be read as opening the path toward the institutionalization of non-patriarchal interpretations within the state. When he asserted that the structure of the Arabic language itself “contains patriarchal nuances” and that interpretations have so far been carried out only by one type of authority men this constitutes a radical critique of the epistemic architecture of Islam that has long been accepted as something “natural.” The state, in this case, acknowledges the existence of bias in the tradition of interpretation and explicitly proposes an alternative, involving women as interpreters, creating space for critical thinking, and rejecting the domination of a singular interpretation.

This is an important step toward epistemic justice in the religious sphere, where women are seen as active subjects in shaping religious meaning.

Symbolic moves such as this do not automatically guarantee sustainable structural change. The long history of state religion relations in Indonesia shows that progressive statements by state figures can quickly be forgotten or retracted when faced with resistance from conservative groups that have a strong mass base and discursive power. In this regard, the potential politicization of gender issues is significant. Many political actors and religious organizations can easily frame the call for alternative interpretations as “religious liberalism,” “westernization,” or “radical feminism,” claiming it to be incompatible with Islamic values. With their access to social media and extensive preaching networks, these groups are capable of producing counter-discourses that may in fact reinforce the position of patriarchal interpretations as the only legitimate ones.

The state's dependence on political compromises with conservative groups places the continuity of the Minister's ideas in a fragile position. Will Nasaruddin Umar's statement be integrated into the Islamic education curriculum? Will there be formal affirmation of women's participation in the Indonesian Ulema Council, *bahtsul masā'il* forums, or ulama cadre training such as PKU-MI? Will the state allocate funding for gender-based interpretation research or support women's *pesantren* that produce independent *tafsir*? These questions cannot be answered merely by looking at the Minister's rhetoric but require a comprehensive analysis of state policy structures and institutional practices.

Another challenge lies in bureaucratic inconsistency in responding to progressive discourse. Officials under the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the provincial or district level may not share the same understanding or commitment to gender issues. In many cases, local officials even become obstacles to inclusive ideas because they tend to preserve patriarchal local culture and hold conservative views. Thus, the greatest challenge may come from within the bureaucracy itself, which is not necessarily ready to support the discursive transformation initiated by its national leader. In this sense, the discourse of gender justice risks being frozen at the symbolic level without ever materializing into concrete social practice.

Nasaruddin Umar's statement also shows that the state is not always synonymous with repressive power in the Foucauldian sense. The state can also be a site of discursive contestation, where counter-discourses emerge from within its own structures. In power or knowledge theory, power does not always come from the outside to repress but circulates through complex networks, including through the agency of individuals within institutions. In this context, Nasaruddin Umar can be seen as an agent seeking to reposition the state as a space for the production of meaning that is more democratic, inclusive, and responsive to gender justice. The Minister's statement is a rhetorical opening that creates space for resistance against the monopoly of interpretation, but this opening will only become a wide path toward transformation if followed by concrete policy commitments, funding, and structural change. Without these, what remains is merely a progressive discourse tied to one individual rather than institutionalized change. Ultimately, as Foucault suggests, truth will never be free from power, but it can always be contested, repositioned, and reformulated within an ever-shifting field of discourse.

CONCLUSION

The statement made by Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin Umar on March 4, 2025, marks a crucial moment in the shifting landscape of religious discourse in Indonesia, particularly in relation to gender justice and the dismantling of interpretive monopolies held by male scholars. Throughout the long history of Islam in Indonesia, the structures of religious authority from clerical hierarchies and fatwa councils to religious education institutions have been dominated by masculine voices, resulting in interpretations that frequently reflect a patriarchal perspective. These interpretations often fail to provide space for women's experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge. Exegeses of verses concerning gender relations, women's rights, and women's bodies have too often been used as tools of social control rather than as avenues for spiritual liberation. Thus, when a state official at the level of the Minister of Religious Affairs voices a critique of the “monopoly of interpretation” and asserts that the Arabic language itself contains “patriarchal nuances,” it shakes the epistemic foundations that have long underpinned the power structures within Islamic interpretation.

The Minister's progressive statement will remain meaningless if it stops at the level of rhetorical symbolism without leading to structural transformation. The state must treat this statement as a starting

point for building a new system that affirms interpretive plurality, particularly by involving women as epistemic subjects. Such efforts must include reforming the religious education curriculum, incorporating women into fatwa and interpretation councils, funding gender-justice-based religious research, and strengthening the institutional capacity of women's pesantren. In the context of Foucault's theory, this change should be read as an attempt to deconstruct the patriarchal "regime of truth" that has been systematically reproduced through the symbolic power of religious institutions. The state, in its strategic position as both producer and manager of public discourse, can act as a facilitator for the transition toward an Islamic discourse that is more just, egalitarian, and contextually grounded. This struggle requires political courage, institutional consistency, and steadfastness in confronting resistance from conservative groups who frequently use religion as a tool to delegitimize change. Without concrete action, the Minister's statement will vanish as a fleeting piece of rhetoric amid the ongoing waves of conservatism that continue to reinforce the dominance of patriarchal interpretations.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study by conducting fieldwork that involves interviews with key stakeholders such as religious leaders, policymakers, and grassroots women's organizations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how discursive shifts influence lived religious practices. It is also recommended that future studies analyze the long-term impact of such statements on Islamic education and legal reforms, thereby contributing to the development of gender-just religious interpretations in Indonesia.

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