

Islamic Studies Review

Foreword

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Seventy years ago, Indonesia hosted one of the most renowned conferences in modern history: the Asia-Africa Conference. Since that pivotal 1955 Bandung moment, numerous commemorative events have been held by governments, academia, and civil society across the globe—particularly in major cities of the Global South. The profound legacies of this moment continue to resonate throughout the world, including within academic discourse, especially in what has increasingly been referred to as “decolonization”—a term coined in Latin America that now echoes across many regions. In academia, decolonization is more than a buzzword. It has become the subject of serious inquiry, with scholars seeking multiple tools—not just a singular approach—to redefine notions of ‘selfhood’ and ‘explanation’ beyond Eurocentric frameworks.

In April 2025, the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia convened an international conference on decolonization from Islamic and other non-Western perspectives. In collaboration with Enstitü Sosyal in Türkiye, this conference aimed to explore these critical issues. The initiative for this conference was launched the previous year to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Spirit. Its modest yet important goal was to disseminate discourses on decolonization, drawing from both Muslim and broader non-Western experiences to Indonesian audiences and their counterparts in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. We hope that such forums will contribute to an ongoing, long-term project—not merely serve as ceremonial reflections on the historic momentum of 1955.

While this journal edition does not contain all the papers presented at the conference, we believe that scholarly interpretations of the Bandung Spirit are urgently needed in Indonesia, given the long-standing neglect of this legacy by political and academic elites, particularly during and after the New Order. Unlike African and Indian scholars—many of whom are well-represented in Euro-



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American academia as part of the diaspora—Indonesian voices have often been marginalized. However, with the emergence of a new generation of Indonesian intellectuals writing in English, both domestically and abroad, we hope to encourage early-career and established scholars, as well as diverse authors, to contribute to topics aligned with our journal’s focus and scope: **“the diversity of Muslim texts and practices across the globe, with a scholarly emphasis on the discourses of decolonization and the Global South.”**

We also express our heartfelt condolences on the passing of Anthony Reid on 8 June 2025 in Canberra. Professor Reid was an eminent historian and generous human being who had a particularly close connection to the people of Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia as a whole. His work profoundly shaped our understanding of the region’s plural traditions, including the history of Islam in Sumatra. His scholarship opened pathways for generations of researchers and contributed to rethinking Southeast Asia as a vibrant and interconnected historical space. In addition, his historical insights have helped generations of scholars understand Southeast Asia from a global perspective—well before global history became a mainstream academic agenda. We at ISR extend our deep condolences to his family, colleagues, and the many students he inspired. His legacy will continue to inform and enrich scholarly inquiry in this region and beyond.

We are pleased to present the seventh issue of Islamic Studies Review (ISR), a journal published by the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia. Since its founding in 2022, ISR has aimed to foster critical and interdisciplinary engagement with Islam and Muslim societies across the globe. With a commitment to de-centering dominant discourses in Islamic studies, the journal actively welcomes diverse scholarly contributions that explore Muslim life and thought through varied approaches and perspectives. This issue continues that mission by presenting a diverse collection of research articles that explore themes such as education, contemporary art, political identity, diaspora dynamics, and gender justice, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the complexities within Muslim societies.

The issue opens with Nuruddin Al Akbar’s study of The Center for Islamic Philosophical Studies and Information (CIPSI) in Indonesia. This article sheds light on how CIPSI challenges epistemic hierarchies by integrating Islamic philosophy with local knowledge traditions. Through translation initiatives,

curricular innovation, and critical engagement with dominant educational paradigms, CIPSI offers a grounded yet globally conscious vision of decolonial education. The study contributes to broader conversations on epistemic justice and reclaims educational discourse as a space of ethical and cultural transformation in the postcolonial Muslim world.

Following this, Nabilla P. Fiandini examines the work of contemporary artist Faisal Kamandobat. Framing his art through the philosophical concept of *Bildung*, the article reveals how Faisal creatively engages with Islamic spirituality, poetry, and abstraction to bridge past and present. His artwork becomes a living dialogue with tradition, resisting static representations and reimagining heritage within the context of modern culture. Fiandini's reflection on art as a space for identity, memory, and spiritual renewal adds a powerful layer to current discussions on Muslim aesthetics and creativity.

Turning to the politics of postcolonial governance, Syarifah Huswatun Miswar presents a comparative analysis of Aceh and Mindanao, two Muslim-majority regions navigating the legacies of colonial disruption within modern nation-states. The article highlights the divergent paths taken: Aceh's formal adoption of Islamic law under special autonomy and Mindanao's protracted negotiations through peace agreements. By unpacking the structural, cultural, and historical elements shaping these trajectories, Miswar offers critical insights into the layered processes of Muslim political subjectivity and autonomy in Southeast Asia.

Efri Arsyad Rizal's article offers a fresh look at the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in the United Kingdom. Through fieldwork among key organizations such as KIBAR, PCINU UK, PCIM Britania & Irlandia, and IIC London, the article explores how diaspora Muslims maintain cultural ties while navigating new social environments. Despite differing ideological leanings, these groups build cooperative networks rooted in the values of Islam Nusantara such as moderation, inclusivity, and dialogue. Rizal's analysis shows how diasporic communities become active agents in shaping how Islam is lived and represented in multicultural societies.

In the final article, Muhammad Nurkhanif tackles the gendered assumptions embedded in the traditional exclusion of women's testimony in *ru'yat al-hilāl* (moon sighting). Drawing on Derrida's deconstruction, sociology of change, and

Islamic astronomy, the study challenges the normative exclusion of women's testimony in this ritual practice. It argues for a reinterpretation of evidentiary validity based on empirical credibility rather than gender, thereby contributing to ongoing efforts in Islamic legal reform and gender equity. The article exemplifies how critical theory and scientific reasoning can inform more inclusive readings of Islamic law.

Complementing the research articles, this issue features three diverse book reviews that reflect the expanding intellectual terrain of contemporary Islamic studies. Wayne Huang reviews *Beyond Debt: Islamic Experiments in Global Finance* by Daromir Rudnyckyj, examining Malaysia's Islamic finance project as an effort to morally and institutionally reframe capitalism beyond Western paradigms. Kante Hamed assesses *Studying Islam in the Arab World: The Rupture Between Religion and the Social Sciences*, authored by Sari Hanafi, which interrogates the tension between elites in the Arab world (plus Malaysia) in the social sciences and humanities and religious scholars, by emphasizing on reformist efforts within traditional Islamic institutions. This book highlights the significance of a multidisciplinary approach, an ethical foundation, and pluralism. Lastly, Rizky Bangun Wibisono reviews *Muslims and Humour: Essays on Comedy, Joking, and Mirth in Contemporary Islamic Contexts*, edited by Bernard Schweizer, Lina Molokotos-Liederman, and Yasmin Amin. This volume dismantles the stereotype of Islam as humorless by exploring comedic expression across religious texts, media, and diaspora performances. While commending its interdisciplinary reach, the review calls attention to the underrepresentation of Southeast Asian contexts and emphasizes the need for more regionally diverse scholarship.

Together, the articles and book reviews in this issue demonstrate the vibrancy and range of contemporary scholarship on Islam. We hope this collection inspires readers to engage more deeply with the ongoing questions, practices, and interpretations that define Muslim life and thought across local, regional, and global contexts.