



## National Post

**Roman Catholic priest, professor, and columnist  
highlights Humanitarian Islam's potential to transform the Muslim world**

*“Humanitarian Islam’ — a religious vision tolerant of pluralism and committed to interreligious harmony, human rights and democracy [has] the potential to change the thinking of hundreds of millions of Muslims in the next generation... It is a development very much worth watching and, at year’s end, a cause for hope”*

*~ Fr. Raymond J. de Souza  
Senior Fellow at Cardus and the University of Toronto*



TORONTO, Canada, 1 January 2024 — On the first day of the New Year, prominent Canadian Catholic priest, professor, and commentator Father Raymond J. de Souza dedicated his column in Canada’s *National Post* to an expansive analysis of the prospects for Middle East peace.

In his article, titled “A budding peace grows in the Islamic world, despite terrorist efforts,” Fr. de Souza praised Nahdlatul Ulama’s Humanitarian Islam movement for having a greater long-term potential impact than recent diplomatic breakthroughs in the region, such as the Abraham Accords or the Chinese-brokered détente between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

A [keen observer](#) of Nahdlatul Ulama, the Humanitarian Islam movement, and the G20 Religion Forum (R20), Fr. de Souza is the latest among a series of [award-winning journalists](#), [blue-chip](#)

[media outlets](#), [prominent academics](#), [geopolitical analysts](#), [diplomats](#), [heads of state](#), and [religious authorities](#) from across the world to recognize the transformative potential of Humanitarian Islam.

Selected excerpts from Fr. Raymond J. de Souza's article may be read below. [Read the full article here.](#)

# NATIONAL POST

## **A budding peace grows in the Islamic world, despite terrorist efforts**

*Optimism brews as Indonesian Muslims build a movement for 'humanitarian Islam' and those in the Middle East work to normalize relations*

Father Raymond J. de Souza  
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The flags of Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are projected on the ramparts of Jerusalem's Old City on September 15, 2020 in a show of support for Israeli normalization deals with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. PHOTO BY MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

[A]ttention should be paid to the work of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world’s largest Muslim organization — an astonishing 100 million members — based in the world’s largest Muslim country, Indonesia. Even amongst those who follow Islamic geopolitics, NU is not as well-known as it should be. The name could be translated as “Awakening of (Islamic) Scholars.”

NU has sought to contribute [its own distinctive experience](#) to global Islam. Indonesian Islam is not marked by the caliphate mentality of Arabian Islam, and the Indonesian constitution defends religious pluralism. NU applies these principles by defending Christians against jihadist terror in Indonesia, for example.

In 2022, in conjunction with Indonesia’s [hosting of the G20](#), NU hosted a historic meeting of interreligious leaders. That occasion meant new attention for NU’s proposal for what it calls [“Humanitarian Islam”](#) — a religious vision tolerant of pluralism and committed to interreligious harmony, human rights and democracy. That Indonesia is the world’s largest Islamic democracy is, in significant part, due to NU’s influence.

In 2023, building upon efforts in Bali in November 2022, NU hosted two further interreligious and intercultural meetings in Jakarta, one in conjunction with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings, and another after the outbreak of war in Israel.

Their project will not produce diplomatic breakthroughs like the Abraham Accords or the Iran-Saudi agreement, but it does have the potential to change the thinking of hundreds of millions of Muslims in the next generation. That is more important. It is a development very much worth watching and, at year’s end, a cause for hope.

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[R20 International Summit of Religious Authorities \(ISORA\)](#)

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