

An International Law and National Resilience Perspective for Internationalizing Religious Moderation as Indonesia's Soft Diplomacy Legal Instrument in ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as the largest country in Southeast Asia, plays a strategic role in shaping regional stability and political dynamics within ASEAN. At the same time, regional developments, particularly the rise of religious radicalism and transnational terrorism, have significant implications for Indonesia's national resilience. In this context, this article examines how Indonesia can strengthen its regional leadership through the internationalization of religious moderation as a legal and diplomatic instrument within ASEAN. The study analyzes the legal foundations of religious moderation policy in Indonesia, including constitutional principles, statutory regulations, and Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023, which institutionalizes the promotion of religious moderation as part of national policy. Using a normative qualitative legal approach, this article explores the intersection of law, religion, and diplomacy in promoting regional stability. The findings show that the internationalization of religious moderation can function as a form of soft diplomacy and normative leadership, enabling Indonesia to translate domestic legal norms into regional normative practices. This approach is consistent with ASEAN's principles of consensus and non-interference, while also contributing to broader efforts to counter violent extremism and strengthen human security in the region. Furthermore, the study argues that religious moderation can be positioned as part of Indonesia's non-military defense strategy, supporting the development of regional legal norms that promote peaceful coexistence and social resilience. Ultimately, the research highlights Indonesia's opportunity to institutionalize religious moderation within ASEAN's legal and diplomatic framework as part of its constitutional mandate to contribute to international peace and stability.

Keywords: ASEAN Law, Human Security, International Law, Religious Moderation, Soft Diplomacy, Soft Law.

INTRODUCTION

In his writing published in The Jakarta Post, October 24, 2024, Secretary General of ASEAN, Kao Kim Hourn, wrote :

Under the leadership of President Prabowo Subianto, we look forward to Indonesia's continued proactive role in navigating ASEAN through the complexities of a fragmented global economy. By leveraging Indonesia's economic strengths and strategic position, ASEAN will be well-positioned to secure its prosperity in the post-2025 landscape and chart a bold path toward the ASEAN Vision 2045, aligning seamlessly with the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision. Forging a more integrated and resilient ASEAN, where national and regional strength reinforce each other in a virtuous circle, is the best way forward in our collective pursuit of resilience, innovation, and shared prosperity (Hourn, 2025)

With consideration of ASEAN history and Indonesia's position within it, this association of Southeast Asian countries, Hourn wrote above, is clear. Talking about ASEAN is not possible to deny

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Received: October 10, 2025; Revised: February 17, 2026; Accepted: March 14, 2026

the importance for Indonesia. ASEAN was founded on August 8, 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, through the signing of the Bangkok Declaration (Idris & Kamaruddin, 2019; Narine, 2008). Five countries registered as its founders, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Until now, the five countries have been important in this regional institution.

Indonesia, as the largest country in Southeast Asia, has a crucial position in ASEAN. Although ASEAN chairpersons change among its member countries every year, Indonesia as a whole naturally holds an important position in the organization, it said. Indonesia holds an important role in the integration of the Southeast Asia region. Integration accompanied by Indonesian leadership stands out especially in the field of multilateral cooperation, management of conflict, and promotion of democracy, as well as the rights of the basic man (Drajat, 2018). Whoever becomes the Indonesian president is believed to give impact on the future of ASEAN (Diphda, 2025).

Indonesia itself positions ASEAN as an important partner in policy outside its country. ASEAN Centrality (ASEAN's Priority) has always become a theme dominant in Indonesia's foreign policy (Indraswari, 2022; Syailendra, 2015). Even though with their various respective styles, the Indonesian leaders have been maintaining ASEAN Centrality in policy outside their country. In fact, during the government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014), the ASEAN Centrality policy became increasingly important in policy abroad in the Asia Pacific region.

At least, there are three important reasons why Indonesia should keep strengthening its leadership in ASEAN. First, Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia, both in terms of population, economy, and the size of its territory. Based on Sensus data, Population of Indonesia 2020, the population of Indonesia is 270,203,917 people¹. The Indonesian population is four tens One percent from all ASEAN countries. Meanwhile, Indonesia's GDP reached almost four-tenths percent of the total GDP of the bloc (Raditio, 20225).

Second, since the founding of ASEAN, Indonesia has played an important role in this meeting. Heritage Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN can be seen in the history of Indonesia's progress during this. Indonesia plays an important role in mediating even regional crises. Currently, it has not taken office as ASEAN Chair, for example, the Cambodia-Vietnam War in the 1980s, the crisis of the Moro people in the southern Philippines in the 1990s, and the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia over Preah Vihear in 2011. In April 2021, when the Myanmar crisis occurred, Indonesia took the initiative to host a meeting specifically for ASEAN Leaders (Raditio, 20225). The role of mediation can only be carried out by a trusted country leadership of the countries involved in the crisis. That's all played in a good way by Indonesia.

Third, if Indonesia is successful in strengthening its position as a leader in ASEAN, things That with by itself will give profit for Indonesia. Indonesia's credibility in global diplomacy will increase. In addition to that, Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN can guarantee more for the interests of Indonesian nationals, good from the aspect of stability, security, politics, and economy. With the signing of the "Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015," cooperation in ASEAN is not only focused on economics, but also in the field of security and social culture. From the declaration, the three pillars of the ASEAN community are the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

A number of the above reasons are important for Indonesia to strengthen its leadership in ASEAN. Leadership here must be understood in understanding formal leadership, but more about informal leadership. As stated by Pielstick, the informal leader is one who is in a position of leadership in an official way, but still recognized as a leader by his colleagues, because of his ability to share future vision, effective communication, and power through his character (Pielstick, 2000). Indonesia can still strengthen its leadership informally even though it has not taken office as the formal leadership of ASEAN.

¹ <https://sensus.bps.go.id/main/index/sp2020>

Why does Indonesia need to consider internationalization of religious moderation as part of its efforts to strengthen its leadership in ASEAN? Indeed, there are various possible policy strategies abroad that can be developed by Indonesia to strengthen its leadership in ASEAN. Dominance strength military can be one of the strategies taken. However, the strategy of mastery of the area through military domination is almost No Possible done except if Indonesia acts recklessly. This is because ASEAN has the principle of non-interference, where each ASEAN member may not intervene in the sovereignty of other member states. Even if Indonesia is determined to do it, it is clear that this strategy need very high resources. Therefore, one of the things that can become a choice policy abroad in Indonesia to strengthen its leadership in ASEAN is through leadership strategies, social culture, where moderate religion is one of them.

At least, there are two important reasons why moderation can be chosen as a strategy to strengthen his leadership in ASEAN. First, extremism threatening the religious integrity of the nation and state is not only experienced by Indonesia, but also by several ASEAN member countries. Separatism in Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines, for example, is not only triggered by inequality development, but also narrated through religious sentiments. Malaysia also has fewer problems than Indonesia in matters of radicalism and religion (Akhmetova & Jaafar, 2020). In fact, Malaysia and Singapore have become a bridge that connects the extremist Indonesian religion with an international network. Network terrorism in the religious areas in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand also has a direct connection with terrorists in Indonesia (Magouirk et al., 2008).

Second, Moderation Religious is the official program of the Indonesian state for managing diversity in the Indonesian nation in the framework of integrity and improvement of the quality of life of the nation and state. This program has succeeded in dampening religious extremism and terrorism in Indonesia, which had strengthened since the beginning of the 2000s. Indonesia's success in deradicalizing efforts through the Moderation program Religious is a story of success that can be adapted and modified by ASEAN member countries, especially countries facing religious extremism problems like Indonesia. This is expected to create stability in the Southeast Asian region. The stability of the ASEAN region in itself will give impact positive impact on the resilience of the Indonesian national. This will ultimately result in positive on sustainability development.

Stability in the Southeast Asia region is not only in the interests of Indonesia, but also in the interests of ASEAN member countries. ASEAN countries need to study how to help Indonesia manage its population. Moderation in religion, where one of the indicators is compliance agreement, emphasizing Pancasila as a common platform for all over the diverse Indonesian nation.¹⁵ Even though Islam is embraced by the majority Indonesian population (87.03%), there is no state religion in Indonesia. Indonesia recognizes six official religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The percentage of religious adherence does not impact the position of each religion before the state. Moderation in religion in Indonesia is completely based on the principle of equality for all religious adherents. With an approach like this, religion can become a solution for problems faced by the nation.

The Southeast Asia region is not an impermeable area from various security threats resulting from increasing radicalism and extremism. In fact, conflicts in other regions can also influence the security in ASEAN countries. For example, the conflict between India and Pakistan, if not addressed, can give impact on peace and security in the Southeast Asia region. The conflict between India and Pakistan is indeed the long-standing conflict over the Kashmir region. However, the conflict has also long been burdened by religious sentiments between Hinduism and Islam.

While the writing that raises the theme of Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN is very extensive, studies that raise the theme of moderating religion as a legal strategy of soft diplomacy in Indonesia's overseas presence in the ASEAN arena, so far, are still limited. There are several studies about the internationalization of the religious moderation program, but the same very No associated with effort strengthen Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN. For example, in Hilmy's article entitled "Exporting Religious Moderation," he highlights the leadership of KH. Yahya C. Staquf in

Nahdlatul Ulama is an important figure in bringing values and moderation to religion on the global stage (I Wayan Salendra, 2024; Trio Mashuri et al., 2023). Writing with less tone more the same thing was also found in Seeth's writing. In his study, Seeth examines Indonesia's global diplomacy played by Nahdlatul Ulama through various initiatives in introducing the typical Indonesian peaceful Islam to the international world. Meanwhile, the internationalization of the moderate Indonesian Islamic model is an answer to various religious conflicts in the international world. Arifin and Umiarso also highlighted export moderation of religious practices carried out by Muhammadiyah's various international organizations, which is becoming the network (Arifin & Umiarso, 2024; Fath & Hayat, 2026).

Based on the background and in the context of geopolitics and international law, Indonesia holds a strategic position as a main guardian of stability in the Southeast Asia region. Challenges contemporary like radicalism and extremist religious not only threaten national security, but also the integrity of law and order. The same between countries. Therefore, the policy of moderating religion has become a policy that lifts Indonesia's national potential to an international level as a soft diplomacy tool in the ASEAN environment.

ASEAN, through the Charter 2007 and the Bangkok Declaration of 1967, is based on principles of international law like sovereignty, equality, non-interference, and consensus. However, the principles of No may obstruct efforts to prevent extremism of a nature across countries. In the context of this context, moderation can become an instrument of law of a legal nature, soft law that bridges the approach to security with values of humanity and religion. Thus, diplomacy is law-based moderation. This can strengthen Indonesia's position as a normative leader in ASEAN while guarding national resilience.

Therefore, this study has three research questions:

1. How can religious moderation policy be legally interpreted as a soft diplomacy instrument within ASEAN?
2. What legal justification supports the internationalization of religious moderation norms in ASEAN's normative framework?
3. How does this policy contribute to Indonesia's non-military defense and normative leadership?

Then, in accordance with those research questions, this research has three main contributions of this study. First, this research develops a legal synthesis between Indonesia's constitutional and statutory frameworks and ASEAN's normative instruments, demonstrating how domestic legal norms can be translated into regional diplomatic practices. Second, introduces the concept of religious moderation as part of a normative defense framework, positioning it within Indonesia's broader strategy of non-military national defense and resilience. Third, this research advances a legal conceptualization of religious moderation diplomacy as a soft law mechanism operating within ASEAN's normative order, thereby contributing to discussions on normative leadership and regional legal governance.

Legal Framework

The foundation normative and juridical used in the study include :

1. 1945 Constitution

The 1945 Constitution is the source law highest in the system of Indonesian law. In the context of moderation, religion, and diplomatic law, there are two articles. The main relevant issues, including Article 28E paragraphs (1) and (2), guarantee the freedom of everyone to embrace religion and worship according to their religion, and Article 29 paragraph (2) states that the state guarantees the independence of each resident to practice their respective religions. Both

chapters. This becomes a basic constitutional framework for policy religious moderation as a national legal strategy. In the context of internationalization, principles that reflect the universal value of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) as arranged in ICCPR Article 18. Through ASEAN, Indonesia can project values constitutional as a form of soft power diplomacy that is based on law.

2. Constitution Number 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations

This law becomes the framework law for organizational politics abroad. Article 2 confirms that the connection abroad in Indonesia is implemented based on the principles of independence, perpetual peace, and social justice. Articles 4 and 5 regulate the role of diplomacy in guarding national and world peace. The connection with internationalization, moderation, and religion, this law gives legal basis for Indonesia to operate non-military diplomacy (soft diplomacy) that promotes market tolerance and peace in ASEAN. Religious Moderation becomes part of the instrument policy, legitimate overseas in a way, law, and in line with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution.

3. Constitution Number 23 of 2019 concerning the Management of National Resources for National Defense

This law expands the draft national defense not only in the military, but also as a source of human and social power. Articles 2 and 3 state that national defense is of a nature universal, involving all citizens and national resources. Within the framework of resilience, national religious moderation forms resilience, ideological and social, which strengthens Indonesia's internal stability. When the concept is internationalized in ASEAN, it functions as a preventive legal instrument in preventing non-military threats like radicalism and conflict based on religion, which is transnational.

4. Constitution Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense

This law confirms that national defense is of a nature universal, involving all citizens in the effort to guard sovereignty and territorial integrity. Article 7 paragraph (2) emphasizes the importance of non-military strategy through diplomacy and improving the resilience of social culture. Thus, Moderate Religious can be understood as part of non-military defense that strengthens national resilience through legal and social. Within the ASEAN framework, the policy can be integrated as a legal strategy for a regional collective to guard stability and security together.

5. Regulation President Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening the Moderation of Religious

Presidential Decree This is a base law nationally, which is explicitly arranged policy on Moderate Religion in Indonesia. Its Purpose is to build an attitude of fairness, balance, tolerance, and respect for differences in life, nation, and state. The executor is mainly the Ministry of Religion, working in the same with ministry/institution related. Presidential Decree. This can become an instrument of law, a soft law that was adopted at the regional level as a policy model, a socially based law. In the ASEAN context, the values contained therein can be adapted through the ASEAN Religious Moderation Framework to strengthen security, social, and regional resilience.

6. Standard Norms and Regulations Number 2 About the Right to Freedom of Religion and Belief by the National Commission on Human Rights, People of the Republic of Indonesia

This SNP describes the principle of religious freedom in accordance with ICCPR Article 18 and UDHR Article 18, which includes internal freedom (belief) and external freedom (expressing religion). This SNP becomes standard in evaluating related human rights violations and religious freedom. Affirming that the country has a positive law to protect inhabitants from discrimination based on religion. In the context of ASEAN diplomacy, this SNP functions as a national best

practice reference that can be adopted as a legal guideline between countries to strengthen religious rights in a collective way in the region.

7. ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint

This Blueprint is part of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which aims to create a peaceful, stable, and supremacy - based region with laws as well as respect against human rights. One of the principles is comprehensive security, including non- traditional threats like radicalism and extremism. APSC emphasizes the importance of preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures. Religious moderation can be integrated as a form of preventive legal diplomacy in APSC. Approach This encourages member countries to overcome extremism through the instruments of law, education, and social collaboration, not through a coercive approach.

8. ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, Adopted by the 11th AMMTC, 20 September 2017

Document: This arranged plan of action is integrated to eradicate terrorism in ASEAN. Emphasizing Work: the same intelligence, enforcement law, education, and deradicalization. Recognizing the need for a data-based strategy for public prevention of extremism. Policy Moderation Religious relevance as non- punitive components in countermeasures to terrorism. With the enter values moderation in education and policy, Indonesia contributes to the ASEAN legal pillar, which is more inclusive and based on humanity.

9. ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime

Declaration: This confirms the commitment of ASEAN countries to work together to fight cross-border crime, including terrorism and trafficking of humans. Determined the first time in 1997, with principles Work, the same law, and non-interference. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to face threats across countries. In the context of Moderate Religion, a declaration. This can become a runway regional law for development. Work on the same deradicalization and education across borders. The values that Indonesia brings are a complete working mechanism of ASEAN law, which is still naturally reactive, with an offer approach, preventive, and normative soft law-based.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a juridical-normative approach to the relevant legal framework, namely an analysis of written legal norms and principles of international law, as well as interstate agreements. The analytical method used is qualitative, examining the relationship between national and international legal norms to develop arguments about the legality of the internationalization of Religious Moderation.

As Moser and Korstjen state, qualitative research is the investigation of phenomena through the collection of narrative, not numerical, data, with a relatively flexible research design. Qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth understanding and comprehension of a phenomenon. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not intervene in the phenomenon being studied and does not quantify variables (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). In accordance with the definition of qualitative research above, the data used in this study are narrative data, especially those in the form of documents. There are two groups of documents that are the source of data in this study. The first group is primary documents consisting of ASEAN documents, Indonesian foreign policy related to ASEAN, and documents on religious moderation. Meanwhile, secondary documents are documents, including research results, that enrich primary documents, which are useful for clarifying the understanding of primary documents, as well as for analyzing primary documents. Another approach used in this study is geopolitics and geostrategy. This approach is closely related to a country's foreign policy, as it examines the relationship between a country's political dynamics and its development strategy in relation to its geographic factors. These geographic

factors encompass not only its natural resources but also the political and security dynamics within a region.

Legal interpretation, norm comparison, and norm construction are interconnected processes that play a crucial role in the application and development of law. Legal interpretation refers to the process of assigning meaning to legal texts in order to apply them to specific situations, while norm comparison and norm construction involve evaluating existing norms and formulating new ones within the legal system. These processes enable legal norms to be adapted to changing circumstances and ensure their effective implementation in practice. Legal interpretation employs several methods, such as grammatical, teleological, and systematic interpretation, to ensure that the meaning derived from legal provisions remains consistent with the principles and objectives of the legal system as well as the context in which the norms operate (Merдова et al., 2023; Navrotska, 2023). Interpretation itself may take different forms, including cognitive, adjudicative, and creative interpretation, with the latter allowing for the formulation of new norms that are implicitly embedded within the legal framework. As a dynamic process, legal interpretation allows norms to be adjusted to unforeseen circumstances by revising the constitutive rules that determine their applicability (Boella et al., 2013).

Closely related to interpretation is norm comparison, which involves examining and evaluating different legal norms in order to identify similarities, differences, and underlying principles. This process is essential for maintaining consistency and coherence within the legal system and for understanding how various legal provisions interact with one another (Serediuk, 2023). Comparative legal analysis benefits from multiple interpretative frameworks, such as the Tarskian Correspondence Model and the Symphonic Model, which offer different perspectives on legal reasoning and discourse (Monateri, 2024). Through this process, scholars and practitioners are able not only to identify distinctions between norms but also to analyze the purposes and values embedded in them, thereby informing their interpretation and practical application.

Norm construction, in turn, refers to the formulation and development of new legal norms, often emerging as a consequence of interpretative processes. It involves establishing stable conceptual and doctrinal connections within the legal system to preserve its integrity and identity (Serediuk, 2023). Legal constructions function as epistemological tools that clarify the substance and scope of legal norms, enabling them to be more effectively applied in practice. The construction of norms frequently arises from the need to address gaps, ambiguities, or inconsistencies within the legal framework, which may result from incomplete legislative drafting or rapid normative developments without sufficient legal technique.

From a theoretical perspective, legal interpretation and norm construction reflect the complexity and subjectivity inherent in legal reasoning. Contemporary textualist and intentionalist approaches emphasize the importance of interpreting legal texts according to their wording and the intent of lawmakers, while more skeptical perspectives highlight the discretionary role of judges and legal actors in shaping legal meaning (Spaić, 2021). In this sense, legal interpretations resemble scientific hypotheses: they are abstract and general propositions that can be evaluated against potential counterexamples or practical applications. Ultimately, while legal interpretation, norm comparison, and norm construction are indispensable for ensuring the effective functioning of the legal system, they also present significant challenges. The discretionary nature of interpretation may lead to divergences from expected meanings, requiring careful attention to the context, purpose, and principles underlying legal norms. Similarly, the construction of norms must carefully address inconsistencies and gaps within the legal framework to maintain stability and coherence. These processes highlight the central role of human agency, responsibility, and professional judgment in the interpretation, development, and application of law.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of soft diplomacy and soft law becomes key in understanding how policy moderation of religion can function in international law. Soft power works through Power pull values and norms (Henne, 2022; Henne & Ozturk, 2022; Rothman, 2011; Vuving, 2009). In the context of law, soft law

includes instruments that are not tied formally but have moral and political power in the form of state behavior. ASEAN itself is known for a soft institutionalist approach, which emphasizes consensus and work equally non-confrontational juridical, regulations, President Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Moderation Religious can categorized as policy law relevant national with law international, especially in aspect right basic human and freedom religious as arranged in ICCPR Article 18 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Human Rights (UDHR) Article 18. Approach law This allows Indonesia to export values moderation as a regional norm without violating the principle of non-interference. This section discusses findings of normative and qualitative juridical studies on the internationalization of religious moderation as an instrument of soft diplomacy in ASEAN, the principle of non-inference, diplomatic law, as well as the implications for national and regional laws.

Internationalization Moderation Religious as ASEAN Soft Diplomacy Instruments

Internationalization literally means the act or process of bringing something under the control or protection of two or more nations and making something international (Fletcher et al., 2013; Knight, n.d., 2003; Welch & Luostarinen, 1988). So, internationalization is the act or process of bringing or making something "belong" to two or more countries. Religious Moderation is a perspective, attitude, and practice of religion in communal life by embodying the essence of religious teachings and beliefs that protect human dignity and build public welfare based on the principles of justice, balance, and adherence to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as a national agreement. Strengthening religious moderation aims to strengthen brotherhood and togetherness among religious communities, as well as strengthen harmony and harmony among religious communities (Peraturan Presiden (Perpres) Nomor 58 Tahun 2023 Tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama, 2023). In this context, the internationalization of religious moderation means making religious moderation a "program" that is implemented in several ASEAN member countries.

Internationalization of Religious Moderation is a legal diplomacy strategy that places the values of tolerance, justice, and harmony as a soft power of Indonesia in ASEAN. This strategy is not coercive, but rather builds normative influence through policies, agreements, and cross-border legal cooperation. The following nine national and regional legal instruments serve as a complementary legal foundation for constitutional legitimacy at the national level and for legal implementation at the ASEAN level, including:

1. The 1945 Constitution legitimizes Religious Moderation as an instrument of Indonesia's national legal diplomacy within ASEAN. The internationalization of these values aligns with the constitutional mandate to contribute to regional and global peace.
2. Law 37/1999 provides a legal mandate for Religious Moderation diplomacy in ASEAN, making Indonesian religious values part of foreign policy identity. It supports soft diplomacy that emphasizes normative persuasion rather than military force.
3. When this value of moderation is internationalized to ASEAN, it functions as a collective resilience mechanism. ASEAN can adopt this model to strengthen regional stability through shared social resilience, in line with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint.
4. Moderation becomes a soft defense instrument defense), which allows Indonesia to play a strategic role in ASEAN in non-traditional security issues such as extremism, intolerance, and religious disinformation.
5. Presidential Decree No. 58 of 2023 is a substantive legal model that can be "exported" to ASEAN through the ASEAN socio-cultural cooperation framework. Community (ASCC) or ASEAN Law Ministers' Meeting (ALAWMM). In a soft context of diplomacy, Presidential Decree 58/2023 functions as a soft law, does not force, but influences the formation of shared norms at the regional level.
6. SNP 2 serves as a mechanism for harmonizing domestic law with international human rights norms. When communicated through the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), this SNP can function as a normative one reference in the formation of the ASEAN Religious Tolerance Charter.

7. The internationalization of religious moderation strengthens the pillars of APSC as a soft law instrument. Institutionalism, which encourages confidence-building measures and preventive measures in diplomacy. Thus, Indonesia can become a normative leader that directs ASEAN towards the integration of moderate values into regional security policy.
8. Moderation serves as a counter-narrative. Legal policy provides an ethical and social basis for regional deradicalization. Indonesian legal diplomacy can advocate for the integration of moderation into the ASEAN Plan of Action. Action on Prevention Violent Extremism (PVE) as a non- punitive strategy.
9. Moderation can be proposed as a preventive legal approach in this declaration, expanding the scope of " crime prevention " to the social and religious dimensions. This shifts ASEAN's paradigm from merely repressive law enforcement to strengthening normative law based on humanitarian values and social harmony.

Framework law the as instruments that form track law multi- level legal architecture that supports internationalization Moderation Religious, starting from the 1945 Constitution as legitimacy ideological; Law 37/1999 as diplomatic legitimacy; Law 23/2019 and 3/2002 as legitimacy non- military defense; Presidential Decree 58/2023 as legitimacy policy substantive; SNP 2 as legitimacy of universal human rights; APSC Blueprint, Plan on Counter Terrorism, and Declaration on Transnational Crime as regional legitimacy and implementation law collectively. Through the interconnection mentioned, Moderation Religious not only policy domestic, but has transformed into an instrument of law diplomacy ASEAN software that promotes peace, supremacy law, and resilience in a sustainable way.

Principle of Non-Interference and Shared Responsibility

Although ASEAN was founded in 1967, it only achieved its formal form in 2007 with the signing of the ASEAN Charter (Asciutti, 2010; Seah, 2009; Woon, 2017). The signing of the ASEAN Charter marked ASEAN's transformation from a loose political association into an international organization with a strong legal basis (legal personality), clear rules, and an effective and efficient organizational structure.

It was through this charter that what is known as the ASEAN Community was formed. This ASEAN Community consists of three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. The goals of ASEAN's formation were further emphasized and detailed. While the Bangkok Declaration contained seven points, the ASEAN Charter contains fifteen points of ASEAN's goals.

The fifteen ASEAN goals are divided into three groups: 1) Regional stability and security; 2) Increased cooperation in the political, security, economic, and socio-cultural fields; 3) Improved economic and people's welfare. To ensure productive cooperative relations in order to achieve the stated goals, the ASEAN Charter also contains principles that serve as the rules of the game among member countries. The ASEAN principles are sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and territorial integrity, non- interference, consensus, and unity in diversity. These principles require ASEAN member states to respect the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all member states. They are prohibited from interfering in the internal affairs of other member states.

The principle of non- interference and responsibility is the main pillar of ASEAN law as stated in the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN Charter) Article 2 paragraph (2) (e): " *Respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all ASEAN Member States, and non- interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States.* " This principle was also reaffirmed in the Bangkok Declaration (1967) and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint (2015). This means that each member state may not impose its values, political system, or domestic policies on other states. This principle serves as a mechanism for protecting regional sovereignty and stability. This principle stems from Southeast Asia's historical experience, which was rife with colonialism and internal conflict. ASEAN seeks to avoid external political interference or intervention between member states. However, this

principle does not imply an absolute prohibition on cross-border cooperation, but rather sets limits on coercive or political intervention.

Shared concept responsibility (shared responsibility) appears in various modern ASEAN documents, especially in:

- ASEAN Charter (2007) Article 1 paragraph (7) states that the purpose of ASEAN is "to strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms."
- The APSC Blueprint recognizes the importance of collective security and a comprehensive approach to non-traditional threats such as radicalism, extremism, and cross-border crime.
- ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism (2017), which emphasized the need for joint measures to address terrorism and violent extremism.

This principle marks ASEAN's shift from rigid sovereignty towards cooperative security, where cross-border issues must be faced together because they have a collective impact on the region.

Moderation can function as a soft law instrument. A law that does not violate the sovereignty of member states, but still encourages ASEAN's collective responsibility against common threats. Thus, Religious Moderation becomes a non-coercive diplomatic legal instrument, which does not change the legal systems of member states, but internalizes the values of tolerance and justice through voluntary cooperation mechanisms and mutual understanding.

Legal Diplomacy and Regional Implementation

Indonesian diplomacy in Southeast Asia is clearly unavoidable. Although there is no explicit statement from Asta Cita or President Prabowo's Priority Programs, in the 2025-2029 RPJMN document (Figure 1), Priority Program 2 ("Strengthening the national defense and security system and promoting national independence through self-sufficiency in food, energy, and water, the sharia economy, the digital economy, the green economy, and the blue economy") is related to the direction (goal) of the RPJPN, namely "Diplomatic resilience and defense that can deter the region." Therefore, one of the national development goals is to increase Indonesia's leadership and influence in the international community.

Linkage between the 2025–2029 RPJMN and the 2025–2045 RPJPN

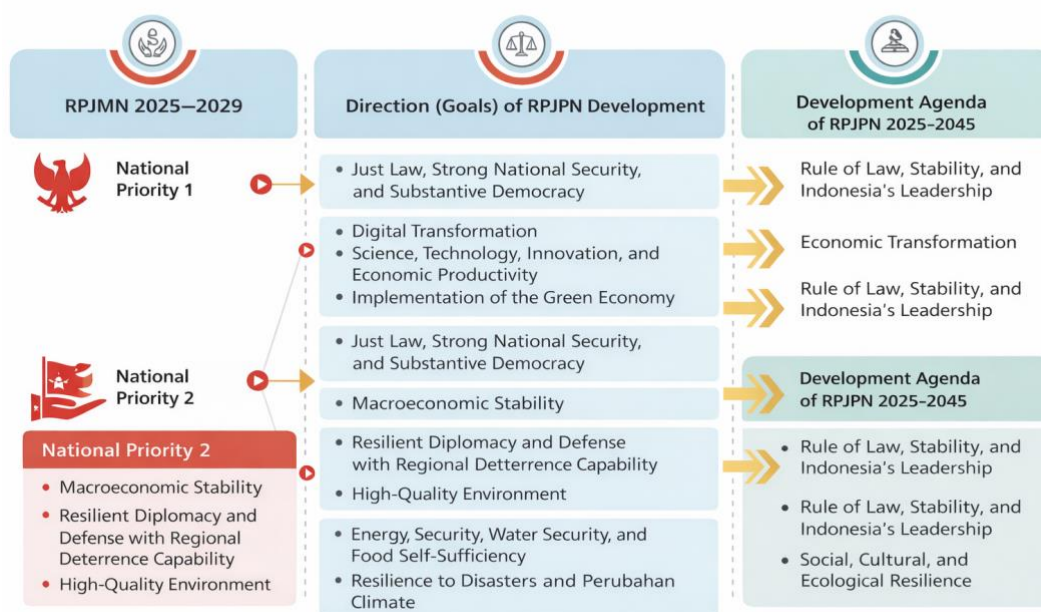


Figure 1. Indonesia's Leadership in the Region (Source: Summary of the 2025-2029 RPJMN)

The question is, where does ASEAN fit into Indonesia's foreign policy direction? In the 2025-2029 Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM) in Figure 2, Indonesia's target is no longer leadership and influence within the ASEAN region. It's instead focused on international leadership and influence at the Asian level.

Indicators of National Sovereignty and Security Stability (RPJMN Targets)

No	Indicator	Baseline 2024	Target 2025	Target 2029
1	Asia Power Index (Military Capability)	15.7	16.0	20.0
2	Asia Power Index (Diplomatic Influence)	65.6	65.7	66.1
3	Population Feeling Safe Walking Alone in Their Residential Area (%)	62.8 (2020)	67.5	68.5
4	Global Cybersecurity Index	100	100	98
5	National Maritime Security Index	59	60	64

Note: Indicators reflect Indonesia's targets for enhancing national sovereignty and security stability under the national development framework.

Note: Indicators reflect Indonesia's targets for enhancing national sovereignty and security stability under the national development framework.

Figure 2. Indonesia's Leadership and Influence in the International World (Source: Summary of the 2025-2029 RPJMN)

This can also be seen in the foreign policy priorities outlined by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Figure 3). Indonesia has five foreign policy priorities under President Prabowo's leadership: multilateral reform; strengthening leadership in the global South; enforcing international law; commitment to the SDGs; equitable climate diplomacy; and moving towards net-zero emissions

Polugri Priorities

Multilateralism Reform

Promoting UN reform and international financial systems to be more inclusive and responsive to Global South needs.

Strengthening Global South Leadership

Advancing better alignment of developing countries in global governance.

International Law Enforcement

Reviving global solidarity and strengthening the primacy of the UN Charter.

Commitment to SDGs

Achieving sustainable development, particularly in energy and environmental transition.

Climate Diplomacy Justice

Promoting differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries.

Towards Net Zero Emission

Pursuing net zero carbon emissions through a fair carbon market.

Figure 3. Foreign Policy Priorities in the Era of President Prabowo Subianto (Maulidiah, 2025)

Nevertheless, ASEAN remains crucial for Indonesia. As Maulidiah stated, it is impossible for Indonesia to ignore ASEAN. In today's global geopolitical landscape, regional power is part of Indonesia's bargaining power in the international arena. Domestic security also depends heavily on the security of the ASEAN region, particularly regarding transnational crime (Maulidiah, 2025). Figure 3 explains about Indonesia's Foreign Policy Priorities:

1. **Multilateralism Reform:** Indonesia advocates for reforms of the United Nations and the international financial system to ensure they become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the Global South.
2. **Strengthening Global South Leadership:** Indonesia seeks to enhance the role and influence of developing countries in global governance and decision-making processes.
3. **Upholding International Law:** Indonesia promotes the revitalization of global solidarity and the reinforcement of the supremacy of the United Nations Charter as the foundation of the international legal order.
4. **Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Indonesia remains committed to achieving sustainable development, particularly in the areas of energy transition and environmental sustainability.
5. **Just Climate Diplomacy:** Indonesia supports the principle of differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries in addressing climate change.
6. **Toward Net Zero Emissions:** Indonesia continues to pursue its commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions, including through the development of fair and equitable carbon market mechanisms.

It's clear that Indonesia doesn't want ASEAN to become a cage in shaping its foreign policy. However, it's incorrect to assume that President Prabowo Subianto is ignoring ASEAN. Even before being inaugurated as president, Prabowo Subianto visited five ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia). Observers viewed this trip as Prabowo Subianto's way of positioning himself as an ASEAN leader. This trip sent a strong message of "good neighbor policy" (good neighbor policy), that ASEAN remains a priority without having to hinder cooperation with other global powers (Suhenda, 2024).

This message was clearly stated by President Prabowo Subianto when holding a press conference with the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, in Kuala Lumpur, February 27, 2025. On that occasion, President Prabowo Subianto firmly stated, "Only through unity and strong cooperation among ASEAN countries can our voices be heard and we can be recognized by larger global powers" (Admin INP, 2025).

However, Indonesia cannot ignore ASEAN's stability. Regardless of whether Indonesia is chairing ASEAN or not, Indonesia will implement a 'lead-to-the-leader' policy. from behind in ASEAN (Yadav, 2025). Indonesia's foreign policy within this geopolitical framework is expressed very well by Singh that President Prabowo will position Indonesia as an important power in the global arena (Singh, 2025; Yadav, 2025). Prabowo doesn't want to just play at the regional level without ignoring ASEAN. The Prabowo administration will try to navigate its relationships with ASEAN, the United States, China, and other developed and developing countries.

President Prabowo's foreign policy was also conveyed by the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, at the 29th Nikkei Forum on the Future of Asia in Tokyo, that "all ASEAN leaders await steps taken by Indonesia, considering the country's major roles. Hence, we in ASEAN must preserve our togetherness to prevent our region from becoming a conflict zone. Why is the ASEAN region important for Indonesia? This is where understanding geopolitics is crucial. After all, geopolitical issues must be mitigated from the outset. Regional peace and stability are not merely security issues. They also impact economic development and national development. This is what Hartarto firmly stated, "We see no region, other than the ASEAN, enjoying peace and stability. Indonesia, as the largest economy in the region, has been working to maintain this condition."

Considering various global dynamics, ASEAN is currently becoming increasingly significant. Amidst the current uncertain global situation, Indonesia must find the right way to navigate the escalating geopolitical competition. One way Indonesia can do this is by strengthening its leadership within ASEAN. ASEAN can act as a buffer for Indonesia if conflicts in other regions continue to rage and do not benefit Indonesia's national development (Martinus, 2025).

Based on the facts and legal framework, both national and regional, which form the legal basis for Indonesia's legal diplomacy in ASEAN, it is very possible to:

1. Implementing Religious Moderation as a soft instrument of diplomacy ;
2. Strengthening ASEAN as a strategic partner in non-military law and defense; and
3. Realizing the vision of the 2025–2029 RPJMN regarding Indonesian legal leadership at the Asian level.

Thus, the internationalization of Religious Moderation through legal diplomacy is a form of actualization of Indonesia's geopolitical vision: " *Leading without dominating, influencing without coercing, and building a peaceful, just, and resilient regional legal order.* "

Implications of Internationalization Moderation, Religious to National Resilience, and Regional Law

In its latest report, the Institute for Economics & Peace released a global terrorism index, ranking Indonesia 30th. The report lists Indonesia as a country that has not experienced a terrorist attack for two consecutive years. The data also shows a significant decline in the activities of extremist and terrorist groups in Indonesia. Indonesia's efforts to combat terrorism have shown positive results (Maulidiah, 2025).



Figure 4. Interfaith Harmony Index 2020-2024 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DTAkCiokrn/>)

Is the decline in extremism and terrorism in Indonesia due to the role of religious moderation? No single factor has been responsible for Indonesia's success in combating radicalism and terrorism. However, ignoring religious moderation as a crucial factor in protecting Indonesia from radicalism and terrorism clearly ignores the data. Data on the Interfaith Harmony Index (IKUB) in Indonesia continues to show a positive trend, as visualized in Figure 4 (provided in Indonesian language). The 2022 IKUB was 73.09; the 2023 IKUB was 76.02; the 2024 IKUB was 76.47; and the 2025 IKUB was 77.89.

However, religious moderation cannot be separated from tolerance (Qoumas et al., 2024a). In the Ministry of Religious Affairs Roadmap document, it is stated that the definition of religious moderation is "The perspective, attitude, and practice of religion in communal life by embodying the essence of religious teachings that protect human dignity and build welfare based on the principles of justice, balance, and adherence to the constitution as a state agreement." This definition is supported by four indicators: tolerance, non-violence, acceptance of tradition, and national commitment (Fauzan, 2023; Junaidi & Tanszil, 2025; Munif et al., 2023; Qoumas et al., 2024b; Tanjung, 2022; Toreh, 2022).

Policy Religious moderation was first launched in 2019 by Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, Minister of Religious Affairs for the 2014-2019 period. Religious moderation was then included in the 2020-2024 RPJMN through Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2020-2024, which states that strengthening religious moderation is carried out in order to strengthen tolerance and social harmony. During the era of Minister of Religious Affairs Fachrul Rozi (2019-2020), religious moderation was institutionalized into a Working Group through Ministerial Decree No. 720 of 2020. From here was born the "roadmap for strengthening religious moderation 2020-2024".



Figure 5. Number of Alumni of the Religious Moderation Strengthening Program 2020-2024
(Source: Agency for Religious Moderation and Human Resource Development, Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia)

The development and implementation of religious moderation has been further strengthened in the era of Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas (2020-2024). From 2020 to 2024, a total of 333,050 people received religious moderation training (Figure 5). The actual number could be much higher because many strengthening programs are not included in the training scheme. This year, religious moderation training began targeting several provincial governments: the provincial governments of West Java, South Sulawesi, East Java, and Banten.

In the Qoumas era, a Joint Secretariat was also established through Presidential Regulation Number 58 of 2023. This Joint Secretariat serves as a cross-ministerial and cross-institutional forum to strengthen religious moderation. Several lectures, Religious education workers in ministries and institutions outside

the Ministry of Religion are starting to receive training as trainers and facilitators to strengthen religious moderation. The moderation program was also inextricably linked to the high rates of radicalism and extremism that Indonesia was facing at the time. Although the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) emphasized managing religious diversity in Indonesia, the program was motivated from the outset by the rise of intolerance and radicalism in Indonesia since the early 2000s. From this, it can be argued that Indonesia's current peaceful religious life is clearly due in part to the government's successful dissemination of the religious moderation program. This statement does not ignore the various other factors contributing to the low rate of religiously motivated violence in Indonesia today. However, ignoring the Religious Moderation Program would be a clear mistake.

Transnational crime is also a serious concern for ASEAN. One such crime is transnational terrorism. To intensify counter-terrorism efforts, ASEAN has even established the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) since 2009, which has been ratified by all ASEAN member states. Within this framework, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint is committed to supporting the development of various initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism and the conditions conducive to its emergence. This is where religious moderation, as Indonesia's success story in addressing religious diversity and as an effort to address the roots of terrorism, can be offered to the ASEAN community.

Is the internationalization of religious moderation in ASEAN member states possible only through the ASEAN Political-Security Community? No. The internationalization strategy for religious moderation can also be implemented through the ASEAN Socio - Cultural Community (ASEAN Community). Although the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community blueprint does not discuss religious radicalism and terrorism at all, this Community has several cooperation schemes that can be used.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community has an ASEAN Youth program Leadership, which aims to foster a network of alumni to promote solidarity and mutual understanding among them. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community also established the ASEAN Youth Peace Corps, which can also serve as a gateway to internationalizing religious moderation. This is possible because the implementation of each ASEAN Community's actions always overlaps with the activities of other ASEAN Communities.

In the document, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community stated that "The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council shall be accountable for the overall implementation of the Blueprint and shall ensure coordination of efforts under purview as well as those which cut across the other Community Councils" (Maramis, 2017; Quayle, 2018). Therefore, several ASEAN Community programs fall into the cross-cutting category, for example, the ASEAN Smart City Network program. This program is a cross-cutting program between the economy and socio-culture. With the same scheme, Indonesia can offer religious moderation as a cross-cutting program between the ASEAN Political-Security Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

By emulating the ASEAN Smart City program, Indonesia could incorporate religious moderation into the agenda of the ASEAN Summit, which will feature heads of state and government. From there, religious moderation could be realized through the establishment of a pilot project for harmonious cities, or the ASEAN Harmonious City Network, in various ASEAN member states. A city vision, priority focus areas, strategic targets, and various activities need to be developed.

Considering ASEAN's working mechanisms, if religious moderation becomes a decision at the ASEAN Summit, it will be coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which serves on the ASEAN Coordinating Council, to ensure its implementation at the appropriate ASEAN Community Council. It could also be pushed through the ASEAN Community Council, as the Community Council also has the authority to make recommendations to the ASEAN Summit.

In addition to official ASEAN mechanisms, the internationalization of religious moderation in ASEAN can also be implemented through the "semi-official" institution of the Unofficial Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Religious Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (MABIMS). MABIMS is a form of agreement between the ministries that oversee Islamic religious affairs in ASEAN

countries, aimed at safeguarding the welfare and interests of Muslims without interfering in the political affairs of member countries.

MABIMS was founded on 7 August 1989 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, and was the first meeting of MABIMS. The vision of MABIMS is " To strengthen unity and make the Muslim community in MABIMS member countries a progressive people who love peace and harmony, which brings grace to all nature and becomes a reference for the development of the Muslim community in the world." The mission is to increase cooperation in developing Muslims in MABIMS member countries in the field of religion and the quality of religious life, as well as socio-economic welfare, and to increase the role of MABIMS in development and humanity in the international world to strengthen the positive image of Islam in the eyes of the world.

Another strategy that can be used to promote religious moderation in ASEAN is through cooperation between socio-religious organizations within ASEAN member states. Seeth's paper, "Indonesia's Islamic Peace Diplomacy: Crafting a Role Model for 'Moderate Islam'" very well describes how Indonesian Islamic religious organizations have played a significant role in carrying out the mission of "Islamic peace diplomacy" in the international world.⁸³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can facilitate religious organizations in Indonesia to promote religious moderation to their partners, fellow religious organizations in ASEAN member countries.

The internationalization of Religious Moderation is not merely a diplomatic effort, but rather part of a non-military legal defense strategy that expands the concept of national security into ideological, social, and cultural domains. This policy shifts the defense paradigm from "physical defense" to "normative defense," namely, strengthening legal ideology and national values through international legal cooperation. In the ASEAN context, Religious Moderation is positioned as a soft law instrument. law) that supports social integration, regional stability, and the prevention of ideology-based conflict. In other words, moderation is not merely a moral value, but has become a legal-diplomatic tool with strategic implications for two key areas: Indonesia's National Resilience and the Strengthening of ASEAN Regional Law.

Moderation Religious has implications for strengthening ideological resilience with confirmed identity, national-based laws and morals, which function as civil defense against ideological threats. This is a part of non-military defense strategies as arranged in Law No. 3 of 2002 and Law No. 23 of 2019. Moderation as policy law pushes for the formation of a devout society , law, and tolerance, strengthening social cohesion as an important factor in national resilience. In addition, diplomatic non-military defense through moderate religious strengthening deters Indonesia's strategic position in the region, making influence laws and values moderation as a resource " fear " which is acknowledged in a way international in accordance with the direction of the 2025–2029 RPJMN regarding tough diplomacy and defense empowered afraid area.

Implications towards Regional Law (ASEAN Legal Order), internationalization, moderation, religious expansion, coverage of ASEAN law from just stability political to a normative-legal cooperation based on mark humanity and pluralism. Moderation of religion expands ASEAN's definition of collective security, from law enforcement cooperation to value-based legal cooperation. Internationalization policy Moderation Religious open opportunity formation institution or mechanism law new, for example, the ASEAN Center for Religious Moderation and Legal Dialogue, as a legal forum cross-country; ASEAN Code of Conduct on Religious Tolerance, as guidelines law voluntary; or ASEAN Legal Education Network, for the spread principle moderation in system law education. Institutions. This strengthens the capacity of ASEAN law in the face of ideological and social challenges, as well as increases Indonesia's role as a legal norm-setter in the region. Then, the convergence of the principle of non-interference and shared responsibility for internationalization moderates religious confirmation of the principle of non-interference, along with expanding shared responsibility that does not force other countries to adopt policy moderation in a positive way. However, push adoption values moderation through voluntary legal alignment. The implications of ASEAN's move from the "sovereignty-based cooperation" model to

“responsibility-based cooperation”, where stable social and legal become not quite enough to answer collectively.

Recommendation Concrete

To promote religious moderation in ASEAN countries, there are two practical approaches: through formal ASEAN schemes and through informal ones. However, before moving beyond these, strengthening and fostering understanding within the country among several key institutions is necessary. Some recommendations offered to strengthen Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN through an international strategy for religious moderation are as follows:

1. Strengthening collaboration between parties in strengthening religious moderation in the country

Presidential Regulation Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Religious Moderation mandates the establishment of a Joint Secretariat as a joint forum to strengthen cross-ministerial/institutional coordination in implementing the strengthening of Religious Moderation. Unfortunately, to date, this Joint Secretariat has not been operational. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the Joint Secretariat as a gateway for collaboration between parties. The management structure of the Joint Secretariat is as follows:

Director:

1. Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture;
2. Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs;
3. Coordinating Minister for Community Empowerment;
4. Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections;
5. Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs;
6. Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development;
7. Coordinating Minister for Food.
8. Implementer:
9. Minister of Religion (Chairman);
10. Minister of Home Affairs;
11. Minister of Foreign Affairs;
12. Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology;
13. Minister of Primary and Secondary Education;
14. Minister of Culture;
15. Minister of Communication and Digital;
16. Minister of Law;
17. Minister of Human Rights;
18. Minister of National Development Planning;
19. Minister of Youth and Sports;
20. Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform;
21. Minister of Tourism;
22. Minister of Creative Economy;
23. Minister of Social Affairs;
24. Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection;
25. Minister of Manpower;
26. Minister of Cooperatives;
27. Minister of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises;
28. Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia.

In implementing the program to strengthen religious moderation, the Joint Moderation Secretariat uses a pentahelix approach that connects eight strategic groups in building a religious moderation ecosystem. These eight strategic groups are:

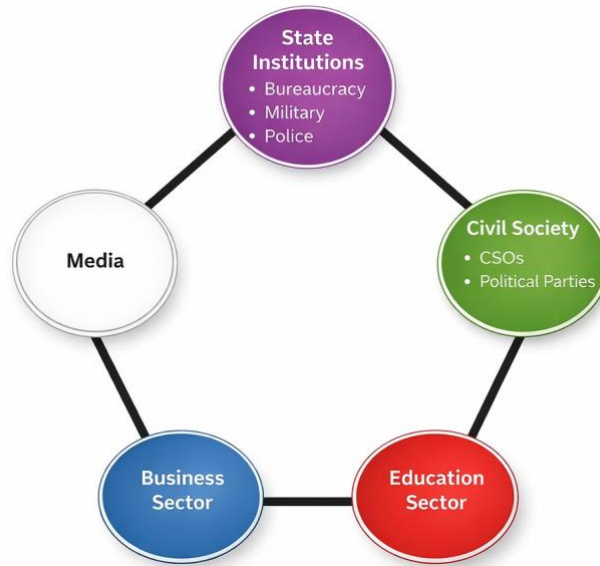


Figure 6. Pentahelix Collaboration Strengthening Religious Moderation

The Joint Secretariat, led by the Minister of Religious Affairs, could establish a Working Team for Strengthening Religious Moderation, with representatives from eight strategic groups. This team would work collaboratively, dividing the work according to their respective areas.

1. Bureaucracy. Strengthening the perspective of religious moderation among bureaucrats. After all, civil servants have a duty to provide services and fulfill the civil and religious rights of all religious communities and adherents of religious beliefs, in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.
2. Indonesian National Armed Forces. Strengthening the perspective of religious moderation among Indonesian National Armed Forces soldiers. This is crucial for the TNI to carry out its duties and functions of safeguarding the nation's territorial sovereignty. The Indonesian National Armed Forces plays a strategic role in maintaining the defense and resilience of the nation and state.
3. The Indonesian National Police. Strengthening the perspective of religious moderation among the leadership and members of the Indonesian National Police. The Indonesian National Police has an important role in maintaining security and public order.
4. and law enforcement in Indonesia. The implementation of the duties and functions of the Indonesian National Police must always be based on the constitutional rights of citizens, as the constitution guarantees the freedom for every citizen to embrace and practice their religion according to their beliefs and convictions.
5. Education. Instilling the values of religious moderation in educators, staff, and students. This is crucial for the realization of non-discriminatory management of educational institutions. Education is the most effective medium for the transfer of values and knowledge.
6. Media. The media plays a crucial role in disseminating values, whether good or bad. Therefore, the media plays a strategic role in strengthening religious moderation by enriching and strengthening

public literacy as a builder of collective values, preventing the media from becoming a vehicle for spreading hateful sentiment in the name of religion.

7. **Civil Society.** Strengthening religious moderation cannot be done solely by the state and its various instruments; it also depends heavily on the involvement of civil society and the grassroots. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen religious moderation among community leaders, traditional leaders, religious and belief leaders, cultural figures, religious and belief-based organizations, managers of places of worship, community organizations, families, women, and youth. All these components of civil society must work together in harmony with other strategic groups.
8. **Political Parties.** In a democratic country like Indonesia, political parties play a crucial role in determining the direction of state policy. Politicians also have a significant responsibility to strengthen dignified political practices and refrain from engaging in hateful politics based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA). Therefore, internalizing the values of religious moderation among politicians is crucial for creating just and dignified political practices.
9. **The Business World.** The success of strengthening religious moderation is also greatly influenced by the business world. Businesses have a responsibility to establish a direction for inclusive, fair, and non-discriminatory economic development. Therefore, strengthening moderation among business actors is essential.

The legal synthesis between Indonesia's constitutional and statutory frameworks and ASEAN's normative instruments is operationalized through a multi-stakeholder institutional network, as illustrated in Figure 1. Within this framework, state institutions, including the bureaucracy, the military, and the police, serve as the primary actors responsible for translating constitutional mandates and statutory regulations into national policies that support religious moderation. These state actors coordinate with civil society organizations and political parties, which function as normative intermediaries that disseminate and internalize moderation values within democratic and social institutions. At the same time, the education sector plays a crucial role in institutionalizing these values through curriculum development, research, and academic discourse, while the business sector contributes through corporate social responsibility initiatives and economic engagement that promote social stability and inclusive development. The media acts as a strategic communication channel that amplifies and normalizes moderation narratives within the public sphere. Together, these interconnected actors form an integrated governance ecosystem through which domestic legal norms on religious moderation can be translated into broader regional diplomatic practices within ASEAN's normative order, thereby strengthening Indonesia's role in promoting normative leadership and non-military approaches to regional stability.

The stakeholder network illustrated in Figure 1 demonstrates how Indonesia's domestic legal framework on religious moderation can be translated into regional normative influence within ASEAN. From a legal perspective, this framework reflects a multi-level governance structure in which constitutional and statutory norms are operationalized through coordinated interactions among state institutions, civil society, the education sector, the business community, and the media. State institutions, particularly the bureaucracy, military, and police, play a central role in institutionalizing religious moderation within national policy and security strategies, thereby linking the concept to Indonesia's broader non-military national defense and resilience framework (Itmam & Aouich, 2024). At the same time, civil society organizations and political parties function as normative intermediaries that facilitate the internalization of moderation values within democratic and social institutions. The education sector contributes to long-term norm institutionalization through knowledge production and curriculum development, while the business sector and media act as channels for social dissemination and public legitimization of these values (Sudrajat et al., 2021; Yetno & Cristiana, 2026).

From the perspective of international legal theory, this network supports the diffusion of domestic norms into the regional arena through mechanisms commonly associated with soft law and normative diplomacy. Rather than imposing binding legal obligations, Indonesia's approach promotes religious moderation as a shared normative principle consistent with ASEAN's preference for consensus-based

governance and non-interference. In this sense, the institutional ecosystem depicted in Figure 1 functions as a norm diffusion mechanism, enabling Indonesia's domestic legal commitments, grounded in constitutional principles and supported by regulatory instruments such as Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023, to evolve into regional diplomatic practices (Peraturan Presiden (Perpres) Nomor 58 Tahun 2023 Tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama, 2023). This process aligns with constructivist perspectives in international law, which emphasize the role of social interaction, institutional networks, and normative persuasion in shaping regional legal orders. Consequently, Indonesia's promotion of religious moderation can be understood not only as a domestic policy agenda but also as a form of normative leadership within ASEAN, contributing to regional stability, human security, and cooperative approaches to countering transnational radicalism (Rahmat et al., 2025).

2. Internationalization Through ASEAN Formal Schemes

- a) Strengthening several existing initiatives. The Ministry of Religion once held a workshop. Religious Moderation through the MABIMS (Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam) cooperation scheme in 2024. The Ministry of Religion has also held an International Conference on Religious Moderation (ICROM) 2023, one of the recommendations of which is to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN countries to share experiences and information on strengthening religious moderation. Both workshops Religious Moderation and ICROM aim to address the challenges of religious harmony and uphold moderation in the ASEAN region. Unfortunately, these two events are not routine and planned programs at the ASEAN level. These events could be expanded to include ASEAN cooperation, not just for Muslim participants. They could complement the annual ASEAN Youth agenda. Interfaith Camp (AYIC). AYIC is an ASEAN youth program initiated by Indonesia. This annual program aims to promote tolerance, moderation, and mutual respect among youth from ASEAN member countries. AYIC operates within the official ASEAN framework, which is part of the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy, and Harmonious Society. This program was initially initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, its implementation has been largely handled by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
- b) Building an ASEAN Harmonious City Network. The initiative to build an ASEAN Harmonious City Network could be included in the agenda of the ASEAN Summit, attended by heads of state. From here, religious moderation could be realized through the establishment of pilot projects for harmonious cities in various ASEAN member countries. The Joint Secretariat Working Team for Religious Moderation would develop a city vision, priority areas, strategic targets, and various activities. If the initiative for an ASEAN Harmonious City Network becomes a decision at the ASEAN Summit or ASEAN Summit, the decision would be coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which serves as the ASEAN Coordinating Council, to ensure its implementation at the appropriate ASEAN Community Council. It could also be pushed through the ASEAN Community Council, as the Community Council also has the authority to make recommendations to the ASEAN Summit.



Figure 7. ASEAN HCN Pilot Project Strategy

3. Internationalization through Informal Schemes

Informal approaches place greater emphasis on the role of civil society, religious organizations, interfaith communities, and academics. Possible practices include interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Society Organizations (CSOs) can initiate interfaith dialogue at the community level, bringing together religious leaders, youth, and the general public to build mutual understanding and reduce prejudice. CSOs in various ASEAN countries can build networks, share good practices, and take joint action to respond to issues of intolerance or religious-based conflict. To date, many Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have not been able to address these issues. Society Interfaith or faith-based organizations (CSOs) that actively engage in dialogue, education, and campaigns for togetherness. For example, major religious organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, regularly hold pluralism conferences. NU initiated the ASEAN Intercultural Conference. and Interreligious Dialogue The 2023 ASEAN Intercultural Conference (IIDC) resulted in the Jakarta Declaration, which emphasized the shared values of ASEAN civilization and the importance of "tolerance and harmony" amidst diversity. The conference was supported by the Indonesian government in its capacity as ASEAN Chair. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can facilitate collaboration between religious organizations to establish a periodic agenda for organizing ASEAN Intercultural Conferences. and Interreligious Dialogue Conference (IIDC). The ASEAN IIDC can serve as a forum for religious leaders in Southeast Asia to discuss various issues through a religious approach.



Figure 8. Strategy for Building ASEAN IIDC

4. Religious Moderation and Human Security in ASEAN

Religious moderation and human security are closely interconnected themes within the ASEAN region, particularly in the context of Indonesia's culturally and religiously diverse society. Religious moderation functions as a strategic approach to mitigate extremism and promote social harmony, while human security has increasingly become integrated into ASEAN's regional policies in response to various transnational challenges. In Indonesia, religious moderation has been promoted as a balanced approach that counters radicalism and exclusivism while encouraging tolerance, dialogue, and respect among different religious communities (Jura, 2021; Khoerunisa & Yuliani, 2024). This approach emphasizes values such as fairness, cooperation, and compassion, which are essential for maintaining peace and protecting human dignity (Masykur et al., 2024; Mulyanti & Muhajarah, 2025). Furthermore, religious moderation contributes to national integration by preventing social conflict and reinforcing Indonesia's foundational principles, including *Pancasila* and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Khoerunisa & Yuliani, 2024). At the regional level, ASEAN's understanding of security has gradually evolved from a state-centered paradigm toward a broader perspective that incorporates human security, driven by emerging challenges such as natural disasters, poverty, and transnational crime (Howe & Park, 2017).

This shift reflects ASEAN's commitment to a "people-centered" approach that prioritizes the protection and well-being of individuals while strengthening regional cooperation (Martel, 2022). Civil society organizations and non-governmental actors also play an important role in shaping this agenda by contributing to alternative forms of security governance and encouraging broader participation in addressing regional issues. The integration of religious moderation and human security therefore reflects shared objectives in promoting stability, preventing conflict, and fostering inclusive policies across the

region (Howe & Park, 2017; Jura, 2021). By linking these two frameworks, ASEAN member states can strengthen regional cooperation in addressing ideological extremism while promoting a peaceful multicultural society that respects diversity and protects individual rights (Oishi, 2016; Wahid, 2024). Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including the tension between national sovereignty and regional commitments to human rights and security, as well as the diverse cultural and religious landscapes across ASEAN countries that require context-sensitive policy approaches. Despite these challenges, ongoing efforts to integrate religious moderation and human security into ASEAN's institutional framework demonstrate the region's commitment to addressing complex social threats and advancing a more stable, peaceful, and resilient Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

Internationalization of Religious Moderation as a soft instrument The law demonstrates how Indonesia uses the values of tolerance, justice, and diversity as a non-coercive legal force in regional diplomacy. This approach aligns with the ASEAN Principle of Non- Interference because it does not force changes in another country's domestic policies, but remains in line with the spirit of Shared Responsibility. Responsibility) to maintain regional stability from the threats of radicalism, extremism, and social disintegration. Through legal diplomacy and regional implementation, Indonesia utilizes national legal frameworks—such as the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations, Laws No. 3/2002 and No. 23/2019 on Defense, and Presidential Decree No. 58/2023 on Strengthening Religious Moderation —to project legal values into the ASEAN legal system that is based on consensus and soft institutionalism , as reflected in ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint , Counter-Terrorism Plan of Action and Declaration on Transnational Crime .

The implication is that Religious Moderation strengthens national resilience through legal, social, and ideological channels by making moderation a non-military defense component that increases the nation's resilience against transnational ideological threats. Furthermore, at the regional legal level, this policy contributes to the formation of new legal norms in ASEAN oriented towards humanitarian values, pluralism, and collective security. Thus, all national and regional legal frameworks function to support each other in establishing Indonesia as a normative legal leader in Southeast Asia, a country that leads through the power of law, values, and moral example to create a peaceful, just, and highly resilient regional order .

To strengthen Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN through the internationalization strategy of Religious Moderation , the first step that must be taken is to strengthen national collaboration across sectors by optimizing the function of the Joint Secretariat for Religious Moderation as mandated by Presidential Decree No. 58 of 2023. This secretariat needs to be immediately activated as a coordination hub across ministries and institutions with a pentahelix approach , involving the bureaucracy, security forces, the education sector, the media, civil society, political parties, and the business world to build a solid moderation ecosystem domestically. Once the domestic foundation is solid, internationalization can be carried out through two main channels. First, the formal ASEAN scheme, by making activities such as the Workshop Religious Moderation and the International Conference on Religious Moderation (ICROM) as an official ASEAN agenda, as well as developing the ASEAN Harmonious City Network initiative as a pilot project for harmonious cities across member countries. Second, an informal scheme, by strengthening the role of civil society, religious organizations, and interfaith communities through dialogue, research, and regional collaboration, for example through the ASEAN Intercultural Forum. and Interreligious Dialogue Conference (IIDC) involving interfaith figures and academics. This dual approach will position Religious Moderation as a soft instrument power diplomacy based on law and humanitarian values, while strengthening Indonesia's position as a normative leader in ASEAN in creating a peaceful, inclusive and highly resilient region .

Although this study demonstrates the legal and diplomatic potential of the internationalization of religious moderation as a soft law instrument within ASEAN, several avenues for future research remain

open. Future studies should conduct empirical assessments of policy implementation to evaluate how initiatives such as the International Conference on Religious Moderation (ICROM), regional workshops, and the ASEAN Harmonious City Network operate in practice and contribute to preventing extremism and strengthening social cohesion across ASEAN member states. In addition, comparative legal analyses between Indonesia's religious moderation framework and counter-radicalism or social harmony policies in other ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, or the Philippines, would help assess the adaptability of the Indonesian model and identify opportunities for developing shared regional legal norms within ASEAN's consensus-based institutional system. Further research could also explore the institutionalization of religious moderation within ASEAN's legal and policy architecture, including its potential integration into regional soft-law instruments, declarations, and cooperative mechanisms under the ASEAN Political-Security Community framework. Finally, interdisciplinary studies combining international law, diplomacy, and security studies would be valuable for examining how religious moderation can function as part of a broader non-military defense strategy, contributing to regional stability, human security, and cooperative approaches to addressing transnational ideological threats in Southeast Asia.

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