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## **The Strategy of the Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia (PERKIM) in Managing *Mualaf* Family Conflicts in Malaysia**

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### **Abstract:**

The problems faced by the families of *mualaf* in Malaysia require serious handling and management by looking at the increasing number of *mualaf* every year. The National Board that has the responsibility to deal with this problem is the Council or State Department of Islamic Religion. Other non-governmental institutions are also involved in handling the problems of *mualaf* families such as The Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia/ *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* (PERKIM) and *Urusetia Saudara Kita* (USK). This research will analyze the strategy of a governmental or non-governmental organization—the Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia (PERKIM) in dealing with and managing the problems of converted families. This research is qualitative–empirical with a juridical-sociological approach. Primary data were collected from interviews with respondents located in Selampit Village, Malaysia. The results show that the PERKIM organization helps *mualaf* families in managing the conflicts they experience through cognitive empowerment strategies in handling and managing problems. Islamic preachers from PERKIM changed the speculations of *mualaf* parents who considered Islam immoral and troublesome religion by conveying *da'wah bil-hikmah* and *da'wah fardiah* through house-to-house visits and providing food, protection, education, financial and moral support. It can be concluded that the role of PERKIM in overcoming

this conflict is good but not optimal, as can be seen from the activities, programs and policies in resolving the conflict.

**Keywords:** mualaf; family; conflict.

## Introduction

PERKIM stands for *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* or known as The Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that helps and guides new Muslim converts/ *mualaf*<sup>1</sup> in Malaysia from the material aspect and religious knowledge. This organization has branches in every different province in Malaysia.<sup>2</sup> PERKIM has helped people in remote villages convert to Islam through its da'wah activities. Currently, the population of Malaysia is around 60.4%, with 55% Muslim from ethnic Malays, and the rest are Chinese, Indians, Indigenous, Iban, Dayak, and others. PERKIM also helps *mualaf* who face various problems related to religious issues from the closest people in their environment, like parents and the community by providing guidance and counseling assistance. The establishment of PERKIM has contributed to converting 17,440 people from various regions and ethnicities.<sup>3</sup> PERKIM's operations are fully funded by donations from the public, companies, and government organizations. PERKIM also conducts fundraising activities to support its programs. PERKIM has implemented several projects, including financial, educational, and charity activities for *mualaf*, as well as orphanages, medical assistance, and a children's care center for children with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> *Mualaf* is the term used to refer to a new convert due to his new experience with the Islamic faith, someone who originally disbelieved and recently embraced Islam, those whose hearts are made to incline, or are conciliated by beneficence and love or affection. For example, one way to give love is through zakat, called 'love' in Islam.<sup>5</sup> However, sometimes the status of '*mualaf*' to a person causes conflict in his family. Their safety can be threatened by people they know before they converted to the religion.

Several similar studies have been conducted. Research conducted by Abdullah et al implies that PERKIM Kebangsaan's programmes are conducted through

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<sup>1</sup> Suci Ramadhani dan Muaz Tanjung, "Communication Strategy in Strengthening Da'wah for the Muallaf Community in North Sumatra," *MUHARRIK: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 6, no. 1 (16 Juni 2023): 87–104, <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrik.v6i1.2728>; Mohammad Syukri Jalil dkk., "The Effectiveness of Zakat Assistance Towards Straightening Religiosity of Muslim Converts (Muallaf)," *E-Journal of Islamic Thought & Understanding (E-JITU)*, no. 1 (2 Juni 2022), <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/E-Jitu/article/view/18355>.

<sup>2</sup> Nur A'thiroh Masyaa'il Tan Abdullah dkk., "Persepsi Saudara Muslim Terhadap Program Dakwah Di Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) Kebangsaan, Kuala Lumpur," *Sains Humanika* 2, no. 1 (15 Juli 2014), <https://doi.org/10.11113/sh.v2n1.387>; Nur A'thiroh Masyaa'il Tan Abdullah dkk., "Program dakwah Islamiah Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) Kebangsaan kepada saudara Muslim: satu tinjauan dari segi pendidikan," 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia, *Suara PERKIM* (Kuala Lumpur: Perkim, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Zakaria Bin Noh, "Peranan Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (Perkim) Dalam Pembinaan Keagamaan Mualaf Di Malaysia" (Undergraduate Thesis, Pekanbaru, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2010), <https://repository.uin-suska.ac.id/10718/>.

<sup>5</sup> Anwar Holid, *Seeking truth finding Islam : kisah empat mualaf yang menjadi duta Islam di Barat* (Bandung: Mizania, 2009).



da'wah, education, benevolence, cooperation, and publishing. PERKIM's education activities have had a significant impact in increasing public knowledge and removing the negative stigma against Islam.<sup>6</sup> Research by Rahim & Zakaria shows that PERKIM's Islamic education model makes it easier for converts to learn about Islam.<sup>7</sup> Kasim et al hold that the teachers of the creed at PERKIM establish the principles of the wisdom of practice and wise practice in teaching religion to the converts.<sup>8</sup> This article discusses *mualaf* who experienced conflict with their families after converting to Islam in Selampit Lundu Village, Sarawak, Malaysia. Many efforts have been made by The Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia (PERKIM) for them to maintain the benefit (*mashlahah*) and virtue. It is the responsibility to help, lead and teach the *mualaf*.<sup>9</sup>

The case of *mualaf* in Malaysia especially in Sarawak has received more attention from society. Apart from that, they experienced discrimination such as changing their original names into Malay names, adding the word “bin” in the name, and putting new lineage names such as “Abdullah”. The change aims to identify their new religion (Islam), which is regulated in bureaucratic Malaysia. Also, some people think that using ‘bin’ with his non-Muslim biological father will damage his creed (*aqidah*).<sup>10</sup> There are also cases where parents force their *mualaf* children to eat the “Holy Bread” which, according to Christian religious belief, is part of the flesh and blood of Jesus. Moreover, parents ask them to leave the house, do not admit them as their children, force them to eat pork after converting to Islam, forbid them to worship in an Islamic way, and cover their *aurat* (intimate parts of the human body) properly. Every *mualaf* in Malaysia has their own rights as mentioned in a particular Act, specifically in the *Akta Pentadbiran Undang-Undang Islam Wilayah Persekutuan* (APUIWP) of 1993, section 91. This act stipulates that a person who has converted to Islam and has been registered in the list of *mualaf* should be treated as a Muslim by any federal or state law. The total family number of *mualaf* is 1,214 across Sarawak. Many governmental and non-governmental agencies have been specifically set up to guide these residents, one of them is PERKIM, which is directly involved through activities with *mualaf*. However, in some places, this organization is experiencing difficulties due to a lack of personnel to serve the needs of *mualaf*.<sup>11</sup> This article aims to analyze the role of The Islamic Welfare

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<sup>6</sup> N. a. M. T. Abdullah dkk., “Program Dakwah Islamiah Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) Kebangsaan Kepada Saudara Muslim: Satu Tinjauan Dari Segi Pendidikan,” Juni 2012, <https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/3486313>.

<sup>7</sup> Nur Rahim dan Idris Zakaria, “Dakwah PERKIM kepada Etnik Cina di Malaysia,” *Islamiyyat* 30 (1 Juni 2014): 63–70, <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2014-3601-08>.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Yunus Kasim, Samsuddin Abdul Hamid, dan Misnan Jemali, “Pengajaran Akidah Dalam Kalangan Mualaf Di Institut Dakwah Islamiyah PERKIM: Teaching of Islamic Faith (Akidah) among New Converted Muslim in Islamic Propagation Institute (PERKIM),” *Perspektif Jurnal Sains Sosial Dan Kemanusiaan* 9, no. 3 (18 Desember 2017): 89–100.

<sup>9</sup> Firdaus Lokman, “Buletin PERKIM,” 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Prof Madya Dato’ Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, *Menjawab Persoalan Menjelaskan Kekeliruan* (Selangor: Karya Bestari, 2015), 300.

<sup>11</sup> Aishah Binti Abdul Rashid, *Interview*, (Malaysia: 3 February 2020)

Organization Malaysia (PERKIM) in managing conflicts experienced by people converting to Islam with their parents or families.

## Method

This article is based on qualitative research, specifically field research. The analysis used empirical data collected from interviews with a semi-structured interviewing technique. This study was conducted in Kucing, Serawak province where the headquarter of PERKIM is located. Three people (Si, Ha, and Fa) were included in the sample group of this study selected under a snowball technique. They were selected simply because they converted to Islam. To gain additional information about the role of PERKIM and the sample group's experiences in dealing with their conflict after converting to Islam, this study also interviewed four officials (Na, Sam, Ms, and Pb) from PERKIM. All names included in this research are pseudonyms for the sake of confidentiality. The collected data were analysed to answer the overarching question of this research, “*what is the role of Perkim in managing the conflict of converted people into Islam with their families and rural communities.*” From this central question, two sub-questions are derived. First, this study investigates *what* is the regulation of protection of people converting to Islam in the local context of Malaysia. The second sub-question intends to examine *how* PERKIM provides assistance in managing the conflict of converting people with their families and surroundings in their communities. Juridical–sociological approaches are used in the data analysis.

## Result and Discussion

### **PERKIM and Its Contribution to Converts in Malaysia: Protecting equal rights and obligations of converts**

PERKIM is fully involved in the protection arrangements for the converts in Malaysia. It refers the protection support to Section 101, the regulation of the Islamic Religious Council and Malay Custom of Kelantan in 1994. The sections highlight two points; 1) the children as young converts have similar rights and obligations to other Muslims. 2) The council may, at any time, end the period of assistance for someone who has just embraced Islam PERKIM that focuses its protection on three aspects of protection, namely virtue, da'wah and education. The State Islamic Religious Council/ *Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN)*, the *State Department of Islamic Religious Affairs/ Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri/ Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN)* and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide services through protection in temporary housing, education (financing temporary housing for *mualaf* in certain institutions), medical services, marriage assistance, and so on.<sup>12</sup> For this virtue, PERKIM provides dormitory protection known as Darul Falah Dormitory (ASDAF) for orphans who come from underprivileged families. There is

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<sup>12</sup> Azman Ab Rahman, Irwan Mohd Subri, dan Nuradli Ridzwan Shah Mohd Dali, “Skim Bantuan Zakat Asnaf Mualaf: Satu Analisis Kontemporari di Malaysia,” *مجلة إدارة و بحوث الفتاوى* 6 (1 November 2015): 167–91, <https://doi.org/10.12816/0029910>; Mohammad Noorazlan Md Ismail dan Nor Aini Ali, “Konsep Asnaf Mualaf Dan Had Pengukuran Mualaf: Asnaf Mualaf Concept and Mualaf Measurement Limits,” *ALBASIRAH JOURNAL* 13, no. 1 (28 Juni 2023): 25–41.



also the Darul Aitam Wal Masakin Abdul Rahman Putra Dormitory (DATAR) for the poor or underprivileged people specifically from the age of 9 years. PERKIM also helps poor orphans who live with their mothers or heirs with the Outer Dormitory Orphans assistance scheme. In addition, there is Tasputra, the first Islamic Care Center in Malaysia specifically for financial protection, detection and assistance for children with mental disabilities or children with disabilities.

Through da'wah activities, PERKIM preachers visit homes or hospitals to encourage *mualaf* by bringing groceries as donations for them. This activity is conducted in all states or regions because it is da'wah as an obligation in showing the concerns of the Islamic community towards *mualaf* in all corners of the country.<sup>13</sup> Beside dakwah activities, there is an Islamization process which is written in Section 100, the rules of the Islamic Religious Council and Malay Custom of Kelantan in 1994, mentioning "a person who wants to embrace Islam should recite two sentences of *shahadah* in front of all Muslims and after that should be meet Qadhi or any person appointed by Majlis". Each PERKIM branch will conduct *fardhu ain* classes for *mualaf* by focusing on the study of the Pillars of Faith, Pillars of Islam, prayer guidance, *thaharah* and others. Each MAIN, JAIN or NGO conduct education classes for *mualaf* in each country or region.<sup>14</sup>

MAIN and JAIN manage *mualaf's* education through classes. At the initial stage, *mualaf* will be guided with basic matters in Islam both theoretical and practical forms such as education of monotheism (*tauhid*), obligatory bathing (to perform *ghusl*) procedures and perform prayers (*salah*). They will also receive an offer to register the PERKIM Islamic Da'wah Institution/Institusi Dakwah Islamiah PERKIM (IDIP). This institution offers three main courses, such as the Teaching Preparation Course/ *Kursus Persediaan Pengajian* (KPP). KPP is a basic program for *mualaf*/children of *mualaf* for 6 months. The second is the Islamic Study Certificate/ *Sijil Asas Pengajian Islam* (SAP), a two-semester program for students who pass the KPP stage. The third is Islamic Study Certificate/ *Sijil Pengajian Islam* (SPI) conducted for one and a half years or in three semesters. However, administrators in each country emphasize teaching on the main issues of Islam including the study of the Quran, *akidah* (creed), *fiqh* (practices of the sharia), *akhlak* and Islamic history.

There are two types of organizations responsible for protecting the converts in Malaysia, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The State Islamic Religious Council/ *Majlis Agama Islam Negeri* (MAIN) or the State Department of Islamic Religious Affairs/ *Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri* (JAIN) is a royal institution responsible for *mualaf* in Malaysia. The Islamic Welfare Organization Malaysia/ *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* (PERKIM), Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association/ *Persatuan Cina Muslim Malaysia* (MACMA), the Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress/ *Kongres India Muslim Malaysia* (KIMMA), and Islamic Outreach

<sup>13</sup> Azman Ab Rahman, Irwan Mohd Subri, dan Mahazan Mutalib, "Persepsi Mualaf Terhadap Pengisian Pengislaman dan Program Pembangunan Mualaf: Kajian di Negeri Sembilan," *مجلة إدارة و بحوث الفتاوى* 6 (1 November 2015): 135–48, <https://doi.org/10.12816/0029908>.

<sup>14</sup> Asmawati Suhid dkk., "Teacher's Teaching Practices in the Class of Mualaf (New Convert)," *Asian Social Science* 17, no. 11 (2021): 83.

ABIM (IOA)/ *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* are among the examples of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for converts matter. The mentioned non-organizations are financially dependent on the divisions of the royal and their own financial sources (cooperatives or others) to organize the right activities. Several non-government organizations in Malaysia receive continuous financing from the MAIN or JAIN. Although the names of associations in each country are different, like the *Unit Ukhuwah* (Fellowship Unit), *Unit Saudara Kita* (Our Brothers Unit) and so on,<sup>15</sup> the mission or function of MAIN and JAIN in managing *mualaf* in each country is the same.<sup>16</sup> All countries in Malaysia use *zakat asnaf mualaf* as a source of cash to accomplish the mandate of managing *mualaf*.<sup>17</sup>

### Overcoming the personal and familial Conflicts of the converts

When a person decided to convert to Islam as a Muslim, she or he has to face challenges coming from inside and externally from their family who do not follow the conversion. Internally, the newborn Muslims are not stable yet in their new faith. Their faith in Islam is possibly changeable and easily influenced by others. Regarding familial problems, *mualaf* face prejudice from their family members who stay with their religion. The family members have their own perceptions of Islam, which are less desirable. In helping the *mualaf*, PERKIM takes two steps. First, the officials of PERKIM did regular visits to the family of *mualaf* to introduce Islam in a more proper way to provide another insight into Islam, explaining that Islam is as good as other religions. Second, they also invite the *mualaf* and the family together to conduct charity activities to strengthen the family's understanding of Islam, such as providing the family of *mualaf* with free medical check-up and foods. Furthermore, in dealing with personal problems, *mualaf* can gain assistance and coaching in strengthening their new faith through regular counselling.

PERKIM also helps *mualaf* face their religious or personal problems by providing counselling and guidance. The establishment of PERKIM has succeeded in helping to Islamize 17,440 people from various places and tribes.<sup>18</sup> PERKIM Kuching Sarawak's operations are financed entirely by donations from the public, companies and government organizations. Other projects handled by PERKIM are the construction of traditional *mualaf* protection centres, orphanages, health facilities, and orphanages for children with disabilities. PERKIM also initiated charities to support *mualaf* financially, education, and guidance for children with disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

PERKIM organizes daily recitation classes at certain times. classes are held three times in two weeks, aiming to guide and teach *mualaf* knowledge about Islam.

<sup>15</sup> Norhana Abdullah @ Ng Siew Boey dkk., "Development of Human Capital through the Islamic Education of Our Brothers (Mu'alaf) in Terengganu," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 25, no. 1 (25 Juni 2023): 159–98, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.6>.

<sup>16</sup> Asyraf Hj Ab Rahman et al., "An Insight into How Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies Work in Preserving Welfare of the New Converts in Malaysia," *Synesis* 15, no. 2 (18 Maret 2023): 97–113.

<sup>17</sup> Ismail and Ali, "Konsep Asnaf Mualaf Dan Had Pengukuran Mualaf."

<sup>18</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia, *Suara PERKIM*.

<sup>19</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia.



The recitation classes have been very well organized. They have professional preachers fit to teach *mualaf*. The delivery method is adjusted to the backgrounds of converts such as Malays, Bidayuh, Iban and Selako. The preachers teach *fardhu ain*, morals, Quran recitation, prayer guidance for men and women, *tajweed*, and the prophetic history of Muhammad SAW. With these da'wah activities, *mualaf* can deepen their faith and devotion (*taqwa*) to Islam because they have received the needed guidance. PERKIM also held a faith-strengthening program for converts. The purpose of this program is to strengthen *aqidah* which includes the pillars of Islam and faith as well as the intention to embrace Islam with the aim of increasing the understanding of converts toward Islam and avoiding unwanted things by providing life support and assistance to *mualaf*.<sup>20</sup>

PERKIM also provides support to *mualaf* by building houses, fulfilling basic needs for orphans and single mothers/ fathers, giving maternity and entrepreneurship assistance, educational assistance, as well as costs for continuing education for children to university level both at home and abroad. In addition, PERKIM also provides wedding expenses and financial support to help ease financial issues associated with someone's death.<sup>21</sup> There is also zakat assistance to reduce financial burdens and provide happiness for new Muslims. The financial resources that will be distributed are collected from all Muslim communities and companies through zakat. Furthermore, PERKIM also held an *iftar* ceremony which aims to provide understanding to converts about the greatness and glory of Ramadan and strengthen the relationship between *mualaf* and other PERKIM members. PERKIM also involved converts in the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday by holding a parade or procession using traditional Malay clothing for men and brackets for women. Another activity that involves *mualaf* is the celebration of Eid al-Adha, while PERKIM will distribute goats and cows in every place. Through this program, PERKIM introduces Islamic teachings that can raise enthusiasm for the celebration of the great days of Islam by fostering a sense of sacrifice among *mualaf*. During Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha prayers, PERKIM holds a congregational prayer with *mualaf* that aims to enliven the atmosphere of celebrating the Islamic big day together to make sure that they do not feel lonely, especially for those who live in remote villages and are often marginalized before Eid because of the minority.<sup>22</sup>

To explain further the author's view about the organization's role, this study explains in detail several aspects, such as legislation and policies, Islamization and registration. First, the legal aspect and the policies are the first Islamic religious institutions at the state level after the Head of Islamic Religion, the State Islamic Religious Council/ Majelis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN) has full control in formulating the law related to the Islamic religion, related to the legislation of *mualaf* which made up in the legal arrangement of State Islamic Religion and its

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<sup>20</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia.

<sup>21</sup> Aishah Binti Abdul Rashid, *Interview*, (Malaysia: 3 February 2020)

<sup>22</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia, *Suara PERKIM*.

rules or regulations under it.<sup>23</sup> If there are cases related to *mualaf* in court, MAIN or JAIN should be involved as the representative or opposing part. Second, Islam is the process of saying the two sentences of *shahadah* (Islamic creed) in front of two accountable males (*mukallaf*) and can be done anywhere, by anyone and at any time, and managed by anyone including MAIN or JAIN, non-governmental experts, priests or nazir/ mosque administrator. Third, registration is a process to prove that the religion of the *mualaf* is Islam and only can be done at the MAIN or JAIN office during office hours and according to the graduation standards stated in the law. After completing the registration process, *mualaf* will receive a certificate or membership card for embracing Islam.

MAIN or JAIN is a governmental organization that becomes responsible for *mualaf*. They will donate a small percentage to PERKIM as an independent organization because their position is fully guaranteed by the government. All countries in Malaysia use zakat *asnaf mualaf* as their source of funds.<sup>24</sup> However, non-governmental organizations are more active and free to achieve their vision and mission in preaching Islam. This is because the activities they carry out are not only restricted to Muslims but also involve non-Muslims in Malaysia. Therefore, many *mualaf* people will go to non-governmental organizations before visiting the Religious Office to express their desire to convert to Islam. Besides obtaining funds for holding events, non-governmental organizations also become intermediaries for MAIN or JAIN in distributing donations and assistance to *mualaf*. Through this article, the author conveys that a network of cooperation has been formed between MAIN or JAIN and Non-government organizations in all countries in Malaysia, officially or unofficially. The following table shows the agreement between the countries or regions involved.

**Table 1.** Cooperation between MAIN or JAIN and Non-Government Organization *Mualaf* in Malaysia

Country	Islamization/ Registration	Education	Joint Program	Visits/ Welfare	Fund	Shura
Sabah	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sarawak	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kelantan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Selangor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Penang	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
Johor	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓
Perlis	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	
Federal	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0

<sup>23</sup> Siti Adibah Abu Bakar dan Siti Zubaidah Ismail, “Pengurusan *Mualaf* Di Malaysia: Kerjasama Dinamik Antara Agensi Kerajaan Dan Bukan Kerajaan,” *Jurnal Usuluddin* 46, no. 2 (31 Desember 2018): 97–122, <https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol46no2.4>.

<sup>24</sup> Tuan Sakaria Samela, “Tadbir Urus Saudara Baru: Antara Santunan dan Terpaksa,” (Kursus Tadbir Urus Saudara Baru, Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (JAWI), 26-27 November 2016).



Territory						
Malacca	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terengganu	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0
Perak	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	0
Negeri Sembilan	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0
Pahang	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kedah	✓	0	✓	0	✓	✓

✓ - cooperation 0 – no cooperation

Cooperation between government and non-government organizations in the process of Islamization and *mualaf* registration in Malaysia is an obligation. The conversion process can be conducted in any area or their domicile. The formal registration of their converted religion must be under the authoritative institution, which is in this case MAIN or JAIN. The syahadah majlis that assists in the conversion process must also provide the converts with prior knowledge of their rights and obligations as Muslims. This step can help *mualaf* prepare themselves for dealing with the pressures of life that may last long, preventing cases of *mualaf* who want to return to their original religion when facing public threats or incitement. The authorities, both government, non-government organizations and other Muslim communities also provide fundamentals of Islamic knowledge and guidance in living context. This can be done by taking MAIN or JAIN classes or non-government organizations or private education at their residence. With these educational services, most *mualaf* people can join Islamic classes because of flexible schedules to which people in this context can adjust. Hence, all of them can attend classes according to their time and convenience.

The cooperation of government and non-government in holding agendas and virtues can provide support for non-government organizations through funds owned by MAIN and JAIN.<sup>25</sup> Cooperation between government and non-government organizations also boosts the implementation of da'wah programs, facilitates the distribution of funds, and also expands *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in all countries in Malaysia because it involves more *mualaf* people. The collaboration can provide special support for *mualaf*, like those conducted in Sarawak, Melaka and Perak which are capable of doing follow-up programmes, regular social visits, and counselling operations. Besides knowing the needs of *mualaf* through their teaching activity at the zakat office, the administrators will also know the problems they faced. By providing donations, moral and psychological support and the neglect of *mualaf*'s needs in Malaysia can efficiently be minimized. The author contends that cooperation between MAIN or JAIN or non-government organizations should realize the benefit and discussion through meetings or

<sup>25</sup> Tuan Sakaria Samela, "Tadbir Urus Saudara Baru: Antara Santunan dan Terpaksa," (Kursus Tadbir Urus Saudara Baru, Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (JAWI), 26-27 November 2016).

dialogues which can be held in every country in Malaysia to find solutions to the problems faced by *mualaf*.

Five main needs must be managed for *mualaf* in Malaysia, such as identity, religious education and guidance, finances and their needs, da'wah and counselling and legislation. First, the identity of *mualaf* in Malaysia should not be underestimated because this country consists of a pluralistic society, nationally and religiously.<sup>26</sup> The identity mentioned is the identity of *mualaf*. They must obtain a name according to the card or a valid Islamic religious certificate through the process of converting and registering. Obtaining a card or certificate of embracing Islam serves as strong evidence if *mualaf* get problems related to their religious status when they are alive or dead.<sup>27</sup> Second, religious education and guidance are very needed by *mualaf* after moving from a formal conversion to a practical conversion. This education and guidance can be obtained through classes provided by MAIN or JAIN or non-government organizations. The subject matter prepared is arranged properly, including *fardhu ain*, monotheism (tauhid), worship, morals, Islamic history and teaching of the Quran. Not only in the classroom but guidance can also be obtained from a spouse or Muslim neighbours who can help them understand Islam better.<sup>28</sup> Third, financial assistance and material needs for their life support are given by the authorities at the *mualaf*'s residence in the form of basic materials, cloth, dormitory protection, medical assistance, education and others. Fourth, da'wah and counselling through home visits to find out their condition<sup>29</sup> can foster brotherhood among *mualaf* people and also strengthen their belief to hold fast to Islam.<sup>30</sup> Counselling can be held formally or after accepting a proposal from *mualaf* about their problems.<sup>31</sup> In terms of the legislation aspect, a *mualaf* should be treated as a Muslim when she or he has legal matters to solve or to deal with. *Mualaf* people should bring their legal matters to a religious court, not the civil court.<sup>32</sup>

PERKIM resolves the conflicts between *mualaf* and their family by holding social activities. The purpose of this activity is to prove to the *mualaf*'s biological family that Islam emphasizes the obligations of fellow Muslims not deviating from their creed (*aqidah*). This program can bring goodness to society and education. This represents a good deed that leads to harmony between communities until the

<sup>26</sup> Adam Corrie, *Ada iman, baru syok, ada fight*, Cetakan pertama (Selangor: Must Read, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> Siti Zaleha Ibrahim, Nur Sarah Tajul Urus, dan Mohd Faisal Mohamed, "Pertukaran Agama Dan Kesannya Terhadap Komuniti: Satu Sorotan Terhadap Kes-Kes Murtad Dan Masuk Islam Di Malaysia," 2016, <http://localhost:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/12276>.

<sup>28</sup> Ikhwan Ng, *Dengan lafaz 2 kalimah syahadah*, Cetakan pertama (Selangor: Must Read, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Mohd Ridhuan Tee Abdullah, *Cabaran saudara baharu di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Aimi Wafa Ahmad dan Nur Najwa Hanani Abd Rahman, "Sokongan Sosial: Satu Keperluan Dalam Pemerksaan Saudara Baru," *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* 13, no. 2 (30 November 2020): 238–53.

<sup>31</sup> Nor Ashikin Md Nasir dan Siti Zubaidah Ismail, "Keluar Agama Islam Di Malaysia: Permasalahan Dari Sudut Undang-Undang," *Journal of Shariah Law Research* 1, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.22452/http://doi.org/10.22452/JSLR.vol1no1.8>.

<sup>32</sup> Azri Bharii dkk., "Analysis of Muallaf Fatwa in Selangor," *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 6, no. 2 (23 Maret 2022): 1316–22.



presence of Islam can be well received.<sup>33</sup> Another responsibility of PERKIM is to make visits to the houses of new converts. This method can show the effect on the *mualaf's* family, especially their parents (who hold different religions) will see Muslims as friendly, loving and caring people. Having home visits also has many benefits. Besides strengthening the Islamic brotherhood, it can provide support and find out more problems or challenges faced by new *mualaf*. PERKIM also makes guidance and assistance through this activity, so converts do not feel neglected.<sup>34</sup> During the visit, PERKIM also tried to advise *mualaf's* parents through the method of *da'wah fardiah* and *da'wah bil-hikmah*.<sup>35</sup> *Da'wah fardiah* is conducted by building good communication between PERKIM and the parents of the *mualaf* to provide a better understanding of Islam, while *da'wah bil-hikmah* focuses on doing activities targeted to the parents of the *mualaf* in the form of charity, such as helping the sick of the family, scholarship for the family members, providing assistance for the parents or the family members in need.<sup>36</sup>

In dealing with conflicts between *mualaf* and their families, PERKIM also held a compensation program. PERKIM came to Selampit village and invited *mualaf* and their parents from different religions to take donations from PERKIM. This method can soften the hearts of their parent so they do not look negatively at the struggles of their children and accept the choice they made sincerely. PERKIM also provides cash and offers scholarship opportunities and compensation for sick and poor people concerned. With this program, it is obvious that PERKIM is very concerned about the aspect of goodness for every new convert to Islam, especially those who live in very remote locations surrounded by non-Muslims.<sup>37</sup> This all indicates that PERKIM plays a significant role in overcoming problems faced by newborn Muslims.

Cited from one of the officials of PERKIM,<sup>38</sup> PERKIM should provide assistance and coaching because they are afraid of certain situations if *mualaf* are not able to maintain their faith after getting various conflicts and being ridiculed by their biological families who lack understanding of Islam. Moreover, they are not considered children by their own parents. In fact, there is also a plan from the *mualaf's* biological family to persecute their children by cooking pork for their children who have converted to Islam. When their children confirm, other family members will say the meat they are cooking is beef. There is also the biggest conflict experienced by *mualaf* when their parents force them to eat the "Holy Bread" which according to Christian belief that the Holy Bread is part of the flesh and blood of Jesus. The long conflict between *mualaf* and their parents to this day is caused by the conversion to religion.<sup>39</sup> In Sarawak, new Muslim converts can choose their

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<sup>33</sup> Pertumbuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia, *Suara PERKIM*.

<sup>34</sup> UAR, Interview (Malaysia, 3 February 2020).

<sup>35</sup> Kasim, Hamid, dan Jemali, "Pengajaran Akidah Dalam Kalangan Mualaf Di Institut Dakwah Islamiyah PERKIM."

<sup>36</sup> UAR, Interview (Malaysia, 3 February 2020).

<sup>37</sup> UAR, Interview (Malaysia, 3 February 2020).

<sup>38</sup> AAR, Interview (Malaysia, 3 February 2020).

<sup>39</sup> FSF, *Interview* (11 October 2020).

name, but they must change their surname to “bin Abdullah” as a symbol that they follow Islam. There are only two groups that should use "bin Abdullah": the new Muslim converts and children who do not have legal status. The factor of conflict between *mualaf* and their family is caused by perceptions of Islam as a religion of immorality.<sup>40</sup> These conflicts will affect *mualaf's* inner pressure caused by the existence of two or more conflicting ideas or desires to control themselves, which will affect their behaviour.

## Conclusion

Through the activities that have been carried out by PERKIM as described by the author, this organization can resolve conflicts between *mualaf* and their non-muslim parents. PERKIM succeeded in changing parents' perceptions about Islam as an immorality religion. The programmatic activities conducted by PERKIM help *mualaf* strengthen their faith in Islam as their choice through a da'wah program and collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations in managing the problems faced by *mualaf* in Malaysia. The program is different in each province because it adapts to the place and conditions. Those programs unite hearts and bind converts with their parents peacefully. The various strategies used in preaching by the preachers from PERKIM strongly support the change in the attitudes of *mualaf's* parents. The da'wah material provided by the preachers can be well received and redistributed. With the existence of PERKIM in all provinces in Malaysia and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental staff, *mualaf* can be accepted by their non-Muslim environment and have the opportunity to study their religious knowledge more deeply to strengthen their faith towards Islam. Every organization, both governmental and non-governmental organizations, is very concerned about and responsible for serving *mualaf* from the initial process of converting to Islam (taking the shahada) until they die. The PERKIM organization and its programs can be accepted by groups that used to reject and consider Islam an immorality religion. More, there is even a perception among them believing that mutual respect among religious people is very important. The friendly preaching has helped the process of Islamic da'wah and the reconciliation between *mualaf* and their parents.

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<sup>40</sup> Abidin, *Menjawab Persoalan Menjelaskan Kekeliruan*.



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