The Strengthening of Guardian Institutions in Nanggroe Aceh During the Autonomy Era

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1. Introduction

The Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution is a constitutionally recognized gift from the Central Government to Aceh, based on Article 18B paragraph (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution. Then, in the agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the consensus of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution (LWNA) is confirmed in Helsinki item 1.7.1: "The Nanggroe Wali Institution will be founded with all its ceremonial instruments and titles".¹ Then, in Article 96 paragraph (4) of Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Acehnese Government, this text is stated: "Further Provisions Institutions regarding candidate requirements, election procedures, election participants, term of office,

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protocol position, and finances, as well as other provisions concerning Wali Nanggroe, are regulated by Aceh Qanun.²

The entrance to LWNA in Law Number 11 of 2006 is given to the Aceh Qanun. So Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Second Amendment to the Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2012 was formed regarding the Nanggroe Wali Institution. The process of its formation and after the stipulation of the qanun, a quo continues to attract protests from all non-Acehnese ethnic groups (minorities).

First, the Gayo tribe, which is represented by civil society on behalf of Gayo Merdeka, clearly rejects the presence of LWNA based on very discriminatory institutions, such as appointing Malek Mahmud Al-Hayter as the Wali of Nanggroe Aceh. This decision seems to negate the position of traditional leaders from the Gayo community. The role of LWNA should not only be for the majority. All ethnic groups in Aceh have the right to occupy this noble position. On the other hand, historical facts explain that the tribe that first inhabited the Aceh region was the Gayo tribe. Then it was impressed that the presence of LWNA only became the interest of a group in Aceh.³

Second, the Alas tribe objected to the condition for becoming a Wali Nanggroe, specifically that they must be fluent in Acehnese. The Alas tribe is noted for having four generations of Acehnese descendants and above. Naturally, the Alas people are not fluent in Acehnese; the language they use in daily life is Alas'. This is as if the qanun a quo diminishes the Alas tribe's entity, because throughout Aceh's history, the Alas tribe has been considered a component of the Acehnese country.⁴ One of the Alas figures even threatened that if the Alas tribe was not accommodated, they would spread. Thirdly, the Aceh Singkil and Subulussalam City Community Association (HMSS) voiced anger with LWNA for failing to intervene in the Singkil clash riots. The existence of LWNA has the potential to obliterate and preserve energy harmony, as well as resolve communal issues in Aceh Singkil. LWNA appears to be a pragmatic political issue.⁵

The Qanun a quo continues to reap contra. The purpose of this research is to reconstruct the perspective of traditional leaders in Central Aceh, Bener Meriah, Southeast Aceh, and Aceh Singkil in order to understand that the purpose of

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LWNA is to strengthen Aceh in terms of customs and institutional dignity within the framework of the Constitution 1945. The problem is stated as follows: What is the non-Acehnese ethnic groups’ perspective on strengthening LWNA within the framework of the 1945 Constitution.

2. Research Method

This is a normative-empirical legal research project since it seeks a holistic perspective from the leaders of the Gayo, Alas, and Singkil tribes in four districts of Aceh. The targeted figures are structurally subordinate to the Aceh Customary District/City Council (MAA). This research takes a statute-based approach, examining the laws and regulations pertaining to the LWNA, MAA, UUPA, and the 1945 Constitution. This strategy places a greater emphasis on the research’s positive direction and legal principles. Second, this study use the historical method to delve into the origins of the LWNA notion, aided by MAA. Additionally, this approach will aim to grasp the history of the development of current laws and regulations, as well as those that are no longer valid, in order to comprehend the reasons for the formation of the norms of a statutory regulation and therefore the legislation’s soul. Thirdly, the sociological law approach is more concerned with the development of the Qanun LWNA; once the qanun a quo is established, researchers will view social phenomena through the eyes of the Gayo, Alas, and Singkil people in order to understand how LWNA should be structured; they will also serve as a unifier of all ethnic elements in Aceh.

3. Results and Discussion

The community’s perspective on the establishment of legal norms is both necessary and obligatory. Particularly among the ethnic Acehnese, who are composed of numerous tribes. Article 4 paragraph (2) of Aceh Qanun Number 17 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Population Administration recognizes and legitimizes these distinct ethnic groups. The Acehnese people, as defined in

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6 Bambang Suharnoko Sjahrr, Krisztina Kis-Katos, and Günther G. Schulze, ‘Political Budget Cycles in Indonesia at the District Level’, Economics Letters, 120.2 (2013), 342–45 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2013.05.007
9 Arifin Maruf, ‘Legal Aspects of Environment in Indonesia: An Efforts to Prevent Environmental Damage and Pollution’, Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System, 1.1 (2021), 2807–12 https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v1i1.4
paragraph (1), are divided into the following ethnic groups, Aceh, Alas, Gayo, Aneuk Jame, Klueit, Simeulue, Singkil, and Tamiang." This indicates that theoretically the Acehnese are distinct from one another; this is perceived as the Acehnese people's diversity. On the other hand, public participation in the formulation of Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Second Amendment to Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Wali Nanggroe Institution is required.\(^\text{11}\)

While the development of a qanun has conceptually represented the Acehnese people through their representatives in the legislature, public input is equally critical to include in the formulation. It should be in drafting Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Second Amendment to Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Wali Nanggroe Institution in order to accommodate all groups, as the Aceh Wali Nanggroe Institution is essentially a mandate from the Helsinki MoU and an order from Article 96 Law Number 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh.\(^\text{12}\)

From the Singkil tribe's perspective, the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution should be strengthened as follows: Following an interview with Zakaria, the Chair of the Aceh-Aceh Singkil Traditional Council, Mufrin, the Aceh-Aceh Singkil Traditional Council's Deputy Chair I, and Zakirun Pohan, the Aceh-Aceh Singkil Traditional Council's Deputy Chair II. They demonstrate that MAA-Aceh Singkil institutionally supports the existence of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution because it is mandated by the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding.\(^\text{13}\) Additionally, the MAA-Aceh Singkil functionary claimed that the Singkil community supports the Wali Nanggroe Aceh institution wholeheartedly, but academics are skeptical due to the lack of supporting information. Finally, the field findings indicate that the Aceh Wali Nanggroe Institution was mandated as a unifier of the Acehnese people in Aceh Qanun Number 9 of 2013 concerning Amendments to Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Aceh Wali Nanggroe Institution, but the Aceh Singkil conflict incident, the a quo institution, was not included in the series. fight that is calm.\(^\text{14}\)

From the Gayo tribe's standpoint, the strengthening of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution occurs in two locations, namely MAA-Central Aceh and MAA-Bener


Meriah: Interviews with Banta Cut Aspala, SE., MM, Chair of the Gayo-Aceh Tengah Traditional Council, Joni, Deputy Chair I of the Central Gayo-Aceh Traditional Assembly, and M. Thaib, KB, Deputy Chair II of the Central Gayo-Aceh Traditional Assembly. While the Aceh Customary Council, both MAG-Aceh Tengah and MAG Bener Meriah, remain institutionally supportive of Wali Nanggroe Aceh, the grassroots of the Gayo people do not fully support the institution.\(^\text{15}\)

This is because Malek Mahmud’s appointment as Guardian Nanggroe Aceh is not democratic and is legally defined by the qanun a quo. The figure of Malek Mahmud then becomes a source of controversy due to the establishment of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institute, which appears to have began focusing exclusively on the person of Malek Mahmud, who was created to fill this position. This was established factually when the Aceh Party group appointed Malek Mahmud as Wali Nanggroe Aceh ex efficio. According to Malek Mahmud’s 2012-2016 mandate as the 9th Wali of Nanggroe Aceh, it was extended for a second period of 2016-2023 without regard for the a quo qanun’s mandate for the establishment of the Election Commission for the Wali Nanggroe Aceh.\(^\text{16}\)

Additionally, Tgk. Abdul Kasah, as Chair of the Gayo-Bener Meriah Customary Council, emphasized that by including the phrase that the Wali Nanggroe Aceh must speak Acehnese in the qanun a quo, it has harmed non-Acehnese people, as the Gayo language is predicted to emerge first, followed by the Acehnese language. Then, MAG-Bener Meriah encouraged the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution to pay attention to, consider, and understand the fact that Aceh is not the only tribe in Aceh Province; the province is home to a variety of tribes, including Gayo, Alas, Singkil, Jamee, Kluet, and Tamiang. Finally, MAG-Bener Meriah believes that criticizing the clause of Acehnese descent in the qanun a quo should be interpreted and clarified to include all Acehnese ethnic groupings. Even the Gayo people’s lower echelons have vowed to invite other minority ethnic groups to secede from Aceh. We invite other minority ethnic groups to secede from Aceh Province if this proposal is not heard and realized.\(^\text{17}\)

Systematically in the field that: The Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution in general is adored by the Acehnese people, because it shares the same goal, namely the strengthening of Acehnese customs in all directions. That the MAA-Aceh Tenggara, MAA-Aceh Singkil, MAA-Aceh Tengah, and MAA-Bener Meriah shall


subordinate to and obey the Wali Nanggroe Aceh institutions in line with the mandate of the applicable laws and regulations. However, because no stimulus program was given to the MAA, the Regency MAA’s leaders continued to condemn the institution.\textsuperscript{18}

In the same time, prior to the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution was established pursuant to Article 1 point 3 of Law Number 18 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for the Province of the Special Region of Aceh as the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. “Wali Nanggroe and Tuha Nanggroe are institutions that serve as a symbol for the preservation of Aceh Province’s traditional way of life, culture, and community solidarity.” It was not constituted, however, because Aceh was under an emergency state at the time; it should have been established in accordance with the mandate of Article 10 paragraph (3) of Law Number 18 of 2001.\textsuperscript{19}

Another study focuses on the establishment of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution under the Helsinki MoU’s mandate “With all the ceremonies and titles, the Wali Nanggroe Institution shall be founded.” Prase 1.1.7. The agreement between RI and GAM was established under to Article 96 paragraph (1) of Aceh Law No. 11 of 2006. “The Wali Nanggroe Institution is the community’s customary leadership that is autonomous, authoritative, and empowered to develop and monitor the life of traditional institutions, customs, and the awarding of titles/degrees and other traditional rituals”. Then, in Article 96 paragraph (4) of the a quo legislation, the mechanism for its establishment is controlled again “Additionally, the law regulates the requirements for candidates, election procedures, election participants, term of office, protocol position, finances, and other aspects of the Wali Nanggroe. Qanun Aceh “” However, in terms of the candidates’ needs, the election system was fully circumvented, resulting in judicially procedural conditions being used. Indeed, Malek Mahmud was ex-officio as Wali Nanggroe Aceh when he succeeded Hasan Ditiro as Prime Minister of the Free Aceh Movement, but the electoral system must be open to all Acehnese.\textsuperscript{20}

It is understandable and perceived that the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution’s existence must be preserved since it is a mandate for peace and a manifestation of the Acehnese people. Nonetheless, the unrest among non-Acehnese tribes, such as the Gayo, Alas, and Singkil, became a significant note and paved the way for the


eventual establishment of Wali Nanggroe Aceh. However, being the parents of the Acehnese people, Wali Nanggroe Aceh must be capable of accommodating all Acehnese tribes. Otherwise, more battles will erupt in the future, as the Wali Nanggroe Aceh is highly revered by the Acehnese.\footnote{21}

The 1945 Constitution’s Article 18B paragraph (1) serves as the reference and foundation for Indonesia’s unique and special regions. The a quo article establishes a constitutional framework for the interaction between the center and the regions. Technically, it is constitutional for the state to recognize and respect distinct or unique regional government units governed by legislation and rules. When a conflict erupted, this constitutional obligation provided an opportunity for the Indonesian government and GAM to achieve a settlement. This understanding is detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in Finland between the Indonesian government and the Movement. 1.1.7. “All ceremonies and titles will be incorporated into the Wali Nanggroe Institution.”\footnote{22}

Then, in Article 96 of Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Acehnese Government, the phrase 1.1.7. is translated to mean that the Wali Nanggroe Institution is a customary leadership as a unifying community that is autonomous, authoritative, and empowered to foster and supervise institutional life’s organization. - traditional institutions, customs, and the conferral of titles/degrees, as well as other customary rites. The Aceh Qanun was then charged with establishing the Wali Nanggroe Institution. Following seven years of calm, Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Wali Nanggroe Institution was founded amid numerous controversies from the Indonesian government.\footnote{23}

The Qanun a quo continues to evolve to enhance institutions; such evolution is the Aceh Qanun Number 9 of 2013 on the Wali Nanggroe Institution. The Qanun a quo was altered due to the Ministry of Home Affairs deeming some provisions to be incompatible with the Central Government. One of the contentious provisions in Article 117 paragraph (1) of Aceh Qanun No. 8 of 2012 states: "The tenure of office of Wali Nanggroe shall be seven (seven) years." Article 117 (1) Aceh Qanun No. 9 of 2013 was revised to read as follows: "The tenure of office of Wali Nanggroe is five (five) years from the date of inauguration." It is unclear why the

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Ministry of Home Affairs amended Article 117 paragraph (1) of the Qanun a quo, allowing the legislature and executive to make amendments.24 Because, fundamentally, the Wali Nanggroe Institution should not be compared to other five-year-term political entities. This indicates that traditional leadership acts as a unifier of an autonomous society on an institutional level. The term "traditional leadership" should not be construed as referring to a conventional leader alone because the term "leadership" is defined as the leader of the Acehnese people in their field of specialization and privilege and the leader of an Acehnese uniting civilization. Understandably, the Central Government’s idea of its term of office should not be equated with that of other agencies.25

The Wali Nanggroe Institution is intended to symbolize reconciliation between the Indonesian government and GAM. This institution provides a new bridge for the Government of Indonesia because its ideal anatomy provides philosophical, juridical, and sociological considerations for forming the Qanun a quo, which has now become Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Wali Nanggroe Institution. The Government of Indonesia should not intervene in the reformulation in Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 because the Central Government has explained the LoGA.26

The Wali Nanggroe Institution is a stakeholder for peace in Aceh within the 1945 Constitution. The institution's content can supervise the entire physical and non-physical development process in Aceh. According to the facts outlined above, upon the death of the 8th Wali Nanggroe Aceh, Dr. Hasan Di Tiro appointed Malek Mahmud Al-Hayter as the 9th Wali Nanggroe Aceh per the Qanun a quo. Indeed, Wali Nanggroe Aceh will eventually become the epicenter of the Acehnese people, as its institutional manifestation will serve as the custodian of Aceh's peculiarities and privileges.27

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and various discussions above, the conclusions that the institutional perspective of the Alas, Gayo, and Singkil tribes fully supports the existence of the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution via the Gayo-Aceh Tengah and Bener Meriah Traditional Councils, the Aceh-Central Aceh Traditional Council, and the Aceh-Aceh Singkil Traditional Council, as mandated by Aceh Qanun No.

9 of 2013 regarding amendments to Aceh The circumstance in which performance is questioned is logical, as the community is fundamentally invested in this institution. This suggests that additional community perspectives will be beneficial in the future for improving the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Institution. The constitutional side is vital, as evidenced by Article 18B paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution and Law Number 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh, but what needs to be reformed is Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Wali Nanggroe Institution, particularly in terms of budgetary authority. That is, financial and financial resources must be dispersed relatively throughout the institution’s program. This means that the agency’s colossal authority must be proportionate to the budget’s operational costs

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