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## Ulil Abshar-Abdalla

"Is God Subject to Vote? Islam, Democracy and Religious Pluralism in Indonesia"

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Noon

Mershon Center for International Security Studies  
1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

See a [streaming video](#) of this event. This streaming video requires RealPlayer. If you do not have RealPlayer, you can [download it free](#).

Ulil Abshar-Abdalla is founder of Jaringan Islam Liberal ([Liberal Islam Network](#), widely known in Indonesia as JIL), which he began as a response to the rising trend of Islamic conservatism that ensued after the collapse of the authoritarian regime of Suharto in May 1998.

JIL's mission is to:

- Develop the liberal Islamic interpretations that are appropriate to our principles, and disseminate it to as many people as possible.
- Attempt to create dialogue rooms that are open and free from any pressures of conservatism.
- Endeavor the formation of a fair and humanely social and political structure.

Abshar-Abdalla has a long history of political activity in Indonesia. Besides founding JIL, he was director of the Freedom Institute and executive director of the Institute for the Study of Free Flow of Information (ISAI), a non-governmental organization that advocates freedom of expression and free press in Indonesia. It was founded after the closing of prominent weekly magazine, *Tempo*, by the Suharto regime in 1994.

He was also a member of MADIA (The Society of Interreligious Dialogue); chief editor of *Tashwirul Afkar*, a quarterly journal of Islamic thought; and head of Lakpesdam Nahdlatul Ulama (Research and Human Resource Development Institute, affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama).

Abshar-Abdalla has a bachelor's degree in Islamic Law from the Al-Aqidah Institute of Islamic Studies (AIIS), and is currently working on a master's in religion from



Ulil Abshar-Abdalla  
Founder, Liberal Islam  
Network (JIL),  
Indonesia

Boston University.

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1501 Neil Ave.

Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614.292.1681

Fax: 614.292.2407

Email: [mershoncenter@osu.edu](mailto:mershoncenter@osu.edu)