

Institutionalizing Religious Moderation in Non-Military Security Governance: The Cidahu Religious Intolerance Case

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: <i>Religious Moderation; Non-Military Security; Religious Intolerance; Collaborative Governance.</i> Article history: Received 2026-06-22 Revised 2026-07-02 Accepted 2026-09-08	This study aims to analyze the operationalization of religious moderation in the institutional response to the 2025 case of religious intolerance in Cidahu, Sukabumi, West Java, and to explain its relevance to non-military security governance. This inquiry is important because religious intolerance not only disrupts freedom of religion but may also develop into a broader social security risk when preventive mechanisms fail to function effectively. The study employs a qualitative approach using a document-based single-case study design. Data were collected from policy documents, official government reports, institutional publications, police statements, reports issued by the National Commission on Human Rights, and national and local media sources, and were then analyzed thematically. The findings show that the conflict developed from unresolved local grievances into identity-based escalation; de-escalation occurred through a multi-actor response; and religious moderation became significant when operationalized through dialogue, mediation, coordination, law enforcement, and community engagement. These findings support the strengthening of preventive non-military security governance through cross-actor coordination. The originality of this study lies in formulating an institutional mechanism that explains the transformation of religious moderation from a normative framework into a practice of collaborative conflict governance.
	ABSTRAK <i>Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis operasionalisasi moderasi beragama dalam respons kelembagaan terhadap kasus intoleransi beragama di Cidahu, Sukabumi, Jawa Barat, pada 2025 serta menjelaskan relevansinya bagi tata kelola keamanan non-militer. Kajian ini penting karena intoleransi beragama tidak hanya mengganggu kebebasan beragama, tetapi juga dapat berkembang menjadi risiko keamanan sosial ketika mekanisme</i>

pencegahan tidak bekerja secara efektif. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus tunggal berbasis dokumen. Data dikumpulkan dari dokumen kebijakan, laporan resmi pemerintah, publikasi kelembagaan, pernyataan kepolisian, laporan Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, serta media nasional dan lokal, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa konflik berkembang dari keluhan lokal yang tidak terselesaikan menuju eskalasi berbasis identitas; deeskalasi berlangsung melalui respons multiaktor; dan moderasi beragama memperoleh signifikansi ketika dioperasionalkan melalui dialog, mediasi, koordinasi, penegakan hukum, dan pelibatan masyarakat. Temuan ini mendukung penguatan tata kelola keamanan non-militer berbasis pencegahan dan koordinasi lintas aktor. Orisinalitas penelitian terletak pada formulasi mekanisme kelembagaan yang menjelaskan transformasi moderasi beragama dari kerangka normatif menjadi praktik tata kelola konflik kolaboratif.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as one of the world's most religiously diverse countries, with a population of more than 280 million people representing hundreds of ethnic groups and six officially recognized religions within a democratic political system (Wardana, 2026). This diversity constitutes an important social asset that has long been supported by the national ideology of Pancasila and constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and belief (Hefner, 2000). At the same time, religious diversity continues to present challenges to social cohesion when religious differences intersect with political contestation, identity politics, socioeconomic disparities, and the rapid circulation of information through digital media (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Østby, 2008). Under such conditions, religious intolerance can extend beyond isolated acts of discrimination and develop into broader social tensions that weaken community resilience, undermine national integration, and create risks to public security (Bertrand, 2003; van Klinken, 2007).

Recent developments indicate that religious intolerance remains a persistent concern in Indonesia despite sustained governmental efforts to promote interreligious harmony. Reports published by the SETARA Institute and the Wahid Foundation continue to document restrictions on religious freedom, discrimination against religious minorities, and other manifestations of intolerance across different regions of Indonesia (Idris et al., 2025). Similarly, the National Commission on Human Rights has repeatedly identified violations of freedom of religion and belief as a recurring human rights challenge in the country (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia Republik Indonesia [Komnas HAM RI], 2023). These patterns demonstrate that religious intolerance cannot be understood solely as a theological or intercommunal issue. In plural societies, localized tensions may also generate broader consequences for social stability, human security, and national resilience when preventive mechanisms fail to contain escalation (Acharya, 2001; Caballero-Anthony, 2016).

Indonesia's historical experience further demonstrates the security implications of inadequately managed identity-based tensions. The communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso during the late 1990s and early 2000s remain significant examples of large-scale violence in which religious identities became powerful instruments of mobilization amid complex political, economic, and social dynamics (Masyrullahushomad, 2019; Schulze, 2017). More recently, the religious intolerance incident in Cidahu, Sukabumi Regency, West Java, in June 2025 showed how a localized dispute over religious activities

could rapidly attract nationwide attention through digital media and generate wider public concern regarding religious freedom, social cohesion, and conflict prevention (Herlambang & Costa, 2025; Saepulloh, 2025). The Cidahu case therefore provides an important empirical context for examining religious intolerance not only as a problem of interreligious relations but also as a non-military security challenge (Buzan et al., 1998) requiring preventive institutional responses capable of protecting human security and reducing the risk of wider communal escalation.

Research on religious moderation in Indonesia has developed along at least three major tendencies. The first tendency conceptualizes religious moderation primarily as a normative framework for strengthening tolerance, interreligious harmony, and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies. Studies within this perspective emphasize balanced religious understanding, mutual respect, and acceptance of diversity as important foundations for reducing exclusivism and intolerance (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Fahri & Zainuri, 2019; Sutrisno et al., 2024; Wijayati & Fuad, 2024). Collectively, these studies show that religious moderation can strengthen social cohesion by encouraging inclusive attitudes and harmonious relations among religious communities. Their principal contribution lies in establishing religious moderation as a normative foundation for maintaining social harmony within Indonesia's pluralistic society.

The second tendency examines religious moderation through educational, cultural, and community-development perspectives. This literature focuses on the internalization of moderate religious values through formal education, religious institutions, public literacy, and community empowerment as strategies for preventing radicalism and strengthening social resilience (Damopolii et al., 2024; Junaidi et al., 2025; Mustofa et al., 2023). Rather than examining institutional responses during active conflict situations, these studies predominantly investigate how moderation is cultivated through educational processes and sustained community engagement. Their findings position religious moderation as a long-term sociocultural strategy for fostering tolerant citizenship, reinforcing democratic values, and developing resilience within religiously diverse communities.

The third tendency has begun to connect religious moderation with governance, conflict management, and peacebuilding. Studies in this emerging body of literature argue that religious moderation can support policies aimed at managing diversity, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing communal tensions through dialogue, mediation, and collaborative governance (Ernada, 2025; Fitri et al., 2025; Mulyanti & Muhajarah, 2025). This literature represents an important shift from normative and educational perspectives toward institutional analysis. Nevertheless, the existing studies remain largely concerned with the policy promotion of religious moderation and provide limited empirical explanation of how moderation is operationalized by multiple institutional actors during actual incidents of religious intolerance. Its relationship with human security, non-traditional security, and preventive peacebuilding therefore remains insufficiently developed at both theoretical and empirical levels.

Taken together, previous studies have established the importance of religious moderation for promoting tolerance, strengthening interfaith harmony, cultivating inclusive religious values, and supporting peacebuilding. However, they predominantly approach religious moderation as a normative principle, an educational strategy, or a sociocultural framework. As a result, the institutional mechanisms through which religious moderation is translated into preventive governance during concrete conflict situations remain insufficiently explained. This gap is particularly important because the effectiveness of conflict prevention cannot be inferred merely from the existence of moderate values; it also depends on how governmental institutions, law enforcement agencies, religious organizations, and local stakeholders coordinate their responses to emerging tensions. Furthermore, the relationship between the institutional operationalization of religious moderation and broader frameworks of human security, non-traditional security, collaborative governance, and peacebuilding remains theoretically underdeveloped. Addressing this gap is therefore necessary to move the study of religious moderation beyond normative prescription toward an explanation of its institutional operation within preventive security governance.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how religious moderation was operationalized in the institutional response to the 2025 religious intolerance incident in Cidahu, Sukabumi Regency, West

Java, and to examine its relevance within the framework of non-military security governance. Using the perspectives of human security, non-traditional security, collaborative governance, and peacebuilding, the study examines the roles and interactions of governmental agencies, law enforcement authorities, religious organizations, the Interreligious Harmony Forum, religious leaders, and local stakeholders in managing the incident. By focusing on an actual case of religious intolerance, the study seeks to explain the institutional processes through which dialogue, mediation, coordination, legal response, and community engagement contributed to conflict de-escalation and reduced the risk of broader communal escalation.

This study argues that the contribution of religious moderation to conflict prevention lies not primarily in its normative content, but in the institutional processes through which its principles are operationalized in concrete conflict situations. Religious moderation is therefore conceptualized not as an independent causal determinant of peaceful outcomes, but as an institutional governance framework that enables multiple actors to organize dialogue, mediation, inter-agency coordination, legal accountability, and community engagement within preventive non-military security governance. This argument extends predominantly normative and educational approaches to religious moderation by specifying the institutional mechanism through which moderation becomes relevant to security governance. It also contributes to human security, non-traditional security, collaborative governance, and peacebuilding perspectives by demonstrating that preventive security depends on the capacity to translate normative commitments into coordinated institutional practices. On this basis, the study proposes that institutional operationalization constitutes the principal mechanism linking religious moderation to collaborative conflict management, conflict de-escalation, and preventive non-military security governance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study was the institutional response to the 2025 religious intolerance incident in Cidahu, Sukabumi Regency, West Java. The study did not examine individual attitudes toward religious moderation, but focused on the institutional mechanisms through which governmental agencies, religious organizations, law enforcement authorities, and community-based institutions collectively responded to the incident. Particular attention was given to interactions among the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Forum for Religious Harmony, local government, law enforcement agencies, and religious leaders in facilitating dialogue, mediation, coordination, and conflict de-escalation. The Cidahu incident was selected because it represents a contemporary case of identity-based tension that attracted national attention and provides an empirical context for examining how religious moderation was operationalized within broader institutional responses to non-military security challenges.

This study employed a qualitative document-based single-case study design. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth examination of complex contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, particularly when institutional processes cannot be clearly separated from the social environments in which they operate (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The Cidahu case was purposively selected as an information-rich case because it involved multiple institutional actors, received extensive public attention, and generated substantial documentary evidence concerning governmental and societal responses to religious intolerance. Rather than seeking statistical generalization or testing direct causal relationships, the study aimed to develop an analytical explanation of how institutional mechanisms contributed to conflict management within the framework of non-military security governance.

The study relied primarily on documentary evidence obtained from multiple publicly accessible sources. These sources included official government reports, ministerial statements, institutional publications issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, reports from the National Commission on Human Rights, police press releases, documents produced by the Forum for Religious Harmony, and relevant legislation and policy documents concerning religious moderation. Scholarly publications addressing religious intolerance, conflict management, human security, non-traditional security,

collaborative governance, and peacebuilding were also used to support the analytical framework. In addition, national and local media reports were examined to reconstruct the chronology of the Cidahu incident, identify institutional responses, and compare public accounts across different sources. The use of multiple documentary sources enabled source triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the analytical interpretation (Bowen, 2009).

Data were collected through systematic document analysis and media analysis. Documentary materials were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives, institutional authority, and credibility. Official documents were reviewed to identify formal policies, institutional responsibilities, and governmental responses to the incident, while media reports were used to reconstruct the sequence of events, identify public narratives, and compare accounts provided by different actors and institutions. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, evidence was cross-checked through source triangulation by comparing official statements, institutional reports, legal and policy documents, and reputable national and local media coverage. This process was intended to reduce dependence on a single source and to identify convergences or inconsistencies across documentary accounts.

The collected data were analyzed thematically using the interactive analytical model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, documentary materials were systematically reviewed and coded to identify themes related to institutional responses, dialogue, mediation, collaborative governance, conflict de-escalation, and religious moderation. The coded data were then organized into thematic matrices to facilitate comparison across documentary sources and to identify recurring institutional patterns. In the final stage, explanation building and pattern matching were used to interpret how religious moderation was operationalized through institutional mechanisms within broader non-military security governance. Throughout the analytical process, the findings were interpreted through the perspectives of collaborative governance, human security, non-traditional security, and peacebuilding in order to assess how the empirical patterns supported, extended, or refined the study's analytical framework.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Local Religious Dispute to Escalation Risk in Cidahu

The Cidahu religious intolerance incident began on 27 June 2025 during a Christian youth retreat held at a private residence in Tangkil Village, Cidahu District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java. Documentary evidence indicates that a group of local residents forcibly dispersed the religious gathering, after which the confrontation escalated into acts of vandalism against the residence. The incident resulted in damage to property and the removal of religious symbols from the site (Azhar, 2025; Herlambang & Costa, 2025; Saepulloh, 2025). Although the violence remained geographically confined to the immediate location, the incident transformed an initially localized dispute over religious activities into an open confrontation involving religious identity. The rapid circulation of reports, photographs, and videos of the incident further expanded public attention beyond Cidahu and brought the case into a broader national debate concerning religious freedom, minority protection, and the management of interreligious tensions.

The confrontation did not emerge abruptly. Documentary accounts indicate that tensions had developed before 27 June 2025 around the repeated use of a private residence for religious activities, the display of religious symbols, and differing interpretations of regulations governing places of worship (Santoso, 2025). These concerns had reportedly been communicated through informal interactions involving local residents, village authorities, and members of the religious community (Heryadie & Pratiwi, 2025). However, the available evidence provides little indication that the accumulated grievances were subsequently addressed through a structured mediation process involving the relevant institutional actors. As a result, existing disagreements remained unresolved and continued to develop beneath the surface of everyday community relations. This pattern shows that the violent confrontation was preceded by a period of latent tension in which grievances were present

and recognized, but had not yet been incorporated into an effective institutional mechanism for early conflict resolution.

As the confrontation unfolded, the dispute also began to exhibit a more explicitly identity-based character. Three observable patterns were evident in the documentary record. First, collective mobilization increasingly followed religious identity lines, shifting the dispute away from an interpersonal disagreement toward a confrontation involving broader communal affiliation. Second, religious symbols became direct targets during the vandalism, indicating that the conflict had extended beyond disagreement over the use of a private residence. Third, public narratives surrounding the incident increasingly framed the dispute in terms of religious rights, minority protection, and intergroup relations rather than solely as a property-related or administrative matter. Taken together, these patterns show that the conflict had moved from a localized disagreement toward a broader identity-based confrontation with greater potential for social polarization.

The identity-based character of the confrontation was further amplified by the rapid circulation of photographs, videos, and news reports through digital media. As visual and textual accounts of the incident spread beyond the immediate locality, public attention shifted from the specific dispute in Tangkil Village to broader concerns regarding freedom of religion, the protection of religious minorities, and the maintenance of public order. This wider circulation also expanded the number of actors participating in the public interpretation of the incident, including government institutions, religious organizations, civil society groups, and national media. Consequently, the Cidahu case no longer functioned solely as a local community dispute; it became a nationally visible episode through which questions of religious rights, intergroup relations, and institutional responsibility were publicly contested. The digital amplification of the incident therefore increased its social significance and raised the potential for broader polarization beyond the original site of conflict.

Figure 1. Physical Damage at Villa Ninna Following the Cidahu Religious Intolerance Incident



Source: Syahdan Alamsyah/detikJabar (2025).

Beyond the visible damage to property, the incident also affected the sense of security experienced by individuals and the wider community. Reports issued by the National Commission on Human Rights documented concerns related to fear, uncertainty, and insecurity among participants in the religious activity, while also drawing attention to the disruption of constitutionally protected religious practices (Komnas HAM RI, 2025a, 2025b). These consequences extended the significance of the incident beyond its material effects. The forced interruption of religious activities, the destruction of property, and the heightened public attention surrounding the case contributed to an atmosphere of anxiety and mutual distrust among affected groups. At the community level, the incident also generated broader concern regarding the ability of local institutions to protect religious freedom and

maintain peaceful relations across different religious communities. The Cidahu case therefore produced both immediate physical consequences and wider social effects on perceived safety, trust, and the continuity of religious life.

Table 1. Escalation Trajectory of the Cidahu Religious Intolerance Incident

Stage	Empirical Condition	Main Actors	Observable Consequence
Latent tension	Repeated disagreement over the use of a private residence for religious activities, the display of religious symbols, and differing interpretations of regulations governing places of worship	Local residents, village authorities, religious community	Accumulation of unresolved grievances and persistence of latent tension
Triggering incident	Forced dispersal of the Christian youth retreat on 27 June 2025	Local residents, retreat participants	Transition from latent tension to open confrontation
Escalation	Vandalism against the residence, property damage, and removal of religious symbols	Mobilized local residents	Intensification of the dispute into an identity-based confrontation
Public amplification	Rapid circulation of photographs, videos, and news reports through digital media	Media, public institutions, religious organizations, wider public	Expansion of the incident from a local dispute into a nationally visible issue concerning religious freedom and minority protection
Initial containment	Police investigation, inter-institutional communication, and coordinated involvement of governmental and religious actors	Police, Ministry of Religious Affairs, local government, religious organizations, religious leaders	Containment of immediate escalation and reduction of the risk of retaliatory mobilization

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Azhar (2025), Herlambang and Costa (2025), Saepulloh (2025), Santoso (2025), Heryadie and Pratiwi (2025), Komnas HAM RI (2025a, 2025b), Khoeron (2025), and Poerwoto and Daniswara (2025).

The trajectory summarized in Table 1 shows that the Cidahu incident developed through a sequence of empirically observable stages rather than emerging as a sudden and isolated episode. Unresolved grievances preceded the confrontation, while the forced dispersal and subsequent vandalism transformed a localized disagreement into an identity-based conflict with wider public visibility. Digital amplification further expanded the social significance of the incident, but the conflict did not continue toward prolonged communal violence because legal, governmental, and religious actors initiated parallel containment measures shortly after the confrontation. This sequence confirms the importance of examining the Cidahu case not only through the chronology of escalation, but also through the institutional responses that interrupted further conflict development.

Multi-Actor Institutional Response and Conflict De-escalation

The institutional response to the Cidahu incident extended beyond conventional law enforcement and involved multiple actors performing distinct but complementary functions. The Indonesian National Police concentrated on investigating the acts of vandalism and pursuing legal accountability

against those responsible (Costa, 2025a, 2025b). At the same time, governmental institutions, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, local government authorities, the Forum for Religious Harmony, religious organizations, and religious leaders-initiated efforts to restore communication, coordinate institutional responses, and prevent further social polarization (Mulya & Kusbiantoro, 2025; Poerwoto & Daniswara, 2025). The Ministry of Religious Affairs also played an active role in facilitating dialogue and communication among religious stakeholders while reinforcing the importance of peaceful and lawful conflict resolution (Anshory, 2025). These parallel responses indicate that the containment of the Cidahu conflict relied on a multi-actor institutional arrangement in which legal enforcement, administrative coordination, religious mediation, and community communication operated simultaneously rather than sequentially.

Within this multi-actor response, the Ministry of Religious Affairs performed a distinct coordinating and communicative role. Documentary evidence indicates that the Ministry facilitated communication among religious stakeholders, encouraged the parties to resolve disputes through constitutional and legal procedures, and reinforced dialogue as the preferred means of addressing religious tensions. The Ministry also connected religious actors with local government authorities and other relevant institutions in order to maintain communication across different levels of response. Through these functions, the Ministry helped create channels for institutional interaction after the incident and supported efforts to reduce misunderstanding and further confrontation. Its role was therefore not limited to issuing normative appeals for tolerance, but extended to facilitating communication, linking stakeholders, and supporting institutionally mediated conflict resolution.

Legal enforcement operated alongside, rather than in place of, dialogue and mediation. Police authorities proceeded with investigations into the vandalism and pursued legal accountability for those involved, thereby addressing the immediate need to restore public order and uphold the rule of law. At the same time, mediation and communication among religious leaders, government representatives, and community actors continued to reduce tension and prevent retaliatory responses. The simultaneous operation of these two tracks is an important empirical feature of the Cidahu response. Legal enforcement addressed violations that had already occurred, while dialogue-oriented measures sought to stabilize intergroup relations and prevent further escalation. The evidence therefore shows that accountability and mediation functioned as complementary components of the institutional response rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives.

Local government authorities, the Forum for Religious Harmony, religious leaders, and religious organizations complemented the roles of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and law enforcement agencies by sustaining communication at the community level. Local government and the Forum for Religious Harmony helped bring relevant parties into contact, facilitate dialogue, and maintain coordination among institutional and religious stakeholders. Religious leaders and faith-based organizations, meanwhile, contributed to reducing the risk of further mobilization by encouraging restraint, discouraging provocative narratives, and promoting peaceful resolution. Their involvement was particularly important in stabilizing public communication after the incident, when competing interpretations of the conflict could have intensified mistrust and polarization. These community-oriented interventions therefore helped bridge formal institutional responses with local social networks and contributed to maintaining channels of communication during the de-escalation process.

The Cidahu case also revealed an important limitation in the preventive architecture that existed before the incident. Prior to the outbreak of violence, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and related institutions had already implemented several religious moderation initiatives, including religious counseling, interfaith dialogue, support for the Forum for Religious Harmony, and the development of Religious Moderation Villages. These programs created institutional platforms for promoting tolerance and interreligious communication, but the available evidence indicates that they did not automatically generate an effective early-warning or formal mediation mechanism when local tensions began to accumulate. Concerns surrounding the use of a private residence for religious activities had circulated before the incident, yet these grievances were not systematically translated into a structured conflict-

prevention process involving the relevant institutions. This finding suggests that the principal preventive weakness lay not in the absence of moderation programs, but in the limited capacity to connect those programs with timely risk detection, institutional follow-up, and formal mediation before latent tensions escalated into open confrontation.

Taken together, the evidence indicates that conflict de-escalation in Cidahu emerged from the interaction of several institutional functions rather than from the intervention of a single actor. Law enforcement addressed criminal accountability and public order, while institutional coordination connected governmental and religious stakeholders across different levels of response. Mediation created channels for direct communication among affected parties, public communication helped limit the circulation of provocative narratives, and community engagement supported efforts to stabilize local relations. These functions operated concurrently and reinforced one another throughout the containment process. The findings therefore show that the de-escalation of the Cidahu conflict was embedded in a broader institutional response in which legal, administrative, communicative, and community-based measures were combined to reduce the risk of further escalation.

Institutional intervention also continued after the immediate crisis had subsided. Documentary evidence indicates that governmental institutions, religious organizations, and community actors maintained interfaith dialogue, community engagement, and religious moderation initiatives as part of post-incident recovery efforts. These activities aimed to restore communication, rebuild trust, and reduce the likelihood that unresolved grievances would generate renewed tension. Rather than treating de-escalation as the endpoint of intervention, the post-crisis response extended conflict management into a longer process of social stabilization and relationship repair. This continuity between immediate containment and post-incident engagement shows that institutional responses in Cidahu operated across multiple stages of the conflict cycle, from crisis management to efforts intended to prevent re-escalation.

Table 2. Institutional Actors and Their Functions in the Cidahu Conflict Response

Institutional Actor	Primary Function	Form of Intervention	Observable Outcome
Indonesian National Police	Legal accountability and public order	Investigation of vandalism, prosecution of responsible individuals, and maintenance of public order	Strengthened legal accountability and helped contain immediate disorder
Ministry of Religious Affairs	Religious affairs coordination and stakeholder communication	Facilitation of dialogue, communication with religious stakeholders, and promotion of lawful and peaceful dispute resolution	Reopened communication channels and supported coordinated institutional engagement
Local Government	Administrative coordination	Coordination among local institutions and support for communication between affected parties	Consolidated the local institutional response and maintained cross-agency coordination
Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB)	Interfaith mediation and communication	Facilitation of dialogue, interreligious engagement, and communication among relevant religious actors	Helped reduce intergroup tension and sustain communication across religious communities
Religious Leaders and Organizations	Community restraint and social stabilization	Public appeals, mediation, discouragement of provocative narratives, and	Reduced the risk of further mobilization and supported community-level de-escalation

encouragement of peaceful resolution			
Community-Based Actors	Local engagement and relationship repair	Participation in dialogue, communication, and post-incident community engagement	Supported trust rebuilding and reduced the risk of renewed local tension

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on Costa (2025a, 2025b), Mulya and Kusbiantoro (2025), Poerwoto and Daniswara (2025), Anshory (2025), and documentary evidence examined in this study.

Table 2 demonstrates that the institutional response to the Cidahu incident was distributed across actors with different but complementary functions. Law enforcement addressed accountability and public order, while the Ministry of Religious Affairs, local government, FKUB, religious leaders, and community-based actors-maintained communication, mediation, coordination, and social stabilization. The evidence therefore indicates that de-escalation did not depend on a single institutional intervention, but on the interaction of legal, administrative, religious, and community-based functions. This multi-actor configuration also helps explain why conflict management in Cidahu extended beyond immediate crisis containment toward continued communication, trust rebuilding, and efforts to prevent renewed escalation.

Institutional Operationalization of Religious Moderation across the Conflict Cycle

The Cidahu case demonstrates that religious moderation acquired empirical significance when it moved beyond normative appeals for tolerance and became embedded in concrete institutional practices. Documentary evidence shows that its operationalization took several forms, including dialogue among affected parties, mediation involving religious and governmental actors, inter-institutional coordination, engagement with religious leaders, and communication with local communities. Through these practices, religious moderation functioned not merely as a discourse promoting peaceful coexistence, but as a practical framework that informed how institutions organized their responses to emerging tension. Its role became visible in the ways relevant actors created channels of communication, connected stakeholders across institutional boundaries, and supported non-violent forms of conflict management. The findings therefore indicate that, in the Cidahu case, the significance of religious moderation lay in its translation from a normative value into a set of institutionalized practices embedded within the management of religious conflict.

At the preventive stage, religious moderation was institutionalized through religious counseling, interfaith dialogue, support for the Forum for Religious Harmony, and the implementation of Religious Moderation Village programs. These initiatives provided formal platforms for promoting tolerance, strengthening interreligious communication, and encouraging peaceful interaction among religious communities before the outbreak of open conflict. However, the Cidahu case also reveals an important limitation in this preventive arrangement. Although moderation programs and interfaith institutions were already present, the available evidence indicates that they were not fully connected to an effective local conflict-detection mechanism capable of identifying and responding to accumulating grievances at an early stage. As tensions concerning religious activities and the use of a private residence intensified, existing preventive initiatives did not automatically translate into structured risk assessment, institutional follow-up, or timely mediation. The preventive operationalization of religious moderation was therefore evident, but its effectiveness remained constrained by the weak linkage between general moderation programs and localized early-warning and conflict-prevention mechanisms.

Once violence had occurred, the operational role of religious moderation shifted from preventive education toward direct conflict management. Institutional actors translated moderation principles into dialogue, mediation, inter-agency coordination, and public appeals that emphasized peaceful resolution through legal and constitutional procedures. At this stage, religious moderation became embedded in practical efforts to contain escalation, reopen communication among affected parties, and align religious, governmental, and law-enforcement responses. The evidence indicates that moderation

no longer functioned primarily as a long-term effort to cultivate tolerant attitudes, but as an institutional resource used to organize responses to an active conflict situation. This transition marks a significant change in function: from promoting coexistence before conflict to supporting coordinated conflict management once confrontation had already emerged.

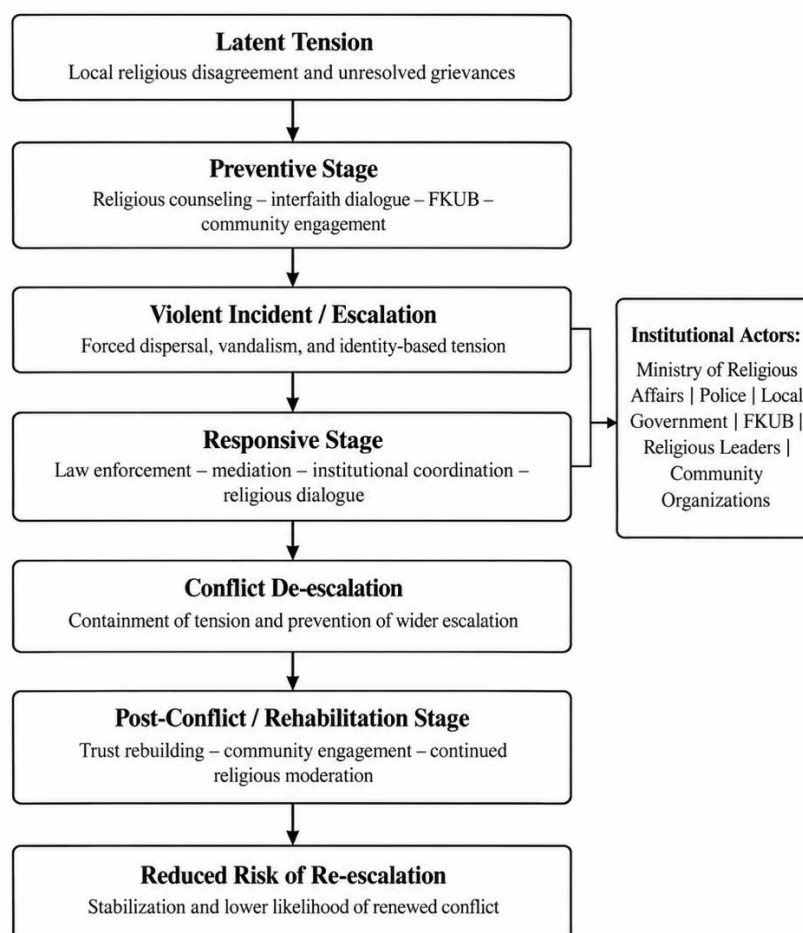
After immediate tensions subsided, the operationalization of religious moderation continued through post-conflict communication, renewed interfaith dialogue, and community engagement aimed at restoring social relations. Governmental institutions, religious organizations, and local actors-maintained efforts to rebuild trust, reduce residual suspicion, and prevent unresolved grievances from generating renewed confrontation. These activities demonstrate that institutional intervention did not end with the cessation of open conflict. Instead, religious moderation continued to operate during the rehabilitation stage by supporting relationship repair and strengthening communication across affected communities. The Cidahu case therefore reveals a degree of continuity across the conflict cycle, in which religious moderation was present in preventive initiatives before the incident, conflict-management measures during the crisis, and rehabilitative efforts after de-escalation.

The operational significance of religious moderation also depended on its interaction with other institutional functions. In the Cidahu response, moderation-oriented practices operated alongside law enforcement, local government administration, and public communication rather than as a separate or self-sufficient intervention. Police action addressed legal accountability and public order, while local government institutions coordinated administrative responses and connected relevant agencies at the local level. At the same time, public communication by governmental and religious actors sought to reduce uncertainty, discourage provocative narratives, and maintain social restraint. These functions intersected with dialogue, mediation, and community engagement associated with religious moderation. The findings therefore show that religious moderation formed part of a broader institutional response configuration in which legal, administrative, communicative, and religious functions worked in combination to manage the conflict and reduce the risk of renewed escalation.

The empirical pattern identified in the Cidahu case can be summarized as a sequential institutional mechanism in which religious moderation gained practical relevance through its operationalization within coordinated multi-actor responses. The observed sequence can be expressed as religious moderation → institutional operationalization → multi-actor coordination → conflict management → de-escalation. In this sequence, religious moderation provided the normative orientation, while institutional operationalization translated that orientation into dialogue, mediation, stakeholder engagement, and coordinated action. Multi-actor coordination then connected these practices with law enforcement, local administration, and public communication, allowing conflict-management functions to operate across different institutional domains. The resulting de-escalation should not be interpreted as the automatic or universal consequence of religious moderation itself. Rather, it represents an empirical mechanism identified in the specific context of the Cidahu case, where the interaction of moderation-oriented practices and complementary institutional functions contributed to containing escalation and stabilizing intergroup relations.

Taken together, the findings identify three main empirical patterns in the Cidahu case. First, the conflict emerged from unresolved local grievances that gradually developed into an identity-based confrontation. Second, the containment of escalation resulted from a multi-actor institutional response involving legal enforcement, administrative coordination, dialogue, mediation, public communication, and community engagement. Third, religious moderation became institutionally significant when its normative principles were translated into concrete practices embedded within these coordinated responses. The findings therefore show that the practical relevance of religious moderation in Cidahu lay not merely in its value orientation, but in its institutional operationalization across the stages of conflict prevention, response, and post-crisis recovery.

Figure 2. Institutional Operationalization of Religious Moderation across the Cidahu Conflict Cycle



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the findings of this study.

Figure 2 illustrates the empirical mechanism identified in the Cidahu case, showing how religious moderation operated across the conflict cycle rather than appearing only as a normative principle. The process began with latent local tension rooted in disagreement over religious activities, the use of a private residence, and the display of religious symbols. At the preventive stage, religious moderation was institutionalized through counseling, interfaith dialogue, FKUB activities, and community engagement, although these mechanisms did not fully function as an effective early-warning system. Once the conflict escalated into a violent incident, religious moderation entered a responsive stage in which it was translated into dialogue, mediation, institutional coordination, and communication involving multiple actors, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the police, local government, FKUB, religious leaders, and community organizations. These interventions contributed to conflict de-escalation by containing tension and preventing wider communal escalation. After the immediate crisis subsided, the process continued through post-conflict rehabilitation, including trust rebuilding, renewed community engagement, and the continuation of moderation initiatives. In this way, the figure demonstrates that the significance of religious moderation in Cidahu lay in its operationalization through institutional practices that linked prevention, response, and recovery, thereby reducing the risk of re-escalation.

Discussion

The findings reveal three interrelated patterns in the Cidahu case. First, unresolved local grievances developed into an identity-based confrontation once religious symbols and communal affiliations became part of the conflict. Second, de-escalation emerged through a multi-actor

institutional response rather than through the intervention of a single institution. Third, religious moderation became practically significant when its normative principles were translated into institutionalized practices, including dialogue, mediation, inter-agency coordination, and community engagement. The central significance of the case therefore lies not in demonstrating that religious moderation directly produces peace, but in showing that its preventive value depends on institutional operationalization. The empirical mechanism identified in Cidahu can be understood as a process in which religious moderation gains practical significance through institutional operationalization, which then facilitates multi-actor coordination, supports conflict management, and contributes to de-escalation. This sequence should not be interpreted as a universal causal law, but as an analytical mechanism derived from the specific institutional dynamics observed in the case.

The Cidahu findings broadly support previous studies that position religious moderation as an important normative foundation for tolerance, inclusivity, and interreligious harmony (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Fahri & Zainuri, 2019; Sutrisno et al., 2024; Wijayati & Fuad, 2024). However, the case also extends this literature by showing that normative commitment alone is insufficient when tensions have already begun to accumulate at the local level. Prior to the incident, programs promoting religious moderation and interfaith dialogue were already in place, yet emerging grievances were not effectively connected to structured mediation or early-warning mechanisms. This indicates that the practical effectiveness of religious moderation depends on more than the diffusion of tolerant values. It also requires institutional channels capable of detecting, mediating, and managing emerging tensions before they escalate. Religious moderation should therefore be understood not only as a normative orientation, but also as a governance capacity whose preventive value depends on its translation into concrete institutional procedures.

This finding also complements studies that emphasize religious education, public literacy, community empowerment, and the internalization of moderation values as long-term strategies for strengthening tolerance and social resilience (Damopolii et al., 2024; Junaidi et al., 2025; Mustofa et al., 2023). The Cidahu case confirms the preventive relevance of religious counseling, interfaith dialogue, the Forum for Religious Harmony, and Religious Moderation Village programs as forms of social infrastructure that can sustain communication across religious communities. However, the case also reveals an important limitation: the existence of such programs did not automatically create the institutional capacity to identify and respond to specific localized grievances before they escalated. The findings therefore distinguish between general moderation infrastructure and conflict-responsive institutional capacity. While educational and community-based moderation can cultivate favorable social conditions over the long term, effective crisis prevention additionally requires mechanisms for local risk diagnosis, escalation monitoring, institutional referral, and timely mediation. This distinction extends the existing literature by showing that preventive religious moderation must connect value formation with operational institutional capacity.

The Cidahu findings strongly support the collaborative governance perspective, particularly the argument that complex public problems require coordinated interaction among governmental and non-governmental actors rather than unilateral institutional action (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). In this case, the police provided legal accountability, the Ministry of Religious Affairs facilitated dialogue and coordination, local government organized administrative responses, FKUB supported interfaith mediation, religious leaders and organizations encouraged community restraint, and community actors contributed to trust rebuilding. The significance of this pattern lies not simply in the presence of multiple actors, but in the complementarity of their differentiated institutional roles. Effective collaboration in identity-based conflict does not require each actor to perform the same function; rather, it depends on whether distinct capacities can be coordinated into a coherent response. The Cidahu case also demonstrates that legal enforcement and dialogue should not be treated as competing approaches. Legal accountability addressed violations and restored public order, while mediation and communication worked to stabilize intergroup relations and prevent further escalation. This finding extends collaborative governance theory by showing that, in conflict-sensitive settings, governance effectiveness rests on the coordinated integration of coercive, administrative, deliberative, and community-based functions.

The Cidahu case also supports the relevance of human security and non-traditional security perspectives by showing that the consequences of religious intolerance extended beyond physical damage and public disorder. The incident generated fear, insecurity, disruption of religious practices, weakened interpersonal trust, and a heightened risk of social polarization, indicating that the security threat emerged from social fragmentation and identity-based tension rather than from conventional military aggression (Buzan et al., 1998; Acharya, 2001; Caballero-Anthony, 2016). From a human security perspective, this shifts the object of protection from the state alone toward the safety, dignity, religious freedom, and everyday security of individuals and communities (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1994). The findings extend these perspectives by identifying institutionalized religious moderation as one possible preventive governance mechanism through which non-military security threats can be managed before they develop into wider communal violence. The case also suggests that peacebuilding should not be understood only as a post-conflict activity. The sequence of prevention, crisis response, and rehabilitation observed in Cidahu is better interpreted as a continuum of preventive, responsive, and restorative governance. However, this does not imply that religious moderation inherently or universally produces human security. Its contribution remains contingent on the presence of functioning institutions, coordinated actors, legal accountability, and sustained community engagement.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in repositioning religious moderation from a primarily normative value into an institutionalized governance practice. The Cidahu case shows that religious moderation acquires preventive significance when its normative orientation is translated into concrete institutional mechanisms, enacted through differentiated multi-actor coordination, and connected to conflict management and de-escalation. In this sense, the study adds an institutional mechanism that remains insufficiently specified in much of the existing religious moderation literature. This contribution also has practical implications. Policies on religious moderation should not rely solely on campaigns, educational programs, or general interfaith dialogue, but should be linked to early-warning mechanisms, structured mediation, institutional referral procedures, inter-agency coordination protocols, community-based conflict monitoring, and post-conflict trust rebuilding. Such institutionalization can strengthen the capacity of public and religious actors to respond to emerging tensions before they develop into wider communal conflict. Nevertheless, the Cidahu case does not establish a universal causal relationship between religious moderation and peace. Rather, it demonstrates how religious moderation can acquire preventive security relevance when embedded in coordinated institutional arrangements capable of translating normative commitments into sustained conflict-management practices.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Cidahu religious intolerance incident developed from unresolved local grievances into an identity-based confrontation with the potential for wider escalation. The conflict was contained not through a single intervention, but through the interaction of legal enforcement, institutional coordination, mediation, public communication, and community engagement involving multiple actors. Religious moderation became practically significant when its normative principles were translated into institutional practices across preventive, responsive, and post-conflict stages.

The study contributes to the literature by extending the understanding of religious moderation from a normative and educational framework toward an institutionalized governance practice. Its main theoretical contribution lies in identifying institutional operationalization as the mechanism through which religious moderation can support multi-actor coordination, conflict management, and preventive non-military security governance. This perspective also strengthens the connection between religious moderation, collaborative governance, human security, non-traditional security, and peacebuilding by showing that preventive capacity depends on coordinated institutional arrangements rather than normative commitment alone.

This study is limited by its single-case, document-based design and its reliance on publicly available institutional and media sources. It therefore cannot establish a universal causal relationship between religious moderation and peaceful outcomes or fully capture the perceptions and experiences of all actors involved in the Cidahu incident. Future research should compare multiple cases of religious intolerance, incorporate interviews and community-level data, and examine how early-warning systems, mediation procedures, and institutional coordination operate across different local contexts.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the National Commission on Human Rights, the Forum for Religious Harmony, and other public institutions whose official publications and documentary materials contributed to this study. The authors also acknowledge the availability of publicly accessible reports and media documentation that facilitated the analysis of the Cidahu case.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions: 1) Tri Adianto: Conceived and designed the analysis; Collected the data; Contributed data or analysis tools; Performed the analysis; Wrote the paper. 2) Rosa Maria Rostandi: Contributed data or analysis tools; Performed the analysis; Wrote the paper; Other contribution (Language Editing). 3) Moh. Dulkiah: Performed the analysis; Wrote the paper; Other contribution (Critical Review of the Manuscript and Conceptual Refinement). All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies: The author(s) declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used to generate the scholarly content, analysis, interpretation, or conclusions of this manuscript.

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