



## **Institutional Arrangement of Adherents of Belief in One Almighty God at the Ministry of Culture**

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### ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is the initiative to establish the Ministry of Culture and Belief Adherents. The purpose of this article is to protect the basic rights of Belief Adherents by organizing an institution whose specific task is to protect Belief Adherents within the Ministry of Culture. The problem formulation of this article is, first, how is the current institutional structure of Belief Adherents in the Ministry of Culture? Second, how is the institutional structure of Belief Adherents in the Ministry of Culture reorganized? The research method used is Empirical Jurisprudence, namely reviewing regulations and also using primary legal materials in the form of interview data from Belief Adherents. Based on the initial hypothesis, currently the institutional structure of Belief Adherents in the Ministry of Culture as stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 190 of 2024 concerning the Ministry of Culture is still the same as when it was in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. This similarity is because Belief Adherents are still under the auspices of the director level, not the directorate general which has broader authority. Therefore, through this article, to better protect the fundamental rights of believers in one God, the institution must be elevated to the Directorate General of Believers in One God, no longer under the Directorate General of Culture. Therefore, the ministry's nomenclature should be "Ministry of Culture and Believers in One God."



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## **1. Introduction**

Adherents of Belief in One Almighty God (hereinafter referred to as "Penghayat Percaya") are a local religious entity native to the Indonesian archipelago. Their existence in Indonesia paralleled the development of civilization in the archipelago itself. The long journey and changes in the state system brought and "forced" them into a constantly changing environment. Unfortunately, these changes were not in their favor; adherents of Belief tended to face discrimination, which gradually became "intentional" discrimination by the policies of the ruling system.

One of the many forms of discrimination experienced by the adherents of Belief is their placement within the institutions responsible for their services within state ministries. Most recently, the institution responsible for services to adherents of Belief was placed within the Ministry of Culture through Presidential Decree No. 190 of 2024 concerning the Ministry of

Culture. However, the transfer of the ministry from the Ministry of Education and Culture to the Ministry of Culture did not significantly improve their position.

Belief adherents are still under the auspices of the Directorate General of Culture, meaning they are still perceived as belonging to the same cultural group. They are not a religious entity with a divine nature, as is the fundamental nature of religions. The institutional shift of Belief adherents is not unique to the current era. Their long history extends back approximately six years after Indonesian Independence.

The entry of Belief adherents into state institutions began in 1951 when the Ministry of Religious Affairs established the Institute for Research on Spiritual Movements or Groups.

The purpose of this institution was to conduct research and manage belief groups outside the jurisdiction of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In 1954, through Decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia Number 167/PM/54, dated August 1, 1954, the PAKEM (Supervision of Community Beliefs) Bureau was established. Subsequently, in 1964, it was reorganized into the PAKEM Interdepartmental Committee, with the Decree of the Presidium of the Republic of Indonesia Cabinet No. A/C/121/1964 dated October 6, 1964.

In 1970, a symposium concluded that the word "belief" in the final sentence of Article 29, paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia refers to "belief," which refers to the group of beliefs, spirituality, spirituality, and spirituality. Therefore, spirituality was considered equal to and on par with religion. This was followed by the First National Conference (Munas) in Yogyakarta from December 27-30, 1970, which established the Secretariat for Cooperation in Beliefs (Kebatinan, Kejiwaan, Kerohanian), abbreviated as SKK.

Subsequently, the SKK evolved into the BKKI, a new forum that accommodated the aspirations of almost all groups of believers in the One Almighty God, whether they were members of organizations, groups, or individuals. From this time on, the term "Kebatinan" was abandoned, and the term "Penghayat Percaya" (Belief in Belief) was popularized. In its full form, within the State Institution, it was called "Belief in the One Almighty God." (H.M. Rasyidi, 1978)

At that time, the Belief Adherents were still under the auspices of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and were included in a section within the Secretariat of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the provincial level. Based on Ministerial Instruction No. 13 of 1975, the guidance of Belief Adherents was transferred to the General Administration Subdivision of the Central Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Since then, the Belief Adherents group was discussed at the 1973 and subsequent sessions of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR-RI), as well as in the 1978 and 1983 sessions. The result was the inclusion of the nomenclature "Belief in One Almighty God" in the General Outlines of State Policy (GBHN), each with MPR Decree No. IV under the headings: Religion and Belief in One Almighty God, and Socio-Cultural Affairs. This legal basis reflects the guarantee of equality between Belief and Religion in terms of roles, facilities for practicing, and developing their teachings.

Systematic discrimination began with MPR Decree No. IV/MPR/1978 and MPR Decree No. IV/MPR/1983, as well as the GBHN (State Guidelines of the National Policy) of 1988 and 1993, stated that belief in the One Almighty God does not constitute a religion and that

fostering the belief in the One Almighty God should be carried out to prevent the formation of new religions. This MPR Decree was later supported by President Soeharto's speech before the House of Representatives on August 16, 1978, which emphasized, among other things, that belief is part of National Culture and is a living culture internalized by the Indonesian people.

Since Soeharto's speech in 1978, the belief in the One Almighty God, which was previously under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and whose implementation was delegated to the General Sub-Division within the Administration Section of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the provincial level, was transferred to a newly formed directorate, the Directorate for Fostering Believers in the One Almighty God (Dit. PPK) under the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture (P and K).

The establishment of this Directorate was based on Presidential Decree No. 27 of 1978, issued on 31 August 1978, which added attachment 12 to Presidential Decree No. 45 of 1974, article 9, namely regarding the structure of the Directorate General of Culture with one more, namely paragraph (6), which was in the form of the formation of a new unit with the name of the Directorate for the Development of Belief in the One Almighty God. (Ruyadi, 1980, p, 43-44)

At almost the same time, on April 11, 1978, the Minister of Religious Affairs issued Instruction No. 4 of 1978, directing regional work units of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to no longer handle matters related to Belief in the One Almighty God.

The guidance of Belief Adherents groups, as stated in Decree No. 0957/Fl.IV/E.88 of the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture, dated November 11, 1988, was based on: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, MPR Decree No. II/MPR/1978 concerning P4, MPR Decree No. IV/MPR/1978 concerning GBHN, MPR Decree No. II/MPR/1983 concerning GBHN, Presidential Decree No. 27 of 1978, No. 40 of 1978, Law No. 8 of 1985, and Decree No. 2 of the Minister of Education and Culture. 0222e/0/1980.

According to the Decree of the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 0151/Fl.IV/N.86, dated March 15, 1986 concerning the Main Points of Policy for the Management of the Development and Promotion of National Culture and Belief in the One Almighty God, the development of believers in the Belief in the One Almighty God is carried out through the following main efforts and activities: 1) Implementing the Guidelines for the Experience and Experience of Pancasila in the personal and social lives of believers; 2) Inventorying and identifying statements and works of believers; 3) Providing legal counseling and following the application of law to believers in social life; 4) Organizing seminars and conducting in-depth studies and presentations on the spiritual culture of Belief in the One Almighty God; 5) Strengthening organizational structures and cooperation in developing believers; and 6) Increasing the expertise and skills of the Belief in the One Almighty God management staff and improving supporting facilities.

At that time, the role of the group of believers in the One Almighty God was quite significant, namely as a stabilizer of the unstable social situation. The strengthening of the belief's existence through development programs actually demonstrated the need for this belief group among some in society. Believers in the belief were encouraged to be more devout in their beliefs and to engage in more devotional activities. (Surat MenAg No. B.VI/5966/17 Juli 1980)

Entering a new era, services for believers in religious beliefs are regulated in Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2015 concerning the Ministry of Education and Culture, which emphasizes that beliefs are managed by a state institution at the Directorate General of Beliefs, under the Directorate General of Culture. Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that the state positions believers in religious beliefs as a cultural entity, not a religious belief group.

For comparison, examine Article 4 of Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2015 concerning the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which regulates the structure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This article stipulates that the Ministry of Religious Affairs consists of: "Secretariat General, Directorate General of Islamic Education, Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, Directorate General of Catholic Community Guidance, Directorate General of Hindu Community Guidance, Directorate General of Buddhist Community Guidance,..."

The aforementioned article clearly states that the state's services and recognition for adherents of the "six state religions" are more certain and commensurate with the status of each religion, which has an equivalent institution, namely the Directorate General of Community Guidance. This is clearly disproportionate and discriminatory when compared to the regulations governing the institution of adherents of the belief in the One Almighty God. Guidance and services for adherents of the belief are regulated solely under the Directorate General of Culture. In other words, belief in the One Almighty God is classified as a culture, not a religious belief system, as are the other six religions.

Article 29 of Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2019 concerning the Ministry of Education and Culture states that the Directorate General of Culture is tasked with formulating and implementing policies in the fields of film, arts, traditions, "belief in the One Almighty God," history, cultural heritage, museums, cultural heritage, and other cultural areas. In carrying out the duties referred to in Article 29, the Directorate General of Culture carries out the functions of policy formulation, policy implementation, monitoring, and providing services in the areas of fostering institutions of belief in One Almighty God, managing cultural heritage, national and world cultural heritage, and national museums...."

Referring to the above regulations, the state is unfairly treating adherents of six religions and adherents of other faiths. The state is discriminating against these two groups, whose fundamental rights are essentially the same and guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on this, the author seeks to formulate a comprehensive regulation governing adherents of the belief in One Almighty God. This regulation, a separate law, is required.

To support this objective, the article examines two key areas of inquiry: first, the institutional structure of believers in the One Almighty God as it was organized under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and how it is currently arranged under the Ministry of Culture; and second, the operation of this institutional structure today.

## 2. Methods

This study employs an empirical juridical method. It examines existing laws and regulations related to belief systems, while also analyzing the social and legal realities experienced by adherents of such beliefs. Qualitative data are collected through the study of literature and

foundational legal theories, with a focus on identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research. This involves gathering relevant secondary data that provides insights into the institutional and legal challenges faced by belief communities in Indonesia.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Reframing Belief Systems in State Institutions

The institutional placement of adherents to religious beliefs, previously under the Ministry of Culture, was under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which was then transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture during the New Order era.

This shifting of state institutions implicitly demonstrates the state's "half-heartedness" in protecting and fulfilling the basic rights of adherents to religious beliefs. Adherents to religious beliefs in Central Java expressed their disagreement when they were placed under the Directorate General of Culture within the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as the current position within the Ministry of Culture.

Arifin, an elder of the Sapta Darma Adherents to Beliefs in Semarang City, stated that comparing the six state religions served by the Directorate General of Community Guidance (Direktorat Bimas Islam, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), while adherents to religious beliefs are served by the Directorate General of Culture, is inappropriate. This means that adherents to religious beliefs are categorized as a cultural product.

"Actually, we think that's not quite right. Culture originates from local wisdom. Local wisdom is a culture that has been believed in by the local community, and from that belief, a particular sect has emerged. Beliefs, especially the Sapta Dharma, are different. They don't originate from local wisdom culture, but rather from a figure who received revelation. The problem is, there are witnesses, there is a place, there is evidence. If believers in beliefs are included in culture, then culture is different from the beliefs of believers in beliefs. We are made like that (placed under the Director General of Empowerment), but we don't actually accept it sincerely. Even if it's not placed in the Ministry of Religion, at least there is a word that indicates divinity." (Arifin, Wawancara, 12 Juli 2025).

The placement of adherents to the Beliefs under the Directorate General of Culture began with MPR Decree No. IV/MPR/1978, supported by President Soeharto's speech before the House of Representatives on August 16, 1978, which emphasized that Beliefs are part of National Culture. Therefore, in 1978, Belief in One Almighty God, which was previously under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, was transferred to a newly formed directorate, the Directorate for the Development of Believers in One Almighty God (Dit. PPK) under the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture.

Wongso Wisanggeni, a follower of the Sabdho Dadi Belief in Semarang Regency, believes that although Beliefs are now being recognized by government institutions, their placement under the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Culture, is inappropriate. "For Beliefs, our Director General should be the Director General of Beliefs. Similarly, for Religion, the Director General is the Director General of Religious Guidance (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism). It shouldn't be (Beliefs are under the Director General of Culture). But that's okay, we're still in the process of the struggle. Previously, it was unthinkable to study at university with a major in Belief Education. But now, it's proven possible. The same will be true for positions in state institutions."

The current organization structure for Beliefs in One Almighty God within state institutions is not commensurate with the structure for the six state religions. Beliefs are currently under the government's auspices and are placed within the Ministry of Culture, previously under the Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Director of Beliefs in One Almighty God under the Directorate General of Culture.

For comparison, Article 4 of Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2015 concerning the Ministry of Religious Affairs regulates the structure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. According to this article, the institutional structure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs consists of "...the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, the Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, the Directorate General of Catholic Community Guidance, the Directorate General of Hindu Community Guidance, the Directorate General of Buddhist Community Guidance,...".

Through this article, the government is unfairly treating adherents of the "six state religions" compared to adherents of other faiths. This unequal treatment is evident in the institutional arrangement of the belief in the One Almighty God, where guidance and services are regulated solely under the Directorate of Beliefs, which is then under the Directorate General of Culture. In other words, belief in the One Almighty God is grouped into a culture, not a religious belief system. Although every religious organization contains elements of culture, there is a fundamental difference between culture and belief in the One Almighty God.

This difference, as reflected in interviews with prominent religious figures, emphasizes that culture is a natural product of human interaction. Meanwhile, Belief in the One Almighty God is an entity whose existence arose from divine elements, and its teachings contain elements of "revelation." While it is undeniable that in the development of every religious group, cultural elements are always present, it is not appropriate to consider Belief as a separate part of a culture.

### 3.2 Administrative Structure and Legal Standing of Belief in One Almighty God

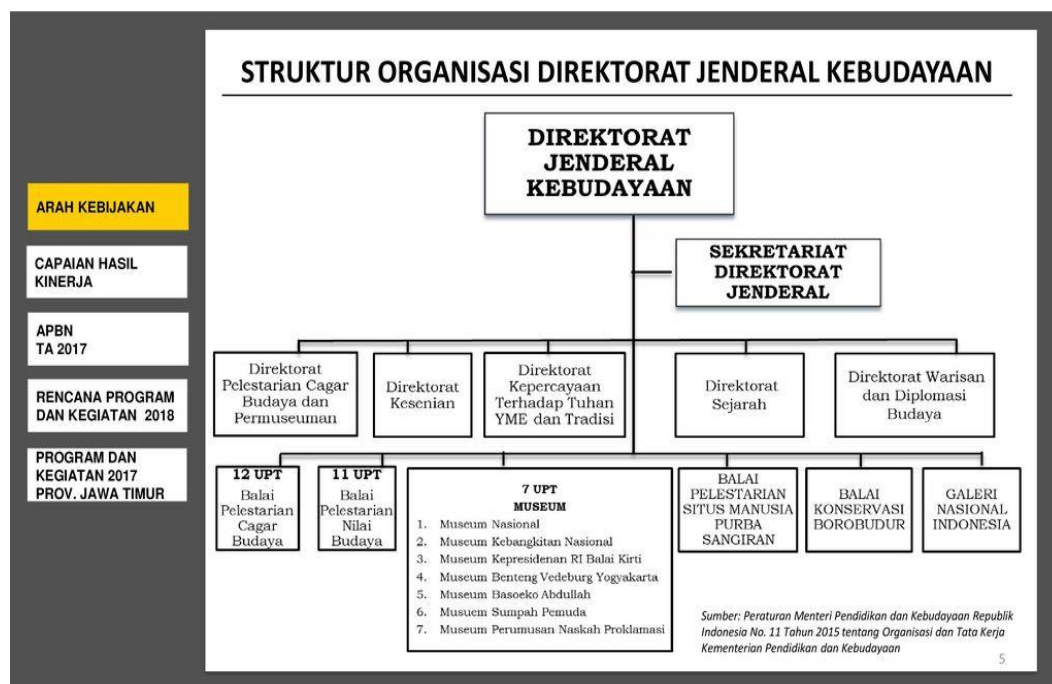
Article 29 of Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2019 concerning the Ministry of Education and Culture stipulates, "The Directorate General of Culture is tasked with formulating and implementing policies in the fields of film, art, tradition, "Belief in the One Almighty God," history, cultural heritage, museums, cultural heritage, and other cultural matters. In carrying out the duties referred to in Article 29, the Directorate General of Culture carries out the functions of policy formulation, policy implementation, monitoring, and providing services in the areas of fostering institutions dedicated to Belief in the One Almighty God, managing cultural heritage, national and world cultural heritage, and national museums..."

At the Ministry of Culture, adherents to traditional beliefs are regulated by Presidential Decree No. 190 of 2024 concerning the Ministry of Culture. Article 12 stipulates that "the Directorate General for the Protection of Culture and Tradition is tasked with formulating and implementing policies in the field of protecting culture and tradition."

Article 13 stipulates that "in carrying out the duties referred to in Article 12, the Directorate General for the Protection of Culture and Tradition shall carry out the following functions: a. formulating policies in the field of cultural and traditional protection, as well as fostering adherents to the belief in One Almighty God, and empowering indigenous communities; b. implementing policies in the field of cultural and traditional protection, as well as fostering adherents to the belief in One Almighty God, and empowering indigenous communities; c. developing norms, standards, procedures, and criteria in the field of cultural and traditional protection, as well as fostering adherents to the belief in One Almighty God, and empowering indigenous communities; d. providing technical guidance and supervision in the field of cultural and traditional protection, as well as fostering adherents to the belief in One Almighty God, and empowering indigenous communities."

Referring to the above regulations, the state is unfairly treating adherents of the six state religions and adherents to the beliefs. The state is discriminating against these two entities, which are essentially equal and whose basic rights are equally guaranteed under the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The adherents to the beliefs are placed or grouped together with entirely different entities: film, art, tradition, history, cultural heritage, museums, and cultural heritage. For further details, see the current institutional chart of Belief in One Almighty God. For further details, see the chart below, taken from the institutional organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture:

Picture 1. Organizational Structure Chart of the Directorate General of Culture and Tradition

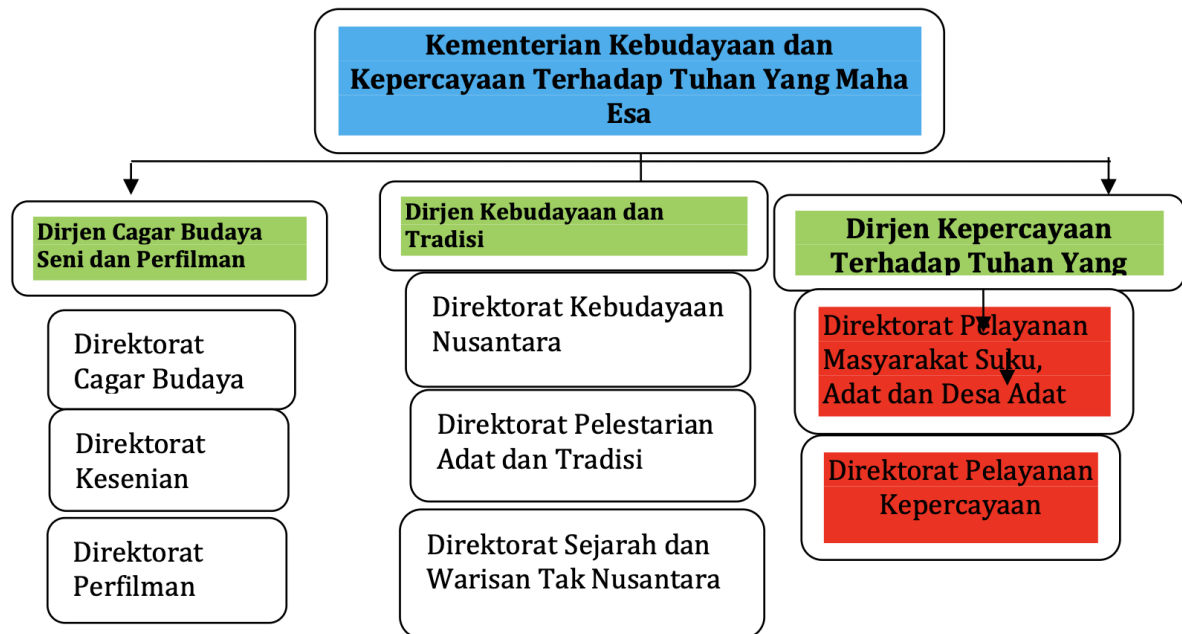


The picture above clearly shows that believers in the One Almighty God are grouped with entities of a different or similar background. Belief in the One Almighty God is grouped with culture and tradition. This also applies to films, cultural heritage, museums, art, history, and cultural heritage. There is a fundamental difference between believers in the One Almighty God and the aforementioned groups. Believers in the One Almighty God are entities that contain elements of religious belief. While each organization of believers in the One Almighty God contains cultural elements such as history and artistic ritual traditions, the fundamental principle of belief is divine.

The organizational structure of institutions within both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the current Ministry of Culture, which oversees the One Almighty God, is inconsistent with the state's fundamental principles of tolerance and non-discrimination. The state must maintain an equal position between the institutional organizations of the "six state religions" and the institutions of "belief adherents" within the ministry. In practice, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and "belief adherents" must be under the auspices of a state institution at the Directorate General (Dirjen) level, even if they are within different ministries.

Picture 2.

The new organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture is the novelty of this dissertation.



Source: Processed from the results of the analysis of the formulation of religion and belief

The fundamental difference between a Directorate and a Directorate General lies in their authority within a ministerial institution. Law No. 39 of 2008 concerning State Ministries, Article 9 Paragraph (2) stipulates that "the organizational structure of the ministry that carries out the affairs referred to in Article 5 paragraph (2) consists of the following elements: a. leader, namely the Minister; b. assistant leader, namely the secretariat general; c. implementer, namely the directorate general; d. supervisor, namely the inspectorate general; and e. support, namely the agency and/or center." This law only mentions the Directorate General without mentioning the existence of the institution under it, namely the Directorate.

Presidential Regulation No. 68 of 2019 concerning the Organization of State Ministries, Article 13 paragraph (1) stipulates that "the implementing element as referred to in Article 6 paragraph (1) letter c and Article 7 paragraph (1) letter c, namely the Directorate General. Paragraph (2) stipulates that "the Directorate General is under and responsible to the Minister. Article (3) stipulates, "The Directorate General is led by a Director General." Article 14 paragraph (1) stipulates, "The Directorate General is tasked with formulating and implementing policies in its field." Article (2) stipulates, "The areas of duty as referred to in paragraph (1) constitute part of the Ministry's main duties." Article (3) stipulates, "Some of the main duties as referred to in paragraph (2) are aligned with the Ministry's strategic goals and objectives."

Based on the two regulations above, it is clear that a state institution at the Directorate General level has quite strategic authority, namely to formulate and implement policies

within the ministry. Meanwhile, the authority of the "directorate" is not regulated in the two regulations above, meaning the Directorate is limited to assisting the Directorate General in implementing the Directorate General's duties. Therefore, the Organization of Belief in One Almighty God must be elevated to the level of Directorate General to maximize its service and protection of the fundamental rights of Believers in Belief in One Almighty God within the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, the ministry's nomenclature must be changed to "Ministry of Culture and Belief in One Almighty God."

## 4. Conclusions

The institutional position in charge of services for believers in the One Almighty God, both at the Ministry of Education and Culture and currently at the Ministry of Culture, is less strategic for fulfilling the basic rights of believers in the One Almighty God. The service and state recognition for adherents of the "six state religions" is more certain and appropriate to their status, namely the Directorate General of Community Guidance for the six religions. This is clearly disproportionate and discriminatory when compared to the regulations governing the institutions of believers in the One Almighty God. Guidance and services for believers in the One Almighty God are only regulated under the Directorate General of Culture, both at the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Yet, state institutions at the Directorate General level have quite strategic authority, namely to make policies and implement policies within the ministry. Meanwhile, the "directorate"'s authority is limited to assisting the implementation of the Directorate General. Therefore, the Organization of Belief in the One Almighty God must be elevated to the Directorate General level to maximize the service and protection of the basic rights of believers in the One Almighty God, within the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, the ministry's nomenclature must be changed to "Ministry of Culture and Belief in God Almighty".

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UUD NRI Tahun 1945

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Tap MPR No. IV/MPR/1978 dan Tap MPR No. IV/MPR/1983 serta dalam GBHN 1988, 1993 tentang Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa

Keppres No. 27 tahun 1978, dikeluarkan 31 Agustus 1978, yang menambah lampiran 12 Keppres No. 45 tahun 1974 pasal 9 tentang struktur Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan

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Perpres No. 14 Tahun 2015 tentang Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan

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Pidato Presiden Soeharto di hadapan DPR tanggal 16 Agustus 1978 tentang penegasan bahwa Kepercayaan merupakan bagian dari Kebudayaan Nasional.

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