Many Indonesians were surprised when President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo announced that cleric Ma’ruf Amin would be his running mate in 2019 presidential election.

Without saying that his decision was an attempt to bolster his Islamic credentials, Jokowi explained, however, that the cleric was with extensive experience in government and religious affairs.

Jokowi’s decision has, admittedly, upset a former defence minister and chief justice of the Constitutional Court who is from Madura Island (East Java), Mahfud MD. He had been reported to be preparing himself to become Jokowi’s vice presidential candidate.

It was also reported that Mahfud’s fanatical followers, hundreds of thousand people from Madura, had, indeed, been very disappointed. They were so angry that they set up some movements, declaring that it would be haram (prohibited) for Maduranese people to vote for Jokowi in the presidential election.

They had also staged some rallies, protesting against the decision in many different cities in Madura and East Java.

In the meantime, Mahfud MD has asked for his secretary, Imam Marsudi, to meet the leaders of the movements, demanding them stop conducting their inappropriate actions since he could understand and accept Jokowi’s decision.

In response to such a demand, they said that they were very upset and could not accept such a political play.