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## Declare vasectomies as halal, Indonesian Council of Ulamas urged

**JAKARTA:** The central body of the Indonesian Council of Ulamas (MUI) has been urged to declare vasectomies as halal (permissible under Islamic law) to support government programmes in curbing population growth in the country.

In making the call, the head of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN), Sugiri Syarif said the halal

ruling was necessary following the declaration of vasectomies as haram (not permissible under Islamic law) by MUI at its annual meeting in Padang Panjang, West Sumatera, recently.

"We are currently pushing for the central MUI to come out with a fatwa declaring vasectomy as halal," Sugiri said as quoted by English daily the Jakarta Globe, Tuesday.

So far, he said only the MUI

chapters in East Java and the province's Situbondo district had approved the use of vasectomy.

Sugiri hoped that with the blessing from the MUI, the number of men having vasectomies would double.

A vasectomy is the medical procedure that prevents men from releasing sperm.

He said that of the nine million people nationwide who

had registered for a government family planning support programme, only 1.5 per cent were men, and of them only 0.7 per cent had had vasectomies.

Sugiri said that Indonesia's population problem was immense, with the number of people growing by about four million each year and in 2012, the country's population was predicted to reach 245 million, up 31 million from a decade ago.

To help curb population growth, the country's family planning program will seek to raise active members to 28.32 million.

He estimated that in 2012, there would be 4.5 million pregnant women, and efforts would be made to have all those pregnancies covered by maternity insurance and thus make them new family planning programme participants. — Bernama