

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** US Embassy Jakarta Holds Second Annual Ramadan Delights Event

**Country:** Indonesia

**Post:** Jakarta

**Report Category:** Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal, Livestock and Products, Dried Fruit, Fresh Fruit, Fishery Products, Dairy and Products, Raisins

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**Report Highlights:**

On April 2, 2024, FAS Jakarta held its second annual Ramadan iftar event at the U.S. Embassy's @america cultural center. This year's event, "Ramadan Delights with U.S. Products: featuring the Talents of Chef Vindex and a Conversation with U.S. Halal Certifying Bodies," promoted high-quality U.S. food ingredients such as beef, cheese, dates, chickpeas, raisins, and seafood. These ingredients were integrated into local dishes traditionally served during Ramadan. This event also highlighted the diversity of the Muslim community in the United States and bolstered the confidence and trust of Indonesian consumers in the recently accredited U.S. halal certifying bodies issuing halal certificates for U.S. products exported to Indonesia. Halal certification will be mandatory in Indonesia for most food and beverages starting October 17, 2024.

On April 2, 2024, FAS Jakarta held its second annual Ramadan iftar event in collaboration with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta at the embassy's cultural center @america in South Jakarta. This year's event was titled *Ramadan Delights with U.S. Products: feat. the Talents of Chef Vindex and a Conversation with U.S. Halal Certifying Bodies* and promoted high-quality U.S. food ingredients that can accompany or be integrated into local dishes traditionally served during Ramadan.



Figure 1. Charge d'affaires Michael Kleine and Acting DCM Eric Alexander visit exhibitors' booths.

Chargé d'affaires Michael Kleine kicked off the event by visiting donors' booths in the exhibition area outside the studio. Exhibitors included representatives of Sunmaid raisins, Washington Apple Commission, Natural Delight dates, USA Pulses, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, the California Milk Advisory Board, the Raisin Administrative Committee, U.S. Dairy Export Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation, and various Indonesian importers.



Figure 2. Renowned Chef Vindex Tengker poses with his creations using various U.S. products.

The first half of this three-hour event consisted of a cooking demonstration by professional celebrity chef, Vindex Tengker, who wowed the audience of importers, retailers, government officials, and culinary school students with three Indonesian dishes using U.S. medjool dates, raisins, cheese, beef, and Alaska seafood.

The second half of the event shifted gears from a cooking show format to a talk show format with a casual conversation with three Muslim Americans from very different backgrounds to discuss the diversity of the Muslim community in the United States. Two of the participants

were representatives from two U.S. halal certifying bodies recently accredited by the Government of Indonesia to halal-certify U.S. products: Mr. James Chambers of the American Halal Foundation and Mr. Aly Ghanim of the Islamic Society of the Washington Area – Halal Certification Department. The third participant was a member of the U.S. Embassy community in Jakarta, Hiba Baatour, who was born and raised in Tunisia. The panelists described the typical life of American Muslims, the history of Islam in America, the evolution and current availability of halal products and services in the United States, and the challenges American Muslims face fasting every Ramadan while the majority of the people around them are not.

This conversation was important in bolstering the confidence and trust of Indonesian consumers in the five recently accredited U.S. halal certifying bodies issuing halal certificates for U.S. products exported to Indonesia (see GAIN report [ID2024-0005](#) for more information on the accredited U.S. HCBs). Their accreditation is crucial to keeping the Indonesian market open to U.S. products as halal certification will be mandatory in Indonesia for most food and beverages starting October 17, 2024.

Mr. Ghanim and Mr. Chambers also sat down for an interview with multiple news outlets Antara, Republika, Bisnis Indonesia, Detik.com, Jakarta Globe, Tempo, Liputan6.com, CNBCIndonesia.com, MINAnews, and TVRI prior to the event to discuss how halal certification is conducted in the United States.



Figure 3. (Left to Right) James Chambers, Hiba Baatour, and Aly Ghanim discuss the Muslim-American experience and halal certification in the United States.



Figure 4. Culinary school students posing with their iftar boxed meals.

The evening ended with the breaking of the day's fast (*iftar*), known as *buka puasa* in Indonesian. The audience members were each provided an exclusive iftar boxed meal with a menu designed by Chef Vindex consisting of Natural Delights medjool dates stuffed with Cajun-spiced U.S. mozzarella; Natural Delights medjool dates dipped in white chocolate; Alaska sock eye salmon with chili coconut; U.S. beef shank in Indonesian *malbi* sauce served with California Raisin spiced rice, Natural Delights medjool dates, and California cream cheese butter cake.



Figure 5. Chef Vindex's Ramadan Delights menu creation.

During the iftar, there was one last surprise cooking demonstration by panelist Hiba Baatour. Ms. Baatour presented a traditional middle eastern dish called *fatteh* using U.S. chickpeas donated by USA Pulses. Almost 200 Indonesians were in attendance with many more tuning in online via the U.S. Embassy's livestream (the event registered a total 1,121 digital views). The full event can be watched at the follow YouTube link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9j-NUoo3hE> and photos can be seen [here](#).

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.