



Is Militant Islamism a Busted Flush in Indonesia?

by Paul J Carnegie

Abstract

In the late 1990s, Indonesia - the world's most populous Muslim nation - began a transition from authoritarian rule. At the time, many commentators expressed concern about the security threat posed by Islamist militancy in the wake of Suharto's downfall. Initially, Indonesia did witness a proliferation of Islamist paramilitary groups and a heightened security environment. Yet, in the decade and more since then, the dire threat predictions have largely failed to materialise at least strategically. This outcome raises some interesting questions. First, has Indonesia really contained its extremist threat? Secondly, if so, how and what lessons, if any, can we draw? The following article examines the extent to which Indonesia's security concerns have actually diminished.

KEYWORDS: *Indonesia, Islamism, militants, radicalism, security threats, terrorism*

Introduction

In the late 1990s, Indonesia - the world's most populous Muslim nation - began a transition from authoritarian rule. At the time, many commentators expressed concern about the security threat posed by militant Islamists in the wake of Suharto's downfall.[1] Initially, the archipelago did witness a proliferation of Islamist paramilitary groups.[2] Yet, in the following decade since the transition, the worst-case scenarios have failed to eventuate and proved to be largely unfounded. In fact, Indonesia today in coordination with international partners has reduced its potential threat environment at least strategically. This outcome raises some interesting questions. First, has Indonesia really contained its paramilitary/extremist threat? Secondly, if so, how and what lessons, if any, can we draw? In order to answer these questions, the best thing to do is to take a closer look at the nature of the security threat and responses to it.

Taxonomy and Context

The first thing to note is that militant groups in Indonesia are numerous and a pretty mixed bag.[3] Of course, this is of no great surprise considering the size, diversity and history of the archipelago. For our purposes, the main Islamist ones are broken down here on the proviso that I am not providing an exhaustive list and limit myself to the most visible groupings. These groups usually have either direct or indirect ties to larger hard-line organisations and they are typically factional in character. We can include (in no particular order) the following groups: *Laskar Pembela Islam* (LPI - Defenders of Islam Army) operates as the paramilitary wing of the hardline vigilante organisation *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI - Islamic Defenders Front). There is *Laskar Jihad* (LJ - Army of Jihad) that operates as a militant offshoot of *Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* (FKAWJ - Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet). Similarly, the



paramilitary *Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia* (LMI - Indonesian Mujahidin Militia) has ties to *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI - Indonesian Mujahidin Assembly).[4]

Somewhat differently, the roots of *Ring Banten*, *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI - Islamic Congregation) and *Angkatan Mujahideen Islam Nusantara* (AMIN - Nusantara Islamic Jihad Forces) trace back to the *Dar-ul-Islam* movement (DI - Abode of Islam). Both DI and *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII - Indonesian Islamic Army) formed out of revolutionary Islamic militias that helped fight the long fight against Dutch colonial rule. In fact, many of the contemporary groups in some ways trace an insurgency connection and their 'repertoires of violence' back to the formation and structures of these anti-colonial militias.[5]

It is also worth noting that in the aftermath of independence, the secular oriented nationalism of both Sukarno and Suharto frustrated the political ambitions of militant Islamic organisations by imposing major restrictions on them. In fact, Sukarno banned both DI and TII but their cadre continued to fight for the establishment of *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII – Indonesian Islamic State) under the leadership of S.M. Kartosuwiryo between 1948 and 1963.[6] Their numbers peaked in and around the 13,000 mark, primarily in West Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh. They did eventually suffer defeat after a concerted and bloody campaign by the Indonesian military culminating in the capture and execution of Kartosuwiryo in 1962. DI and TII subsequently unraveled but memories, attachments and frustrations from that period still have resonance with sections of the populace in the aforementioned areas.

Contemporary Variants

Of course, a significant difference between now and then is an influx of *hadrami* (Indonesians of Middle Eastern descent). Some of these arrivals fought with the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and brought with them substantial combat experience. Many of whom have gone on to provide influential tutelage over the years.[7]

With the rise of a new globally networked terror landscape groups like JI started presenting themselves as a regional franchise of *al-Qaeda* with links across Southeast Asia.[8] It claimed to be pursuing along with its pan-regional partners the establishment of *darul Islam nusantara* (an archipelagic Islamic state) as a core objective. How much of this is actual reality and how much of it illusory propaganda was and is difficult to gauge. What is telling is that in a post-modern age of mediatized conflict and our largely self-generated 'climates of fear', image and perception function as powerful tools of combat.

Although big on rhetoric and the ratcheting of fear, there is no denying that JI did pose a very real security threat as evidenced by its capacity to conduct *jihadist* operations. For instance, the 2002 bombings in Bali and Sulawesi, the 2003 Jakarta JW Marriott Hotel bombing, the 2004 suicide bombings at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and the 2005 Bali restaurant bombings all bore a substantial JI stamp.[9] However, the most recent Marriott and Ritz Carlton bombings in Jakarta in 2009 are more likely the work of a JI splinter group, probably *Tanzim Qaedat al-Jihad* formerly led by the now deceased Noordin M. Top. The reason for the latter prognosis is that over the past decade, Indonesia's US/Australian backed counter-terrorism squad, *Detasemen Khusus 88* (Special



Detachment 88 -- more commonly known as *Densus 88*) has decimated JI's operational capacity. [10] It is responsible for the incarceration or death of many of JI's leading figures and other Islamist militants. [11]

Other militant groups in the archipelago seem to follow a somewhat different *raison d'être*. LPI and LJ both publicly deny any links with *al-Qaeda* and claim to focus firmly on domestic concerns. Something evidenced by their significant involvement in internecine and intra-communal sectarian conflicts in Central Sulawesi and the Maluku Islands. In particular, LJ views itself very much as the protector of Muslims in the Maluku where it retains an active presence. [12] But with long histories of localized intra-communal conflict, places like Central Sulawesi also provide fertile recruiting grounds for organisations like JI and the Abu Bakar Ba'asyir inspired *Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid* (JAT - Partisans of the oneness of God) to further peddle their radical message. [13]

Despite denials, suspicions persist that both LPI and LJ enjoy indirect support from orthodox Islamic organisations, namely *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII – Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication) and *Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam* (KISDI - Indonesian Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World). It is an ill-kept secret that DDII and KISDI receive substantial funding from the Middle East especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. [14] An estimated 15 to 20 percent of all Saudi charity dollars sent to Indonesia end up in the hands of suspect groups. [15] There are also alleged links between *Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis* (KOMPAK - Crisis Management/Prevention Committee - set up in Central Sulawesi in 1988 to help victims of flood, disaster and conflict) and the indirect channeling of funds to militant groups. Little or no accountability and the lack of discernible paper trails make tracing and then preventing the diversion of donations away from relief operations in to the hands of radicals a hard ask. The practice of turning of a blind eye or not following up investigations by sympathetic factions in the National Police Force (POLRI) and Armed Forces (TNI) alongside endemic corruption also plays a role in the ability of radical groups to maintain toeholds. [16]

Domestic Attitudes and Efforts

Popular sentiment in Indonesia suggests that militant Islamists lack sufficient clout or wide support. The majority of Indonesian Muslims are more interested in organisations that respect the rule of law, help combat corruption and try to address the archipelago's economic problems within a constitutional framework. [17] In fact, the majority of Islamic involvement in politics in Indonesia remains very far from being associated with the coercive institution of an Islamist theocracy.

Of course, given Indonesia's recent authoritarian past dealing with radicalism and militant threats (especially Islamist ones) is still a sensitive political issue. The notorious *UU Anti-Subversi* 1963 (Anti-Subversion Laws) are still fresh in the memories of many Indonesians and there is an understandable aversion towards the potential return of the sort of practices carried out under these laws. [18] The specter of overt security intrusion or meddling in religious affairs simply does not play well domestically especially when accusations of brutality continue to plague both TNI and POLRI in outlying regions. [19] Impinging on hard won civil rights and political freedoms runs the risk of antagonizing or polarizing segments of what is a moderate Islamic majority.



Operational disagreement and tension between POLRI and the TNI over the way to deal with the problem further complicates matters.[20]

Although critics complain of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's overly tentative handling of these issues, his presidential directive in March 2010 did authorize the new National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT - *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*).[21] It may fall well short of a 'game changing' response but at least it is a step in the right direction for coordinating efforts. To its credit, Indonesia has tried with some success to balance 'hard' and 'soft' approaches in dealing with its radical militant problem. This largely stems from recognition of the often counter-productive tendencies the exclusive reliance on incarceration and prisons elicits. Prisons can act as incubators for extremism by way of radicalisation, training and recruitment.[22]

Rather than merely adopt a traditional 'hard' approach of tactical assaults, punishment and detention, Indonesia's 'smart' program of disengagement and de-radicalisation is similar in some ways to ones run in Malaysia and Singapore.[23] Putting issues of under-resourcing and ad-hoc institutionalisation aside for a moment, the 'soft' approach angle involves a three-pronged strategy. If you can get imprisoned militants to recognize the destructive consequences of their actions, it can open a path to a credible alternative or second chance. There is then a possibility for them to rediscover a different Islamic meaning in their lives, a discursive one that does not include the destructive cycle of extreme thinking, mobilisation and violence.[24] Firstly, breaking this nexus of radicalisation involves a focus on persuasion.[25] Getting militants to turn away from violence and terrorism and reclaiming them for society is crucial for lasting containment. The thinking is that it is more effective in the long-term if you can convince imprisoned militants to renounce violence and sever previous ties rather than incarcerating them indefinitely. Secondly, encouraging inmates to speak out about their experiences as a warning to others and thirdly getting them to use their influence over other inmates to cooperate with authorities are crucial in this approach.[26] The real goal in all of this is to give these people a 'way-back'.[27] Harsh treatment and indefinite incarceration alone simply fuels frustration, resentment and the anger of inmates and by extension their immediate/extended families against an outside world. Persistent punitive dealings with certain sections of a population, no matter how marginal, runs the associative risk of perpetuating a 'ghettoised' sub-culture of hate and alienation amongst them towards state and society.

Having said this, there is a fine line between persuasive prevention and too little state interference. Some worrying currents of religious intolerance are beginning to emerge in Indonesia to the detriment of the human security of minorities.[28] Rather than the much lauded 'unity in diversity', accusations abound that government officials and members of the police are tacitly and in some cases openly complicit in allowing hardline Islamist vigilantes to intimidate and incite discrimination against religious minorities.[29] The reluctance of authorities to curb their hate speech, incitement to violence, intimidation and training activities represents a growing trend. Paying little notice to certain types of intolerance and acts of intimidation is tantamount to condoning the suppression of religious freedom of expression in the eyes of some outside observers.[30] Prosecutions do occur but they are all too infrequent and usually lenient. *Badan Koordinasi Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat* (Bakor Pakem - Coordinating Board



for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society) further normalises and reinforces the acceptability of intolerant attitudes and practices through its influential role in recommending the banning of certain religious sects/groups to the Attorney General's Office and its active pursuing of prosecutions for blasphemy. [31]

International Cooperation and Regional Efforts

In the wider context of the 'War on Terror' and growing international pressure for more definitive action against extremism, we have witnessed Indonesia issuing *Anti-terrorism Decrees No.1 and No.2/2002*. This move even received widespread domestic support despite the fact that it gave *Badan Intelijens Negara* (BIN—the National Intelligence Agency) greater powers in the identification and detention of suspects. Economic aid incentives and logistical assistance from the US Department of State's Anti-Terrorist Assistance program and from the Australian government have also bolstered threat reduction capacity. The TNI and POLRI especially *Densus 88* have been the main beneficiaries of this largesse. They have received large amounts of equipment, technical support and training. This has even included the construction of multimillion-dollar training facility partly funded by Australia.

In fact, the last decade has brought Indonesia and Australia (an important regional partner of the US) closer together in making inroads against a perceived extremist threat. The Australian government committed AUD\$36.8million over 5 years in cooperation with the Indonesian government to establish the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in 2004. Based at Indonesian National Police Academy (AKPOL) in Semarang, this bilateral initiative provides a joint police training program for combatting terrorism. Not all joint efforts have been as successful. The Australian Federal Police also had a hand in helping set up the now defunct Multinational Operation Support Team (MNST) in Jakarta. It was supposed to provide a locus for countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines to share information and expertise on terrorism issues and de-radicalisation programs. Having said this, the Indonesian government is certainly now better positioned to coordinate its anti-terrorist efforts not only with Australia but also with Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.[32] In fact, Indonesia will host the ASEAN plus Eight joint exercises in counter terrorism at the Indonesia Peace and Security Center in Bogor, West Java in September 2014. All of which is especially important in combatting pan-regional threats and enhancing the common security of the strategically vital Malacca Straits.

Despite both the strategic and human security threats posed by militant Islamist groups, a mounting body of evidence suggests that the transnational *jihadist* project is failing in Indonesia.[33] A splintered *jihadist* community simply does not elicit broad-based popular support for its violent tactics. As they descend into factionalism, many radical groups have shifted their emphasis toward a more surreptitious indoctrination of the jihadist message.[34] This involves *dakwah* (proselytization/religious outreach) as an alternative strategy for building support for their project rather than the direct enlistment for indiscriminate terror activities.[35] Regardless of these efforts to build grassroots support for Islamist jihad insurgency especially amongst the youth, mainstream Indonesian society continues to marginalise them. For instance, hard-line organisations like MMI, LMI, FPI and AMIN led renewed recruitment attempts in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami under the



guise of providing humanitarian aid and *dakwah* but met with little community support.[36] The fact that the tsunami had simply wiped out many of their previous support networks in the region further thwarted their efforts. As mentioned, an even starker reality is that *Densus 88* has crippled JI. Many of its leading figures and many other Islamist militants are now languishing in prison or dead. All of this indicates a diminished macro-threat environment and a more manageable strategic security situation.

Conclusion

Please do not think I am being too optimistic here. I am not. Radical organisations like FPI may be slowly realising that politics and bombs do not mix but violent intimidation of so-called ‘heretics’ and ‘deviants’ by its associated ‘thugs’ or the local mobs they help incite still goes on largely unabated.[37] In fact, the human security threat to religious minorities remains a major problem. Intimidation and attacks against local religious minorities and their places of worship is actually increasing as the strategic threat decreases. Groups like FPI appear to be able to carry out their vigilante activities with relative impunity. The unwillingness of authorities to tackle this ‘grey area’ between radicalism and outright terrorist activity or intervene for whatever political reasons is essentially allowing them to do as they please. It signals an increasing atmosphere of intolerance and a worrying failure of the state to uphold its human rights obligations to protect religious minorities.[38] The seeming legitimisation of intolerance by regency and municipality authorities who pass bylaws banning certain religious sects feeds this growing concern. The worry is that this provides fertile conditions for incubating a transformation of intolerance and radical thinking into more homegrown forms of violence and terror. [39]

Although the diminishing appeal and promotion of jihadi ideology is limited to the extreme fringes of Indonesian society, it does continue to metastasise in new ways especially amongst disaffected and impressionable youth who fall into the jihadist orbit via radical *dakwah* groups.[40] A lack of coordinated management of radical organisations, lax money transfer regulation and porous, notoriously difficult to patrol borders facilitate the spread. The movement of funds and personnel to vulnerable conflict prone areas are a less than challenging exercise. Whether the implementation of *Law No. 9/2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Terrorism Financing* will stem these flows is still an open question. A pressing strategic threat could re-emerge without a financially coordinated and genuine effort to de-radicalise radical groupings and promote tolerance. As such, the management of security threats both strategic and human remains a priority with a continued commitment required to yield meaningful containment. I think the main thing the Indonesian experience highlights is the complex and interlinked character of strategic and human security. There are no simple categorisations or solutions, but rather matters of degree and increments.

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Notes:

[1] See Bandoro, B. (2001). "Indonesia: A 'broken-backed' State?" *Indonesian Quarterly* 29:4, pp. 333-337; Bandoro, B. (2002). "War against Terror: Lessons from Indonesia." *Indonesian Quarterly* 30: 3, pp. 234-236; Crouch, H. (2000). *Indonesia: Democratization and the threat of disintegration*. Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 115-133; Gershman, J. (2002). "Is Southeast Asia the second front?" *Foreign Affairs* 81:4, pp. 60 and Hasan, N. (2002). "Faith and Politics: The rise of Laskar Jihad in the era of transition in Indonesia." *Indonesian Quarterly* 73:2 pp.4-18.

[2] It is wholly inappropriate to confuse Islamism especially its extreme militant variants with Islam as a religion. The former refers to a contemporary and ideological interaction between politics and religion specifically concerned with the modern politicisation of Islamic cultural concepts and symbols in a highly orthodox manner for radical ends.

[3] See Santosa, J. C. (1996). *Modernization, utopia and the rise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia*. Graduate School. Boston: Boston University and Hefner, R. (2007). *The sword against the crescent: religion and violence in Muslim Southeast Asia*, in Linell Cady and Sheldon Simon (eds.), *Religion and conflict in South and Southeast Asia: Disrupting violence*. London: Routledge.

[4] Other hardline organisations with links to militant vigilante groups include *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII - Indonesian Islamic State), *Forum Umat Islam* (FUI - the Islamic People's Forum), *Forum Komunikasi Muslim Indonesia* (Forkami - the Indonesian Muslim Communication Forum), *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI - Party of Liberation - Indonesia) and *Gerakan Islam Reformis* (Garis - the Islamic Reformist Movement).

[5] See Colombijn, F. and Lindblad, T. (eds.) (2002). *Roots of violence in Indonesia*. Leiden: KILTV. They provide a thorough working through of the idea of 'reservoirs of violence' as a key historical concept for explaining contemporary conflict in Indonesia.

[6] See Dengel, H. (1995). *Darul Islam dan Kartosuwiryo: Angan-angan yang Gagal*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.

[7] See Abuza, Z. (2002). "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian network." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 24 no. 3, pp. 427-465 and Cox, D., Falconer, F. and Stackhouse, B. (2009). *Terrorism, instability, and democracy in Asia and Africa*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, p. 94.

[8] See Abuza, Z. (2005), *Al Qaeda comes to Southeast Asia*, in Paul J. Smith (ed.), *Terrorism and violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational challenges to states and regional stability*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, pp.31-61 and Sholeh, B. (2006). *Jihad in Maluku*, in Andrew Tan (ed.), *A handbook of terrorism and insurgency in Southeast Asia*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

[9] The South Jakarta District Court ruled that JI was an illegal organisation in 2008. This ruling brought JI out of the shadows. It could no longer operate as a *tanzim siri* (secret organisation) after having its activities so publicly unmasked in the eyes of the wider populace.

[10] *Densus 88* formed in 2003 in the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings with backing from the US and Australia. It is part of the Indonesian National Police Force and estimated to have arrested about 700 militant suspects and killed 60. Since its formation, the last decade has seen the imprisonment, execution or killing of all the major suspects in the 2002 Bali bombing. Former terror mastermind Hambali, a key link between JI and *al-Qaeda* is now languishing in Guantanamo Bay. In 2005, police killed Malaysian bomb-maker Azahari Husin, one of the alleged technical masterminds behind the 2002 Bali bombings. In 2008, there was the execution of Amrozi for his role in the Bali Bombings and in 2009 *Densus 88* killed Azahari's close partner and 'money man' Noordin M. Top. There was also the shooting of Dulmatin (a leading member of JI) in 2010. In 2011, the radical cleric and JI *amir* (spiritual head) Abu Bakar Ba'asyir received a 15 years sentence for his support of a jihadi training camp in Aceh. Mind you, Ba'asyir is no longer really the major driving force of Indonesia's radical movement, if he ever was, given his poor strategic and coordination skills. In 2012, the capture and extradition from Pakistan of bomb maker Umar 'the demolition man' Patek led to a 20 years sentence.

[11] Recently, there have been calls for the dissolution of *Densus 88* over wrongful arrests and extra-judicial killings from, coincidentally, Islamist factions in parliament. See Aritonang, M (2013). "Densus 88 needs to improve: Marzuki." *Jakarta Post*, March 1.

[12] See Hasan, N. (2006). "Laskar Jihad: Islam, militancy, and the quest for identity in post-New Order Indonesia." *Studies on Southeast Asia*. No. 40. Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, pp.4-18.



[13] These are main regions of concern because of an adjacent long running separatist conflict led by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines. Although a tentative peace deal has been brokered there recently, Mindanao is still awash with arms, training camps and trafficking routes. This means that arms and personnel can funnel up and down from Mindanao through a chain of islands across the Celebes Sea and into places like Sulawesi and the Maluku. These areas with their long histories of insurgency and intra-communal tensions provide deep narrative structures of meaning upon which militant Islamist jihad discourses can engraft themselves.

[14] See Thayer, C. (2008). "Radical Islam and political terrorism in Southeast Asia," in Terence Chong, ed., *Globalization and its counter-forces in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 260-264.

[15] See Bond, C.S. (2005). "Indonesia and the changing front in the War on Terrorism," Lecture, April 28, Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

[16] See Roosa, J. (2003). "Brawling, bombing and backing: The Security Forces as a source of insecurity." *Inside Indonesia*. 73, pp. 10-11; Atkins, S. (2004). "Laskar Jihad (Militia of the Holy War), Indonesia", in: *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p. 174 and Jakarta Post (2011). "Police deny relations with FPI following Wikileaks Release", September 4, Jakarta.

[17] See Asia Foundation (2003). *Democracy in Indonesia: A survey of the Indonesian electorate*. Washington, DC: Asia Foundation.

[18] These former laws gave almost unlimited power to the armed forces to suppress dissent with little or no legal accountability.

[19] Accusations of excessive force have been leveled at units from the national police's Mobile Brigade (Brimob) on their recent 'recovery mission' in Poso, Central Sulawesi to deal with a JAT propaganda campaign and its attempts to establish training camps.

[20] The TNI's Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS) favours monitoring radical groups rather than banning them outright. For BAIS, wholesale bans can force groups underground and make tracking their activities even more difficult. This is in some contrast to POLRI's Home Security Intelligence Agency (BIK) that has sought to have organisations such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) outlawed for its activities.

[21] The BNPT has sought to establish a multi-institutional de-radicalisation program with religious groups, clerics, NGOs, universities and schools. They include the two Islamic mass organisations *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* along with the likes of *Al-Hikam* College, the Islamic State University of Surakarta and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences.

[22] See ICG (2007). "'De-radicalisation' and Indonesian prisons." *International Crisis Group, Asia Report*, No. 142, 19th November, Jakarta/Brussels, pp. 3-5.

[23] See Abuza, Z. (2009). "The rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah detainees in South East Asia: A Preliminary Assessment." in Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (eds.) *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*. New York: Routledge, pp. 193-211; and Teo, L. (2007). "Winning hearts, minds next step in combating terror: Governments agree to promote dialogues within and across different religions." *The Business Times*. Singapore, March 7.

[24] This has even included the organisation of prayer sessions by members of Densus 88 in conjunction with militant detainees as a sign of respect and opportunity for the latter to atone for past deeds. Former Densus 88 chief, Brigadier General Surya Dharma was a prime mover in promoting this approach, as it is an important part of Islamic teaching especially in an Indonesian context to treat someone fairly and give them a second chance if they genuinely seek to repent (*bertobat*).

[25] See Kearney, S. (2006). "Islamic leaders to help rehabilitate terrorists." *The Australian*, June 5 and Oorjitham, S. (2008). "Persuading Terrorists to 'disengage'." *New Straits Times*, October 5.

[26] For instance, ex-JI commander Mohammed Nasir Bin Abbas has played a significant role in helping 'de-program' extremist mind-sets especially amongst Indonesian youth. Ex-JI member Ali Imron (brother of Amrozi) also renounced his past mistakes by publishing a book and tapes about his experiences and publicly advocating against terrorism. He and others have worked closely with the authorities and different non-state actors (i.e. socio-religious organisations) in their de-radicalisation efforts with militant detainees. These initiatives have also run in conjunction with ad campaigns on the street and through the media promoting an anti-jihadist message.



[27] See O'Brien, N (2007). "Terrorists who say no to terror," *The Australian*, October 22 and Sheridan, G. (2008). "Jakarta's terrorist rehab." *The Australian*, May 31.

[28] Recently, the SETARA Institute reported 264 such attacks in 2012 up from 244 and 216 in 2011 and 2010 respectively. Local Ahmadiyya, Baha'i, Christian or Shi'a minorities are the main targets of religiously motivated attacks. See SETARA Institute (2012), *Reports on freedom of religion and belief 2012*, December, Jakarta: SETARA, Institute for Democracy and Peace.

<http://www.setara-institute.org/en/content/report-freedom-religion-and-belief-2012>

[29] See HRW (2013). *Religion's name: Abuses against religious minorities in Indonesia*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

[30] See ICG, (2010). "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and intolerance." *International Crisis Group, Asia Briefing* No. 114, Jakarta/Brussels, November 24, p. 17. Top ranking officials have all appeared at FPI events in Jakarta that sends a less than mixed message about official attitudes to FPI methods for maintaining so-called 'law and order'.

[31] See HRW (2013). *Religion's Name: Abuses against religious minorities in Indonesia*. New York: Human Rights Watch, pp. 60-66, 71-86.

[32] See Fealy, G. and Thayer, C. (2009). "Problematising 'linkages' between Southeast Asian and International terrorism." In William Tow (ed.), *Security Politics in the Asia-Pacific: A Regional-Global Nexus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 211-227.

[33] See Hwang J.C. (2012). "Terrorism in perspective: An assessment of 'Jihad Project' trends in Indonesia." *Asia Pacific Issues*, No. 104, September, Honolulu: East-West Center, pp.1-12; Fealy, G. and Borgu, A. (2005). "Local Jihad: Radical Islam and terrorism in Indonesia." September, Canberra: *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*; Fealy, G. (2004), *Islamic radicalism in Indonesia: The faltering revival?* In Daljit Singh and Chin Kin Wah (eds.), *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp.104-121.

[34] See Ramakrishna, K. (2009). *Radical Pathways: Understanding Muslim radicalization in Indonesia*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International.

[35] The return of Dulmatin (now deceased) from training in Mindanao heavily influenced this shift from indiscriminate terror to a more persistent insurgency. He questioned the effectiveness of suicide bombing as an operational tactic and became a strong advocate of a more co-ordinated coalition between organisations (*lintas tanzim*) in regards activities and longer-term strategic goals. Part of his strategic agenda was to enforce *shari'a* through *jihad* and promote the 'correct' form of Islam by means of *dakwah*. The thinking being that inculcating community support for their aims would assist in the objective of establishing secure bases across different regions and these bases could then further consolidate the Islamist insurgent message and project.

[36] See ICG (2010). "Indonesia: Jihadi surprise in Aceh." *International Crisis Group, Asia Report* No. 189, 20 April, Jakarta/Brussels, pp. 1-27 and Hwang J.C. (2012). Terrorism in perspective: An assessment of 'Jihad Project' trends in Indonesia. *Asia Pacific Issues*, No. 104, September, Honolulu: East-West Center, pp. 1-12.

[37] Having said this, FPI's chairman and founder, Habib Muhammad Riziek Syihab did receive a 1.5 year jail term in 2008 for inciting attacks against a gathering held by the National Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Belief in Jakarta that injured seventy demonstrators.

[38] Indonesia is a party (signed and ratified) to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966.

[39] In 2012, Densus 88 arrested 11 suspects accused of planning attacks on several high-profile targets. They were from a relatively new homegrown splinter group, *Hasmi* (the Sunni Movement for Indonesian Society). Even more recently, police arrested several terror suspects supposedly led by the Abu Hanifah cell. The latter also has links to the Abu Omar network that operated in Surakarta and Cirebon, West Java. They were allegedly plotting attacks against the Myanmar Embassy in Jakarta and several US targets in Java in response to the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar.

[40] There are multiple recruitment paths into Islamist militancy whether it be spiritual, intellectual or kinship based. But the *dakwah* activities of jihadist groups and hardline clerics can often gain an initial surreptitious access to young Indonesians through former links with the wide and complex network of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) that traverse Indonesia. These secretive jihadist



groups can then lure students into joining exclusive prayer groups or religious discussions outside campuses, an entry point for potential radicalisation. Of course, stating this is not to implicate *pesantren* in the spread of a radical Islamist message as the vast majority of these institutions play vital socio-cultural, religious and educational roles in Indonesian society. In fact, given their embeddedness in the social fabric of Indonesia, those *pesantren* with long established credentials are in many ways a bulwark against radicalism.

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