

## Terrorism in Indonesia

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From: Roger Pearson (socecon@aol.com)

To: sahrasad@yahoo.com

Date: Saturday, February 1, 2020 at 11:54 AM GMT+7

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## **Indonesian Terrorism: Wahabism and the “Imagined Caliphate”**

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### **[Abstract]**

Some terrorist groups have joined ISIS (The Islamic State of Syria and Iraq) and built regional bases in Indonesia (Poso, Central Sulawesi) and the Philippines (Southern Mindanao) to fight against the so-called "thaghut regime" (evil regime) according to their perception. ISIS was born as a result of the failure of Iraqi leaders, including Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to build an inclusive political system in Iraq. It has given way to grow militancy across Iraq, but especially among Sunnis, which in turn has given birth to ISIS. Sunni militants protested the economic and political marginalization by the ruling Shi'ite. The rise of ISIS amongst among the Sunnis has shocked many in the Muslim world, including Indonesians. Some call the “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” (ISIS) “the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant “(ISIL), which specifically relates to a more extensive area. The bombing by terrorists in Indonesia is evidence that there are radicals elsewhere in the Muslim world who hope to realize the caliphate of their dreams.

Keywords: Indonesia, Islam, ISIS, Wahabism, Islamic Caliphate (*Khilafah*), Terrorism

### **Introduction**

After ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) was cornered and defeated in 2018, Abubakar Al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS clerics, called for all supporters and sympathizers, to carry out acts of terror in their respective countries. The appeal was heard by Islamist families in Indonesia who were interested in the idea of a Muslim Caliphate interested in supporting ISIS. The role of violent intellectuals (Hoffman, 2006) is obviously observed in these chained cases of terrors.

The Surabaya bombing May 13-14, 2018, was the result of pro-ISIS family terrorism, which was lured by the calls of Al Baghdadi and his clerics to the corners of the world. The act of terrorism with suicide bombings in Surabaya involves the perpetrators of one family took place for the first time in Indonesia, even in the world. The family in this context consists of father, mother, and children (Saifuddin, 2006) who terrorized and detonated bombs attached on their bodies.

The Surabaya bombing by family terrorism had affirmed and confirmed views of Morrison (2014), and Bloom & Dyamond (2018) that ISIS network, cell, and supporters are very passionate in carrying out the call for prompt attacks. To do so, they should move quickly in an increasingly limited time, with exclusivity, limitations or even scarcity of

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resources, but with high demands that actually encourage terrorists to be even more aggressive. For the terrorists, the premise of limited time or requirement to “act now” raises the supposed value of the good and creates a call to action. Thus, exclusivity, scarcity, and high demand make it more *desirable*.

The Surabaya 2018 bombing was a series of bomb explosions in various places in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, East Java on 13-14 May 2018. The bombings in three churches in Surabaya and also police headquarters in Surabaya and Sidoarjo were a series of violent acts of terrorism committed by three families with extreme theological motives—jihad and wanting to go to heaven as a family together. The series of bomb attacks in Surabaya were committed by six members of family members consisting of DitaUpriyanto (48) and his wife PujiKuswati (43) accompanied by four of their children, Yusuf Fadil (18), Firman Halim (16), Fadilah Sari (12), and Pamela Rizkika (9). They rode motorbikes and carried bombs.

The ISIS through its news agency, *Amaq*, stated that they were responsible for this attack. There was one big circle that was not revealed from this family suicide-bombing network. The large network consists of clerics who provide recitations containing orders and encouragement to carryout family suicide bombings. However, the how and what the contents of their communication were produced and distributed have not been identified. What is known so far was that they communicated through games to avoid the monitoring of security forces. This communication technique is very creative and the results are truly undetectable, unexpected, and very terrible (Fealy, 2004; Mubarak, 2015). Therefore, a social network is embedded within this family network (Saifuddin1992, 8).

It is very likely that the Surabaya bombing was more advanced and dramatic than the fighters of ISIS in the Middle East and Africa who have involved usually children as executors of their opponents and as suicide bombers. This is because the bomb blast in Surabaya was seen as not common, since the perpetrators committing the suicide bombing operation were whole members of a family. Nevertheless, speculation regarding the involvement of foreign terrorist network became stronger following the emergence of new local sort of radical groups such as the *Daulah Ansharud Jamaah* (JAD) and *Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid* (JAT). The groups allegedly suspected as an ISIS network because based on a report of The Soufan Center, a New York-based study institute, there were around 600 ISIS fighters from Indonesia, and there were also around 113 women from Indonesia who joined the rank in ISIS. Overall, there were around 30,000 to 40,000 foreigners from 110 countries who entered Syria and Iraq after ISIS announced the establishment of an Islamic state in June 2014 (Agara, 2015).

The involvement of ‘whole family jihadist’ in the bomb blast in Surabaya has triggered a discourse regarding the motives and background why the whole family members were willing to sacrifice their lives in a suicide mission.

### **Acceleration of radicalization in Indonesia**

In this context, it is clear that for the terrorists, family ties were considered the easiest route to radicalization. Here, the consideration is no longer political or ideological, but family ties. In family relationships, there is love, mutual understanding, and a shared willingness to sacrifice on behalf of their religion. A previous study of domestic groups reveals that they may feel difficult to betray each other because they have family relationships (Netting, Wilk, dan Arnould, 1984). This was also felt and confirmed by former terrorism inmates, Ali Fauzi Manzi. He is the younger brother of the terrorists Ali

Imron and Amrozi. Both of them were perpetrators of the Bali Bombing I in 2002. From the age of 18, Ali joined his brothers. He is in charge of assembling the bombs. The four were arrested and imprisoned. His brothers were sentenced to death and for life. This case could be seen as the violence of everyday life of a radical family (Scheper-Hughes, 1992).

Out of prison, Ali FauziManzi received medical treatment funded by the police. His view of the evil police changed because he was treated humanely. Ali FauziManzi then continued his life by studying and becoming a terrorist observer and forming a de-radicalization institution for former terrorists in Surabaya. According to Ali FauziManzi, family relationship is not the only thing that could make people be able to bond and form their radical ideology. Moreover, this is the process that takes place at the place where they can freely to have indoctrination among others. “That often happens,” said Ali Fauzi Manzi (Interview).

Basically, a terrorist community provides two supports for its members. The first is non-material supports—ideology and brotherhood, or friendship. This community provides radical understanding to its members through educational institutions, *daurah* (camping), *idad* (self preparation), and others.

The second support is material—education, employment, and health assistance. The presence of these two supports bind its members, so it is difficult to get out of the social environment because there is a feeling of doubts, that if they leave, they do not get the two supports, they will have no friends, and are even ostracized. Thus, among Islamists, it seems that family-based recruitment is considered safer, being closed and confidential. For the future, we are concerned that family terrorists in the Surabaya Bomb case may become a precedent.

The suicide bombing in Surabaya (May 2018), Solo (July 2016), and the terrorist attack in Thamrin Street, Jakarta in January 2016, were both successful in gaining media publicity. President Joko Widodo has started a deradicalization program in Solo with the fund equivalent to US\$ 12 million aimed to eliminate terrorism and the seeds of terrorist in Solo (Sahrasad et al. 2017).

Paletz et al. (1992) showed that to achieve the objectives, terrorists must publicize their actions. Publicity was standard to Al Qaeda, Jamaah Islamiyah, ISIS and their networks. Sometimes, they would select a suitable time and place to attract the target, although they have not issued a statement, or even when they did not claim to be responsible. In the last ten years, based on experience in Indonesia, almost no terrorist group has openly claimed to be responsible. The suicide bombings in Solo in July 2016, Bali bombing 2002, and in Jakarta July 17, 2009, that shocked the JW Marriot Hotel and the Ritz Carlton Hotel, in the heart of the security of Mega Kuningan business area, Jakarta, there has been no specific declaration regarding the terrorist groups as perpetrators. It is rather clear to us that the bombing creates this dangerous message that seems to be related to the victory Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and Budiono presidential election in the just previous days. These bombings have a strong relationship with the reaction among the radicals and fundamentalists against democracy. This is similar to what happened on July 17, 2007 in Islamabad, Pakistan, where a bomb was detonated in a presidential election campaign, specifically in the J. W. Marriot Hotel, Islamabad. The hotel had been attacked twice before, but the explosion on that Saturday night was the most formidable since the country joined the war against terror in 2001.

Meanwhile, many people ask whether the terrorists wanted to deliver a message the Bali Bombing 2002, Jakarta Bombing 2009, Solo 2016 suicide bombing in July 17 bombing and so forth? These bombings were a clear reaction to the victory of a pro-US President of Indonesia. However, the terrorists did not seek to disrupt the presidential vote counting results by General Elections Commission. The evidence was that no poll site was bombed by the terrorists. For them, timing was important and the decision would have been influenced by the ease of access to the target.

This bomb was also a reaction to the forthcoming visit of the Manchester United football team to Indonesia, not because of their dislike this sport, but because the target was considered as western foreigners, and U.S. allies. This perception make a terrorist attack as an attempt to prevent sports event involving MU football team held in Jakarta even the terrorist leader, Osama bin Laden, was a fan of the Arsenal football club from the UK. The implication of the Marriot bombing was that a terrorist nation has made this hotel a permanent target. JW Marriot, Islamabad, has also been bombed twice, so also the one in Jakarta. This means that the Marriot hotels will remain a target of terrorist attacks, and may need to change their name to a a more local name. The terrorists want was to attack the symbols of capitalism, democracy, neo-liberalism, and the United States wherever they are located.

Indonesia is a fertile ground for radical movements and fundamentalists. Recognition of their actions including for Bali Bombing perpetrators October 2002, is clearly a visible expression of religious emotions. Ali Gufron, one of the Bali bombing terror suspects, even empathetically states that there is a "... reply to tyranny and arbitrary rule of the US and allies against the Muslims with the intention that they will stop the oppression".

There is a value that works and dictates the way they think. Ali Ghufron, for example, states that the bombing was an "act devoted to God". Ali Ghufron, Imam Samudra, Amrozi, and his group felt a *delusion of grandeur*, the feeling of having a decree and being part of the elements of greatness with a special mission from God. The terrorists always see themselves as "warriors of God" serving as the "hand of God" on earth to realize "his wrath" by opposing authoritarian government with bombs (Sahrasad & Al Chaidar 2013).

In fact, the terrorist group is not new in the world of movement and the radical fundamentalists of Indonesia. The terrorist is the combination of the core teachings of radical fundamentalists that meet at one particular point of planning a war against tyranny (Mohammad ZakiArrobi, 2018). In Indonesia, these terrorist groups were small, as can be seen in the following: (1) *Jamaah Islamiyyah*, (2) *Mujahidin Indonesia Timur* (East Indonesia Mujahidden) led by Santoso and (3) *Darul Islam* (Islamic State). However, there is a rapid proliferation of some terrorist groups in cities such as Palembang, Cilacap, and Semarang (Central Java).

Many people blame terrorism in Indonesia on extremist Wahabi groups and *salafi* who have been radicalized.

### **The Wahabi movement**

The Movement of Wahabi was initiated by Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1792), a reformer (mujaddid) of Islam of Najd, Saudi Arabia, who came amid a long upset Muslims under static of the four schools (Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Hanafi). Abdul Wahab was a *mufti* from Suudiyah Daulah, the forerunner to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that we know today. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab called on his people to monotheism, to

pray to God without intermediaries, not to glorify the saints and learned men or scholars or people who are more pious as special, and refuse to worship graves.

Wahabi embraces egalitarian principles in worship. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab sect is regarded as the fifth after Shafi, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Maliki. Many wrote that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab's ideas was in line with the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Wiktorowicz, 2001). Due to being influenced by the ideas of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Wahabi-ism is somewhat similar to the Hanbali school. Wahabi's thoughts were then developed by Bin Baz, Utsaymin, Syek Ahmad Khan, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Rashid Rida, Muhammad Abduh, HOS Tjokroaminoto, and S.M. Kartosoewirjo.

Later in the period of post-colonialism, Wahabi ideology have developed more systematically by Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb, Hassan al-Banna, Abul A'la Al-Mawdudi, Yusuf Qardawi, and Nasir Al Albani. Then, during the revolution in Afghanistan, this ideology was documented in books by Abdullah Azzam, Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al Zawahir, up to the period of the conflict Iraq and Syria by Abu Mushab As Shuri.

### Typology of Wahabism

Wahabism are not monolithic, which means that this group is also split into several variants of unfriendly or even hostile to each other and sometimes can also lead to bloody conflicts. Wahabism is actually a generic term to describe or refer to the Salafi groups. However, due to the traditional Islam that also claims itself as Salafis (who carry out the tradition *Salafussholeh*), then the label Wahabi has been so easily distinguishing them theologically with groups that are not Wahabi. The Wahabi terminology was used as a euphemism because there are certain groups who are very sensitive to the name of Salafi (Sahrasad & Al Chaidar 2016). Anthropologically, there are at least three types of Wahabism in Indonesia that the writers have observed.

First, the Wahabi *Shururi* considered as anti mixed-religious local culture commonly practices in societies that hardly rely on Wahabi ideology that claimed was matched with what the prophet done. The local practices such as birthday celebration, twice adzan, anti *tahlil*, anti pilgrimage, and anti jihad, and so forth. Second, the *Jihadi* Wahabi is the Wahabi group that focuses on jihad and has tried to resist any government policy. This group also has a similar rejection as the first group. Wahabi Jihadists in Indonesia had appeared with the name of Darul Islam (DI) in West Java in 1949 [with the character Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo], Central Java in 1950 [Amir Fatah Widjaja Kusuma], South Sulawesi in 1951 [KaharMuzakkar], South Kalimantan 1952 [Ibn Hajar] and Aceh in 1953 [DaudBeureu'eh]. Then, there was *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI) 1992 through 2010, which accused Ustadz Abdullah Sungkar and Abubakar Ba'asyir, Dr Azahari, Noordin Mat Top, Amrozi, Imam Samudra, Ali Ghufron, and Ali Imron as the top figures within this group. Lastly, the group that appears in the Jihadi Wahabi 'Al Qaeda', which later formed Tanzhim Veranda of Mecca (TQSM) and many of its activists were arrested after the discovery of *i'dad* activities (war preparation/war games) in Bukit Jalin, Aceh Besar in 2010. The *Jihadi* Wahabi group is now quieter and chooses the path of missionary endeavor with wisdom, peace, and being a sage (*dakwahbil hikmah*) in their daily activities.

Third, the *Takfiri* Wahabi that so often accuses others outside the group as heretics or even pagan. This group is found in Aceh, Java, Sulawesi, and other regions today, and is still faithful to their pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Syria (ISIL/S) or better known as ISIS. This group is radical in word and deed, This *Takfiri*

Wahabi group are more frightening, could be more desperate, will not easily be killed, and is the embryo of ISIS (Islamic State of Syria and Iraq) in Indonesia that has been growing with its global network. In addition, the paradigm of ISIS is that Muslims who disagree with them are seen as unbelievers who deserve to be killed, while ISIS is ready to attack the government of a state at any time.

Because of conflicts of interest in their own internal Wahabi circles there are mutual accusations and recriminations, in which many groups of Wahabi were involved in blasphemous and heretical actions among themselves. *Shururi* Wahabi circles have often accused the Wahabi Jihadists as the rebels, betrayers (*bughot*). *Jihadi* Wahabi more passive and does not react socially and politically. The *Jihadi* Wahabi prefer to worship by *mahdhoh* (ritual) and avoid friction with any party. It actively promotes monotheism in non-monotheistic communities and has accused many *Jihadi* Wahabi groups as heretic or infidel because they do not accept the caliphate of Al-Baghdadi in Syria and Iraq. Through social media, *Takfiri* Wahabi groups are noisy, full of threats and accusations, and assertively intolerant. In fact, the group have been involved in various communal conflicts in Indonesia such as at Aceh (1946), Ambon (1999), Poso (2001), South Sulawesi under changeable organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyyah, Darul Islam, and so forth, from 2000 to 2014. In public perception, therefore, Wahabi is seen as a radical organization. Wahabi is supposed to be a paragon of beauty and the scent of Islam, but violence in Iraq and Syria, ISIS has acted with terrible cruelty, has made Wahabi theologically responsible for violence and barbarity.

### **The Khilafah of ISIS**

In search of a solution to many complex problems in the archipelago, many Indonesians are in the peak of getting tired with the lack of effort from the government towards combating poverty. Not to mention other issues like injustice, tyranny, corruption, lack of education, and significant number of human rights violations. It is quite understood that the prolonged transition in Indonesia has not only given birth but also led to louder voices of Islamic parties, calling for the establishment of *Khilafah* (imagined Islamic state) as a way of building a better moral and prosperous nation (Hwang, Julie Chernov. and Kirsten E. Schulze, 2018. Samuel Helfont, Tally Helfont, 2018).

Just like a promise, but for the pluralistic country like Indonesia this is not at all a good idea. *Khilafah* (imagined Islamic state) means combining Islam and politics in governance, and applying khilafah in the archipelago that has high diversities in religions, ethnics, cultures and economic disparity, can be very dangerous.

Nonetheless, some Islamic parties and organizations have been inspired by transnational Middle East version of Islam. Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). This party is a real example of an Islamic political party that follows, to some extent, the teaching of *Ikhwanul Muslimin* (Muslim brotherhood) of Egypt.

Having motivated by the al-Qaeda, a notorious terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden, Jemaah Islamiyah has been modeled by the style of al-Qaeda's Islamic Arabism. In addition, both Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) and *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* also take that Islamic Arabism as their teaching direction. The Islamic Arabism also seems to have been the source of Islamic teaching in many *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), where students become radical activists. Tahrir Indonesia's International Khilafah Conference in Jakarta, is an evidence of how the teaching of religions in developing



countries like Indonesia can convert a religion into a religio-political system. This is also what Clifford Geertz claimed to be “religion mindedness”, a process of how the religion ideology comes into existence (Geertz 1966, Geertz 1973).

In this context, the religion ideology has the power to ignite fanaticism and radicalization that can erupt violence and destruction. Any religion in this position will have two functions, building better integrity among its followers and at the same time creating conflict and violation.

The tragedy of the Bali bombing in 2002, the bombing of the Australian Embassy bombing in Jakarta in 2004, the suicide bomb in Solo, and other brutal acts done by anarchists such as the Islamic Defender Front (FPI)—using violence and destructive acts to close down businesses that they think are not in accordance with *sharia*, are examples of fundamentalist belligerence toward minority communities.

er to mark the positive potential of religious, cultural and political exchange between both regions that are very heterogeneous but at the same time, share a common history. (Norbert Eschborn, 2004).

As tension in the relationship between Western and Islamic cultures/civilizations have been growing, any kind of dialogue, therefore, is not only to be intensified, but must also be taken into consideration for the changing situation of world politics.

### **Indonesian Muslim: In search of justice and prosperity**

When in power, President Barack Obama (USA)—who spent four years of his childhood in Indonesia—stressed that Indonesia is not an Islamic country, but a secular country that has more than 200 million Muslims. The majority of Indonesians enthusiastically reject most of the remnants of the Suharto dictatorship, and they have maintained the Pancasila ideology, a nationalist ideology that mandates equal treatment of all religions in the country and all social groups while embracing democracy has nothing to do with religion.

With the biggest Muslim population in the World, Indonesia can be regarded as a champion of democracy or at least democratic transition for Muslim nation, although this must still be tested by the passage of time. It is natural that the West viewed Indonesian Islam, at least before the Bali bombing 2002, as being Islam with a new face. In 1996, *Newsweek*, an international media has called Islam in Indonesia as modernist, progressive, and a friend of the West and other cultures/civilizations, and perceived it as an example of successful harmony between Muslim and modernity.

Tolerance is very important in a country with 260 million people, of which at least 24 million Christians and Hindus are spread across 17,000 islands, with more than 300 different ethnic groups, and around 800 dialects. Islam is only one of the five officially recognized religions. Most Indonesians do not define themselves by their faith but by national and regional pride. Religion is second or third, which is a why Muslim-based parties are consistently defeated in elections, including during the 2019 presidential and legislative elections.

However, to borrow Anthony Reid’s perspective, Indonesian Islam is *grossly understudied*. The West needs to study and understand Indonesian Islam, which is pluralistic and complicated, and too little understood by Westerners. The issue of terrorism has become

a real issue since the Bali bombing of 2002 shocked the world, (Sahasrad & Al Chaidar 2015).

Indonesian society has fallen into a *debt trap* mounting to about US\$ 350 billion (state and private loans, according to Bank Indonesia data) which weighs heavily on the the people who are mostly poor.(Sahasrad & Al Chaidar 2015). In this sensitive situation, Islam has been the *rallying point* to youth, students, *ulamas*, and scholars as a basic ideology *vis-à-vis* the Western hegemony they blame for global capitalism. Therefore, it is imperative for *ulamas* (Islamic scholars), leaders, a Muslim intellectuals to make their *ummah* aware of and conscious that radicalism and violence is the wrong answer to solving poverty and Indoneasia's other multidimensional problems (Sahasrad & Al Chaidar 2015, Sahrasad & Al Chaidar 2016 ).

In Indonesia, democracy can grow and develop if law enforcement,, and economic security are enjoyed by the people. Equitable prosperity and equality largely determine people's support for the ruling government. If inequality and injustices are severe, then the people will find their own way to overcome this problem, and that can lead to destabilization which disrupts the course of development and democracy these days and in the future.

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