

**COUNTERING VIOLENT  
EXTREMISM IN INDONESIA:  
NEED FOR A RETHINK**

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## CONTENTS

I.	Overview .....	1
II.	Background to the Government Program .....	2
III.	Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forums (FKPT).....	3
IV.	Deradicalisation and Counter-radicalisation 2013-2014.....	6
	A. The Deradicalisation Blueprint and the PNPT .....	6
	B. The Sentul Deradicalisation Centre .....	7
	C. Visits of Middle Eastern Ulama.....	8
V.	Mosques.....	9
	A. The Takeover of the Muhammad Ramadhan Mosque.....	9
	B. The Case of Mesjid Jami, Krapyak, Klaten.....	12
	C. Lessons for BNPT.....	13
VI.	Prisons .....	13
	A. “Self-Deradicalisation”.....	14
	1. Organisational Disengagement.....	14
	2. Individual Disengagement .....	15
	B. Assessment of High-Risk Prisoners.....	16
VII.	Countering Extremist Media .....	16
	A. Resistance, not Vigilantism.....	17
	B. Victim Voices.....	18
	C. Counter-narratives.....	19
VIII.	Conclusion .....	21

## I. OVERVIEW

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Indonesia is making some headway in countering violent extremism but not through government programs. Some prisoners have moderated their views through discussions with fellow inmates and their own self-awareness. Communities have taken back radical mosques on their own without help from counter-terrorism agencies. In general, the twin goals of “deradicalisation” (persuading extremists, especially prisoners convicted of terrorism, to move away from violence) and “counter-radicalisation” (immunising communities against extremist ideology and preventing new recruitment) have not been well-served by top-down programs heavy on rhetoric and formal meetings, divorced from detailed knowledge of radical networks. The challenge is to understand when, why and how individuals and communities resist on their own and see if there are any lessons that can be replicated.

The National Anti-Terrorism Agency (Badan Nasional untuk Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) has not been as effective as hoped. Some of its problems on the prevention side are not of its own making. There is still no consensus in the broader Muslim community about what constitutes extremism; radicalism in defence of the faith is considered laudable in many quarters. The BNPT structure effectively puts the police in charge of intelligence and operations and the military in charge of prevention, which does not make for smooth cooperation. All the law enforcement officers with direct field experience went to the first, leaving prevention to newcomers who had no personal knowledge of networks, prisoners or available data. Prevention officials still complain that funds have been slow in coming, hampering their work. Many agencies and ministries that BNPT is supposed to be coordinating have little interest either in the subject of countering extremism or in being coordinated.

Questions remain, however, over BNPT’s ability to target programs effectively. In its 2014 “National Program for Preventing Terrorism” for example, BNPT identifies prisons, mosques, schools and media as the key areas for work. These are the right areas, but the activities proposed are mostly meetings and generic training of trainers without honing in on particular institutions and individuals known to be propagating extremism. The design of prevention programs could benefit from more systematic study of the case dossiers of the almost 800 individuals indicted on terrorism charges since 2002. It could also benefit from better analysis of the ideological arguments used against violence within the radical community that some convicted terrorists have found persuasive and more in-depth study of successful cases of community rejection of radical teachings.

This report examines the government prevention program to date while also looking at examples of non-government and community-based initiatives to counter violent extremism. When well-planned and implemented, the latter can be very effective, but in some cases, they turn into exercises in vigilantism that are as ugly when mobilised against extremists as when directed against religious minorities. BNPT’s programs to date may be weak but a national agency is still needed to coordinate and share information across agencies; develop policies designed to discourage advocacy of violence; and help community leaders develop strategies. Unless programs in all of these areas are based on detailed knowledge about how and where radicalisation takes place, however, they are not likely to be productive. As a new government takes office later this year, it might consider a restructuring of BNPT to remove the divide between intelligence/operations and prevention.

## II. BACKGROUND TO THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

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From the 2002 Bali bombing until the early years of the Yudhoyono administration, “deradicalisation” was left to the counter-terrorism police, Detachment 88.<sup>1</sup> It was ad hoc and largely off budget, aimed at terrorist detainees and suspects. Prisoners who were seen as cooperative received all-expenses-paid family visits, better food, good medical treatment, school fees for their children and even periodic outings. In a few cases, the police financed weddings, allowing imprisoned jihadis to marry their girlfriends in prison ceremonies, with family members flown in for the occasion. Anonymous donors provided the funding. There was no systematic attempt at counseling, although police encouraged a few senior JI prisoners who expressed remorse or denounced the bombings to talk with other inmates and publish accounts of their own personal trajectories into and out of violence.<sup>2</sup>

These efforts brought some notable individual successes and made Indonesia a showcase for “deradicalisation” efforts. Police officers involved recognised that understanding radicalisation was key and that building relationships with prisoners needed certain personal qualities: operational experience, empathy, good listening skills and an understanding of the culture of radical networks.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on these skills, however, meant that there was less analysis of the men who “successfully” disengaged, many of whom were uncomfortable with targeting civilians or waging jihad on Indonesian soil in the first place. Even without the police input, some might have pulled away on their own, particularly those who joined as combatants in local conflicts which have since been resolved, or those who played largely peripheral, non-violent roles: hiding fugitives, withholding information or disposing of evidence.

The counter-terrorism police guarded their contacts and information closely, partly for security reasons but also perhaps because the information was an important source of political capital and prestige. There was no inclination to work closely with other agencies, many of which they viewed with contempt. This was particularly true of the prison system, where some in Detachment 88 saw the possibility that all their good work cultivating contacts would be undone once convicted terrorists were transferred from police custody to regular prisons that were notoriously corrupt and understaffed.<sup>4</sup> But as time went on, some lower-level prison officials, unnoticed and unrecognised, were building their own ties to prisoners and developing an interest in inmate networks. Their knowledge could have made for a potent partnership with police in understanding and preventing prison recruitment as well as reinforcing deradicalisation efforts, but institutional obstacles were too great.

No real attention to broader prevention efforts took place until President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono took office, just weeks after the 2004 Australian embassy bombing. After the second

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1 For more details on the origins of the program, see International Crisis Group, “Deradicalisation” and Indonesian Prisons, Asia Report No.142, 19 November 2007. Note that while many other countries have abandoned the use of the terms “deradicalisation” in favour of “disengagement”, and “counter-radicalisation” in favour of “countering violent extremism (CVE)”, the old words remain in general usage in Indonesia.

2 Nasir Abas, a veteran of Afghanistan and Mindanao and commander of Jemaah Islamiyah’s Region 3, and Ali Imron, a religious scholar from Lamongan who joined his two brothers, Amrozi and Mukhlas, in the Bali bombing plot, were the most senior prisoners to agree to work with the police. Ali Imron received a life sentence for his role (his brothers were executed); Nasir was given a short sentence for withholding information and was released after a brief sentence. Between 2003 and 2007, he frequently accompanied the police on operations and visited prisons on their behalf to meet with inmates and distribute largesse. But it was never a systematic program, and Nasir by his own account said he only visited prisons off Java once or twice and only went to Cipinang, the main prison in Jakarta, four or five times in total before police decided to use other channels. See “Prison De-Radicalisation and Disengagement: The Case of Indonesia”, unpublished paper prepared for a conference run by The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, October 2009. The case study was incorporated into a Peter R. Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries”, ICSR, London, 2010.

3 Powerpoint presentation by Tito Karnavian, “The Attempt to De-radicalize Islamist Terrorists in Indonesia”, Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund Seminar, May 2011.

4 See International Crisis Group, “Deradicalisation’ and Indonesian prisons”, op.cit.

Bali bombing in 2005, followed within a month by the beheading of three Christian schoolgirls in Poso, Central Sulawesi, then Vice-President Jusuf Kalla summoned Muslim religious leaders, including several hardliners, to his residence to discuss how to counter the appeal of violence and martyrdom. They formed a short-lived group called the Team for Handling Terrorism (Tim Penanggulangan Teror, TPT) but many of its members were convinced that the U.S. was a bigger threat than Indonesian extremists, and it never evolved into a serious community outreach effort.

Between 2005 and 2009, Indonesia had no major bombings, and, after police in 2007 managed to dismantle—temporarily, as it turned out—a major terrorist base in Poso, Indonesia was hailed as “one of world’s few triumphs in fighting terrorism”.<sup>5</sup> But the success was almost all in terms of law enforcement, not prevention, and the assumed correlation between the lull in attacks and effective countermeasures proved false. The suicide bombings in July 2009 at two major Jakarta hotels, and the discovery of a plot against President Yudhoyono led the government to fast-track the creation of what became BNPT. It was established by presidential decree on 16 July 2010, almost a year to the day after the hotel bombings, and began work in September.

The shock of the 2009 attacks convinced the president and many in his inner circle that particularly with the plot against the president, terrorism was now a matter of state security, and the military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) needed to be involved. BNPT therefore would be an agency that transcended the police-military divide, and one of the senior roles in the BNPT would be reserved for an army officer. The new agency had three divisions: operations, which worked closely with counter-terrorism police to coordinate intelligence-gathering, monitoring and arrests; prevention, protection and deradicalisation; and international cooperation. The police were not about to cede their operational role to the military, and with a diplomat heading the international cooperation effort, the TNI was left with prevention. Major-General Agus Surya Bakti, a former army intelligence officer and rising star in Kopassus, was put in charge, with a civilian academic heading the deradicalisation effort under him.

### **III. BNPT AND THE TERRORISM PREVENTION COORDINATION FORUMS (FKPT)**

Prevention got off to a very slow start. From the beginning it was hampered by the lack of a good knowledge base. Part of the problem, as noted, was structural. It was the operational side of BNPT—police officers who had been working to disrupt radical networks and arrest those responsible for violence—that had all the institutional knowledge and ongoing intelligence needed to think through useful strategies for disengagement. The Yudhoyono administration may have had its own political reasons for trying to find a counter-terrorism role for the military, but it made little sense to turn over prevention work to people who had no experience tracking or studying these groups when there were several police officers who had spent a decade doing just that. Dividing operations and prevention between police and military meant from the start that there would be obstacles to cooperation, regardless of the professionalism of the division heads concerned.

The lack of experience was compounded by weak research. Rather than systematically reading through interrogation depositions or trial documents to understand how and where convicted terrorists had become radicalised so that any de-radicalisation projects could be better targeted, BNPT staff tended to prefer consulting with partners, many of whom had very different understandings of what constituted “extremism.” These partners included Nahdlatul Ulama, the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), the Ministry of Religion and several non-governmental institutes. For Nahdlatul Ulama, non-violent salafism—the ultra-pu-

5 Joshua Kurlantzick, “Doing It Indonesia’s Way”, *Time*, 9 August 2007.

ritan stream of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia—was a bigger threat than terrorism because its followers condemned traditional Nahdlatul Ulama practices as un-Islamic.<sup>6</sup> The prevention division did commission research, but often without a clear idea of what it was looking for or how to use the results.

In January 2011, the prevention division produced a strategic plan for 2010-2014. It included a discussion of the causes of terrorism in Indonesia:

The problem of a weak sense of nationhood; a narrow-fanatic understanding of religious teachings; the weakness of citizenship education; the erosion of local values by a wave of negative modernisation; and lack of coordination and integration of efforts to prevent terrorism have all made radical thought and action a more serious threat...

The fact that “weak sense of nationhood” came first was revealing because it fit well with a military’s vision of its own task as protecting and safeguarding national sovereignty. But there was little assessment of how threats had changed over time or acknowledgment that the motivations of someone in a former conflict area like Poso could be different from those who had joined the militant training camp in Aceh a year earlier. In fact there was no reference at all to the Aceh camp, when that incident, more than any other, both underscored how extremist alliances had changed and drew attention to the problem of recidivism among released prisoners.<sup>7</sup>

The document set four goals that it hoped would be 80 per cent achieved by 2014:

- raising awareness and vigilance through dissemination of information, training and anti-terrorist propaganda;
- protecting “vital objects”, residential areas and public places from acts of terrorism;
- reducing radical ideology and propaganda; and
- preventing communities from being influenced by radical ideologies and persuading convicted terrorists, their families and networks to disengage from terrorism.<sup>8</sup>

The goals were right; there was just little idea of how to achieve them, and some of the early efforts were not well thought through (for example, holding shadow-puppet performances in prisons to try and attract radicals back to traditional Javanese culture).

When BNPT did have good, concrete ideas—for example, a proposal to certify clerics and preachers—they were often shot down by Islamic organisations, concerned that they would stigmatise Islam. The objections to certification or government review of Friday sermons (*khutbah*) came from moderates and hardliners alike.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout 2011 and 2012, a series of plots by a variety of small extremist cells drove home the fact that while the level of terrorist competence had declined and the threat of major attacks had receded, there was still no shortage of recruits. No public campaign or outreach program was in place. To fill the gap, BNPT came up in 2012 with the idea of Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forums (Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme, FKPT).

In some ways, it was the New Order mindset: create a national formula to be applied uniformly across the country to mobilise citizens for a particular cause. BNPT provided the general

6 See for example Syaikh Idrahman, *Mereka Memalsukan Kitab-Kitab Karya Ulama Klasik: Episode Kebohongan Publik Sekte Salafi Wahabi*, Yogyakarta, 2011. This anti-Wahabi tract has an introduction by Said Agil Siraj, the head of Nahdlatul Ulama.

7 Among other things, the constellation of groups at the camp showed that Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT), founded by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir in 2008, and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), which he led from 1999 until his arrest in late 2002, were now in opposing camps. JI was vilified by all the groups present in Aceh for having abandoned jihad.

8 BNPT, “Rencana Strategis Deputi Bidang Pencegahan, Perlindungan dan Deradikalisasi”.

9 See, for example, “Djoko: Deradikalisasi Tak Terkait Agama Tertentu”, *vivanews.com*, 10 September 2012.

direction, usually in a launching ceremony in a local hotel with provincial government officials and local notables in attendance. After a few motivational speeches, the provincial FKPT would be launched, consisting of clerics, youth organisations, academics and civil society leaders.<sup>10</sup> By mid-2014, there were FKPTs in 23 provinces and plans to extend them to all 34.<sup>11</sup> In each province, the liaison to the FKPT from the local government is the office of political affairs and national unity (*kesatuan bangsa dan politik, kesbangpol*).

Each FKPT was encouraged to host “Terrorism Prevention Dialogues”, with participants representing both “moderates” and “radicals” as well as religious bodies such as the local branch of the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI).<sup>12</sup> Each dialogue would have facilitators with in-depth religious knowledge and a good understanding of radical thought, who would undergo a three-day training program by BNPT.

According to a syllabus drafted in Jakarta, dialogue participants would discuss general concepts of radicalism and terrorism, as well as causes and possible solutions. It would then move on to a discussion of terrorism in Indonesia, looking at specific incidents, the perpetrators, the root factors, the relevant laws and steps toward prevention. The next topic would be religion and terrorism, exploring how religious teachings could be misinterpreted to ill effect and the role that religious teachers could play in deradicalisation. This would be followed by a discussion on Islam and extremism. The final topic was to be on religion and the state, including a discussion of concepts of the state in Islam, the relationship between Islam and the state in Indonesia and the value of heterogeneity (drafters avoided the word “pluralism”) in building a strong nation.<sup>13</sup> The initial goal was to have dialogues in ten provinces by the end of 2014; halfway through the year because of budget constraints, the goal had been lowered to eight.<sup>14</sup>

With the right facilitators, these discussions might be useful as a way of imparting information, but the chances were never very high that committed extremists would take part. The programs that have taken place to date have ended up largely preaching to the converted, so that, for example, the “dialogue” run by the Banten FKPT in April 2014 concluded with the issuing of a “Declaration of Peace-Loving High-School and College Students”.<sup>15</sup> Discussions in high-end hotels were not the best format for challenging key points of the extremist narrative. And while many were willing to make a stand against terrorism in the abstract, it was not at all clear that local religious leaders were willing to take on extremist clerics in their own communities, or that the FKPTs could provide tactical guidance if they were. Without a targeted local strategy to identify problem areas and institutions; determine what communities were vulnerable to recruitment and why, and identify who might have legitimacy in countering extremist messages, the FKPTs appeared to be little more than cheerleaders for moderation and Indonesian unity.

In an interview in May 2014, Maj. Gen. Agus Surya Bakti acknowledged that the FKPTs were largely powerless but he put it down in part to the fact that they had no budget of their own. Any funds for activities would have to be provided by the local government or outside donors.<sup>16</sup>

10 For example, on 4-5 April 2012, BNPT, working with the Nusa Institute, held a two-day workshop to launch the FKPT for Nusa Tenggara Barat province. Before an audience of about 150, BNPT head Ansyad Mbai gave a pep talk titled “Reject and Oppose!” (*Menolak dan Melawan*). Nasaruddin Umar spoke on “The Effectiveness of Preventing Radical Terrorism Using Local Knowledge”. A month later, a similar event took place in Lampung to launch the provincial FKPT there, with a one-day seminar called “Optimizing the Function of Social Institutions and Local Knowledge in the Effort to Prevent Terrorism.” Similar programs took place in North Sumatra, West Java and East Kalimantan.

11 IPAC interview, Maj.Gen Agus Surya Bakti, Jakarta, 5 May 2014.

12 “Draf Final Pedoman Pelaksanaan Dialog Pencegahan Terorisme” 2014.

13 “Pluralism” is seen by many conservative Muslim groups as a principle that all religions are equally true, which they reject. The Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) issued a fatwa against pluralism, liberalism and secularism in 2005.

14 IPAC interview, Irfan Idris, BNPT, Jakarta, 5 June 2014.

15 “Pelajar Rawan Direkrut Teroris” *Banten Pos*, 26 Mei 2014.

16 IPAC interview, 26 May 2014.

Funding was not the only problem, however. Asked what the FKPT could do if it came to a member's attention that an extremist study group was taking place at a local mosque, Maj. Gen. Agus suggested that members might approach the cleric responsible. But what self-respecting extremist would listen to a representative from a government-organised body that was already branded in radical circles as anti-Islamic? There was no plan to work out policies with the local government, for example, banning preaching that encouraged hatred and violence and preventing government-funded institutions from being used for such purposes. There was no effort even to develop a list of clerics known from interrogation depositions to have been instrumental in radicalisation.

#### IV. DERADICALISATION AND COUNTER-RADICALISATION 2013-2014

Since 2013, prevention efforts have included developing a national terrorism prevention strategy; following through on programs outlined in the November 2013 *Deradicalisation Blueprint*; building a new "deradicalisation centre" outside Jakarta in Sentul, West Java; and bringing over Middle Eastern scholars who it is hoped will be able to moderate the views of extremist prisoners.

##### A. *The Deradicalisation Blueprint and the National Terrorism Prevention Program*

In November 2013, after many fits and starts, BNPT, working with the Nusa Institute, a non-governmental think-tank set up specifically to counter religious radicalism in Indonesia, finally came up with a 122-page *Deradicalisation Blueprint*, but it was extremely general. It focused on the need for broad tasks of collecting data on radical prisoners, then providing rehabilitation, "re-education", and reintegration, with monitoring and evaluation of every step. Indicators of success were to be a rise in moral awareness of convicted terrorists and their families; a change in their attitudes away from radicalism toward inclusiveness, openness, and commitment to peaceful and humanitarian values; growth of feelings of patriotism; and an awareness of the error of their ways.<sup>17</sup> There were no specifics and no attempt to derive suggestions for deradicalisation or counter-radicalisation from knowledge of how radicalisation in different areas or among different groups had occurred in the first place. There was also no sense in the *Blueprint*, or indeed in any other of the numerous booklets produced by the prevention division, of violent extremism as a dynamic, constantly evolving threat.<sup>18</sup>

The *Blueprint* fed into a National Terrorism Prevention Program (Program Nasional Pencegahan Terorisme, PNPT), the outcome of two years of work. It was supposed to reflect input from all of the line ministries that BNPT was coordinating but few had much interest in the task. The only contribution the Education Ministry could make, for example, was to suggest that it be responsible for "character-building" of Indonesian students. The Information and Communication Ministry was also unresponsive, sending junior officials to meetings, if they sent anyone at all. Nevertheless, a PNPT task force was set up, to be headed by the deputy minister of religion,

17 Deputi Bidang Pencegahan, Perlindungan dan Deradikalisasi, Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, "Blueprint Deradikalisasi", Jakarta, 2013, p.75.

18 See for example "Perkembangan Terorisme di Indonesia", a 108-page booklet published by the prevention division in 2013 that consists of odd chunks of description of different groups, divided into three categories: radical militias, radical separatists and radical terrorists. The difference between the first and the others is that radical militias, represented by Laskar Jihad, Laskar Mujahidin and Laskar Jundullah, remain loyal to the Indonesian state. Darul Islam is included in radical separatists, together with the Free Papua Movement, while radical terrorists include JI, the MILF and al-Qaeda. The booklet includes at the end a table of "Terrorist Actions against the NKRI" [the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia] which starts in 1948 with the Madiun Rebellion up through a telephoned bomb threat against the Soekarno-Hatta airport in April 2013 but includes nothing from 1984 to 1998 (no reference to Lampung in 1989); nothing from July 2006 to July 2009 (no reference to Poso or Palembang) and no mention of the Aceh training camp in February 2010.

Nasaruddin Umar, whose Nusa Institute had helped draw up the *Blueprint* and was a frequent partner in convening the FKPTs. Other members represented relevant ministries.<sup>19</sup> Its first meeting was in early June 2014 and the main priority was to draw up a workplan so that funds already made available in the national budget could be released by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>20</sup>

The plan now is to focus on the thirteen provinces most affected by radicalism and terrorism, with a mapping undertaken in each province on the potential for radicalism.<sup>21</sup> Activities envisaged included strengthening the capacity of mosques, religious schools (*pesantren*), high schools and universities to resist terrorism; supporting mass media projects with anti-terrorism themes; and holding peace dialogues with Middle Eastern ulama in prisons and on national television. On the deradicalisation side, prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families would be empowered through entrepreneurial training and other programs.<sup>22</sup>

The programs, some of which are already underway even without the mapping, have some odd metrics. Thus, 91 mosques across the thirteen provinces are to receive “entrepreneurial assistance” of Rp.3 million (\$250) a month for one year. It is not clear how the mosques are to be selected or how such assistance will be used. The expected outcome, however, is that 90 per cent of them will be better able to stand on their own economically (and thus presumably not rely on external donors that might be supportive of extremism).<sup>23</sup>

The pesantren project will involve the training of 60 trainers in each province, and preparation of a terrorism prevention “module”, with 3,000 to be produced for use in pesantrens after the trainers return home. The expected outcome is that 100 per cent of the modules will be distributed, and 80 per cent of the participants will improve their understanding in how to resist terrorism.<sup>24</sup> If the modules were carefully prepared with the content checked by external experts, tested in focus groups and adapted to local contexts, perhaps they might have an impact, but it is not clear that any such procedures are planned.

It is not clear how any of the proposed programs are designed to respond to problems of the moment: recruitment of Indonesians for Syria, for example. The program aimed at universities proposes to train 575 trainers from among students and faculties but Indonesian campuses generally have *not* been a particular focus of violent extremists, in part because non-violent groups like Hizbut Tahrir and the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS), with their very strong campus-based networks, have shut them out. What groups exactly are these trainers going to be taught to resist and how is the distinction going to be made between acceptable and non-acceptable extremism? If Jemaah Islamiyah is engaged in a renewed effort to recruit on campus, what kinds of teachings or programs should the trainers look for and what should they do if they suspect such recruitment is taking place? This is the kind of information that would be useful; a generic module that goes through the history of terrorism in Indonesia and extremist interpretations of jihad is less likely to have an impact.

### B. *The Sentul Deradicalisation Centre*

In 2011, BNPT officials began talking of the need for a maximum security detention centre for terrorists but the concept changed over time. By 2012, an arrangement had been worked out

19 The ministries included are the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs; Religious Affairs; Education; Information; and Law and Human Rights. Also included are the National Planning Agency; the Vice-Presidential Secretariat; and the Presidential Working Unit for Supervision and Management of Development (UKP4).

20 IPAC interview, Irfan Idris, 5 June 2014.

21 These were West Java, Banten, DKI Jakarta; Central Java, East Java, Aceh, North Sumatra, Lampung, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, Maluku, South Kalimantan and West Nusa Tenggara.

22 “Program Nasional Pencegahan Terorisme”, powerpoint presentation by BNPT, Jakarta, January 2014.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

with the military to build a deradicalisation centre in Sentul, West Java as part of a larger military training complex called the Indonesia Peace and Security Centre (IPSC). Plans for the physical plant, built at a cost of Rp.160.8 billion (\$13.6 million) for the deradicalisation centre alone, went ahead before much thinking was done about its purpose.<sup>25</sup> There was no consultation with the Corrections Directorate of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (hereafter referred to as Corrections), according to its staff, some of whom wanted help in dealing with hardcore ideologues. They thought that a maximum security prison in Sentul would have been a great way of keeping them in isolation and transferring responsibility away from overburdened corrections officers.<sup>26</sup> Instead, Sentul evolved into the idea of a rehabilitation centre for prisoners who were about to be released, a hugely expensive facility not for the serious problem prisoners but for those who had cooperated enough to earn regular remissions.

On 7 April 2014, the IPSC was formally inaugurated by President Yudhoyono. In late May, Maj. Gen. Agus said the deradicalisation centre was probably about two years away from being operational and lamented the fact that there was still no clear framework for its use.<sup>27</sup> No one seemed to be happy with it: not Corrections, not the operations division of BNPT, which was left in the dark about plans, and not the prevention division itself. No one could explain what the purpose of a deradicalisation centre was in which Corrections had no role and which was not connected to any post-release monitoring program.

### C. Visits of Middle Eastern Ulama

In December 2013, BNPT brought three Middle Eastern clerics to Indonesia: Ali Hasan al-Halabi, a salafi cleric from Jordan; Dr Najih Ibrahim, one of the founders of the Jihad Group (Islamic Jihad) in Egypt who spent 25 years in prison under Mubarak; and Hisyam an-Najjar, another Egyptian who had also been active in the Jihad Group and in the post-Arab Spring salafi political party.<sup>28</sup> All were opposed to bombings of civilians and to the tendency of extremist groups to brand Muslims who rejected the establishment of an Islamic state as infidels (*kafir*). BNPT was hoping they would have enough legitimacy in the extremist community to persuade some of the jihadis in prison to adopt their views. They spent five days in Indonesia, holding a three-hour “course” for convicted jihadis in Cipinang Prison, Jakarta and in Pasir Putih prison on the island of Nusakambangan, off the south coast of Java. They also took part in a conference at the University of Indonesia and were interviewed on national television.

The Egyptians were known and respected by senior JI prisoners, especially those who had trained on the Afghan border in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the discussions in prison were reportedly lively. While the visits were predictably condemned on radical websites, BNPT considered them enough of a success to do another round.<sup>29</sup> Its staff are thus arranging with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan to choose another three clerics to visit prisons and universities and hold televised discussions.<sup>30</sup> Senior prisoners in Cipinang Prison, however, said that while they enjoyed the discussions, the ulama had no impact on their views.<sup>31</sup>

25 “Pusat Perdamaian dan Keamanan Indonesia di Sentul Telan Biaya Rp.1.6T”, detik.com, 7 April 2014. It also included training facilities for peace-keeping forces, disaster relief, language training, a sports facility and the new campus of the National Defence University.

26 IPAC interview, Department of Corrections, Jakarta, 9 July 2014.

27 IPAC interview, Maj Gen. Agus Surya Bakti, BNPT, 5 May 2014.

28 The Jihad Group was an extremist splinter of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was responsible for the attack on tourists in Luxor in 1997. Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia modeled its founding charter on the group.

29 See, for example, “Beberapa Catatan atas Pemikiran ‘Ulama Deradikalisasi’ BNPT dari Timur Tengah”, arrahmah.com, 13 December 2013 and “JAT: Undang Ulama Timur Tengah, BNPT Sedang Terapkan Teori Hitler”, islampos.com, 23 December 2013.

30 IPAC interview, Irfan Idris, BNPT, 5 June 2014.

31 IPAC interview, JI member, Jakarta, 11 May 2014.

Their BNPT hosts need to consider the pros and cons of these visits and whether clerics chosen by the current military government in Egypt and an increasingly anti-Shi'a Saudi Arabia will be bringing the right messages to Indonesia or at least to understand the potential for additional agendas. They need to look at the impact of the first visit and whether it helped “deradicalise” anyone who was not already being convinced by the senior JI leaders in the prisons involved: Abu Dujana, Abu Husna, and Zuhroni alias Mbah, for example, were already encouraging fellow inmates to do a cost-benefit analysis of the use of violence. They were among the most enthusiastic about the visit of the ulama, but did the visit convince any sceptics? And finally, BNPT’s sponsorship of any visit immediately diminishes its effectiveness in the very community it wants to reach. If these visits are deemed to be worth continuing, it might be more useful to keep BNPT behind the scenes and get a sponsor that does not immediately raise suspicions in the target audience.

## V. MOSQUES

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BNPT correctly identifies mosques as one of the institutions where radicalisation takes place, but the challenge is how to distinguish the problem ones from the vast majority of the nearly 800,000 mosques across the country.

It should not be a difficult task. Most arrested terrorism suspects are questioned in detail about how they came to join extremist groups, and many mention specific mosques where they took part in discussion groups or attended lectures by preachers who explicitly encouraged violent jihad. If a list of such places could be compiled from case dossiers, it could help focus thinking about how to approach the problem of mosque-based radicalisation. By contrast, the findings of the 2011 study by the NGO Lazuardi Birru that 50.95 per cent of mosques in the greater Jakarta metropolitan area had engaged in “radical action”, including 44 per cent by inciting hatred, may be useful for showing a pattern of intolerance but less useful for programming because it employs too broad a definition of “radical”.<sup>32</sup>

Information from case dossiers is much more specific. For example, one of the men arrested in connection with the plot to bomb the Myanmar embassy in Jakarta in May 2013 had attended jihadi lectures at five different mosques in the Jakarta area.<sup>33</sup> Another man convicted of terrorism in connection with a Darul Islam cell based in Cileungsi, West Java, was part of a radical discussion group that moved around seven Jakarta area mosques.<sup>34</sup> In both cases, one of the mosques cited was the Muhammad Ramadhan Mosque in south Bekasi, just east of Jakarta that in April 2014 was taken over by the Bekasi city government. The role of local officials was critical, but no counter-terrorism agencies were involved.

### A. *The Takeover of the Muhammad Ramadhan Mosque*

The Muhammad Ramadhan Mosque for years had been known for its extremist preaching. Sandwiched between the police station (*polsek*) and the subdistrict (*kecamatan*) office of South Bekasi, it was the site of jihadi lectures, book launchings and fund-raising events, including in February 2014, for the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). The story of how it came to be radicalised and deradicalised shows that constructive local resistance can work under certain

32 See “TOR Program Nasional Pencegahan Terorisme 2014”, BNPT, p.9.

33 Trial dossier Sefriano, the Muhammad Ramadhan Mosque, in the Galaxi residential complex in Bekasi, west of Jakarta; the Baitul Karim Mosque in Kebon Kacang; the al-Muhajirin Mosque in Grogol, West Jakarta; and the mosque on the campus of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Ciputat, south of Jakarta.

34 The mosques were al-Mubarak in Krukut, West Jakarta; Mesjid Ramadhan, Bekasi; al-Hikmah, in Tanjung Barat, Lenteng Agung, South Jakarta; Baiturrahman in the Rancu Indah housing complex, Tanjung Barat, Lenteng Agung; Mushola al-Jihad in Cengkareng; Mesjid at-Taqwa in Tanah Abang; and the mosque in the Pertamina hospital, South Jakarta.

conditions. The challenge is how to replicate those conditions.

The story begins in 2002 when residents of the Galaxi housing complex first began a campaign for a new mosque. Eventually they were able to raise funds, and the mosque was built on Bekasi city government land designated for social and public facilities and “lent” through a permit to the mosque’s legal entity, the al-Anshar Foundation. The foundation appointed the first governing board (Dewan Kemakmuran Mesjid, DKM) and a local resident, Muhammad Nanang, was chosen as head for a five-year term, 2004-2009. Nanang, an active member of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, the conservative religious outreach organisation, tended toward salafi views, and the mosque hosted a number of well-known salafi preachers. Many in the surrounding community were not particularly happy because the ultra-puritan salafis disdained many of their traditional practices as un-Islamic.

When Nanang’s term came to an end in 2009, the foundation suggested an election to choose his successor, but Nanang refused to leave, setting off a power struggle between the DKM and the foundation. In the meantime, he had become attracted to salafi jihadism and began inviting well-known extremist clerics, including Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, to the mosque and encouraged discussions promoting jihad. He also stacked the mosque’s religious council, Dewan Syuro, with men sympathetic to his views, including Farid Okbah, known for his radical anti-Sy’ah preaching, and Abu Jibril of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, MMI).

The radical constituency of the mosque was evident in a meeting on 29 June 2012, when the DKM stated that the mosque’s purpose was defending the faith against conversion efforts by Christians, and religious outreach based on salafism and jihad. The meeting was attended by Abu Jibril and nine other MMI members; Abu Abdillah of JAT; several members of the Bekasi Islamic Forum (Forum Umat Islam Bekasi) and representatives of several other hardline organisations.<sup>35</sup>

Increasingly concerned, the foundation in January 2013 sent a letter to subdistrict officials asking for help in removing Nanang. The subdistrict head (*camat*) at the time was worried that intervening would lead to open conflict, and initially did not respond. As pressure increased, he held a series of meetings at the subdistrict office in May and June to listen to both sides, but the DKM was not interested in a compromise. In August 2013, a new *camat*, Drs Abi Hurairah was installed and together with a young *pesantren*-trained police chief (*kapolsek*), Commissioner Susilo Edy, a former investigator for Indonesia’s Anti-Corruption Commission, they decided to confront the radicals.

On 2 February, the mosque held a discussion of Abu Bakar Ba’asyir’s book, *Tadzkirah* (Advice) that the national police commander had just condemned as legitimising terrorism. Police chief Susilo, who frequently prayed at the mosque since it was just next door, was in attendance. He had sat quietly through the presentation of the main speakers, but stood up in the question-and-answer session and said that if Ba’asyir could offer advice, so could he, and started to challenge the book. He was shouted down as an oppressor (*thaghut*, literally idolator).

Two weeks later on 17 February, in an unrelated incident, Susilo’s men arrested Adam Amrullah, one of the regular preachers at the mosque in a dubious criminal defamation case.<sup>36</sup> That evening, dozens of angry activists from the mosque surrounded the South Bekasi police station,

35 “Ikrar Penolakan Penggantian Nama Masjid dari Muhammad Ramadhan menjadi Al-Anshar” with list of signatories, 29 June 2012. For more on the constellation of hardline groups in Bekasi, see International Crisis Group, “Indonesia: ‘Christianisation’ and Intolerance”, Asia Briefing No.114, 24 November 2010.

36 Adam Amrullah was accused of defaming an organisation that works as a civilian auxiliary of the police. The Center for Communication in Partnership with the Police (Sentra Komunikasi Mitra Polisi, SENKOM) claimed that Adam had defamed them in a 2013 video posted on Youtube by accusing SENKOM of being a front for Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII), an Islamic sect once closely linked to the Golkar party. Adam himself was a former member of LDII. He also accused Susilo Edy of being a member of the sect. In fact, as the SENKOM head himself acknowledged, SENKOM has occasionally provided security at LDII meetings.

demanding Adam's release, threatening violence and daring the police to shoot them. Nanang came to the scene and was able to persuade the crowd to disperse, although they returned the next day to surround the prosecutor's office, throwing rocks.

The physical threat against the police help push forward the decision to take back the mosque. There were two parts of the strategy, worked out among the *camat*, police chief and local religious leaders. One was to have a community show of force; the other was to use the government's ownership of the land on which the mosque was built to wrest legal control from the DKM. On 22 February several religious leaders sent a formal request to the DKM to hold a celebration of the Prophet's birthday (Maulid) at the mosque. Signatories included Haji Abdul Hadi, who heads the local chapter of Forum Betawi Rempug (FBR), and Haji Cecep, who commands the local unit of the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), the Islamist vigilante organisation.<sup>37</sup> The request was a direct challenge to the extremists: Salafis disapprove of Maulid because it was not celebrated in early Islam and they regard it as an unwarranted innovation (*bid'ah*). Because of the influence of Abdul Hadi and Haji Cecep in the community, however, they could not refuse.

On 26 February, thousands gathered in front of the mosque for the celebration. Inside, several DKM officials and radical activists had gathered to stand guard because they heard the mosque was going to be taken over. Some feared violence might erupt between the two sides, but a doctrinal compromise was worked out and the event concluded peacefully.<sup>38</sup>

Nanang and other extremists tried to find new allies to strengthen their hand against their increasingly confident opponents, even going to talk to FPI leader Habib Riziek directly. But they got little satisfaction, as he simply urged to find a way of preaching that did not offend other Muslims. They made a few concessions, hoping to avert any further action: for example, promising Nahdlatu Ulama leaders not to disrupt their practices and agreeing to a police request that the mosque's most militant discussion group be disbanded.

In the meantime, the *camat* was busy working out the land issue in consultation with the foundation. On 3 March, foundation officials sent a letter to the mayor (*walikota*) of Bekasi, with subdistrict officials copied in. In light of developments at the mosque that they feared could lead to wider conflict, they wrote, as well as the unhappiness of residents with the mosque management, they were hereby turning the land and all the assets of the mosque over to the city government and leaving it up to the city of Bekasi and the police to resolve the matter.<sup>39</sup>

On 16 April, Nanang received a phone call from the head of the municipal office of social affairs, telling him that the DKM members would be replaced and that the foundation had turned over the mosque to the city government. Nanang's protestations that the foundation had no authority to act were ignored. On 20 April, backed by about 200 police, the Bekasi government formally took over the mosque replacing Nanang with Iskandar Ghozali, a Muhammadiyah leader, who was also on the board of the foundation. Dozens of FPI, FBR and youth groups from Nahdlatul Ulama and other organisations were on hand, but the *camat* later said that they were not important: the key thing was that police were out in force.<sup>40</sup> The radicals tried to

37 Both FBR and FPI are often mistakenly seen as ideologically akin to jihadis, but the membership of both is overwhelmingly traditionalist, with many coming from Nahdlatul Ulama backgrounds. On this mosque issue, the membership was divided. Murhali Barda, a FPI leader in Bekasi who frequently sides with the extremists, was opposed to the Maulid celebration and reportedly angry that FPI members were obeying Abdul Hadi and not him.

38 In the compromise, DKM members acknowledged that rather than being absolutely forbidden, Maulid might be a case of legitimate differences of opinion (*furu'iyah*).

39 Letter signed by H. Abdul Kadir Marikar, head of the Yayasan Islam al-Anshar and Ir Ananto Wijaya, secretary to the walikota of Bekasi, 3 March 2014.

40 IPAC interview, Abi Hurairah, Bekasi, 11 June 2014. According to the *camat*, the FBR and FPI members who showed up were genuinely part of the community and not trucked in from outside or "encouraged" to be there by the local government. Obviously, the government at any level should avoid working with organizations that use intimidation and violence against minorities, practice vigilantism and spread religious hatred.

mobilise Islamist activists across the Jakarta metropolitan region to occupy the mosque after Friday prayers on 25 April. Only a few showed up, however, and some blamed Nanang for the failure, suggesting that faced with defeat, he had advised protestors not to attend. Backed by the Muslim Defence Team that provides legal aid to terrorist suspects, however, he has challenged the decision in court.

As of June 2014, the extremists have moved to a nearby smaller mosque, Mesjid al-Muhajirin, that the police consider an “embryo” of radicalism and are watching closely. The *camat*, emboldened by the success of the takeover, has called a meeting of all DKMs in South Bekasi to discuss how to prevent extremism from taking root in their mosques.

The case is instructive because it shows that extremist control of a major mosque can be successfully challenged if the right elements are present, including determined local officials and powerful local religious leaders willing to sit down and think through a strategy before acting. Other factors that were critical were the DKM-foundation power struggle, and the use of land ownership as a tool to reclaim the mosque. It was a brilliant tactic to use the Maulid celebration as the occasion for a showdown, clearly showing local residents how the mosque could serve the community if it were back in traditionalist hands. At no time during the entire saga was there any contact with BNPT.

#### B. *The Case of Mesjid Jami, Krapyak, Klaten*

The Bekasi mosque takeover was not an isolated event; it just got more publicity than usual. Across the country but particularly in Java, there are cases of local communities rejecting both salafis and salafi jihadis. In many cases, mosque authorities act before extremist control becomes entrenched, simply by telling radical preachers that their activities are unacceptable. This is what happened at the Mesjid Jami, Krapyak when it briefly became the site of a radical discussion group in 2008.

The group was led by Musab Abdul Ghofar alias Darwo of Yayaysan Kafayeh, the organisation behind the extremist publishing house, Kafayeh Media. He had close ties to Jemaah Islamiyah; the men around Noordin Top (responsible for the 2009 hotel bombings, later killed in a police operation); and a particularly militant faction of Darul Islam. Darwo came to the mosque for the first time at the invitation of the mosque governing council (DKM) that wanted to sponsor a regular *pengajian* for the community. Wahyu, one of the members who happened to be an ardent admirer of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, was assigned to look for an appropriate teacher (*ustadz*). On the recommendations of several acquaintances, Wahyu chose Darwo, as he had good religious credentials, fluent Arabic and an understanding of the Qura'an and hadith.

The *pengajian* was open to anyone who wanted to attend. Wahyu himself invited a friend, Agung Jati Santoso, who was then a student at a state vocational high school (SMK Negeri 2) in Klaten, and Agung invited other classmates. Darwo showed jihadi videos and led discussions based on al-Qaeda writings and other extremist material.<sup>41</sup> He called police who did not uphold Islamic law *thaghut* and he taught that jihad was an individual obligation (*fardhu 'ain*) and that saluting the flag was idolatry. His fiery preaching made a deep impression on the high school students; Agung says he became “obsessed” with jihad after listening to him.<sup>42</sup>

Darwo's teachings began to cause concern in the community. One person worried was Muhammad Trisno Wardoyo, a policeman who was influential because his father had been the former village head. Trisno discussed the situation with Agus Sukarno, head of the DKM, who was also a lecturer at Veterans University, Yogyakarta. They agreed that elements of Darwo's

41 Case Dossier of Agung Jati Santoso bin Subandi, 27 January 2011.

42 Ibid.

teachings seemed to condone terrorism.

They thus decided to disband the *pengajian*. Agus approached Darwo and asked him to hold his discussions elsewhere, saying that if he wanted to wage jihad he should go to Palestine. In this mosque, he said, Darwo was welcome to teach about jihad as the war against one's own base instincts (*hawa nafsu*) but discussions of politics were forbidden. Darwo then simply took his followers to another mosque, but they were evicted from that one, too.<sup>43</sup> Some six months later, the students had formed a terrorist group called Tim Ightilayat (Assassination Team) led by a friend of Darwo's. Darwo himself was never arrested.

Some of the same elements operative in Bekasi were present in Krapyak: an influential resident and a divided mosque administration. The role of the DKM in all situations like this is critical but if they move against extremist groups, they need to know that they will have back-up from the community, local government and/or the police.

### C. Lessons for BNPT

Ideally, the role of BNPT's deradicalisation team should be to identify radical mosques, based at least in part on information from the case dossiers of convicted extremists—which the operations division can provide—and then help communities plan strategies to reclaim them. In some cases it may make sense just to reject the extremist preachers; in others, like Bekasi, a new mosque governing council may be needed. Community takeovers are not without risks, however, and there are a few tactics that should be specifically avoided, including anything that smacks of vigilantism. Sealing off extremist-led mosques by angry traditionalist mobs is no different than FPI doing the same to Ahmadiyah mosques or Christian churches.<sup>44</sup>

BNPT could work with Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah to gather case studies of well-planned mosque takeovers to understand what tactics have worked in different circumstances and why. It is also important to understand what specific extremist teachings triggered the decision to act. The widespread branding of other Muslims as *kafir* seems to cause more outrage than anything specifically related to jihad, for example. These cases could provide important input for community outreach programs and would be more effective than a generic training program. BNPT, without publicity or fanfare, could also quietly put individuals involved in these takeovers in touch with community leaders in the areas served by radical mosques.

It is also important in thinking about mosque strategies to look beyond the removal of extremists to longer-term prevention, so that they do not just pop up elsewhere. The effort of South Bekasi *camat* to alert other mosques to the problem and encourage them to find solutions is one useful example. It would be even better to have the *camat* and the police chief present their successful model to communities faced with similar problems.

43 Ibid. The second mosque was Mesjid Danguran, Klaten.

44 One case of vigilantism took place at the Al Ihsan Sabilillah mosque in Surabaya in June 2009. Originally a Muhammadiyah mosque, it fell into the hands of a radical retired policeman, Umar Ibrahim, from Dompu, Bima who happened to be the father of Muhammad Syaifudin Umar alias Abu Fida, a JI member arrested in 2004 for hiding Noordin Top but quickly released. As head of the mosque (*takmir*), Umar Ibrahim pulled it in an extremist direction to the point that many of its worshipers were members of JAT-Surabaya and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was a regular preacher. Local residents, most of whom were members of Nahdlatul Ulama, grew angry at the frequent references in mosque sermons and discussions to civil servants, officials and anyone who took part in elections as *kafir*. Close to midnight on 19 June 2009, the day before a major event with Ba'asyir was scheduled, a mob sealed off the mosque and went to Umar Ibrahim's house, demanding that he step down. Eventually he did so and the jihadis were forced out, but there was an unintended consequence. Because the community that forced out the jihadis was mostly Nahdlatul Ulama, its members did not want the old governing board from Muhammadiyah restored but wanted it controlled by Nahdlatul Ulama, creating new tensions.

## VI. PRISONS

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Deradicalisation/disengagement initiatives run by the police or BNPT have not always been well coordinated with a Corrections prison reform program, yet logically, the two are linked. Better management of high-risk inmates and better prison security—elements of the prison reform program—should improve the chances that well-designed interventions aimed at individual prisoners will bear fruit.

As of May 2014, there were 278 convicted terrorists in 25 prisons across the country.<sup>45</sup> Some 100 others were in police custody, awaiting trial or on trial. Maximum security prisons had the largest populations, with 32 men in Cipinang Prison, Jakarta and 42 in Pasir Putih Prison, Nusakambangan. From the beginning, there has been concern that some of these detainees and prisoners would recruit ordinary criminals or prison personnel; cause problems in prison; or rejoin violent networks once released.<sup>46</sup> But Corrections did not have the staff, training or information to be able to make these assessments of who the potential troublemakers were, and the police officers who were in regular contact with some of the men they arrested were not always ready to sit down with prison staff to share information.

In 2008, recognising that its problems were deeper and broader than just how to manage convicted terrorists, Corrections drafted a Blueprint for Prison Reform, in partnership with several NGOs and the Asia Foundation.<sup>47</sup> The Blueprint became official policy in January 2009, and Corrections opened the door to donors and NGOs interesting in helping efforts to improve prison management, security, data gathering and assessment of high-risk prisoners. Some programs worked, some did not, but over time, a small group of mostly lower-ranking prison officials in charge of terrorist inmates became interested and knowledgeable about extremist networks. BNPT does not seem to have drawn on this knowledge in designing “deradicalisation” programs. However, more prisoners in any case may disengage on their own than through any formal program.

### A. “Self-Deradicalisation”

Prisoners can moderate their views in response to external events, leadership changes, new ideological teachings or family pressure. There has been much attention in counter-terrorism literature to self-radicalisation through the Internet; there has been little to “self-deradicalisation”, which can occur in the same way. Many prisoners can develop awareness on their own that the costs to themselves or their families of continued involvement in violence are too high. If relevant government agencies did more to understand how these “natural” processes occur, they might be better able to craft interventions aimed at encouraging the process.

### 1. Organisational Disengagement

The best example of an Indonesian jihadi organisation disengaging from violence is Jemaah Islamiyah—although it may well prove to be temporary. Some members never endorsed violence on Indonesian soil in the first place, and several senior members disagreed with the 2002 Bali bombings. Others came to the conclusion that violent acts in Indonesia were counterproductive, though not illegitimate. The post-Bali wave of arrests pushed them in this direction, as did their

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45 These figures are from the Corrections Directorate and do not include suspects arrested or on trial but not yet convicted or anyone else in police custody. They also do not include individuals linked to extremist groups who were charged with ordinary crimes. They do include a few people charged with terrorism who are not from jihadi groups, such as the members of Partai Aceh, charged with political murders before the 2009 election.

46 See IPAC, “Prison Problems: Planned and Unplanned Releases of Convicted Extremists in Indonesia”, 2 September 2013.

47 Leo Sudaryono, “Reform at the Doorstep of Prisons in Indonesia,” *In Asia* (Asia Foundation bulletin), 10 August 2011.

concern over unnecessary deaths of Muslims in the al-Qaeda style bombings carried out by their former colleague, Noordin Top. Abu Rusydan, the public face of JI since his release from prison in 2005, believed strongly that after the death of JI founder Abdullah Sungkar in 1999, the organisation had strayed from its main purpose—establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia. After a shootout with police in 2007 led to the deaths of 14 men and the arrests of more senior leaders, JI as an institution decided that for the time being, violence was counterproductive.

The concerns of Rusydan and other leaders were reinforced by a number of revisionist ideological tracts from Middle Eastern jihadis that were obtained in Arabic, sometimes from Internet downloads, and translated into Indonesian. One particularly influential author was the Syrian al-Qaeda member Abu Mus'ab as-Suri who wrote in his 2004 book *Da'wat al-muqawamah al-islamiyah al-'alamiyah* (Global Islamic Resistance Call) that Muslims needed to ask themselves three questions before undertaking any political act: Was the act in question permissible (*halal*) according to Islamic law? In light of political circumstances, would it benefit the Muslim community and the jihadi movement? And was it realistic, in terms of the resources and logistics needed?<sup>48</sup> If the answer to any one of these questions was no, then the act should be considered forbidden, so that even if an act was theoretically sanctioned by Islamic law, it could be rendered *haram* by political and logistical weakness. As-Suri's writings, translated and disseminated by JI intellectuals, led many in the organisation, including prisoners like Zuhroni (also known as Zarkasih and Mbah) and Abu Dujana, to apply a cost-benefit analysis to acts of violence in Indonesia and conclude that the costs were too high. Some prisoners did such an analysis on their own, without any help from as-Suri, and came to the same conclusion.<sup>49</sup>

JI's approach suggests that a fruitful approach to discussions with prisoners is not to bring in "moderate" outsiders, even less immoderate salafi *ulama* from the Middle East, for discussions on alternative interpretations of *jihad*, but quietly to encourage assessments of specific instances of past violence in terms of benefits achieved (*manfaat*) and harm done (*mudhorat*). The more this is done through informal conversations rather than through structured discussions the better.

One thing Indonesian officials need to keep in mind is that rejection of violent jihad in Indonesia does not mean rejection of the concept more generally. The same JI figures who are discouraging jihad in Indonesia are contrasting it with Syria, which they see as a defensive jihad to protect Muslims under attack. A new JI military cell, training for Syria, was recently uncovered in Klaten, Central Java.<sup>50</sup>

## 2. Individual Disengagement

Indonesia has many cases of prisoners coming to the conclusion on their own that violence leads nowhere. The most systematic research on jihadi disengagement in Indonesia comes from studies conducted in Poso, Sulawesi, where researchers found many contributing factors, including their own cost-benefit analysis, as noted; new relationships with individuals outside jihadi circles; family pressures; changing personal and professional priorities; and disillusionment with tactics or leaders.<sup>51</sup>

Prisoners who do disengage need positive reinforcement to stay that way. Good prison management can help, for example in understanding who to move in with whom or who needs to be

48 In 2010, excerpts were published in Indonesian by Jazeera press in Solo under the title *Visi Politik Gerakan Jihad* but parts had been circulating in the jihadi community long before.

49 See for example Julie Chernov Hwang, Rizal Panggabean and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, "The Disengagement of Jihadis in Poso, Indonesia", *Asian Survey*, Vol.53, No.4, 2013, p.764.

50 "Arrests Reveal Jemaah Islamiyah's Return, Police Source Says", *Jakarta Globe*, 21 May 2014.

51 "The Disengagement of Jihadis in Poso, Indonesia", op.cit, p.764.

transferred to a different facility. Post-release assistance can also be useful: Yusuf Adhirama, a former prisoner, has become something of a media star as the cook in a cafe set up by an NGO in Semarang, Central Java. He made the decision on his own to disengage from violence, but he was also befriended by an enterprising former journalist who ensured he found employment after his release.<sup>52</sup> The NGO in question, Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian, continues to provide some assistance to released prisoners. Other organisations and individuals also help out released prisoners, especially those with a record of good behaviour in prison, mostly on an ad hoc basis.

The danger comes in confusing good behaviour in prison with deradicalisation. As officials in Cipinang Prison in Jakarta found recently, a prisoner who may be a model inmate may be simply trying to get early release—and lying in the interests of a greater cause is wholly acceptable.<sup>53</sup>

### C. Assessment of High-Risk Prisoners

While some prisoners seem to change their views after arrest, it is not always clear whether this is genuine or simply expedient, and officials agree that there needs to be a more objective tool for assessing the degree to which individuals constitute an ongoing security risk. Beginning in 2011, Corrections officials experimented with a questionnaire first developed in Canada called VERA (Violent Extremist Risk Assessment), later modified for Indonesia and relabelled VERA-2, with 31 risk indicators assessing beliefs and attitudes, intent, capability and commitment.<sup>54</sup> For a variety of reasons it was eventually discarded, but the desire to develop a tool for assessment remains, and as of mid-2014, Corrections was testing a number of different instruments developed both inside and outside Indonesia.

In countries where these questionnaires were developed, they are used in connection with voluminous data collected and analysed by law enforcement or prison intelligence officers. In Indonesian prisons, much of this information has been lacking, but efforts are now underway to ensure that more detailed information on prisoners' background and networks is made available to prison staff. At the same time, staff are being encouraged to collect and analyse information about inmate activities, alliances and visitors.

All of these developments should improve inmate management and lay the basis for better prison-based programs aimed at disengagement, but they urgently need to be supplemented by a more systematic and better-resourced post-release monitoring system, especially as many convicted prisoners finish serving their sentences and return home.<sup>55</sup> From January 2013 to May 2014, 61 convicted Islamist extremists were released, together with twelve Christians, three Acehese and four others arrested for bomb threats.<sup>56</sup>

## VII. COUNTERING EXTREMIST MEDIA

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The spread of extremist teachings has been taking place for years via the print and broadcast

52 See "Indonesian Scheme Serves Up New Life for Reformed Terrorist", *Financial Times*, 10 June 2014, "Dari Teroris Jadi Koki," Radio Netherlands, 16 June 2011; "Dari memegang sengata berganti wajan," BBC, 11 October 2012; "Jalan Damai Yusuf Menuntaskan Jihad", [www.prasastiperdamaian.com](http://www.prasastiperdamaian.com), 2 December 2012; "Former terrorist-linked inmates helped back to life", *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 2010 and many others. Yusuf was befriended by Noor Huda Ismail, now the executive director of an NGO called Yayasan Prastasi Perdamaian.

53 IPAC interview, official at Cipinang Prison, April 2014.

54 D. Elaine Pressman and John Flockton, "Calibrating risk for violent political extremists and terrorists: the VERA 2 structured assessment," *British Journal of Forensic Practice*, Vol.14, No.4 2012.

55 See IPAC, "Prison Problems: Planned and Unplanned Releases of Convicted Extremists in Indonesia", 2 September 2013.

56 Data from Directorate of Corrections. The Christians were arrested in 2006 for killing two Muslim fish traders in Central Sulawesi as an act of retaliation for the judicial execution of three Christians accused of masterminding a massacre of Muslims at the height of the conflict in Poso. The three Acehese were convicted of bombing the Jakarta Stock Exchange in 2000. The two men and one woman accused of bomb threats had nothing to do with terrorist networks.

media as well as the Internet. BNPT, in national terrorism program, lists the media as one of its target areas, with particular attention to developing “peace journalism” for journalists and editors and “dissemination of anti-terrorism themes” via print, broadcast and electronic media. Nothing in its program addresses the way social media is increasingly being used as a method of recruitment, indoctrination, training and funding.

#### A. *Resistance, not Vigilantism*

One way to fight back against extremism in the print and broadcast media is through the Press Council (Dewan Pers). One instructive example is Program Khazanah Islam on the Trans 7 television channel. The program was fairly popular given the variety of morning programs with a 15 per cent share of the viewing audience in December 2013.<sup>57</sup> Many Muslim viewers, however, saw it as provocative and extreme. On 26 February 2014, for example, it had a discussion about *ashabul rayati suud* or the black banners of Khorasan, cited in various *hadith* or Prophetic traditions as being the flags carried by the troops of the Islamic messiah, the Imam Mahdi, when the final victory of Islam is at hand. It suggested that jihadi groups like al-Qaeda, ISIS and the al-Nusra Front were part of these troops, because they carried black flags.

By the time the discussion was aired, Khazanah had already been the subject of several protests to the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, KPI) because it was seen as divisive and exclusivist. For example, several Nahdlatul Ulama leaders registered a protest about a discussion on 12 April 2013 that condemned several traditional prayers and practices of the Nahdlatul Ulama community as impure accretions not practiced by the Prophet and his Companions. The program had aired similar condemnations in previous programs.<sup>58</sup> On 17 April, the KPI convened a “mediation” meeting between the Nahdlatul Ulama leaders, including Habib Fachry who is also a senior figure in FPI, and the Trans 7 editors. The Nahdlatul Ulama delegation said the program was too influenced by Wahabism; the Trans 7 team apologised and said they would pay closer attention to its content.<sup>59</sup>

For a few months, there were no complaints. Then, on 31 October 2013, at the height of a debate in Indonesia over Shi’ism in Islam, the program aired a highly tendentious segment called “Understanding Shi’ism” that suggested that Shi’a were not true Muslims. Not a single Indonesian Shi’a was interviewed or quoted. Instead, the sources included the ultraconservative Bachtiar Nasir, a Saudi-trained scholar who served, together with other Middle Eastern alumni, as an adviser to Khazanah Islam.<sup>60</sup>

The Indonesian Shi’a community was outraged and reported the program to the Press Council. Initially Trans 7 ignored their complaint, believing that the Press Council had no authority over the program, because Khazanah “was not journalism”.<sup>61</sup> But the Press Council saw the matter differently. It said Khazanah was a feature program that purported to be based on field research and interviews, so the content had to accord with the journalistic code of ethics. After reviewing the October program, the Council concluded that it had violated several elements of

57 “Khazanah Sepuluh Kali Diprotes”, *Suara Hidayatullah*, No.8, Desember 2013

58 The 12 April 2013 program criticized two kinds of prayer, *shalawat badr* and *shalawat nariyah*. A program on 2 April 2013 had criticized *doa* and *tawasul*. On 14 November 2012, the practice of visiting graves (*ziarah kubur*) came under fire. All are traditional practices of Nahdlatul Ulama that are frowned on by the salafi community as unwarranted innovations (*bid’ah*).

59 Available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=79c3PQv135s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79c3PQv135s). See also [www.sarkub.com/2013/kesaksian-tim-sarkub-di-kpi-membungkam-jurnalisme-abal-abal-wahabi/](http://www.sarkub.com/2013/kesaksian-tim-sarkub-di-kpi-membungkam-jurnalisme-abal-abal-wahabi/). Those present on the Nahdlatul Ulama side include KH Thobari, head of Lajnah Falakiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama Banten; Habib Fachry Jamalulail; KH Misbachul Munir from Lembaga Dakwah Nahdlatul Ulama and Habib Mustofa Mohsen al Jufri.

60 Bachtiar Nasir is also a founder of the hardline Council of Young Muslim Intellectuals and Scholars of Indonesia (Majelis Intelektual dan Ulama Muda Indonesia, MIUMI), together with Farid Okbah, the anti-Shi’a cleric who features in the discussion of the Muhammad Ramadhan mosque in Bekasi. He also sits on the executive council of Muhammadiyah.

61 “Khazanah Sepuluh Kali Diprotes”, *Suara Hidayatullah*, op. cit..

the code because it was unbalanced, used unsourced photographs and was guilty of anti-group discrimination.<sup>62</sup> It called on the television station to give the Shi'a a right of reply and do a thorough evaluation of the program so that these violations did not recur.

A few days earlier, on 17 January, perhaps knowing an unfavourable ruling would be issued, Khazanah had a special program on the Prophet's birthday, which as noted above, salafi Muslims do not celebrate. One of the discussants was Jalauddin Rakhmat, head of the Shi'a community. As a result of the pressure on Trans 7, the program's editors modified some but not all of its content. It avoids direct criticism of other Muslims on the show, but its messages on Twitter continue to be provocative and have expressed support for ISIS.

The use of the Press Council is a case of constructive resistance, even if it was less than fully successful, because it used existing institutions and objective standards—in this case the code of ethics—to force a national television station to moderate (somewhat) an extremist broadcast on grounds of discrimination.

Another, less positive case took place in Batam in January 2014 when traditionalist groups, led by Nahdlatul Ulama but also involving the local FPI chapter, mobilised against Radio Hang 106FM, a salafi station. The station frequently broadcast discussions and sermons criticizing traditional practices, reflecting longstanding hostility between the puritans and the traditionalists. The local religious affairs office on 28 December 2013 had tried to mediate by sponsoring a dialogue between leaders of the two sides on several key points of doctrines. Both sides were convinced they had won, which only made things worse. On 17 January 2014, the traditionalists held a demonstration in front of the local Broadcasting Commission branch (KPID) to demand that Radio Hang be closed down. "If the KPID doesn't shut Radio Hang, we'll shut it down ourselves," one protestor warned.<sup>63</sup> The threats worked. A week later, Radio Hang apologised to fellow Muslims for any offence caused and said it would no longer broadcast anything that could give rise to intergroup tension and would invite non-salafi preachers on its shows. The difference here is vigilantism, a mob forcing resolution of an issue through threats and intimidation, especially when the KPID failed to act. This is not a constructive method to deal with extremism, but it legitimises vigilantism against other groups. The Broadcasting Commission could be a much more effective body than it is, but on many cases involving religion, it reportedly has been reluctant to act.

It is also worth noting, especially because of the reliance of the BNPT on "dialogues", how the dialogue attempted in this case actually raised tensions rather than lowering them.

## B. *Victim Voices*

Terrorism victims and their families, strategically deployed, can be a powerful tool in raising awareness of the costs of terrorism. Two organisations of bombing survivors have emerged in Indonesia, the Survivors Foundation (Yayasan Penyintas) and the Association for Victims of Terrorism Bombings in Indonesia, ASKOBI). They are working with the Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia (Aliansi Indonesia Damai, AIDA), an organisation focused on encouraging victims to share their stories more broadly.<sup>64</sup> Both have members who have taken part in school and university programs, in a way that has proved to have an emotional impact on the audience. Neither receives funding from BNPT but the agency recognises the power of victim voices and

62 "Penilaian dan Rekomendasi (PPR) Dewan Pers Nomor: 02 /PPR-DP/I/2014", January 2014.

63 "Siaran Hang FM Dilaporkan ke KPID", *Batam Pos*, 17 January 2014. The demonstrators included the Forum Takmir Masjid dan Mushala Kota Batam, FPI, Banser NU, GP Anshor, PMII, Forum Habaib, and others.

64 The founders of AIDA include Indonesian academic, civil society and religious leaders, guided by Ahmad Syafii Maarif, former chairman of Muhammadiyah and assisted by Dutch businessman Max Boon who lost his legs in the 2009 Jakarta hotel bombings.

has encouraged the organisations' activities.

Bringing convicted terrorists face to face with victims and their families can also be effective, particularly if the victims are Muslim. One of the biggest issues between JI and its more militant critics after JI decided that violence on Indonesian soil was counterproductive was over the deaths of innocent Muslims. JI argued that such collateral damage might be acceptable if Indonesia were under occupation or attack. But in the absence of such dire circumstances, it made no sense.<sup>65</sup>

The impact of bringing victim and perpetrator together was evidence in 2013, when Umar Patek, one of the original Bali bombers, captured in Pakistan in 2011 and returned to Indonesia, was brought together with some of his Indonesian victims. He was reportedly shocked at what they had suffered and said he knew he could never enter heaven without their forgiveness. The emotional punch of that meeting may have contributed to Patek's moderation, to the point that he never became the champion of Indonesian extremists that some of his former colleagues hoped or that Indonesian officials feared. Inside prison, he preaches that jihadi actions are only acceptable when Muslims are under direct attack.<sup>66</sup>

### C. Counter-narratives

Radical websites continue to proliferate in Indonesia, with messages encouraging the use of force that may be all the more attractive given the recent victories of ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria.<sup>67</sup> Closing Internet sites is a largely futile exercise given the ease with which sites can reappear, and the vast majority of what gets posted on extremists sites is not against any Indonesian law anyway.

Challenging the content may be a better way to go but it has to be done in a far more sophisticated way than has been done by government agencies thus far. One avenue is to make use of debates within the jihadi community itself. But this can only be done through a combination of individuals who follow ideological debates closely enough to understand the significance of what they mean for the jihadis, and experts with the technical skills of running social media campaigns to know how to package messages for particular audiences.

After JI withdrew from violence in 2007, for example, its leaders used four major arguments against actions on Indonesian soil:

- *they were counterproductive.* Leaders like Abu Rusydan, Abu Dujana and Zuhroni alias Mbah urged their followers to do a cost-benefit analysis to understand that the costs were too heavy. If bombings led to the arrests of key leaders and the weakening of the organisation, how did that help the establishment of an Islamic state? One jihadi writer, looking back at a decade of bombings, argued that the political achievements of the jihadists at home amounted to nothing.<sup>68</sup>
- *they lacked community support.* JI leaders argued that Indonesia was not Iraq, it could not build on the resentment of the populace toward a hated occupier. For most Indonesians, terrorist attacks made no sense, so the jihadi community needed to intensify its outreach and education to build a mass base. Also, there was something wrong with the jihad if the country's best and brightest professionals were not interested in joining.<sup>69</sup>

65 See [buletinalhikmah.wordpress.com/m-d-u-i/](http://buletinalhikmah.wordpress.com/m-d-u-i/), cited in International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Jihadi Surprise in Aceh*, Asia Report No.189, 20 April 2010.

66 IPAC interview with official at Porong Prison, April 2014.

67 *Indonesians and the Syrian Conflict*, IPAC Report No. 6, 30 January 2014.

68 *Refleksi Jihad Aceh*, available at [elhakimi.wordpress.com](http://elhakimi.wordpress.com), 22 March 2010.

69 *Ibid.* See also Ali Imron, *Sang Pengebom*, Jakarta, November 2007.

- *the enemy was too powerful*. One only had to look at how easily Detachment 88 was able to kill terrorist suspects, wrote one Indonesian jihadi in 2010. It made no sense to go to war against foreigners or even the Indonesian state unless there was a reasonable chance that the jihadi political mission could be achieved or that the enemy could be weakened. In fact, the search for martyrdom was too often driven by selfish personal motives and ultimately did not help the Muslim community.<sup>70</sup>
- *innocent Muslims were being unnecessarily killed*. This last has consistently been the most powerful argument used by “jihadi revisionists” like Jordan’s Abu Muhammad al-Maqqisi against al-Qaeda-style attacks. In Indonesia in 2010, one JI scholar wrote that if Indonesian Muslims were under attack and had to respond, maybe it would be understandable if some Muslims died in the process. But was the situation in Indonesia really so dire that Muslim blood had to be shed?<sup>71</sup> Five years later, anti-ISIS jihadis, including JI, are still using the issue of unnecessary Muslim deaths to argue against ISIS on the grounds of its brutality toward other Muslims, including rival groups.

Three aspects of these arguments are noteworthy. First, no one tried to argue against the interpretation of jihad as physical battle or suggest that violence was illegitimate *per se*. Second, the arguments were probably only persuasive to the extent they were delivered by extremist leaders to their followers; had the same arguments been made by someone known to be working with BNPT, or even Nahdlatul Ulama, they would lose much of their impact. The message is important, but so is the messenger. Third, all four arguments were aimed at those who wanted engage in violence at home. They would have no impact on discouraging young men from going to Syria, indeed, JI leaders see fighting in Syria as obligatory for all Muslims, although not all agree on which group to support.

A more recent example of an intra-jihadi debate involves the practice of declaring all police to be *thaghut* or *kafir* because they served in the defence of an idolatrous state, an idea derived from the writings of Egyptian radical Abdul Qadir bin Abdul Aziz, better known in the West as Dr. Fadl.<sup>72</sup> According to the principle known as *takfir mu’ayyan*, however, one must look at the individuals, not at the institution, before such a damning pronouncement can be made.

This revisionist view began circulating in late 2012-2012, including on the radical website *ar-rahmah.com*.<sup>73</sup> It was based on a book by Abu Yahya al Libi, a senior al-Qaeda official who in the late 1990s had become deeply concerned over the tendency of some jihadis to too easily brand

70 For a longer analysis of these arguments, see International Crisis Group, “The Dark Side of Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid”, Asia Briefing No.107, 6 July 2010, pp.7-8.

71 MDUI website, available at [buletinalhikmah.wordpress.com/m-d-u-i/](http://buletinalhikmah.wordpress.com/m-d-u-i/), cited in International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Jihadi Surprise in Aceh*, Asia Report No.189, 20 April 2010.

72 The original argument that all defenders of idolatrous states were *thaghut* or *kafir* came from an Egyptian extremist known in the West as Dr. Fadl and in Indonesia as Abdul Qadir bin Abdul Aziz, real name Sayyed Imam al-Sharif. He has since renounced his more extremist views and is probably the best-known jihadi revisionist. A book written before that renunciation, *Al-Jami’ fi Thalabil Ilmi Asy-Syarif*, known in English as *The Compendium of the Pursuit of Divine Knowledge*, was published in translation in Indonesia in 2004. In it, Dr Fadl wrote that the companions of the Prophet had agreed that all *thaghut* defenders should be branded as infidels and that therefore succeeding generations could not decide otherwise or they too would be considered *kafir*. Many Indonesian jihadis, following Dr Fadl, adopted the principle that whoever did not declare a *kafir* as such was himself a *kafir*, whose blood was *halal*, i.e. could be killed. See Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz, “Status Aparat Ansharut Thogut, Dari Kalangan Tentara, Polisi, Inteligent dan Ulama Su’u” (a translation of chapter 10 of *The Compendium*), translated by Aman Abdurrahman, 2004, for Tauhid wal Jihad (online publishers). Dr Fadl had originally worked with al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawaheri in the organisation Islamic Jihad. They became bitter rivals, however, and Dr Fadl today is known for his attacks on al-Qaeda. This does not seem to have bothered the Indonesian jihadis who swear by his pre-revisionist writings.

73 See “Serial kajian tentang takfir muayyan” on [www.arahmah.com](http://www.arahmah.com) beginning 23 May 2012. This website, which was once among the most radical, changed after its owner, Muhammad Jibriel, was arrested on terrorism charges in August 2009. Its onetime editor, Fachry, left and set up a more radical site, [al-mustaqbal.net](http://al-mustaqbal.net). Since Jibriel’s arrest and Fachry’s departure, arahmah has been noticeably milder and now is one of the leading critics of ISIS in the Islamist community.

fellow Muslims as *kafir* and therefore as enemies to be killed. He was particularly upset by the indiscriminate killing of police, soldiers and their entire families by Jama'ah Islamiyah Musallahah, an Algerian jihadi group that justified its savagery by reference to Dr Fadl's book. They also used it to justify killing anyone who refused to join them.<sup>74</sup> Once in Afghanistan, he also wrote a book in which he rejected the methods by which Dr Fadl had reached his conclusions and in a complicated analysis, argued that just because someone was part of a *thaghut* institution did not necessarily make him or her a legitimate target for assassination.<sup>75</sup> Some jihadis led by Abu Dujana, basing their reasoning on Abu Yahya's writing, therefore concluded that the practice of Indonesian jihadis to targeting all police just because they did for failing to apply Islamic law was unjustified. Aman Abdurrahman, however, continued to cite Dr. Fadl approvingly, leading Abu Dujana to accuse him of being a *takfiri* or *mutashadid* (extremist).<sup>76</sup>

These intra-jihadi debates need to be studied with care to see how they can be used, and with whom. Part of the problem with the work on counter-narratives thus far is that there has been insufficient attention to the different audiences that messages have to reach or which messengers have credibility with what groups and for how long. Nasir Abas, for example, a former JI commander who went to work for the police, was extremely effective with JI prisoners for the first few years after the Bali bombs, when he still commanded respect among his former comrades. But his influence waned over time, and it is virtually non-existent with the current generation of would-be terrorists, most of whom have no connection to JI. A group of former Afghan veterans, most of them former JI members, may have credibility with some groups but just sending them out into the community to preach may not be an effective use of funds.

Salafi arguments against salafi jihadism, of which there are many, may be useful in persuading members of non-terrorist Islamist groups—members of anti-vice campaigns, for example—from crossing over into the jihadi camp. They will be less useful in traditionalist communities that jihadis have penetrated. There, communities are unlikely to differentiate between salafi and salafi jihadi, seeing both as unacceptable because of their ultrapuritan teachings (indeed, a strong anti-salafi backlash is evident in many parts of Indonesia). The community in Bekasi was most offended by extremist rejection of their traditional practices—a rejection propagated by salafi and salafi jihadi alike.

A much better use of funds would be to hire a political consultant familiar with the use of social media in election campaigns to understand how messages are tested, audiences are targeted and campaigns prepared. This consultant could work with experts on intra-jihadi debates to plan campaigns targeted at some of the audiences the government wants to reach, including the congregations of known radical mosques.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

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No country in the world has found a fully successful method for preventing violent extremism, although many have developed programs that seem to help in a local context. Indonesia deserves credit for managing its extremism problem as well as it has, although it has been enormously aided by a peaceful domestic environment and friendly neighbours. But there is much more it could be doing to build on existing knowledge so that counter-radicalisation interventions can be designed based on hard data about radicalisation.

A new government coming in might consider radically restructuring BNPT to ensure that

74 These included a friend of Abu Yahya's, Athiyatullah Al-Libi, another al-Qaeda leader, who barely escaped from Algeria with his life.

75 Abu Yahya Al Libi, *Ramai-ramai mengkafirkan para pembela thaghut, haruskah mengkafirkan setiap personilnya?* a translation of *Nazharat fi Al-Ijma' Al-Qathi'*, Manjanik Media, Solo, October 2012.

76 IPAC discussion with JI members, April 2014.

the people involved in collecting intelligence on terrorist networks—including not just police but also prison officials—are also involved in the design of deradicalisation and counter-radicalisation programs. The National Terrorism Prevention Taskforce was a good idea but realistically, line ministries like Education have no one at senior levels with detailed knowledge of terrorist networks and therefore they do not necessarily know what problems the Education Ministry could solve. The fact that most extremist groups of any size maintain their own kindergartens, for example, is one such problem that the ministry could take on, perhaps through new policies on certification.

Communities across Indonesia are pushing back against extremists in different ways, but no one in BNPT is systematically collecting information on how, why and where this has taken place and what lessons can be learned. Where Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama communities have taken back schools and mosques from extremist—not necessarily violent extremist—groups, what tactics have they used? If a list of 25 mosques hosting extremist discussion groups was drawn up from terrorist testimonies, and then discussions held with community leaders about what tactics might be applied from Muhammadiyah or Nahdlatul Ulama experiences that worked elsewhere, perhaps the successful pushbacks could be replicated. The problem is that at present, the prevention programs seem to be thought up in Jakarta without much reference to concrete cases, thus diminishing their chances of success.

The last five years have seen few terrorist attacks in Indonesia but there has still been extensive recruitment of would-be mujahidin and many foiled plots. With the number of Indonesians fighting in Syria now believed to be over 100, the current lull could change when they begin to return. Prevention is more important than ever.

## **INSTITUTE FOR POLICY ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT (IPAC)**

The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) was founded in 2013 on the principle that accurate analysis is a critical first step toward preventing violent conflict. Our mission is to explain the dynamics of conflict—why it started, how it changed, what drives it, who benefits—and get that information quickly to people who can use it to bring about positive change. In areas wracked by violence, accurate analysis of conflict is essential not only to peaceful settlement but also to formulating effective policies on everything from good governance to poverty alleviation.

We look at six kinds of conflict: communal, land and resource, electoral, vigilante, extremist and insurgent, understanding that one dispute can take several forms or progress from one form to another. We send experienced analysts with long-established contacts in the area to the site to meet with all parties, review primary written documentation where available, check secondary sources and produce in-depth reports, with policy recommendations or examples of best practices where appropriate.

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