

# **INDONESIA'S LAMONGAN NETWORK: HOW EAST JAVA, POSO AND SYRIA ARE LINKED**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The trajectory of an extremist network in Lamongan, East Java illustrates how support for local jihadi struggles has been transformed into support for ISIS. Better understanding of that process could lead to the development of more targeted counter-extremism programs.

Lamongan, a district some 50km west of Surabaya, Indonesia's second largest city, first came to international attention in 2002 as the home of Bali bombers Amrozi, Mukhlas and Ali Imron and the boarding school their family ran, Pesantren al-Islam. It was in the news again in March 2015 when two sisters-in-law from Lamongan were deported from Turkey with their children after trying to get to ISIS-controlled Syria. One was a widow; the other was trying to join her husband, Siswanto, one of the thousands of foreign fighters in the ISIS army—and a former teacher at al-Islam.

One of the most important lessons of the Lamongan network is that pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia have emerged from existing radical networks that have never gone away. They may have morphed, realigned, regrouped and regenerated but they are not new.

A second lesson is that it is not possible to understand Indonesian pro-ISIS networks without understanding Poso, the former conflict area in central Sulawesi. Since 2000, extremists have seen it as a secure base (*qaedah aminah*) and training center with the potential to expand into a community that applies Islamic law. In 2009-2010, there was a short-lived project to transfer that base to Aceh, the only Indonesian province authorised to apply Islamic law. When it failed, with police breaking up a training camp in late February 2010 and eventually arresting more than 100 suspects, Poso again became the refuge of choice, under the leadership of a former combatant named Santoso—the target of a massive police operation as this report went to press—who sought to train recruits for the jihad against enemies of an Islamic state in Indonesia. Lamongan provided some of those recruits.

There is more to the Poso story, however. The extremists there were never very strong in terms of numbers or competence. Interest in jihad at home had steadily declined after the strength of radical groups peaked in 1999-2001. But committed ideologues wanted to keep alive the idea of a secure base. They needed to convince themselves that the dozens of often not very impressive men sent to Poso for training would constitute the base for an army of *mujahidin* that could join the global jihad and lead to the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. The key to this was providing Santoso with an effective media arm, and the Lamongan network did just this, connecting Santoso first with al-Qaeda's Global Islamic Media Front and then with ISIS. The objective was to create the illusion, both internationally and at home, that the Indonesian effort was bigger and more significant than it really was. The propagandists may have wanted international recognition for Indonesia's homegrown jihad, but they wanted even more to persuade small-town recruits from other parts of Indonesia that Poso was a war worth fighting. Without international links, what was the attraction?

The would-be *mujahidin* never seemed to realise how dangerous the connection to Poso was, because it was one place that had intense police surveillance. If Indonesia's extremists had not kept trying to get to Poso, they probably could have avoided many of the crackdowns that followed. But pursuit by police was a factor in pushing several key Lamongan members to leave for Syria. Many wanted to go anyway, but the steady stream of arrests and the information they produced turned departure into a necessity.

This report takes the stories of six individuals and shows how their lives intersected to shape a pro-ISIS network in Lamongan. The six are Siswanto, the religious teacher from al-Islam; his brother-in-law, Sibghotullah, who had worked with Santoso; Dayat, a fugitive from Medan who married into a Lamongan family and became a recruiter for Poso; Arif Tuban and Arif Wicakso-

no alias Hendro who helped set up Santoso's media arm; and Salim Mubarak Attamimi, a career *mujahid* and the only one of the six without direct links to Poso.

As of early April 2015, Salim Mubarak and Siswanto were in Syria fighting with ISIS. (Indonesian ISIS fighters suffered heavy casualties in Syria in the first weeks of April; it is not known if these two are among them.) Sibghotullah was arrested by Malaysian authorities trying to leave for Syria in early December 2014; he remains in police detention in Jakarta. Hendro and Dayat are dead, killed by the Indonesian counter-terrorism police, Detachment 88, in Poso and East Java respectively. Arif Tuban was arrested in June 2014 and subsequently tried and convicted of terrorism.

An analysis of their relationships shows the enduring importance of several kinds of bonds. Three in particular stand out:

- Alumni networks of Pesantren al-Islam and other schools once affiliated to the regional organisation Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Even though the individuals featured here are not—or in some cases, no longer—JI members, these schools remain a critically important component of the extremist community long after JI itself has disengaged, at least temporarily, from violence at home.
- Commitment to the ideology propounded by detained cleric Aman Abdurrahman. Siswanto and Salim Mubarak in particular were Aman's most trusted associates in East Java. His followers control the channels in Indonesia for sending fighters to Syria. Mapping Aman's support base and understanding his teachings are essential prerequisites to any targeted program to counter violent extremism.
- Kinship and marriage. Family ties have been a recurring theme in studies of Indonesian extremism; the Lamongan network shows they are more important than ever as ISIS appeals to families and sets up Indonesian-language schools in Syria for its "cubs". Women in extremist families can be the main motivators, urging their husbands and children to fight, but they can also be the key to disengagement. Documenting the family's orientation in this regard—toward or away from violence—is another prerequisite of an effective counter-extremism effort.

There are also bonds produced by training in Poso; experience in prison; and participation in radical study groups as well as the close ties that often emerge between fugitives and those who hide them.

All of these relationships produce a complicated web of interactions, but if the bonds can be identified, then at least there is a possibility of targeted interventions to address them. One potentially useful program is underway in Lamongan run by a former JI member but much more needs to be done. It has always been the case that the key to designing counter-extremism programs that have any hope of success is to root them in a thorough knowledge of the patterns of radicalisation in local communities. The story of the Lamongan network reinforces that premise.

## II. LAMONGAN: THE JI LEGACY

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Lamongan's extremist community was shaped by Jemaah Islamiyah. In 1993, around the same time that JI was founded by a group of Indonesian exiles living in Malaysia, the elder brother of Amrozi, Mukhlas and Ali Imron established the al-Islam pesantren in the village of Tenggulun, Lamongan. It was a satellite school of Pesantren al-Mukmin in Ngruki, Solo that Abu Bakar Ba'asyir helped found in the 1970s and that became the center of JI activities in Indonesia. Al-Islam borrowed teachers from Ngruki to help it get started, and Ali Imron, trained in Afghanistan like his brother Mukhlas, returned to teach there.

Between 1999 and 2002, the al-Islam school, largely because of the brothers' involvement in a JI special operations unit, became a center of jihadi activity. Many of the early JI bombing operations—the 2000 Christmas Eve bombings, the attack on the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta and the Bali bombings themselves—were partially planned in or started from Lamongan.

After the three brothers were arrested in late 2002, two were tried and sentenced to death. Ali Imron, the “remorseful” bomber, was given a life sentence, and then with his half-brother, Ali Fauzi, began working to move the school away from its association with violence. But by this time, it was so integrated into JI that this was easier said than done for several reasons.

JI was not just a terrorist organisation; it was a tightly knit social community. A single class at Ngruki could produce one hundred or more students who had lived and studied together, sometimes married into each other's families, and went to teach at or send their children to other JI-affiliated schools. Any student or teacher at al-Islam, whatever his or her views, was still only one degree of separation away from a committed extremist and most would feel obliged to help if asked to provide shelter or other forms of support.

Students frequently moved from one JI school to another, so even if the environment at al-Islam became less militant over time, any moderating influence could be counteracted by the teachers encountered at the next school.

Until 2007, JI maintained an active program of religious outreach (*dakwah*) and jihad in Poso, with a branch there that regularly mounted attacks on Christians and less frequently, informers and government officials. Youths from the local JI affiliate were occasionally sent to study at al-Islam to broaden their religious knowledge, and individuals fleeing police operations that these JI attacks triggered frequently came through Lamongan. After a shoot-out with police in Poso on 22 January 2007, JI effectively disengaged from violence in Indonesia, but the network it left behind—including men it had trained and indoctrinated like Santoso—went on to regroup as the military wing of JAT in late 2010.

From 2002 to 2008, when Mukhlas, Amrozi and their confederate from West Java, Imam Samundra, were executed, there was a steady stream of their admirers coming to al-Islam to see the family or join them on visits to the prison where they were held. The brothers' burial was an occasion for thousands of militants to gather and celebrate their “martyrdom”; their graves later became a popular destination for young people hoping to follow in their footsteps.

Thus, despite the efforts of Ali Imron and Ali Fauzi to moderate al-Islam's teachings, Lamongan remained an important hub for extremists such as Siswanto, the Ngruki alumnus profiled below.

### III. SISWANTO, THE PREACHER

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Siswanto is one of the most important figures in the hub. Born in Brengkok, Lamongan in 1976, he attended Pesantren al-Mukmin in Ngruki but dropped out because of economic difficulties. He returned to Lamongan in 1993 and became a teacher at Al-Islam; he also became a member of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Two years later he married Winarti, known as Wiwin, the elder sister of one of his al-Islam students, Sibghotullah. In 2000, he and his wife moved back to her family's village in Ngariboyo, Magetan, East Java, and he left for Poso to take part in a JI *dakwah* program there. He returned to Magetan and lived there until 2006, when the couple returned to Lamongan.

By this time, however, he had no interest in returning to al-Islam because he felt that under Ali Imron's influence, the school had lost its militancy and commitment to jihad. He moved to Paciran, a different subdistrict of Lamongan, and became a freelance preacher, lecturing in response to invitations. One of his sponsors was the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI) in Lamongan. This branch of the national FPI organisation had been founded in

2007 as a fusion of two anti-vice organisations.<sup>1</sup> It was led by Zainal Anshori, a Muhammadiyah activist, and held religious study meetings (*pengajian*) for members at the Maspuan mosque in Paciran. Siswanto became a regular preacher for the group and drew close to two members in particular. One, Achsanul Huda, was a relatively well-off fish trader from Paciran. The second was a former al-Islam student named Arif Budi Setyawan, better known as Arif Tuban.

Siswanto had become a devoted follower of the radical cleric Aman Abdurrahman, then in prison in connection with a bomb-making class that he had inspired in Cimanggis, south of Jakarta in 2004.<sup>2</sup> After Aman was released in 2008, Siswanto and his FPI friends invited him to lead the monthly discussion at the Maspuan mosque on *tauhid* and jihad, and from 2009, he became a regular preacher.<sup>3</sup> If he could not come himself, he led the discussion by speaker phone, and eventually most of FPI Lamongan came under his influence. Siswanto in turn became one of Aman's most trusted associate in East Java, and when Aman was rearrested in March 2010 for his role in funding the militant training camp in Aceh, Siswanto took over as the main FPI preacher.

National leaders of FPI watched the growing radicalisation of FPI Lamongan with alarm and in 2010 they expelled the branch after it accused the FPI leadership, including Habib Rizieq, of being idolatrous servants of an infidel state. Even some of the FPI Lamongan members themselves found Siswanto too extreme, especially after an incident in late 2010 when he branded a respected Muhammadiyah cleric an infidel only because the man did not agree with his views. The cleric in question was the elder brother of a senior FPI Lamongan member, and the organisation split in two over the issue. Siswanto, Huda and Arif Tuban left to form their own group, which several of the more militant FPI members then joined. It does not seem to have had a name but continued to meet regularly in small prayer houses around Paciran or in Huda's house and maintained contact with Aman Abdurrahman's followers in other parts of the country.

Siswanto under Aman's influence became an early supporter of ISIS. As his group came under more pressure from the police, he also seems to have seen *hijrah* (migration) to Syria as a way of protecting fugitives. In July 2013, after a police operation led to the death of one of his students, Siswanto fled to Bogor, West Java, where he lived under the protection of one of Aman's students.

While in Bogor, Siswanto made contact with another of Aman's followers, a religious teacher named Reza Matondang alias Abu Shofiy (also spelled Sofi, Shofi and Syofi) who led a regular *pengajian* at a mosque in Babakan, Serpong, a Jakarta suburb. Abu Shofiy was close to the men involved in the radical website al-mustaqbal.net, and by mid-2013, he had already developed

1 These were Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah Lamongan and Laskar Umat Islam Pantura.

2 Aman Abdurrahman's real name is Oman Rochman; he also uses the pen name Abu Sulaiman. Born in Sumedang, West Java, in 1972, he was trained at LIPIA (see fn 2, above), then became the imam of al-Sofwah Mosque in Lenteng, South Jakarta, a salafi institution, until he was fired for being too militant. He was first arrested in March 2004 in connection with an explosion in Cimanggis that occurred when a group of his followers were learning how to make bombs. While in prison he became a prolific translator from Arabic to Indonesian of radical tracts, particularly by the Jordanian cleric, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. After serving four years of his seven-year sentence, he was released in July 2008. He was rearrested in March 2010 in connection with the terrorist training camp in Aceh and was later sentenced to nine years. He has become a major ISIS propagandist from behind bars.

3 *Tauhid*, or the oneness of God, is a key concept in Islam but it has been used by extremists to define the Islamic community in very exclusivist terms. When militants are photographed raising the index finger of their right hand, it is a symbol for *tauhid*. Aman Abdurrahman originally called his followers Muwahidun, those who believe in oneness and later adopted the name Tanzim Tauhid wal Jihad—the same name used by Iraqi insurgent Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi. Tauhid wal Jihad was never a structured organisation in Indonesia, however; it was rather used to describe the community of Aman's followers.

contacts in Syria.<sup>4</sup> Siswanto became part of a selection committee with Abu Shofiy to select people to send to ISIS until he himself left for Syria in June 2014.

#### IV. SIBGHOTULLAH, THE EX-PRISONER

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Sibghotullah, Siswanto's brother-in-law, came to Lamongan to study as a teenager. Born in Magetan on 3 July 1982, he became a student at al-Islam in 1997. In early 2002, the school gave him a scholarship to study Arabic at LIPIA, a Saudi-funded salafi institute in Jakarta for the study of Arabic and Islam.

Through friends at al-Islam, he met Abdullah Sunata and joined KOMPAK, an organisation that started out as a humanitarian charity to assist victims of natural disasters and turned into a militant group sending fighters to defend Muslims in the communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso. Sibgho, as he was called, went to fight in Ambon in June 2002. After two months, he returned to LIPIA, graduated, and went back to al-Islam to teach.

In March 2003, Sunata, through a KOMPAK program, sent him to preach in Poso, where he met several other senior *mujahidin* including the Bali bomber Dulmatin, then en route to Mindanao in the southern Philippines. Sibghotullah stayed for about ten months in Poso, then returned to al-Islam. In mid-2004, at Sunata's request, he left briefly for Ketapang, Ambon to take part in a military training exercise there. Among his fellow participants were several who resurface much later as suppliers of guns to Santoso in Poso, including Agus Martin.<sup>5</sup>

After the training Sibgho returned to al-Islam and taught there until 2007—well after efforts to deradicalise the school were underway. He then accepted an offer to teach at another JI-affiliated school, Pesantren al Muslimun in Magetan—just as Dulmatin slipped back into Indonesia and lived quietly at the same school. Sibgho helped arrange a marriage for Dulmatin with a teacher at the school and worked with him to set up a training camp in Aceh in late 2009.

Police broke up the training camp in late February 2010 and tracked down and killed Dulmatin a few weeks later. Sibgho fled to Poso where he stayed with Santoso briefly, then moved to Makassar where he stayed with Daeng Koro alias Sabar, a senior Darul Islam operative whom he had known from his 2003 preaching assignment in Poso. (Daeng Koro, believed to be Santoso's strategist and field commander, was killed on 3 April 2015 in a clash with Indonesia's paramilitary police in Parimo, Central Sulawesi.) After three months, Sibgho moved back to stay with Santoso. He was arrested on 11 June 2011 while on a visit to East Kalimantan.

Sibgho was tried and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He served most of his time in Porong Prison in Surabaya where he seems to have taken a deep interest in the Syrian conflict, based on his discussions with fellow inmates and visitors. One frequent visitor was Bagus Maskuron, himself a former prisoner, who had served a short sentence for his involvement in

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4 Abu Shofiy was also active in FAKSI and sharia4Indonesia. See IPAC, "Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia", Report No.13, 24 September 2014.

5 This training was an important precursor to the attack on a Brimob post in Loki, West Ceram in May 2005 but by that time, Sibgho had long since returned to Lamongan. Among the other participants, some 22 in all, were Sulthan Qolbi alias Arsyad alias Asadulloh; Arqom alias Behai; Asep Jaja; Rusli Mardani alias Uci and Nazarudin Mochtar alias Abu Dzar.

extremist activities in Medan. Bagus, with Siswanto's help, left for Syria in November 2013.<sup>6</sup> (This practice of released prisoners visiting their former cellmates or others still detained is an important mechanism for exchange of information.)

In February 2014, Sibgho was released and immediately began making plans to get to Syria. In March, one of former classmates at al-Islam, Arif Tuban, came to see him to ask his help in getting in touch with Santoso in Poso. Sibgho, in turn reportedly wanted practical information on how to apply for a passport and how to raise money for travel, since as a newly released prisoner, he had nothing saved. He also established Facebook contact with Bagus Maskuron in Syria, who was now going by the name of Abu Muqbil. Through regular and frequent online chatting with Bagus via Facebook and WhatsApp, he was put in touch with people who could help with both travel arrangements and funds, and Bagus himself promised to meet him at the Turkish border.

Finally, on 30 November, he left from East Java, bound for Malaysia, Turkey and Syria, in a group that included among others, Sibgho's wife; his wife's brother-in-law (married to her sister); and the wife and ten-year-old son of Bagus Maskuron.<sup>7</sup> They only made it as far as Kuala Lumpur. On 2 December, they were all arrested as they were getting ready to board a plane for Turkey, and all were deported back to Indonesia. Sibgho was detained as a terrorism suspect; the others were released.

Only months after Sibgho was freed, his friend Arif Tuban was arrested.

## V. ARIF TUBAN, THE NETWORKER

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Arif Tuban, born Arif Budi Setyawan, on 20 January 1982 in Ngawi, East Java, was almost the same age as Sibgho and was a student at al-Islam around the same time. He made little impression on his teachers there. He was known mostly as a bookworm, a small thin boy who was frequently sick. He was also an inveterate Internet surfer, especially of Arabic-language jihadi sites.<sup>8</sup>

His unprepossessing demeanour, however, masked an extraordinary ability to network, both personally and through Facebook. He ended up playing a major role in recruiting for jihadi groups in Medan and Poso; purchasing arms for both; helping hide fugitives; and running a key jihadi website and chat forum. By late 2013 he was helping connect individuals from different groups who wanted to get to Syria. He was arrested on 19 June 2014 and eventually given a relatively lenient sentence of four years, ten months in prison. Neither the prosecutors nor the judges seemed to understand what a critical role he had played.

All of Arif Tuban's connections began in Lamongan. He was friends there with Syaifudin Zuhri, a Ngruki graduate who taught at another nearby JI-affiliated school, Pesantren al-Ikhlas. Arif had worked briefly as an administrative assistant at al-Ikhlas in 2007. He was also friends with Siswanto and Achsanul Huda through Siswanto's *pengajian*, and in 2008, got a job as the

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6 Bagus Maskuron alias Bagus was born in Surabaya on 17 March 1984. He was inducted into Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) in March 2010 and took part in JAT-East Java activities, supporting himself as an itinerant trader. In July 2010 he happened to be in Lamongan for a JAT program and met a man named Abu Nasib (probably an alias for Margono from Magetan) who persuaded him to go to Medan, where a friend named Abdi alias Sabar could help him open a foodstall. Abdi also ran an extremist group involved in several robberies in the Medan area. Bagus was arrested there on 19 September 2010, tried, and freed on 26 September 2011. He returned to Surabaya and became a frequent visitor to Porong prison.

7 Others in the group included Sibgho's brother-in-law (Muchlish Zainal Abidin, married to Sibgho's wife's sister; the sister, Wahyuningsih; and their five-month-old daughter, Tanzila Rahma) and a couple from Surabaya, Harfan Amsura, his wife Lina and their one-year-old child, Fatih.

8 Information in this section comes from trial documents in the case of Arif Budi Setyawan and IPAC interviews in Lamongan, February 2015.

attendant at an internet café owned by Huda's brother, where he could troll jihadi sites to his heart's content while serving the customers.

In Magetan, one of his close friends was Margono, a former JI member from Pesantren al-Muslimun, the same school where Sibgho and Dulmatin were living from 2007 to 2009.<sup>9</sup> Margono had left JI to join Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), the organisation set up by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in 2008.

In Surabaya, Arif Tuban was very close to Abu Fida, another senior JI-turned-JAT member, and he eventually married the daughter of Abu Fida's neighbour.<sup>10</sup>

It was through his friendship with Syaifudin Zuhri that Arif in 2007 came to know Mohamad Abdi alias Sabar, a former member of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) in Medan whose younger brother was studying in Lamongan.<sup>11</sup> Sabar had formed a small jihadi group in Medan and used his friends in Java as well as Internet chat forums to recruit members, especially for *fa'i* actions (robbery to support jihad) in and around Medan. Between 2008 and 2010, Arif Tuban and Margono served as Sabar's major recruiters.

One of the men they sent to Medan in 2010 was Bagus Maskuron—the same man who by late 2013 had joined ISIS and had been ready to meet Sibgho on the Turkish-Syrian border. Another recruit was Guntur Pamungkas alias Suyitno—to be arrested in 2014 for working as a courier for Santoso in Poso. Sabar's group was thus an important way station for men who went on to jihadi activities elsewhere.

In 2009 and 2010, the group was involved in a number of robberies to raise funds for jihad (*fa'i*) but deliberately avoided larger actions while trying to build up its size and strength. It did not take part in the Aceh training camp, for example, but the police crackdown that followed forced the group to disband.<sup>12</sup> Several members fled to East Java, where Arif and Margono helped find them places to stay and engaged them in frequent discussions.

By mid-2011, the jihadi effort in Indonesia seemed to have collapsed. The bombings of two luxury hotels in 2009 by former JI member Noordin Top and others had led to Noordin's death and the disintegration of the cells that worked with him. The Aceh camp had been broken up in 2010, with some two dozen suspects killed and more than 100 arrested. Everywhere jihadi groups were under pressure. What to do, if one was committed to the struggle?

9 Al-Muslimun was founded by Buchori, father of Luthfi Haidaroh alias Ubaid. Buchori had been arrested in the late 1970s for involvement with a Darul Islam group known as Komando Jihad. Several of his ten children became involved with JI and/or Noordin Top. Ubaid took a leading role in the establishment of the Aceh training camp in 2010, together with Dulmatin.

10 Abu Fida was born in Surabaya on 26 January 1966. As a student at the well-known modernist Gontor pesantren in 1984-85, he was assigned to Pesantren al-Mukmin in Ngruki for a practice teaching assignment. He joined Darul Islam there, JI's parent organization, and then left for the Middle East, first to Syria for a year in 1986 to improve his Arabic, then to Qulyatul Mustama Islami University in Jordan for two years, then to study at Ummul Qura University in Mecca for six years. While he was still in Mecca in late 1993, Abdullah Sungkar, JI's founder, came for a visit and inducted the young scholar into his new organisation (JI had been established earlier that year). When he returned to Java in 1995, he was assigned by Sungkar to teach at another JI school, Mahad Ali in Solo. In 2000 he moved to Surabaya to teach for a year in a Muhammadiyah university. There he joined the local branch of JI (*wakalah Surabaya*). After the 2002 Bali bombing, the *wakalah* became largely dormant, but its members, including Abu Fida, helped hide fugitive bomber Noordin Top in 2004. He severed his connections to JI in 2005 but joined JAT in 2007.

11 For more on Sabar's background, see International Crisis Group, "How Indonesian Extremists Regroup", Asia Report No.228, 16 July 2012, p.4. Sabar had come to Lamongan to meet Syaifudin Zuhri. He was introduced to Zuhri through Indrawarman alias Toni Togar, the (imprisoned) head of JI Medan. Toni Togar and Zuhri had been classmates at Ngruki, class of 1989.

12 Police actions intensified after the robbery of a CIMB-Niaga bank branch in Medan on 18 August 2010 in which a security guard was killed. Abdi alias Sabar had not approved of the plans but at least one of his men was involved.

Arif decided it was time to meet one of his longtime Facebook friends in person to review the options. This was Arif Wicaksono alias Hendro, an ethnic Javanese from South Kalimantan.

## VI. HENDRO, THE CYBER-JIHADI

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Arif Wicaksono alias Hendro, born 1 March 1988, was a Ngruki graduate, class of 2005, who had married the daughter of Afif Abdul Madjid, a JI-turned-JAT leader and teacher in various JI-linked schools.<sup>13</sup>

Arif Tuban had first heard about Hendro through a friend in April 2010 when he was trying to recruit personnel for Sabar in Medan. At the time, Hendro was not interested in going, because he was trying to develop a mirror site for al-Qaeda material that he called Forum Islam al-Busyro. Like Arif, he was an Internet addict who could never stay far away from his computer. Some of his friends called him “Hendro Laptop”; others joked that his computer had become his second wife. He saw himself as a media warrior, waging jihad through cyberspace.

Arif and Hendro bonded through their common passion for online jihad and had frequent exchanges via email about how to develop pro-jihad media in Indonesia. They met in person for the first time in March 2011 when Arif went to Batu Licin, South Kalimantan to work in a bread factory owned by his old friend from Lamongan, Guntur Pamungkas alias Suyitno. Arif had recruited Guntur for Sabar’s group in 2009 but Guntur had only stayed a few months in Medan before returning to Java. From there he moved to Kalimantan where he opened the factory.<sup>14</sup> Hendro was living not far away in Tanjung Tabalong, South Kalimantan, so he and Arif arranged to meet.

They liked each other immediately and talked over the next two days about how the failure of the jihadi camp in Aceh and the subsequent crackdown by police necessitated a change in tactics. They decided to promote the idea of do-it-yourself jihad or *jihad fardiyah*.<sup>15</sup> Hendro was translating an article on the subject that had appeared in the on-line magazine *Inspire*, produced by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>16</sup> The article criticised efforts at jihad by large organisations which the author considered to have been total failures because of the retaliation they sparked from the enemy, leading to the destruction of the organisations in question. “Individual jihad” was presented as a safer alternative, because if the enemy destroyed one small cell, it would be relatively easy to construct a new one.

Hendro and Arif were convinced that this approach was worth trying, particularly when they saw how effective a small group of book bombers had been in spreading fear in Jakarta a few weeks earlier.<sup>17</sup> They decided that one way forward would be to revive Sabar’s group, with Arif

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13 Afif as of April 2015 was on trial for having gone to Syria for a month in December 2013 and returned to promote ISIS.

14 Suyitno alias Guntur Pamungkas was arrested with Sukardi alias Kardi on 8 August 2014 in Ngawi, East Java, on suspicion of assisting Santoso and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur.

15 Another term they used was *ksatria dzibul munfarid* (lone wolf).

16 Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, “The Jihadi Experiences: The main arenas of operation for individual jihad”, *Inspire*, Issue 8, 2011, pp18-19.

17 Following this discussion, Arif wrote a tract called “Individual Jihad: Between Obligation and Strategy” (*Jihad Fardiyah, Antara Kewajiban dan Strategi*) which was published on the Forum Islam Al Busyro site on 18 Maret 2011, using Arif’s pen name, jaisy\_554. “Jaisy” (jaish) is the Arabic word for army, while 554 is a reference to the fifth surah of the Qur’an (Surat al Maidah), verse 54, about a people who were friendly to the Muslim community but hostile to infidels. From this point on, Arif became a regular contributor to al-Busyro. One of his articles in July 2011 was titled “The Need for Lone Wolves” (*Hajat kepada Ksatria Dzi’bul Munfarid*) which praised the June 2010 attack by a student of Pesantren Umar Bin Khattab, Bima who on his own stabbed a policeman to death. Arif eventually adopted a second pen name of Abu Kholid Al Indunisy for his al-Busyro postings.

and Guntur going one by one to the individuals involved, most of whom had been recruited from Java, and encourage them to get back involved. Crucially, however, they would not make Sabar's mistake of trying to build a large organisation; instead they would promote the idea of individual jihad.

One of the first men Arif approached was a former drug dealer from Bandung named Hilman, who had been recruited by extremists in prison in 2004 and joined Sabar briefly in August 2010.<sup>18</sup> Beginning in mid-2011, Arif made a series of visits to Hilman's house, and by early 2012, Hilman agreed to pull a few friends together and undertake a robbery in Bali. Their plans were detected by police, however, and Hilman and four others were intercepted and shot dead by police in Denpasar in March 2012.<sup>19</sup>

After the shootings, Arif fled to first Surabaya, where he and Abu Fida had long discussions. He then decided to move his family permanently to South Kalimantan to work with Guntur in the bread business. It would be safer than Java, he would be nearer to Hendro, and he could make some money that he could devote to jihad. He still made frequent trips to Java, however.

In April 2012, Arif and Hendro met in Surabaya at Abu Fida's house to discuss how Forum al-Busyro could be used to promote jihad in Poso. As far as they were concerned, it was the only serious option left for building jihadi capacity in Indonesia. Hendro decided to go to Poso himself and develop a media division in the hope of linking up Santoso's struggle to the global jihad and thus getting more attention at home. He left in August 2012, initially staying in the town of Poso so that he could develop the propaganda unit while also providing religious instruction to some of Santoso's followers. Arif agreed to raise funds and Guntur, with his bread business, became a regular donor.

It was Hendro who drafted the 15 October 2012 challenge to Detachment 88 in the name of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur that was posted on several radical websites. To show they meant business, Santoso and several of his men abducted and murdered two police officers in Poso a few days later. The killings sparked major police operations in Poso. To avoid arrest, Hendro fled to the hills and joined Santoso.<sup>20</sup> The next—and last—two years of his life saw many more interactions with the Lamongan network, including through the next character to appear, Mohammad Hidayat.

## VII. MOHAMMAD HIDAYAT, THE FUGITIVE

Mohammad Hidayat, better known as Dayat, was born in Medan on 1 August 1980. A computer student, he had been part of Sabar's group in Medan. After the post-Aceh police operations, he had fled to Lamongan where he was protected by Siswanto and his friends. In June 2011, he married Tiara Nurmayanti, the sister of Siswanto's close friend, Achsanul Huda. In January 2015, Tiara and Achsanul's wife Ririn and their children would be among a group of sixteen Indonesians detained by Turkish authorities trying to reach Syria, but there was much more to come first.

A few months after his marriage, Dayat returned to Medan where he joined a group around Rizki Gunawan alias Udin. Like Dayat, Rizki had been one of Sabar's men who in 2011 had taken

18 Hilman had been recruited around 2004 in Kerobokan Prison in Bali by Amrozi, the Bali bomber from Lamongan.

19 "Kabid Humas Polda Bali: Total 5 Orang Tewas", *Kompas*, 18 March 2012. Three from the group were killed in Sanur, two others in Denpasar. In addition to planning ATM robberies, they were reportedly looking at the Hard Rock Café as a possible bombing target.

20 Hendro contacted Arif not long afterwards and asked his help in obtaining weapons. Arif agreed to help and in late 2012, he made a quick visit to Lamongan from South Kalimantan to seek out a former KOMPAK fighter, Agus Martin, who married a student from al-Islam and lived in Lamongan. He obtained one gun from Agus and returned to Kalimantan.

part in one of Santoso's military training courses in Poso. When Dayat joined him, he was in the midst of a project to try and secure funding for jihad through hacking into an online site for buying foreign currencies, owned by a Malaysian company. With Dayat's computer skills and a software program set up by another member of the group, they were able to steal almost Rp.7 billion, some of which they planned to use to help Santoso and send their friends there for training. Dayat was one of those selected to go, and in March 2012 he sent Tiara back to Lamongan and left for Poso.

In May, while he was still in Poso, he learned that Rizky had been arrested so when the training was over, instead of returning to Medan, Dayat went directly back to Lamongan where he joined Siswanto's group and devoted himself to recruiting others for Poso.

In March 2013, Santoso, now calling himself the al-Zarqawi of Indonesia, decided to undertake a suicide bombing in Poso. He contacted Dayat and asked him to find a likely "bridegroom" (*pengantin*), the local term for a suicide bomber. The target was the Poso police station. With Siswanto's permission, Dayat recruited an ex-member of FPI Lamongan named Zainul Arifin, who was also a regular participant in Siswanto's *pengajian*.<sup>21</sup>

In April 2013, Dayat sent Zainul to stay with Arif Tuban in South Kalimantan for a few weeks, so that Arif could prepare him mentally for his task. It turned out Arif was too busy and was in any case about to leave for Java, so he sent Zainul to stay with a friend until he returned. He had only been back a few days when Hendro, in late May, called Arif and told him to send Zainul off to Poso immediately; the operation was going ahead.

It turned into a fiasco, underscoring the lack of competence of Santoso's men. The plan had been to detonate the bomb as the police were having their morning roll-call in front of the station. That morning, however, the ceremony had been moved to the back of the station so that when Zainul arrived, hoping to kill several dozen officers, only three men were around, and when he blew himself up, no one else was even seriously injured. As a jihadi operation, it was a total failure.<sup>22</sup>

21 Zainul Arifin, born on 26 June 1979 in Lamongan, was married and worked as a fish trader.

22 Santoso had tasked two men, Ato and Jundi, with supervising the bombing. They met the night before work out the details: Zainul would start from the mosque at Poso's Central Market. He would wait there while Ato and Jundi would do a last-minute survey to make sure everything was ready, then they would send Zainul a code that would be the signal to start moving toward the target. Either Ato or Jundi would give another signal to Zainul to detonate. Zainul would have the bomb in a backpack. After the discussion, they took the bomb to Ato's house. Zainul asked his two minders what time the roll call usually started. Jundi said 7:30; Ato said 7:00. At this late stage, hours before the planned attack, the planners were not even sure of basic facts. It was well after midnight when Zainul and Ato left to do a preliminary survey of the site on a motorcycle. The survey lasted less than ten minutes. The handlers then went over the route from the mosque to the police station several times with Zainul, then they all went back to Ato's house to wait for morning. In the course of the ensuing conversation, it turned out that Zainul did not have a watch, so someone lent him one. They also lent him shoes, after a debate about whether it was better to wear shoes or rubber sandals. They checked the bomb twice to make sure it would not go off accidentally and waited. Just before 6 am, Ato drove Zainul to the mosque with the bomb and told him to wait for the signal. At 7 am, Ato went to the police station but nothing was happening. He went to Jundi's house to ask what they should do. They decided to wait until 7:30 and check again. This time it was Jundi who went to check: nothing. They decided to check again in fifteen minutes, and if still nothing was happening, they would meet Zainul in the mosque and discuss what to do. At 7:45, there was still no activity, although three men had arrived, apparently for guard duty in the front of the station. Ato and Jundi went on to the mosque to find Zainul. First they could not find a place to park their motorcycle, then they could not find Zainul. They finally found him in the mosque bathroom, trying to strap the bomb to his body. He was in a terrible state, wanting to know why they had not sent the signal. They explained there was apparently no roll-call, only a few police on duty out front. Zainul decided it was too late to stop now with the bomb already on his body; he was going to go ahead. He got on a motorcycle and headed for the police station. A few minutes later, Ato and Jundi heard a small explosion, like a firecracker, followed by a much stronger one. Zainul died without taking anyone with him. See Indictment (Surat Dakwaan) No. Reg. Perkara: PDM-57/JKT.TM/Ep.2/04/2014 in case of Rudiyanto alias Jundi, Jakarta, June 2014.

After the bombing, Dayat fled to Surabaya, assisted by another Siswanto follower and JAT member from Lamongan named Mutaqin—who later turns up with ISIS in Syria. Mutaqin himself had family connections by marriage to Siswanto and Sibghotullah.<sup>23</sup> With Mutaqin's help, Dayat hid in Abu Fida's house, where he met Arif Tuban, who also was in hiding. In July 2013, Dayat left Surabaya for Tulungagung, a town some 150 km away. He was tracked there by counter-terrorism police, and while he was meeting another friend from Sabar's group in Medan, both were shot and killed in a police raid. Dayat's wife Tiara was now on her own, with their infant daughter, Syifa Hidayat Kalashnikova, named after the favourite rifle of all revolutionaries.

The failure of Zainul's operation was a huge disappointment for Santoso and Hendro. They had planned to release a video of Zainul bidding farewell to Santoso in the jungle that they would use to launch the Media Division of Santoso's new organisation, the Mujahidin of Eastern Indonesia (MIT). With the failure of the bombing, the plan was scrapped. Instead, Hendro hacked into the Indonesian army website on 28 June, leaving a message, "Hacked by the Media Division of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur".

In July, Hendro and his friends released a video "Letter to Muslims in the City of Poso" (*Risalah Kepada Ummat Islam Di Kota Poso*) in which for the first time Santoso appeared without covering his face. In the six-minute video, he urges Muslims in Poso to actively oppose Detachment 88.

This was the first of many efforts to build MIT's image online, but Hendro wanted more international recognition. He therefore made a video called "Attack Satan's Army" (*Perangilah Tentara Syaitan*). He wanted al-Qaeda's Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) to disseminate it and was hoping to work with GIMF's Indonesia affiliate, Sawt Al Jihad Nusantara. But he did not live to see his ambitions bear fruit because his whereabouts had been detected. In February 2014, while manning an MIT security post in Taunca village in Poso Pesisir, he was suddenly surrounded by police and died in a shootout.<sup>24</sup>

Hendro's death was a huge blow to Arif Tuban. By this time, however, there was more to think about. Dayat's death in July 2013 had led several key leaders of the Lamongan network to seek safety elsewhere. Siswanto, as noted above, had moved to Bogor, West Java, where he taught in a school, Mahad Ibnu bin Masoed, run by one of Aman Abdurrahman's followers. It was a matter of time before the police would be on their trail.

Joining ISIS seemed an attractive option. Siswanto's network had been following developments in Syria closely and following Aman Abdurrahman's lead, had strongly supported ISIS since at least mid-2013. If they could get their people to Syria, they could help the struggle, fulfil the objectives of *hijrah* by moving to a place where Islamic law was applied, and flee the police at the same time. In July 2013, Siswanto arranged to send Mutaqin, the man who had helped Dayat hide in Surabaya, to ISIS. In November, he sent Bagus Maskuron, one of the men who had worked with Sabar in Medan. In getting them to Syria, he used a network developed by an Indonesian of Yemeni descent named Salim Mubarak, later to be known as Abu Jandal.

23 Mutaqin was the nephew of Sali, Sibghotullah's father-in-law. Sibghotullah as noted above was Siswanto's brother-in-law. Sali and Sibghotullah were stopped by Malaysian authorities in December 2014 as they were trying to leave for Turkey to join ISIS in Syria.

24 Thanks to Arif Tuban's efforts, the video did reach its destination. In April 2014, Sawt Al Jihad Nusantara and GIMF released *Perangilah Tentara Syaitan*, the first time ever that an official al-Qaeda media outlet had disseminated an MIT product. This cooperation was short-lived, however. In May, Sawt Al Jihad Nusantara released an appeal entitled "Call to Mujahidin in Syria" (*Panggilan kepada Mujahidin di Bumi Syam*) which castigated pro-ISIS media in Indonesia. Forum Islam Al Busyro responded with a statement that criticised what it saw as Sawt Al Jihad Nusantara's blind defence of Jabhat Al Nusrah in the Syrian conflict. It rejected Sawt al Jihad's claim to speak for Indonesian mujahidin and reiterated its support for ISIS. It concluded the statement with a short, "Good riddance, GIMF". See [https://archive.org/stream/baya\\_2.2/Indonesia\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/baya_2.2/Indonesia_djvu.txt).

## VIII. SALIM MUBAROK ATTAMIMI, THE ISIS RECRUITER

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Salim Mubarok alias Abu Jandal was originally from Pasuruan, East Java. Born on 25 August 1972, he had been a member of Laskar Jihad, the salafi force that fought in Ambon at the height of the communal conflict there, and subsequently went to study in Dammaj, Yemen.<sup>25</sup> As an anti-jihadi salafi who had read and disagreed with Aman Abdurrahman's writings, he challenged Aman to a debate that took place in the prison where Aman was detained after his second arrest in 2010. Salim lost decisively, and became a devoted follower of Aman thereafter, running a discussion group on his teachings from Malang.

Salim, like Siswanto, became one of Aman's most trusted associates in East Java, and he and Siswanto were in frequent contact. Since joining Aman, Salim had wanted to take part in a jihad. In 2012 he had gone to Yemen and joined AQAP. In early 2013, he left Yemen for Syria and later joined ISIS. He returned several times to Indonesia to recruit more fighters. In mid-2013, for example, he went to East Java and then returned to Syria with eight men. When he was in Syria, he helped Indonesians who wanted to join, giving them contacts, arranging to meet them at the border and bring them across. He returned again in early 2014 to recruit, then in March 2014, left again for Syria, this time taking with him a group of twenty, including his ten-year-old son. In June 2014, Siswanto and Achsanul Huda left, with Siswanto's costs borne by Aman Abdurrahman's students in Bogor.

In 2014, Salim set up a committee to facilitate departures from East Java. It was based in Malang and was run by a man named Helmi Muhammad Alamudi, who himself had been to Syria briefly in 2013 but returned with the task of recruiting others.<sup>26</sup> Anyone from East Java who wanted to join ISIS had to go through Helmi. A prospective *mujahid* would send Helmi a scanned copy of his passport to Helmi's email. Helmi would arrange the ticket and also determine who else would go in a particular group and who would be the group leader. Members of the group would not know who else was going until they met at the airport.

Sibgho, the recently-released prisoner, got Helmi's number from Bagus Maskuron alias Abu Muqbil in Syria via WhatsApp. Sibgho then went to Malang, met Helmi (then using the code-name "Mukmin") and got the latter's agreement to help him not only with ticketing but also with possible funding should his own funds not cover the costs. One condition was that he would bring Bagus Maskuron's wife and son along. Sibgho also arranged to bring Muhlis, his wife's sister's husband; and Muhlis's wife and their daughter, still an infant. He gave Rp.10 million to Helmi sometime in November 2014. On 29 November, Helmi called Sibgho and told him to be prepared to leave the next day from Jakarta. Sibgho immediately went to Malang, picked up the tickets for a Jakarta-Kuala Lumpur-Turkey trip as well as RM 1,700 (about \$470) for any financial needs in Malaysia and US\$1,800 for use in Turkey. They were all arrested in Kuala Lumpur on 2 December. Helmi was eventually arrested on 25 March 2015.

## IX. PLANNED VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

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From late 2013 onwards, as interest in going to Syria steadily rose, violence on the part of extremists groups in Indonesia fell. Even the number of plots declined as many would-be jihadis saw the war in Syria as more important than anything they could do at home. Santoso, however, was determined that attacks in Indonesia should continue, if only to divert police attention from himself. The first men to follow his orders had links back to Arif Tuban.

Arif Tuban had been trying to obtain arms for Santoso since late 2012, when he had managed

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25 See IPAC, "The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia," Report No.13, 24 September 2014, p.8.

26 Born 21 June 1964, Helmi Alamudi reportedly had JAT connections.

to come up with one gun from a KOMPAK friend in Lamongan, Agus Martin, who had long-established contacts with the network.<sup>27</sup> Over the next six months, Agus helped broker a few other arms purchases, all small-scale—one here, two there—but the couriers kept getting arrested, and Agus himself was arrested in August 2013.

The efforts to find guns and raise the money to buy them brought Arif Tuban into contact with a number of people in the Jakarta area, including a man in Cipayung, East Jakarta who was willing to help in the procurement effort. His name was Akbar Muriyawan, also known as Donal, a former student of Abdullah Sunata's and frequent participant in radical *pengajian* in the Bekasi area. Arif and Donal became friends; Arif would stay at Donal's house when he was in Jakarta and would store any guns or bullets that he had managed to acquire at Donal's house.

Even with a few more guns, Santoso was clearly not able to do much damage from his hideout in Poso. At the beginning of 2014, therefore, he urged his supporters and alumni of his training courses to undertake attacks wherever they could, especially against police. The first attempt was made by a friend of Arif Tuban's from Surabaya named Isnaeni Ramdhoni alias Doni who together with a few friends planned to attack a prostitution locale and police posts in Surabaya. They were arrested on 20 January 2014 before they could act; both were former JAT-East Java members (and therefore had links back to Abu Fida) but had left JAT to help Santoso.

Then another member of FPI Lamongan, Ramuji alias Kapten, a fisherman's son with an elementary school education, who also had trained in Poso with Santoso for a month in late 2013, tried to construct a few bombs that he wanted to plant in Lamongan police posts. He felt under pressure to do something because Santoso kept demanding to know via Facebook why he had not yet carried out any jihadi action (*amaliyah*). This plot too was discovered, and Ramuji was arrested in Lamongan on 13 May 2014.

In Bima, Sumbawa, Santoso's call to action led to several fatal attacks on police. On 28 March 2014, the head of the narcotics unit for the Bima police station (*polres*) was shot; on 2 June, the station's head of intelligence was killed; and on 16 August the police chief of Ambalawi, Iptu Abdul Salam was shot. These attacks accounted for three of the four terrorist fatalities in 2014. In September, four men were arrested for the crimes.<sup>28</sup>

In Jakarta, Arif Tuban had discussions with Donal about arson attacks on police posts in Depok and East Jakarta, to be carried around the same time as the presidential election to cause maximum disruption. Their plans were discovered, and both were arrested on 19 June 2014.

None of these attacks was ordered by ISIS or committed in its name; they were undertaken on the orders of Santoso by poorly trained men with few skills. The Bima jihadis achieved their target, but the police killings attracted almost no attention in the domestic media and none at all internationally. As jihadi operations, they were on a par with the Polo police station bombings: total failures.

The fact that groups of men in Bima, Lamongan and Surabaya were willing to act on the orders of a third-rate leader in Poso, however, does raise concerns about what could happen if ISIS should decide to send back better trained, more experienced Indonesians for attacks at home. There would undoubtedly be volunteers ready to take part, but thus far there is no indication of such a move. As of April 2015, ISIS seemed to be using all the trained Indonesians and Malaysians it had in battle, and many were being killed.<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, the 22 September 2014 exhortation from ISIS spokesman al-Adnani to kill West-

27 Agus's wife was an al-Islam graduate, and he and Sibghotullah had trained in Ambon together in 2004.

28 These were Juwaid, born on 14 April 1989; Suhail alias Riki, born on 13 May 1991; Dedi Irwawan alias Luis Alexander, born on 28 May 1994 and Salman alias Nasi Kuning alias Bos Arab, born on 13 May 1973.

29 Social media accounts reported more than a dozen Indonesians killed in a battle in al-Shahadi, Barakat in early April 2015.

eners appeared on radical websites in Indonesia but got no traction: at that point, Santoso was still ordering attacks on police.<sup>30</sup> One question is whether this could change if Santoso is killed or captured.

As this report went to press, major police and military operations were underway to capture Santoso. On 3 April, police killed his chief lieutenant, Sabar Subagio alias Daeng Koro, the man who served as instructor for dozens, perhaps hundreds of Indonesians who trained in Poso between between 2010 and 2014 and who are now spread across Java, Sumatra, Sumbawa, Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Without Santoso and Daeng Koro to provide direction, it is possible that someone with ISIS training could fill the vacuum, meaning the targets or methods could change. At the moment, however, the general level of competence of would-be terrorists in Indonesia remains low.

## X. RECURRING THEMES IN LAMONGAN

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The six men profiled here—Siswanto, Sibghotullah, Arif Tuban, Hendro, Dayat and Salim Mubarak—have their own radical trajectories but they eventually intersect in Lamongan through discussion groups, schools, marriage, and Poso. They have no common organisational lineage: they come from (or through) JI, JAT, KOMPAK, FPI and Aman Abdurrahman's network. Taken together, they help explain how the connections are made that can result in support for ISIS and departures for Syria.

Family ties are crucial. If we just take individuals from the Lamongan network or their extended circle who have left or tried to get to Syria but failed, we have Salim Mubarak and family; Bagus Maskuron alias Abu Muqbil and family; Siswanto; Achsanul Huda and family; Dayat's widow and child; Sibgho and wife; Sibgho's wife's brother and child; and Mutaqin, a nephew of Sibgho's father-in-law.

Examining the Lamongan network brings up some other recurring themes that are important in thinking about counter-radicalism programs: the importance of Poso; the role of women; the importance of JI-affiliated schools in terms of alumni bonds and contacts; mobility; the role of imprisoned Indonesian cleric, Aman Abdurrahman; and prisons.

### A. Poso

The continued survival of the tiny extremist band in Poso is of great significance to the Indonesian jihadi movement. Virtually everyone involved in pro-ISIS networks in Indonesia sees an obligation to support Santoso, to follow his orders to the extent possible and to use the electronic media to boost his reputation. The question is why such an unimpressive figure could merit such loyalty. There may be several reasons:

- As noted at the outset, Poso has a history going back to 2000-2001—the height of JI's influence there—of being the secure base (*qaedah aminah*) that would serve as a refuge while at the same time constituting the nucleus of an Islamic community. With an estimated 30-50 armed men, Santoso's MIT is the only group that can claim to control territory, even if a very tiny sliver on a remote mountaintop. It is thus important to preserve that illusion, particularly for those ISIS supporters who see control of territory as one of the signal achievements that give legitimacy to al-Baghdadi's claim to the caliphate.
- Poso is the only part of the Indonesian jihad that is known internationally, thanks to the

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30 For the full text of al-Adnani's speech, see [https://ia601400.us.archive.org/34/items/mir225/English\\_Translation.pdf](https://ia601400.us.archive.org/34/items/mir225/English_Translation.pdf).

efforts of online media propagandists like Arif Tuban and Hendro. A brief clip of Santoso appeared in a 2014 ISIS video that must have chuffed them immensely. The media effort may also be responsible for the fact that three Uighurs from Xinjiang now seem to have joined Santoso's operations, as if it were a major international struggle that needed its own foreign fighters.

- As many as 100 men have gone through Santoso's military training courses since they began in late 2010 or early 2011. Poso became the critical place for *idad* or preparation for jihad, achieving what the Aceh camp could not and in the process building bonds among extremist Indonesians—and a few Malaysians—from a variety of different backgrounds.
- Santoso has managed to withstand repeated assaults from the Indonesian security forces, though none have been as sustained or potentially lethal as that launched in March 2015 by the Indonesian military and police and they may yet pull him in. But as with other long-time fugitives whose stature rose as they were repeatedly the targets of operations – Noordin Top, Dulmatin among others—Santoso's has steadily risen since he first took over as head of the JAT's Central Sulawesi military wing in 2010.

For all these reasons, Poso has become the symbolic heart of ISIS support in Indonesia, but as noted below, this does not mean that Santoso's capture will end that support.

### B. Women

For many men who became important members of the Lamongan hub, marriage was a way of reinforcing bonds. If one could not marry a sister or daughter of a blue blood extremist, marrying an alumna from a respected radical institution, such as al-Islam, was almost as good. With many families now trying to leave for Syria, including women trying to join their husbands, widows trying to find new husbands and couples trying to build a life under an Islamic state, communication among women has taken on a new importance. In some cases the women may be as committed to ISIS as the men; in other cases the economic draw may be important. Either way, any counter-extremism program needs to focus as much on the women in the extremist community as the men, understanding their motivations for leaving and if they support ISIS, why. It would also be important to understand how much they have absorbed of ISIS propaganda about the role of women in the caliphate and how much they participate in social media discussions with Indonesian and Malaysian women and men already in Syria.

### C. The old JI schools

Four JI boarding schools come up repeatedly in this story: al-Islam in Lamongan; al-Mukmin in Ngruki; al-Muslimun in Magetan; and al-Ikhlās, also in Lamongan. Even though it is not the radical institution it once was, al-Islam continues to be a place where alumni status can give an aspiring *mujahid* legitimacy. It is also a place where important relationships were forged in the past and may continue to be cultivated. Siswanto was a teacher at al-Islam; Sibgho was a student, then a teacher; Arif Tuban was also student.

Pesantren al-Mukmin at Ngruki, Ba'asyir's school, continues to be the gift that keeps on giving to the extremist movement. Siswanto was a student there. The Medan-East Java link was facilitated by Arif Wicaksono alias Hendro, class of 2005; and Syaifudin Zuhri and Indrawarman alias Toni Togar, both from the class of 1989, one teaching in Lamongan, the other languishing in a Medan prison. To this day, Ngruki alumni status gives anyone in the extremist community instant cachet, and extremists of all stripes continue to send their sons and daughters there. Abu Fida's 17-year-old daughter, for example, is currently enrolled in its high school.

The network of some 40 JI-linked schools attracted huge attention after the 2002 Bali bombings, but as JI's influence diminished, so did concern about the schools. They are still important, however. They remain the schools where those who follow a salafi jihadi ideology send their children to study, whether they are JI, JAT, Darul Islam, KOMPAK or unaffiliated. Even as most of the would-be terrorists arrested over the last five years have come out of the state school system and not out of pesantrens, the regeneration going on in the JI schools—and the links back to such schools of those who have gone to Syria—deserves more attention.

#### *D. Mobility*

The high level of mobility of Lamongan network members is striking, a phenomenon noted in an earlier study of Indonesian extremists.<sup>31</sup> These six people alone covered East and Central Java, North Sumatra, Jakarta, Central Sulawesi and South Kalimantan, even before trying to leave for Syria. If they were not fleeing police, they would be moving about to find training sessions, study, take part in discussion groups, preach, visit friends in prison, sell herbal treatments or look for other ways to augment their income. Most of the domestic travel was over land or by ferry.

In some cases, social media contacts spurred travel to continue in person the discussions that had started online; there are limitations to how much in-depth discussion one can have over Twitter or Facebook. Extremists networks may be rooted territorially, as the Lamongan group is, but they have a much wider reach in a way that complicates police efforts to keep track of radical activity.

#### *E. Aman Abdurrahman*

Ultimately, one tie that binds many pro-ISIS groups together is the admiration for detained cleric by Aman Abdurrahman. FPI-Lamongan turned into an extremist organization after Siswanto became a dedicated follower of Aman. It was an Aman follower who helped Siswanto find refuge in Bogor after Dayat's death. Salim Mubarak, the ISIS recruiter, was also an Aman confidante. Yet in the clumsy efforts of the government to block radical websites in early March, one site that was never mentioned was [www.millahibrahim.wordpress.com](http://www.millahibrahim.wordpress.com), where tracts by Aman are regularly posted.<sup>32</sup> To date, no one from the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) has analysed what the content of Aman's teachings is, why they exert such an appeal, why they are dangerous or how they can be countered.

#### *F. Prisons*

One of the reasons we know so much about the Lamongan network is that so many of its members are or have been in prison.

- Agus Martin, the KOMPAK man married to a Lamongan woman, was arrested in August 2013 for gun-running to Poso.

31 International Crisis Group, "How Indonesian Extremists Regroup", op.cit.

32 On 30 March, the Ministry of Communication and Information blocked nineteen "radical" sites at the recommendation of BNPT. There were no published criteria for why these sites were deemed more dangerous than others. Some were pro-ISIS, some were anti-ISIS, some were firmly in the Muslim mainstream. Within a few hours, "Kembalikan Media Islam" (Give Us Back Islamic Media) had become a leading trend on Twitter, and politicians and civil society leaders of all stripes were raising concerns about limits on freedom of expression. The sites were [Arrahmah.com](http://Arrahmah.com); [voa-islam.com](http://voa-islam.com); [ghur4ba.blogspot.com](http://ghur4ba.blogspot.com); [panjimas.com](http://panjimas.com); [thoriquna.com](http://thoriquna.com); [dakwatuna.com](http://dakwatuna.com); [kafilahmujahid.com](http://kafilahmujahid.com); [an-najah.net](http://an-najah.net); [muslimdaily.net](http://muslimdaily.net); [hidayatullah.com](http://hidayatullah.com); [salam-online.com](http://salam-online.com); [aqlislamiccenter.com](http://aqlislamiccenter.com); [kiblat.net](http://kiblat.net); [dakwahmedia.com](http://dakwahmedia.com); [muqawomah.com](http://muqawomah.com); [lasdipo.com](http://lasdipo.com); [gemaislam.com](http://gemaislam.com); [eramuslim.com](http://eramuslim.com); and [daulahislam.com](http://daulahislam.com).

- Arif Tuban was arrested June 2014.
- Suyitno alias Guntur Pamungkas, one of the original FPI Lamongan group who went to Medan in 2010, was arrested in August 2014 together with Sukardi alias Kardi on suspicion of helping Santoso.
- Abu Fida, who appears periodically on the margins of the Lamongan group, was arrested in August 2014, several months after he returned from Syria.
- Adi Margono, the Magetan recruiter, was arrested in December 2014.
- Sibghotullah was rearrested in December 2014.

The fact that so many members have been arrested may indicate how thoroughly the police have penetrated the network, but it also shows the potential for any of the above to link into existing pro-ISIS groups in prison.<sup>33</sup> The Indonesian government is still struggling to put in place systems for intelligence-gathering in prison and post-release monitoring of released prisoners. It would be interesting to take the Lamongan network as a pilot project and try at least to monitor visitors, discussions (including between inmates detained in different prisons) and post-release activities for this one relatively small group.

## XI. CONSTRUCTING A COUNTER-EXTREMISM PROGRAM

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Understanding the intricacies of particular networks can help produce more targeted programs for countering violent extremism (CVE). One interesting case study is in Lamongan itself, where the efforts of Ali Imron and Ali Fauzi of the family that runs Pesantren al-Islam have at least kept supporters of Aman Abdurrahman and ISIS from conducting any radical discussions or holding activities in the subdistrict of Solokuro where the school is located. Both men were respected teachers with strong religious credentials and both had a long history of service to JI. More importantly, they had racked up an impressive number of years in actual fighting, whether in Afghanistan, Mindanao, Ambon and Poso. Using an expression borrowed from pilots, their “flying time” (*jam terbang*) in jihad gave them unmatched legitimacy. When they began to moderate their views, they were therefore able to bring many of their followers with them.

Their own reasons for moving away from violence are varied. Ali Fauzi was influenced by Ali Imron, to whom he looked up; Ali Imron became convinced that attacks on civilians in Indonesia were counterproductive. Ali Fauzi’s thinking was substantially enlarged by the university program he enrolled in when he returned from Mindanao and by his interactions with groups outside his old circle: bombing victims, academics and NGOs. Ali Imron held long discussions by telephone from Jakarta police headquarters where he is detained with teachers at al-Islam; Ali Fauzi, who is teaching at the school, had similar discussions in person. They cannot prevent some of the ongoing links into the extremist community described above, but there is at least one concrete success: there are no known pro-ISIS discussion groups taking place in the subdistrict.<sup>34</sup> (It is a very different story in Paciran, a different subdistrict of Lamongan, where Siswanto had his *pengajian*.)

Ali Fauzi is also behind an initiative that started out as a mutual aid society for veterans of the Afghanistan, Mindanao, Poso and Ambon conflicts living in the Lamongan, and has turned into a CVE effort. He had identified about a dozen families that needed economic support. If a family was having difficulty finding school funds for their children, he helped them enroll at al-Islam for next to nothing. As a group, member gave out small loans to those with sudden cash short-

<sup>33</sup> See IPAC, “Support for ‘Islamic State’ in Indonesian Prisons”, Report No.15, 19 January 2015.

<sup>34</sup> IPAC interviews in Lamongan, March 2015.

falls. They later formed a cooperative for raising goats, with the profits distributed to members. At the same time, they began an informal religious discussion where they could examine some of the tenets they had held before and try to understand the flaws.

Under Ali Fauzi's guidance, the group in late 2014 began to reach out to families of detained terrorists from Lamongan, in the hope that the families in the "new community" could gradually challenge the extremist convictions of their imprisoned relatives. One person helping with the management of the cooperative observed that economic empowerment of the women often led them to have more confidence about expressing opinions, including in speaking out against ISIS. The community also means that individuals who have decided to moderate their views need not fear ostracism from jihadi circles because they can get reinforcement from a new set of friends.

It is too soon to know if this initiative will have any impact in weakening the radical network described in this report, or even keeping the subdistrict of Solokuro free of extremist teachings, but it has promise for several reasons. Ali Fauzi, the person organising it, has credibility in the radical community, in a way that government officials or ulama identified with "moderate" organisations do not (although it should be noted that the cooperative has received a small government grant to purchase more animals).

A second element of the program is that it provides an unthreatening forum in which families of individuals in prison or in Syria can express their aspirations, economic needs and ideological convictions without fear. They are talking to people from the same area, with the same accents and often from a similar socioeconomic status.

A third element is the link to al-Islam. This may be more problematic, for while it is clear that the pesantren is no longer promoting violence, the ongoing communication between teachers and alumni can always bring radical elements back. But the idea of having a school with very low fees in an area prone to extremism that can help families while strengthening bonds among the parents is a good idea.

It would be useful to evaluate this program in two years to see how it develops, especially an environment that in the past has been more conducive to radicalisation than deradicalisation. If it seems to be successful, it might be worth replicating elsewhere, always on the basis that the legitimacy of the organiser is absolutely essential.

Initiatives such as Ali Fauzi's cannot stand alone, however. They need to be strengthened by other programs. Much more needs to be done in terms of mapping Aman Abdurrahman's followers and the discussion groups they sponsor; understanding the role of women; monitoring prisons; understanding how extremist networks expand and regroup; improving analysis of social media communications; and improving prevention efforts.

The starting point, however, is knowledge—and more case studies of groups like the Lamongan network.

## **XII. ONE FINAL NOTE: THE ROLE OF THE POLICE**

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One final lesson of the Lamongan network is that the counter-terrorism police have been reasonably effective in disrupting would-be terrorist networks, even if they have not captured Santoso. Since the government of President Jokowi took office in October 2014, there have been insinuations that the police have deliberately left Santoso alone so that they can keep the counter-terrorism funding rolling in.<sup>35</sup> At a time when corruption in senior police ranks is a topic of national discussion, it is understandable that this view should be widely held, within the political elite, civil society and the military.

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35 "DPR Curiga Isu Teroris Poso Dijadikan Proyek", *jpn.com*, 25 March 2015.

But it does a major disservice to Indonesian law enforcement efforts to suggest they have not been working hard to pursue terrorism suspects. In the last two years alone, some 100 people have been arrested on the basis of strong *prima facie* evidence and often long periods of surveillance—not counting the number arrested and released for lack of evidence. The counter-terrorism police have broken up networks that aimed to use violence in major urban areas—greater Jakarta, Surabaya and Bandung—which presumably are a greater priority than a remote jungle camp that presents little direct threat to the country's nerve center.

That said, had police relations with the military been less fraught, it almost certainly would have been possible to develop a joint plan of action that identified the whereabouts of Santoso's camp and do what was needed to dismantle it. The police, however, see the armed forces as standing in the wings, ready to take back internal security functions granted to them after the separation of the police from the military in 1999; the military sees the police as incompetent junior partners who have nevertheless secured the lion's share of security funding while the army searches for a meaningful role. Instead of cooperating to capture Indonesia's most wanted terrorist, the two agencies have made Poso a battleground for their own institutional interests.

The complexity of the Lamongan network shows, however, that the effort to combat extremism is far more than the capture of a single man or armed band. Neither terrorism nor support for ISIS will go away with the arrest of Santoso. As every country that has confronted the problem well knows, extremism is a hydra-headed problem for which there are no easy solutions.

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