

An Overview of Islamist Radicalization in Indonesia

Zhen Chen

College of Political Science and Law, Xinjiang Normal University, Urumqi, Xinjiang 830017,
China

Abstract

Influenced by the Islamization of Indonesia and international Islamic transnational movements, Islamic extremists have formed many extremist groups after the fall of the Suharto government, and these extremist groups have posed a great danger to Indonesia's national security and the security of Southeast Asia. "After September 11, the United States overthrew the Taliban regime through the "war on terror" and destroyed the strongholds of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations in South Asia to Al-Qaeda, which was based on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and its stronghold in South Asia, was forced to shift from its original centralized type to a "decentralized" direction, spreading from South Asia to Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, and conspiring with extremist groups in Southeast Asia to launch terrorist attacks. The group has also been conspiring with extremist groups in Southeast Asia to carry out terrorist attacks.

Keywords

Indonesia; Religious Extremism; House of Islam; Jemaah Islamiyah.

1. Introduction

The rise of Islamic extremism in Indonesia has its historical origins, its development, and its pattern of flourishing. Initially, Indonesians did not see Islamic extremists as a threat, but rather saw the U.S.-led global "war on terror" as a war against Muslims.[1]. Therefore, the Indonesian government's understanding of Islamic extremism has been a process. This paper will outline four aspects of Islamic extremism: its origins, its organization, its dangers, and the causes of extremist thinking.

2. The Origins of the Islamic Radicalization Movement in Indonesia

Islamic extremism in Indonesia can be traced back to the 1940s. The earliest organization was the House of Islam, founded in 1945.[2] After Indonesia gained independence from Dutch colonial rule in the 1950s, the five principles of Pancasila were adopted as the founding principles of the country, rather than Islam as the state religion. As a result, a number of Islamic groups became dissatisfied with the government's adoption of statehood principles, and the House of Islam revolted in West Java, spreading to other parts of the country until 1960, when it subsided. Realizing in the last years of his term that he had lost the support of the Indonesian military, Suharto turned to right-wing Muslims to maintain his political status quo. To achieve this goal, Suharto supported the construction of mosques. This may have been one of the early drivers of the current rise of Islamic extremism in Indonesia.

With the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, the new political environment in Indonesia allowed for the rise of previously suppressed extremist groups. Suharto's successor, Habibie, loosened controls on religious organizations and released imprisoned extremists. Wahid then followed a policy similar to Habibie's, deregulating the rhetoric of extremist Islamist groups "to undermine political pluralism and establish a caliphate. It was not until the 2002 Bali bombing that the

Indonesian government's attitude toward extremist Islamist groups shifted dramatically. The attack forced the Indonesian government to step up its efforts to combat Islamic extremism.

3. Indonesian Islamic Extremist Organization

The main extremist groups within the country of Indonesia include the House of Islam, Jemaah Islamiyah, East Indonesian Mujahideen and the Islamic State. The main extremist groups within the country are the House of Islam, Jemaah Islamiyah, East Indonesia Mujahideen and the Islamic State Terrorist Organization.

House of Islam: This organization, an offshoot of the Dar al-Islam movement in West Java, was founded in the 1930s and 1940s as a political organization opposed to Dutch colonial rule with the goal of establishing an Islamic state, and was later banned by the government. In the 1950s, the organization had a reputation for leading rebel movements in Aceh, South Sulawesi and West Java. The organization is currently divided into moderate and extremist factions. The extremist faction advocates armed struggle and receives funding from Muslims in the Middle East, Europe and the United States. The group has a military wing called the Indonesian Islamic Army (TNI), and a spokesman named Chaidar claims to have been involved in some of the attacks in Jakarta in 2011. [3]

Jemaah Islamiyah: This is the largest extremist group in Southeast Asia. Its two leaders, Sankar and Basil, were originally members of the House of Islam, which sought to establish a caliphate and impose sharia law in Indonesia after the end of Dutch colonial rule. Before establishing Jemaah Islamiyah, they were pressured to leave Indonesia and flee to Malaysia, where they recruited young Muslim volunteers to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, and in doing so established ties with the founders of al-Qaeda. After a dispute with the leader of the House of Islam, Sankar decided to start a new group, Jemaah Islamiyah, in Malaysia, and in 1998, when President Soeharto stepped down, the Indonesian government loosened its grip on the extremist group. The two leaders returned to Indonesia, and in 1999 Sankar died and Muscudi took over the organization.

East Indonesian Mujahideen: Founded in 2012, this organization is based in central Sulawesi and led by Santoso. "East Indonesian Mujahideen was first funded by raising large sums of money through fraudulent Internet activity to support its activities. Other fundraising methods include robbing banks and engaging in other criminal activities. The Indonesian government has dismantled most of the organization's structures in the past few years, but its leader Santoso remains at large and is now one of the most sought-after terrorists.

Islamic State Terrorist Organization: In 2014, extreme Indonesian "jihadists" emerged within the Islamic State terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria. Some extremist groups, including JI, began pledging allegiance to ISIS leader al-Baghdadi, and some extremists even traveled to Syria and Iraq to join the war effort. For a brief period, Indonesian Islamic State extremists publicly pledged allegiance at mosques and marched through the streets of Jakarta carrying the terror group's black flag. While the group does not have a strong organizational structure in Indonesia, it has created a climate of terror through small and medium-sized attacks. The group's attacks have included bombings and shootings at Starbucks and shopping malls in downtown Jakarta, suicide bombings against police and churches, and a knife attack on Indonesia's chief security minister. "The preferred target of Islamic State extremists in Indonesia is the police, who they believe are not a symbol of Islam.[4] . Religious minorities, including Christians, are the second most popular target of attacks against a backdrop of growing political polarization between Islamists and nationalists. "The Islamic State group has been the focus of a crackdown by the Indonesian government, which has thwarted a series of large-scale attacks by the group against the West or the Indonesian government, most notably an attempted attack on Bali and the bombing of the presidential palace.

4. The Dangers of Islamic Extremism in Indonesia

The first is the impact on the economy. On a global scale, acts of terrorism affect the stability of the world economy. "The world economy suffered a major shock after the September 11 attacks. The September 11 attacks greatly affected the economies of Asia and other regions, and the Asian recession affected Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia. Second, from a domestic perspective, several bombings by terrorist groups in Indonesia have had a significant impact on national economic growth. According to the International Monetary Fund, the Indonesian economy has suffered a decline in investor confidence due to the threat of terrorism, causing many existing domestic and foreign investors to relocate to other countries[5]. Sectors of the economy that are highly dependent on security and political stability were the most affected by the two bombings in Bali, including tourism, capital markets, investment and international trade. A large number of buildings were damaged.

Another effect of the Bali bombing was to dent stock market investor confidence, with the index of stocks listed on the Jakarta Stock Exchange falling sharply and hitting record lows. According to World Bank estimates, the Bali riots not only affected Indonesia's economic stability and consumer confidence, but also spread throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. The bombings have not only negatively affected the local tourism industry, but also created difficulties and obstacles in areas such as investment, production, and export activities

Second is the expansion of "jihad". Despite the involvement of two brothers in the Bali and Marriott hotel bombings, there is a less pronounced trend of family involvement in terrorist attacks as a whole, and terrorist attacks are primarily carried out by men. As extremist ideology continues to expand, there are new trends in terrorist attacks resulting from extremist ideology: increased reliance on family or kinship networks, the involvement of women in attacks, and the use of children in terrorist attacks is on the rise. In Indonesia, family suicide attacks that include young children are a new modus operandi. The Surabaya serial bombings were family-based, with male parents organizing the attacks, women and children participating, and highly educated families. "The emergence of the Islamic State terrorist group has provided a platform for female Muslims to participate in terrorist attacks, and to expand its membership, the group has broken through traditional restrictions and recruited female members to participate in terrorist attacks.[6]. "Female supporters of ISIS in Indonesia are active on social media, encouraging and even recruiting men to join the jihad and convincing their families to travel to Syria to join ISIS. A few women have also joined the "East Indonesian Mujahideen" and become guerrillas in Poso, either helping their husbands build bombs or volunteering as suicide bombers. In addition to women, there is a growing trend for children to be involved in terrorist attacks. Bloom's research shows that the Islamic State has made widespread use of children and youth as terrorists.

It will end up causing widespread human casualties. Indonesia and Southeast Asian countries have experienced two waves of terrorism. The first wave was the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in Indonesia. The second wave began with the Islamic State and its affiliates. According to statistics, Indonesia has had the highest number of deaths due to terrorism in some years since 9/11. 2015 ranked Indonesia at the top of the list of countries severely affected by terrorism. The years 2015-2016 were the most rampant years for the terrorist group "Islamic State," which launched frenzied attacks in cities in 15 countries, including Indonesia.

In summary, we can see that Islamist extremist groups have a huge impact in influencing the economy, expanding "jihad" and endangering human security.

5. Causes of Islamic Extremist Thought in Indonesia

As a country with a large population, Indonesia has been repeatedly plagued by extremism and terrorism. At the material level, the causes of extremism can be broadly attributed to political inequality, injustice, and anti-Western sentiments. At the cultural level, it is primarily the result of the extreme Islamic narratives of extremist Islamic groups such as the House of Islam, whose attempt to hand over western Java to Dutch occupation forces in 1949 spurred the House of Islam's anti-government. The insurgency began in West Java and southern Sulawesi. Another extremist ideology comes from Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian militant group with strong ties to al-Qaeda that has carried out numerous bombing attacks in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, including the 2002 Bali bombing and the Marriott Hotel bombing. The spread of Islamic extremist ideology is largely due to the rapid political and social changes in Southeast Asia, particularly the Islamization in the context of rapid political and social change. Domestic Islamization. Over the past few decades, the Islamization of Indonesian society has gradually become more overt. As the process of Islamization has accelerated, Islam has increasingly become the defining variable behind political debates and the most important frame of reference for many Indonesians thinking about socio-political systems, believing that Islam can bring about social justice and development worthy of the name. This expansion of so-called "global indigenous" Islam is linked to the growth of individual religious beliefs in the public sphere and the proliferation of Islamic institutions[7]. Indeed, while most Muslims in Indonesia are tolerant and moderate, and Islamization does not necessarily promote Islamic extremism, it does foster a Muslim community that is more supportive of, or at least sympathetic to, Islamist views and agendas. The turmoil that followed the fall of the Suharto government, beginning in 1998, also provided political space and opportunities for hardline Islamists to organize, recruit, and mobilize followers.

Transnational Influence of Islamic Movements. International Islamist influence has also been an important factor in the emergence of Islamic extremism in Indonesia. In the final years of the Suharto New Order regime, the flourishing of transnational Islamist narratives and extremism laid the groundwork for the explosion of radical Islamist groups in the post-Suharto Indonesian political arena. Members of these groups joined the "jihadists" in Indonesia to pursue "jihadi" activities. The key to the success of the Islamic movement was the pre-existing Islamic networks, which grew universally throughout the country as Islamic ideology flourished. Social networks such as Islamic groups such as dawa groups, madrassas, mosques, and the media allowed individuals the opportunity to interact, negotiate, and create conceptual and motivational frameworks for their actions. Islamic groups closely link domestic events to crisis events in the Islamic world, citing sharia law, "jihad" and the establishment of a "caliphate" as the only solutions to domestic crisis events in Indonesia. These groups question the modern form of the nation-state while expressing a keen interest in transforming Indonesia into a "caliphate".

Rejection of secularism, nationalism and democracy. Indonesia's 1945 constitution deliberately avoided designating Islam as the official religion of Indonesia, providing for freedom of religion and granting "the right of all persons to worship according to their religion or belief." The first tenet of Pancasila, the state ideology since 1945, proclaims a belief in one God without specifying which God, and the constitution does not grant Shariah privileges. As a result, Islamic groups have long perceived the Indonesian government as biased and unhappy with Islamic law and governance. Some organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah and the Indonesian Liberation Organization also reject the concept of a nation-state, seeking instead to establish an Islamic caliphate composed of Southeast Asian Muslims. In addition, Islamists consider democracy to be Western and un-Islamic, and certain human and political rights to be un-Islamic and sinful.

Rejecting religious pluralism. Religious tolerance has long been a delicate balancing act in Indonesia. The vast majority of Indonesians are Sunni Muslims, but there are also large Christian, Hindu, Shiite Muslim, and indigenous religious groups. Radical Islamists strongly oppose Muslim "heretics" and Christian missionaries, and Islamists also oppose policy measures to promote pluralism and "liberalism" within Islam.

Islamists oppose modernization. Islamic radicals see modernization and development in Indonesia as a process of Westernization, which they believe will weaken Islamic values. "The founder of the Pembela Islamic Front argues that Islamic values are being "squeezed by Western decadence, secularism, liberalism and immorality, a process accelerated by rapid democratic reforms. This opposition is manifested in a variety of areas: attacks on "liberal" Islam in the theological sphere, efforts to ban Western music, movies, and concerts in the cultural sphere, and a ban on modern women's clothing in the social and moral spheres.

6. Conclusion

Islamic extremism refers to psychosocial processes that gradually point to extreme religions, which may not necessarily lead to violence, but are one of several risk factors necessary for violence. The polarization that leads to violent extremism is a social and psychological process that is exacerbated through participation in violent non-state movements. Violent extremism manifests itself in two ways: membership in organizations that perpetrate violence and participation in violent activities. Thus, efforts to prevent violent extremism center on reducing violent participation and changing the ideology or perceptions of individuals. The main effort of the "de-radicalization" program is to work to change the ideology or perceptions of extremists, which in turn reduces violent extremist activity.

References

- [1] Smith, "The Politics of Negotiating the Terrorist Problem in Indonesia", Conflict and Terrorism, Volume 28, Issue 1, 2005, p.37.
- [2] Francisco Galamas, "Terrorism in Indonesia: An Overview," Institute of Strategic Studies at Espany Art Institute, 04/2015 , p. 1.
- [3] Li Wei et al., Yearbook of International Terrorism and the Struggle against Terrorism, Center for Counterterrorism Studies, Institute of Modern International Relations, Beijing, Current Affairs Press, 2003, p. 207.
- [4] Quinton Temby, "Terrorism in Indonesia after 'Islamic State'", Yusof Ishak Institute, Issue3, 2020, p. 2.
- [5] Muhammad Hatta, "The Impact of Terrorism on Indonesia's Economic Stability", International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, Volume 9, Issue 2, 2019, p. 338.
- [6] Kirsten E. Schulze, "The Jihadi Threat to Indonesia," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, June /July 2018, p. 4.
- [7] David Timberman, "Violent Extremism and Insurgency in Indonesia: A Risk Assessment", United States Agency for International Development, January 7, 2013, pp. 2-3.