

Enhancing the Role of Religious Education in Countering Violent Extremism in Indonesia – **CONVEY Indonesia**

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CONVEY Indonesia aims to build peace in Indonesia and to prevent violent extremism and radicalism through a series of research-survey, policy advocacy, and public interaction based on the potential of religious education.

CONVEY Indonesia project covers on the issues of tolerance, diversity, and non-violence among youth

Rehabilitation of Victims: Learning from Former NII activist, Gafatar and Deportant/ Returnee ISIS

Indonesian Muslim Crisis Center (IMCC)

Key Messages

- Former activists of the Indonesian Islamic State Movement (NII) are significantly involved in the terrorist acts in Indonesia. Many cases indicate that when someone quits from NII, the next way of life is to engage in terrorist networks. Therefore, intervention from government or reintegration program into moderate society is strongly recommended.
- The Fajar Nusantara Movement (Gafatar) is not a pro-violence group. The group is concerned with food security issue. Gafatar became a national issue after being declared heretical by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and accused of committing treason against the government. The false fatwa and accusation of treason resulted in the emergence of attitudes and acts of public violence against its members and their constitutional rights are taken away. In the case of Gafatar, it is important to discuss reparation efforts including the restoration of victims' rights and the restoration of stigma circulating in the community, also to discuss especially on how the government handles such cases.
- ISIS is an extremist group. Because of its propaganda in the name of Islam, this group has drawn the attention of Muslims around the world to do "hijra" to Syria and join the militant group there. Some of them are deported before they got there (deportant) and some of them are already there, then went back to Indonesia voluntarily (returnee).
- So far, the government only responded to emergency response to issues, where no sustainability program could be measured in terms of success or failure, so that the program is only limited to sheer annual routine programs and repeated with the same method every year. Cooperation with multi-stakeholder is needed to resolve this issue, including moderate religious leaders to respond to Islamic teachings used in radical and extremist group propaganda such as ISIS and NII.

Background

From 1999 to 2013, many terrorists and suicide bombers according to their ideology is a member or former NII activist. They are generally dissatisfied with NII activities that have not shown significant changes in the effort to establish an Islamic state. Imam Samudra and Mukhlas are examples of this section. Both were the main perpetrators of Bali bombings on October 12, 2002. In addition, Iwan Darmawan, the bomber at the Australian Embassy on September 9, 2004 has also been active in NII Banten region. Iwan is now a supporter of ISIS with Aman Abdurahman, who was originally from the Salafi movement

before then transformed into a jihadist group and eventually ISIS supporters.

NII is not a monolithic organization. There are at least two important factions in NII body, which are NII Territory and NII non-Territory. NII Territory is a group that claims to still connected with the first NII priest namely Kartosoewirjo. This faction is held by Panji Gumilang known as Abu Toto. They called as NII Territory because this group has a clear (territory) operating area, such as Al Zaytun Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu, West Java. This group is also known as NII KW9 which has undergone its movement metamorphosis.

Meanwhile, non-Territory NII is the faction that does not have a clear operating area. The group is believed to have many activists who migrate to pro-violence (terrorist) Islam groups. Abu Umar's group, book bombing by Pepi Fernando's group, Santoso Daeng Koro's group, and Kuningan bomber Heri Gulun are examples of this faction. Besides, this faction has also mixed with other ideologies such as Salafi, Ikhwanul Muslimin, and Shi'ah.

But that does not mean there are no members of the NII KW 9 group who move to terrorist groups. For example is the bomber in front of Australian embassy named Iwan Darmawan known as Rois (former NII Banten) and the Vihara bomber named Miko (former NII Jember). Iwan Group is also known as Ring Banten. The group dissociate from NII KW9 which later involved in a terrorist network led by Dulmatin in military training in Jonto, Aceh in 2010.

Another interesting case of NII KW 9 is the Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (NIIS) or better known as ISIS. Related to this, NII KW 9 is not believed to be a pro-violence group except by its former activists. This group uses religion as a tool for the collection of money on behalf of infaq and sodaqoh to build an Islamic state in Indonesia.

Gafatar is also not a pro-violence group. The group focuses on food security efforts and living a religious life. The existence of this group became a national issue when declared as heretical and violate mainstream Islam by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) and accused of committing treason against the government. Its members are then subjected to massive violence and their constitutional rights are ignored, even today.

While ISIS is regarded as the most dangerous group especially over its propaganda using violence in the name of Islam. This group massively persuades Muslims throughout the world to join and emigrate to Syria. Some of them are deported before they reach Syria. While some others have already arrived but chose to return to Indonesia. ISIS as stated in United Nations Security Council resolution on 15 August 2014 declared as a terrorist organization. On October 11, 2014, Indonesian government

through the courts also stated ISIS as a forbidden organization and terrorist group.

This Policy Brief is to describe how former activists, deportants and previous returnee are interested in joining these groups. Furthermore, this paper describes how they quit or separated themselves from the group.

Methodology

This brief is based on the findings of policy research for the rehabilitation of former NII activists, Gafatar, and ISIS deportees and returnee by the IMCC (2017). Subjects of this study is selected according to; first, NII was studied because the group had contribute significantly to a number of terrorist acts in Indonesia, even many of its former members became key actors in several major terrorist movements. The research focuses on the people who involved with and how they quit from NII KW9 as well as how they are subsequently doing social reintegration independently.

Secondly, Gafatar was scrutinized because there was an oddity in the way how government handled this group. Especially after the rampant cases and news about the eviction of this group – that allegedly heretical by the MUI and feared to commit treason by the government – from several areas of its association including the latter in West Kalimantan (2016). Yet in the end, the accusation of treason can not be proved in court. While stigmatization of Gafatar as an extremist group from the results of previous media framing is still not recovered and the government still has not made reparation efforts to this phenomenon.

The third is ISIS, a group that uses violence to achieve its goals and in the name of religion. The government through the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (BNPT) estimates that 800-1000 Indonesians have moved to Syria and joined the militant group around 2014-2016. As of December 2017, the number who deported and rehabilitated through government programs are 240 people, while returnee are only approximately 18 people. The difference between these two entities is that the deportants

still have a desire to move to Syria and live under the auspices of the Islamic state, while returnee no longer has such wishes, even many of them are deeply disappointed by the reality contrary to the beautiful images they get from the internet.

These three subject groups are often associated one another. Albeit the background and profile of those involved are not linear to each other even some has no relationship at all. An example is deportee case of Triyono, an employee of the Ministry of Finance who quit his job to join ISIS in Syria, but was deported by the Turkish government in 2017. There is also a case of former Chairman of the National Youth Committee of Indonesia (KNPI) Depok-West Java, Dody Riyanto (2000-2013) who joined ISIS. Neither Triyono nor Dody, both of whom have no previous radical group background.

Research is done using qualitative method through structured interview and literature review. The research focus emphasizes the question of how they were previously involved and quit the group. The amount of respondents interviewed are up to 46 people, with composition of 20 ex-NII, 16 ex-Gafatar, and 10 families of ISIS deportee and returnee. The research conducted from August 2017 to February 2018.

Key Findings

Learn from Those Involved

Members of NII and Gafatar previously joined their organizations because they know or invited by the closest people like friends, relatives, or teachers. This pattern is actually common when someone joined into a group. According to Marc Sageman, this model in the case of Al-Qaeda is referred to as social affiliation with the form of friendship, kinship, and discipleship.¹

This pattern is somehow different from the reason why people join ISIS, where the main factor is the influence of the media, especially social media. This is expressed by Nurshadrina. The reason she came to Syria because she interested in the narration of hijra and Islamic caliphate in Syria that she got from social media.

¹ Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), h. 107-119.

Nursahdrina is one of 18 returnee who managed to return to Indonesia after escaping from ISIS in 2017. Nur is the second child of the couple Joko Wiwoho and Ratna Nirmala. The father, Joko Wiwoho is the Director of Integrated Services One Door Entity Agency (BP) Batam. Nur was forced to quit school when grade 2 high school because her family decided to move to Syria.²

Nur said, she often read on the website which convey the command that Muslims are obliged to emigrate to the blessed Sham's earth. The dream to get a guaranteed life as in the time of the khilafah lived by the Prophet also became the driving force of himself and the family migrated to Syria. Nur explained that the motive of why she wanted to move with her family to Syria was tempted by the promises of prosperity propagated, such as the life of the free, peaceful and worthy lives. Nur also believes that the earth Sham (Syria and surrounding areas) is a blessed country. Apart from being the place of the Imam Mahdi, the country of Sham is a land that implements Islamic law so that the chances of living a full Islamic life under the umbrella of the Caliphate can be applied.³

Social media has a strong appeal to influence a person and be one of the main tools for introducing the ISIS ideology. The case of Ade Ahmad aka Abu Daud aka Abu Marwah illustrates this point. Ade was arrested on January 8, 2016 at a house in Koja, Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta by Densus 88. He was involved in throwing Molotov bomb into a minibus car with TV One logo during the celebration of New Year's Eve 2016 in Bandung Square. Ade was born in Bandung, January 17, 1967. In the beginning of 2014, Ade followed the news about the conflict in the Middle East, especially the news about the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Syria. He then began to join a group account on Facebook that discussed the khilafah in Syria and eventually make friends with fellow Facebook users who support the establishment of the khilafah. In the group account, Ade was involved in discussions about the conflict in the Middle East, the formation of the Islamic Daulah led by Abu Bakar Al-Bagdadi,

² Interview of IMCC Research Team with Nurshadrina on October 20, 2017 in Depok, West Java.

³ Interview of IMCC Research Team with Nurshadrina on October 20, 2017 in Depok, West Java.

about migrating to Syria and jihad in Syria.⁴

NII often uses the promise of the afterlife in their recruitment process. The concept of heaven promised by NII recruiters for example, is very bewitching those whose understanding of Islam is inferior. This is experienced by Agus Dedi aka Ahmad Shodiq. Agus is a former activist of NII KW9. He entered NII as persuaded by his friend in 1992. At that time, Agus known as a thug who like to fight. The promise of heaven that must be pursued by way of jihad enlighten him to apply it immediately to make up for all his sins. As a form of commitment, he gives charity and alms every month to contribute to the NII.⁵

The ISIS deportee case tells another story. Those who want to join ISIS simply because of the minim knowledge of his religion. This was revealed by Ahbar Muzakir.⁶ Ahbar express his travel plan to Syria to join the extremist group is believed to be based on the end-time traditions, such as *ya'tu 'alaika bil syam*, which means go thou all to Sham. Despite failing to migrate to Syria, Ahbar believes that his intention has been recorded by Allah as a practice of worship. Ahbar said that if there is an opportunity to volunteer again, he will register.⁷

Different from the process of recruitment of former Gafatar. Aside of being invited by their close friends, they are also personally interested in Gafatar activities which focuses on food security and social welfare aspects. Rudi Handoko and Muhammad Syamsudin for example, joined the Gafatar members for their friend's appeal. Before entering Gafatar, Rudi was a food street vendor nearby schools. He then traveled to West Kalimantan as keen to the promised plot of land that he could use to grow crops. With the money of ten million from selling some of his precious properties, he moved along with his wife and two children. Together with other Gafatar members from Bogor dcultivationistrict, he was placed in Landak Village, Ngabang District. His first activity was to open land for rice cultivation and

4 Allegation document against Ade Ahmad a.k.a Abu Daud a.k.a Abu Marwah (State Attorney of East Jakarta, May 2016)

5 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Agus Dedi a.k.a Ahmad Shodiq on 28 September 2017 in Bandung, West Java.

6 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Ahbar Muzakir on 4 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

7 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Ahbar Muzakir on 4 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

various vegetables. However, before enjoying the harvest season, he was repatriated by the government due to tension in Mempawah area. He even already obtain a West Kalimantan ID card.⁸

Meanwhile, Muhammad Syamsudin went to East Kalimantan to open a car interior services business. He later then met a member of Gafatar who is a professor and interested to enter the organization. The reason is because the programs are active in humanity and social welfare agenda. After a while, he was asked to become chairman of the City Leadership Council (DPK) in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. In early 2016, he was repatriated simultaneously by the government due to unrest in Mempawah. Though at that time, his interior services business has been growing rapidly and has had some land assets in East Kalimantan. At the time of his return, he was adjudicated by the village and told to reread the two sentences of the shahadah. Until now, he still believes in the teachings of Gafatar because it does not contradict the ideology of Pancasila.⁹

Learning from Those Who Quit

One of the factors that driving NII activists out of their organizations is because they are disappointed with the behavior of their leaders and the perceived misappropriation of religious shari'a. This disillusionment in John Horgan term is called 'psychological disengagement' where someone comes out of disappointment because the fact that happened is not in accordance with what he expected. Horgan gave the example of a Jamaah Islamiyah activist, Nasir Abbas who left his organization out of disappointment with the actions of his group that attacked innocent people. It is important to note that when they leave NII, it does not mean they are joining the moderate group. Many cases also show that many of those who came out of NII then engage in terrorist networks.

There is no disappointment factor that underlies people quit from Gafatar. In general, they are barely disappointed with the government's

8 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Rudi Handoko on 4 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

9 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Muhammad Syamsudin on 4 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

policy to evacuate them from Kalimantan. They were also disappointed with MUI's false fatwa which did not show any tabayyun (critical analysis) process towards Gafatar before issuing the fatwa. Suparta, one of the respondents who has stayed more than a year with the Gafatar community in West Kalimantan, feels his life is economically and socially much better than before. His farming business in West Kalimantan with Gafatar experience improvement.¹⁰ Another respondent, Agus Supriyadi, said that there is nothing wrong in Gafatar because there is no value or anti-Pancasila teachings in it. In addition, campaign activities are only about food security which, according to Agus, actually helps the Indonesian government.¹¹

Furthermore, for deportant cases, no one expressed disappointment towards ISIS. In fact, they still have a desire to migrate and live under the auspices of Islam. While returnee expressed disappointment towards ISIS because the picture in social media does not match the reality they meet in the country of Sham. Adnan Ruswandi, for example, said that most importantly he had intended to emigrate and have a desire to stay under the auspices of the khilafah.¹² Compared to returnee, the deportants still have a strong ideology of support for ISIS. This is supported by the fact that three deportants have received rehabilitation programs from the Indonesian government but were subsequently arrested by Densus 88 for planning terrorist acts.

Nurshadrina is one of the returnee who also research respondents. She and her family migrated for receiving news from the internet that if living under the auspices of ISIS life would be completely gratis and blessed as in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. But once she gets there, she finds a life far from it. Then they decided to leave ISIS region and return to Indonesia.¹³

In the strategy of handling radical groups of pro-violence and non-violence, it is important to

10 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Suparta on 5 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

11 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Agus Supriyadi on 6 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

12 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Adnan Ruswandi on 6 October 2017 in Bogor, West Java.

13 Interview of IMCC Research Team with Nurshadrina on 20 October 2017 in Depok, West Java.

comprehend by the stakeholders to learn from those who quit by reviewing the condition of their disappointment with the group that they followed before. This condition can be used as an initial assessment for the government and BNPT. Through interviews with many respondents, it indicates that people who experience disappointment of the group is much easier to follow the deradicalization program than those who have not experienced disappointment. Those who are disappointed means already quit from their group or that their opinions are already shifted so it is easy to mold their attitude and behavior. While those who have not experienced disappointment means the former ideology is still inherent which most likely still they adhere. When someone quit from their previous group, the process of deradicalization is clearly essential to disseminate and internalize moderate religious values.

Response to NII, Gafatar and ISIS

So far, the government has only conducted emergency response to such problems. The government seems to act after a case or event emerge, while the prevention or sustainability efforts of the response is not a priority. One good example of the response is producing Terrorism Act in 2003 after Bali bombing on October 12, 2002. Yet aside from that, the government still does not have any regulation to handle global terrorism movement, such as the emergence of ISIS group that leaves plenty of problems in Indonesia like terrorist foreign fighter (terrorists operating in other countries), homegrown terrorism (territorial terrorist) and lonewolf terrorism (unaffiliated terrorist).

Claims against a certain group on a national scale by the government's associate, in this case the MUI fatwa that declared Gafatar as heretical, has trigger the upswing of the problems and induce violence against Gafatar members. When MUI states Gafatar as a heretic, Gafatar members are immediately turn into subject of violence by other civilians. Therefore, to prevent such fatwa to justify violence of certain people or groups, there should be transparency in the formulation and comparison of fatwa from other representative Islamic organizations in

Indonesia such as NU and Muhammadiyah. NU has a mechanism to issue a religious view called Bahtsul Masail, while Muhammadiyah has a fatwa institution called as Tarjih institution. The existence of comparative fatwa is important, because deciding cases in Islamic law is not easy and often leads to many disagreements. It is therefore important for law enforcers not to use the MUI fatwa as the basis of a single national law in deciding a case. It is important to note that the MUI fatwa is not the basis of Indonesian law. Therefore, law enforcers cannot decide based on the fatwa.

One of the main problems in this issue, particularly NII and ISIS is the lack of a broad understanding on how to practice religion. Learning from those who desist and formerly persuade, opportunities and insights to former NII and ISIS shall be provided. The vast majority of former NII activists expressed confidence and were on the right path when deciding to quit their group after gaining a broader perspective from various aspects including from religious leaders and friends. Besides, it is also essential to offering facts that can be seen (the process of cognition dissonance).

Meanwhile, the most favorable instrument is through reintegration or rehabilitation programs conducted in a moderate pesantren. IMCC conducted intervention towards returnee at Al-Hikam Islamic Boarding School in Depok, West Java, established by the late KH Hasyim Muzadi, a leading moderate Islamic figure. This method is seen quite effective in providing openminded perspective to them about how vast the teachings of Islam. From their testimony, they said that the program to stay at pesantren could help strengthen their beliefs to quit from their previous group.

So far, pesantren as an educational institution have not been integrated in the CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) programs. Pesantren generally only provide religious education but do not provide enough support for those who want to do self reflection, repentance or hijrah process. So pesantren should get supports from various parties, especially government to facilitate pesantren to teach moderate Islamic

values in order to strengthen the nationalism reintegration program for those who have been exposed to radicalism and extremism.

It is important to encourage, strengthen and develop what has been done by some civil society groups, for instance Wahid Foundation which conducted peace program in several villages (peaceful village) in Indonesia. This program can be effective to prevent those who have not involved with exclusive groups. In addition, it is also important to integrate the program with economic sustainability of a community with the village. The best practice experience of an area that has been carried out by civil society groups is vital to be disseminated into other areas. The government in this case needs to determine the standardization of a successful village (advanced) in which one aspect characterizes diversity with the strengthening of tolerance and strengthen the values of peace.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The research toward former NII, Gafatar and ISIS shows a concern for state agencies such as BNPT, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Home Affairs and law and regulation authorities.

BNPT needs to take two important mechanisms in assessing a group. First by using the initial assessment between the person who disappointed then decided to leave the group. Both with those who have not expressed disappointment so that they still believe in the ideology of the group. From these two aspects, the most effective and prioritized for deradicalization program is towards those who have been disillusioned with the group.

While people who have not felt any disappointment need to consider another approach. Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Social Affairs can play a significant role in approaching people who have not felt disappointment by doing dissonance cognition that the government and the people of Indonesia is not as bad as what they imagine.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Religious Affairs need to maintain

pesantren to play a role in rehabilitation and reintegration programs, especially for former ISIS activists. So far, pesantren has not been seen as an integrated institution in the handling of pro-violence groups in the name of religion.

Civil society groups need to play an active role in handling the problems of prevention and countering radicalism. It is also important to

note that it is not only talking about a peaceful village program with a series of cognitions but also integrates with the economic sustainability of a community and village. The government needs to formulate an applicable concept of a successful village (advanced), in which one of its elements characterizes Indonesia's diversity. This can be done in cooperation with Ministry of Rural Development.



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