

STEPPING OUT OF EXTREMISM

Eight Stories of "*Hijrah*"
from Violence to Peacebuilding

Translator:
CMM Translation

Proofreader:
Sinta D. Ratnawati



Contributors:
Ali Nur Sahid • Fini Rubianti • Husni Mubarak
Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem • Zainal Abidin Bagir
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Translated from the book under the title of "*Keluar dari Ekstremisme*"
published by PUSAD Paramadina, 2018

ISBN: 978-623-93015-4-5

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Published by
PPIM UIN Jakarta
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Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Barat,
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Introduction

Lately there have been many studies and documentations in Indonesia on how people become radicals, extremists, or even terrorists. However, only a few of them focus on the reverse process: how and why people stop from being radicals, extremists, terrorists.

This is unfortunate, because just as a radicalization process can be studied, so can the deradicalization process. This is the process that we call in this book “personal transformation” or “*hijrah*” from extremism to peace-building.

There are eight *hijrah* stories told in this book. They include a former child soldier in Maluku, a former terrorist-jihadist in Poso, a reconciliator between opposing parties concerning 1965 incident in Java and East Nusa Tenggara, and some former victims/perpetrators in violent conflict in Ambon and Aceh.

Since Indonesia is still disturbed by various types of extremism, it is crucial for this nation to listen and learn from their experiences. Shouldn't we learn from history and, as the proverb says, it is better not to fall twice into the same hole?

With the work completed, first of all we would like to thank the authors whose stories are included in this book. They are the main

actors of this book. Without their support, this work would not have been started.

We also would like to extend our gratitude to the contributors, who have strived to interview their sources and written about it here. All of them, both men and women, are the best supporting casts who are reliable in dry or rainy season.

Finally, on behalf of PUSAD Paramadina, we would like to thank Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), State Islamic University (UIN), Jakarta. Thanks to their trust, along with UNDP and Convey, PUSAD Paramadina could do this *amaliyat*.

May our works be beneficial. Amen.

Jakarta, 10 February 2017

Ihsan Ali-Fauzi

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Introduction

Stepping out of Extremism: “Hijrah” from Violence to Peacebuilding

Ihsan Ali-Fauzi

There are many researches who have studied how people become extremists (radicals, or even terrorists) in Indonesia, but only very few researches have been doing the reverse process: why and how people *stop* from being extremists. Garfinkel (2007) suggested that this process is called “personal transformation” from being an extremist to being an opponent. In this book, we refer to it as a “*hijrah*” from violence (extremist) to peacebuilding.

Concerning its scarcity, Indonesia does not need to be disappointed because the world has the same general tendency: people prefer to learn radicalization process rather than deradicalization, just as many peace studies institutions strangely prefer to investigate themes related to violent conflict and war instead of cooperation. We are being unfair by wanting people to stop being radicals or extremists, but what we observe and learn more is how people become radicals and extremists.

The scarcity mentioned above is unfortunate because of at least three interrelated factors. *First*, as shown by many recent literatures on deradicalization (Horgan, 2009; Bjørgo, 2009; Ashour, 2009), we can actually scientifically learn on how people are no longer or stop being radicals (meaning: stop using violent methods to fight for

their interests) or terrorists. Even though it is complex, the two main factors which are often mentioned to stop people from being radicals/terrorists/extremists are: (1) internal motivation to quit (push factors) such as disappointment toward a leader, an ideology or a method and tactics used by the group or network, the feeling of no longer belong to the group/network, stronger preventive efforts by the security forces, and others; and (2) external pull (pull factors), such as increasingly positive perception on competitors and opponents, consideration on the future career or family, and others (see Bjørge, 2009).

Literatures on deradicalization and peacebuilding also show that in many cases, the main factors mentioned above reinforce one another; they work to strengthen each other in a mutually reinforcing loop (enforcement loops) (Hwang, 2016). For example, disappointment on the use of terror tactics by an organization's leader is reinforced by the growing perspective that the use of violent acts is counterproductive for the organization's purpose. Or, disappointment on the tactics or the organization's leader strongly motivates someone to leave the organization due to the developing new relationships with people outside the organization. In addition, everything usually takes place in a long and lonely "search". Reflecting on the religious extremism cases, Garfinkel stated that "The change from religious extremist to proponent of peace can be a spiritual transformation, much akin to religious conversion" (2007:11).

Second, knowing the factors above will help us facilitate or encourage more people already a part of radical/terrorist group/network to leave. This certainly will not be easy, undoubtedly; it will greatly depend on how important the position of each radical/terrorist in their respective groups/networks and the reasons that motivate them to join in the first place. However, it is a consensus that people whose involvement are motivated by non-ideological reasons (grudge, jump on a bandwagon, solidarity for friends or relatives, or economic) and belong to a less ideological or non-ideological position

in the movement/network (mere supporter or social media admin, for example) will leave the group/network more easily (Bjørge and Horgan, 2009; Karnavian, 2010).

Third, advocacy or anti-radicalism, anti-extremism or anti-terrorism campaign, or campaign opposing all the three, will be more effective if it is done by letting the people who have gone through the personal transformation mentioned above tell the process that they personally experienced to the public (Garfinkel, 2007), especially if it is done through audio-visual means like exemplified by the duet of Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye from Nigeria in *The Imam and the Pastor* (Ali-Fauzi and Agustina, 2017). It is done so because it will leave a more lasting impression, as well as more easily digested by the public than if it is described by other people.

By taking into account various backgrounds as explained above, this book is meant to overcome the scarcity of documentation on personal transformation or *hijrah* from the violence by extremists to peacebuilding. There are eight people whose biographies are featured here: (1) Ronald Regang (former child soldier in Maluku, male, Christian); (2) Arifuddin Lako (former victim/perpetrator of violent conflict in Poso, male, Muslim); (3) Pastor Palti Hatoguan Panjaitan (victim/religious freedom activist in Bekasi, male, Christian); (4) Khairunisak Rusli (perpetrator of separatist violent conflict in Aceh who is now working as a politician, female, Muslim); (5) Baihajar Tualeka (victim/perpetrator of communal violent conflict in Ambon, female, Muslim); (6) Kyai Imam Aziz (Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board who recommended a reconciliation between NU and victims of the 1965 incident, male, Muslim); (7) Mery Kolimon (pastor and academics who recommended church reconciliation with the victims related to the 1965 incident, female, Christian); and (8) Jacky Manuputty (victim/perpetrator of communal violent conflict in Maluku, male, Christian). In our assessment, they all now work for peacebuilding efforts in its general context.

As seen from the brief identity description above, the eight figures are diverse in terms of the type of violent conflict they were involved or their involvement whether as a victim or a perpetrator or as both (communal violent conflict, terrorist, and separatist); in terms of gender (five males and three females); in terms of the location where they operate (Aceh, Bekasi/Yogyakarta, Poso, Ambon, Kupang); and in terms of the “degree” of their extremism and transformation (if not in violence, then in the peacebuilding efforts). Finally, although they do not fully reflect the religious diversity of Indonesia (of eight people, there are only four Muslims and four Christians, with no representative from Buddhism or Kaharingan, or other religions and beliefs), they represent the communities that are often involved in violent conflicts in Indonesia recently.

Why are the choices of people so diverse, yet at the same time also limited, to include people who are definitely not terrorists or even extremists such as Imam Aziz or Mery Kolimon? Why did not we focus on the figures who represent one form of extremist violence and increase the number of cases? Why did we use biography?

The remainder of this introduction will try to answer those questions. However, before going deeper into the topic, we – both editors and contributors – need to mention that this book is meant as a pilot whose work was constrained by the resource and budget availability. As the beginning we would like to propose an idea on research and documentation approach – so that we are not accused of being NATO (No Action, Talk Only!), we try to give an example on how the idea is tested withing limitations.¹

1 I often use the pronoun “we” here as I took the liberty of speaking in the name of my other colleagues who gave their contributions in this book. However, that is how it is. We discussed the idea of this book together from the beginning, as well as the various implementation phases, in various meetings. All of us care and would like to do something useful to strengthen democracy (peaceful and non-violent conflict resolution mechanism) in Indonesia by looking at what the religious elements (actor, institution, teaching), whose influence is very strong in this country, can contribute. We also seek to minimize complaints and increase the acts of kindness. This is how the case is.

Not only Terrorism - “Hijrah” toward Peacebuilding

Apart from the technical issues mentioned above, we also have other more substantive reasons that encourage us to choose the eight figures and use biography to tell their stories. In the early parts of this introduction, it has been said that researches and documentations on people who experience personal transformation or *hijrah* are still very limited in Indonesia. Unfortunately, the small number of existing literatures about it are not to our satisfaction either due to two main reasons.

First, the existing researches are more pertinent to terrorist violence (such as in IPAC, 2014; Karnavian, 2010; Hwang, Panggabean and Ali-Fauzi, 2013; and Hwang, 2016). Even though it is obviously crucial (Ali-Fauzi and Solahudn, 2017), it is also clear that the forms of extremism are not limited to terrorist violence (performed by organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah or what lately happened in Poso, Central Sulawesi, for example). However, as we all know, extremism in Indonesia also takes the form of other violent actions, such as communal violence (like what happened between Muslims and Christians in Ambon in 1989 or mass killings of former PKI members or sympathizers following the 30 September 1965 incident), and separatist violence (like what happened in Aceh or Papua). There will be more forms of extremism if we include other forms of violence, such as sectarian violence (Sunni versus Ahmadiyya or Shia, for example) or even daily violence (Jaffrey, 2017).

In this book, out of eight figures whose *hijrah* stories are rewritten, only one was involved in terrorist violence (Arifuddin Lako, or Iin Brur, in Chapter II and written by Ihsan Ali-Fauzi). In addition to acknowledge that terrorist violence is indeed an important form of extremism in Indonesia, we include this figure because he brought a new method in combatting extremism, which is by making semi-documentary film based on his own experience. Other than that, the involvement of the other figures were not in terrorist violence context.

By writing the *hijrah* biographies of these figures, we hope that we can show the process of why and how they could perform *hijrah*, which later can be compared to the process that happened to people who were involved in terrorist violence. We feel that the constant emphasis of the current researches which are mostly on terrorist violence, we might miss an opportunity to examine and learn from the similarities of the reason and process that might also encourage or pull people to leave from other forms of extremism.

In addition, by showing the stories of non-terrorist figures, we would also like to draw our attention to the fact that non-terrorism violence is just as horrific and destructive as terrorist violence. All along we have the impression that we only react if what awaits us is the threat of terrorism. If Indonesia wants to grow healthier as a country of *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity), as promised by its motto when the country was formed, then everything needs to change.

By reading the explanation of Jacky Manuputty on Ronald Regang (Chapter I), for example, we will become aware of how destructive communal violence in Ambon was toward children, while we keep ignoring the fate of former child soldiers who used to be involved in it like Ronald. Meanwhile, by reading the efforts of Imam Aziz and Syarikat in building a bridge between NU and the victims of the 1965 incident (in Chapter VI, written by Ali Nur Sahid), we will gain more understanding on how the violence of post-1965 keeps dividing the nation and reconciliation between the parties which were involved is still not an easy task, even until 50 years after that incident took place.

Second, the view of the existing researches are limited to direct extremism or violence, while ignoring what Galtung described as “cultural violence” and “structural violence” (1969).² This might also

2 According to Galtung, “direct violence” is various actions that may threaten people’s lives and/or reduce their capacity to fulfill their basic needs as human beings. The examples are murder, bullying, sexual abuse, emotional manipulation, and many others. Meanwhile, “structural violence” reflects the systematic means through which certain groups access to opportunity, goods and service are gone or reduced. The example is the apartheid political system in South Africa, which marginalized the sociopolitical rights of black people. Last, “cultural violence”

be the reason why we immediately react when we face terrorism threat (for example by forming Special Detachment 88 or National Counterterrorism Agency, BNPT), yet we are less or not aware when we face other types of violence, such as systematic discrimination against certain race, gender, or religion (structural violence), and the strong hegemony of certain cultural perspective that women are *konco wingking* (the person behind), because they are at least not as perfect as men (cultural violence).

As a consequence, we assess violent threat pragmatically, trying to resolve it with short-term orientation, with the goal “as long as the (direct) violence stops” – this is what Galtung called as “negative peace” (1964). Usually we claim that we do that only temporarily, even though we often forget about the temporariness. With pragmatic and short-term goal, resolution of violence (once again, direct violence) is done while ignoring the principles of human relationship which support just and long-term peace.³

In the research context, the perspective above encourages us to see (the end of) extremist violence especially from the perpetrators’ point of view, who are the masterminds of the violence in the first place and generally men because they are the most manly God’s creatures and destined to lead since the beginning, and pay less attention to relationships that could affect the violent conflict dynamics. Thus, for example, so far we still rely on the *hijrah* of Nasir Abbas and Ali Imron (Schulze, 2008; ICG, 2007), that is once again taken from terrorist violence case, in order to support deradicalization efforts.

reflects the existence of or the dominating certain social norms which make direct violence and structural violence mentioned above look “natural” (exist by “default”) or “right” or acceptable. The example is certain religious teaching or culture which states that women’s position is half of the men’s.

3 Here, peace is defined in its general context, beyond peacemaking and peacekeeping, which requires the occurrence of violent conflict in advance, before a peaceful situation is re-“created” and then “kept” so that it prevails. Peace in here includes peacebuilding, which means deliberate efforts done so that peaceful situation remains – or deliberate efforts to manage conflict which always potentially exists, so that it can happen in peaceful and non-violent methods or prevent a tense conflict from escalating to a violent conflict. Democracy political system is meant to achieve this purpose (peaceful conflict management) or situation that can be called “just-peace”.

In other words, we are actually ignoring the term used in the peace study literatures to define peacebuilding, which is the creation and the nurture of constructive relationships among humans that go beyond gender, ethnic, religious, racial, or social classes boundaries. Pertinent to violent conflict, as suggested by Lisa Schirch (2004:9):

Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels so as to sustain people and their environment.

The peacebuilding keyword is the relationships that have to be built strategically by those who are inside or outside the conflict, at local, regional, national, even international level. For peacebuilding scholars and activists such as Schirch, these relationships are a form of power or social capital: “When people start lending a hand and connecting with each other, they are more likely to work together to resolve a conflict” (2004: 8-9).

Inspired by the peacebuilding perspective above and in order to avoid the trap of limited perspective on direct violence, in this book we chose our figures by taking into account the involvement of women (and children) and victims in the transformation of conflict toward peacebuilding. We also consciously examined and wrote the social relationships that were built and enabled the figures to get out of extremism.

From reading the experience of Baihajar Tualeka in communal conflict in Ambon (Chapter V, by Fini Rubianti) or the experience of Khairunisak Rusli in separatist conflict in Aceh (Chapter IV, written by Lestari Wahyuningroem), for example, we gain deeper understanding on why violent conflict inflict more sufferings on women (and children) compared to men, the condition which pushes them to urge the cessation of conflict or to accept the peace agreement. Other than that, we also gain more understanding on the importance of organizations such as the National Commission on Violence Against

Women (*Komnas Perempuan*), both in Aceh as well as in Ambon, in empowering people like Baihajar and Nisah. Thanks to her expanding relationships, Baihajar finally dared to make a decision to stop making bombs and, in replace, start building peace. Meanwhile, in Aceh, Nisah has started walking through a new path as a politician who strives for her old goal through general election.

The importance of strategic relation roles is shown in all the figures hijrah experiences written here, but the most prominent ones are probably the cases of these three religious leaders: Reverend Mery Kolimon (Chapter VII, written by Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem), Reverend Jacky Manuputty (Chapter VIII, written by Irsyad Rafsadie), and Kyai Imam Aziz, PBNU Chairman who has been alluded to above. Maybe because they had been involved too long and too deep in their respective groups, they needed exposure to international community to become aware of their extremism and lead them out of that trap.

Imam's case is also very interesting. When attended a seminar in Yogya, his old awareness on the role of NU in strengthening democracy in Indonesia was disturbed when Ben Anderson, a famous professor in Cornell University and an Indonesianist, stated that NU would not be able to play that role unless its cadres made peace with the 1965 incident! That disturbance prompted Imam to delve further into the event, which influences his actions now. Meanwhile, when was at the United States and reminded by his fellow pastor colleagues, Jacky Manuputty realized that the victim of Ambon conflict was not only his group, the Christians, but also the Muslims.

New strategic relationships also played an important role in the personal transformation of Pastor Palti Hatoguan Panjaitan (Chapter III, written by Husni Mubarak). However, different from the others, his transformation happened from a victim of religious freedom restriction into a human rights activist (which is broader than just religious freedom). The impressive thing about him is that he did not only defend the people he leads as a pastor of Huriah Batak Protestant

Church (HKBP), or defend the victims of religious freedom restriction from which he also suffered, but he also fought for the fulfillment of human rights in general. Thus, now he advocates the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), with all its risks.

Hijrah Biography

Finally, why did we choose biography?

Being an extremist or leaving extremism involves a complex process because it is life-changing. Regardless of whether the change process happens quickly or slowly, totally or partially, and others, the process itself always involves many aspects. Sometimes a change of residency plays an important role: it involves novelty, security or the opposite, a room for change. Sometimes the process starts with a certain condition experienced by someone: trauma, pressure, crisis, and others. Often, the process is caused by the changes in personal relationships, which provide a more supportive environment for change.

In order to capture the rich experiences of life, an adequate room is required (not less and not more). This is also the aspect that we feel is still lacking in many publications of the studies of those who have done *hijrah* from extremism in Indonesia. Even when they were given a certain award, their life stories were usually told only briefly, and emphasized on the end result only, not on the journey process. In this case, one of the publication models which becomes the basis of our efforts is the two volumes of *Peacemakers in Actions* (Little, 2006; Dubensky, 2016).

With the background explained above, biography was chosen as the model of this writing because it enables the delivery of four important aspects that are promised in this writing collection: (1) touching and inspiring stories (of people who did *hijrah*) (2) told with sufficient depth (with care and therefore, they are detailed due to the life experiences of these figures and their strategic relationships with other people), but (3) do not talk about all of the life experiences

of these figures. Finally, (4) the life experiences of these figures are not told by the figures themselves, as in autobiography, but by other people, so there is some sort of control on the figures because only about certain things are discussed.

Those are the reasons why the contributors who wrote the chapters in this book know the figures well enough, or even very well. Also, due to the same reasons, Jacky Manuputty appears in this book as a writer as well as a figure whose story is written. It was not easy to convince him to play both roles, but we are grateful that he accepted it.

This biography can be called a short intimate biography. We tried to get to know the figures whom we wrote as well as possible in order to ensure the truth of the facts told. However, it is possible that we have different interpretation from those figures concerning certain facts. In this case, the responsibility is on all of us. ***

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Chapter I

From War Dance to Peace Dance: Transformation of Ronald Regang, Former Child Soldier from Maluku

Jacky Manuputty

One of the irrefutable fact from Maluku conflict in 1999-2004 was the formation of child soldier groups in the two conflicting communities. The exact number of children who became child soldiers is unknown. From my conversation with some of the former child soldier commanders, especially from the Christian side, it is estimated that there were approximately 200 children from the Christian community joined. They became child soldiers at a very young age, around 11-14 years. The youngest child whom I ever found as a child soldier in Christian community was 10-year-old when the conflict broke out in 1999.

None of these children dreamed of joining the child army. Some of the children whom I interviewed stated that they became child soldiers because they were motivated by the injustice. They saw their families and religious community suffer and pressured by the conflict. A 12-year-old girl I met admitted that at the beginning, she only stayed at home because school was disrupted. However, as time went by she saw that her family and peers joined the fight to defend their community. In the end, she decided to join the child soldiers.

After the conflict ended, there was very little attention given to the former child soldiers. They became a marginalized group in the

community. During the war, these children were hailed war heroes, yet when during the peaceful time they became a common enemy of “good people”. Their recovery and reintegration process was not concentrated and consistent. Their dispersal is mostly unknown. The limited search that I conducted through conversations with this group informed me that many of these former child soldiers tried their luck in Jakarta. In Jakarta, many of them join debt collector groups, and test their courage in tough jobs.

Only a few of them were assisted so they could change. One of the children whose transformation process I assisted stated that many of his friends live with major psychological trauma. Terrible memories concerning their involvement in violence and murder during the conflict often haunt and stress them. Luckily, some of them could experience the assisted transformation and reintegration process, when they were made involved in peace efforts conducted by various communities and peace workers.

Transformation process of some former child soldiers, both in Christian as well as Muslim community, was more effective and constructive if done through the involvement of community that built a strong atmosphere of peace and friendship. Ustad Abidin Wakano and I, for example, established Maluku Interfaith Agency (LAIM) as one of the meeting place for interfaith youths, both for those who had been involved as child soldiers and those who did not. Helena Rijoly, Kiki Samal, and Warni Belu, in another occasion, mobilize the Young Ambassador for Peace (YAP) movement which also accomodates many former child combattants from both communities. Rudi Fofid is another example of a figure who works hard in building a young peace mobilizer community through the utilization of art, peace journalism and literature for peace. In that group, some former child soldiers from both communities, including Ronald Regang, received intensive assistance toward recovery. In other group, Zairin (Embong) Salampessy mobilizes young photography enthusiast community

in order to accommodate the transformation process of youth from violence through photography. Sister Brigitta Renyaan, a Catholic nun, is also involved in child conflict victim issue by managing Maluku Child Parliament. Baihajar Tualeka, a woman activist as well as former combattant, also develops a similar movement. The movement involves youth communities who have struggled in conflicts.

There are quite many peace activist communities that can be included here in order to provide descriptions of how peace and transformation from violence process can happen more effectively through the formation of solid base groups. Network of base groups which intensely work for peace and transformation from violence, according to Brauchler (2015), has managed public and domestic places as playgrounds that do not only unite communities that have been involved in conflict, but also former fighters which have been segregated from their communities.

This piece of writing will describe the transformation process of Ronald Regang, a former child soldier who was involved in a conflict since he was 10-year-old. This description is not only based by my exclusive interview with Ronald, but also based on my knowledge of him during the time I assisted him in undergoing the transformation process. This long process is done with the assistance of other peace activists, such as Rudi Fofid, Ustad Abidin Wakano, Helena Rijoly, Rosa Pentury, Elsy Latuheru, and the others¹. Ronald is one of the few child soldiers who experienced the transformation and reintegration process through his intensive involvement in some communities and peace works. This writing describes his ideas, thoughts, concerns and hopes during and after the conflict. My interview with him describes the emotional and psychosocial impacts he suffered and how he struggled with his transformation process.

By narrating Ronald's story in detail, Ronald and I hope that

¹ After I left Ambon to continue my study in United States in 2007, Ronald was intensively assisted by Rudi Fofid (Opa Rudi) who introduced him to peace journalism and involved him in youth peace activist community which fights for peace through arts and literature. Rudi Fofid received Maarif Award in 2016 for his peace efforts.

children's involvement as soldiers in conflict areas can be avoided. Ronald's direct narrative is the voice of children who are the victims of conflict to the policy-makers, children advocates, mass media, leaders and children and youth organizations, military, government, religious institutions and public.

"Ompreng" Child in a Comfortable Environment

Ronald was born in Waipo on 31 July 1989, when his father was assigned as a soldier in Kabaresi Battalion, Waipo, Central Maluku. From Waipo, his father was transferred to the Military Resort Command in Ternate City. Ronald went to school there. Justus Regang, his father, came from Weda- Sawai, Ternate, even though his surname came from Sanger Islands, Talaud, North Sulawesi. His mother, Martha Rahulohoren, came from Kisar Island, South East Sulawesi. His parents have three children, and Ronald is the middle child. His older sister is three years older than him, and his little brother is two years younger than him. His sister is married now, while his brother lives with their parents in Tobelo, North Maluku, after his father retired.

Ronald spent his childhood as *"anak ompreng"* (a child of a soldier). His family lived in Kelapa Pendek Barracks. In that barracks environment, Ronald grew up and socialized with his peers normally. From Ternate, his father was transferred to Saketa-Gene Dala, a village located in the southern part of Halmahera Island. There, he worked as a supervisory non-commissioned officer (Babinsa) in some villages, while Ronald along with his mother and two siblings stayed at the barracks in Ternate. Young Ronald was taken to visit his father in Gene Dalam a few times.

Around 1996-1998 Ronald had not heard any issue concerning the tension between Muslims and Christians in North Maluku where the majority of population were Muslims. There was no worship prohibition, including the worships of Christian families which were often done in their residential homes. In fact, Ronald made good

friends with many Muslims and he clearly remembers that he had more Muslim friends than Christian ones.

Ronald's spirituality grew in his family. He recalled that when he was a child, he along with his mother and siblings, had a strong family worship tradition.

My father was rarely present with us in routine family worships because he was assigned somewhere else. Through the family worship tradition, I learned and memorized the Lord's Prayer. Likewise, I memorized the Apostles' Creed well. In our family worship the schedule of worship leading was arranged together. There was someone who was tasked to lead the prayer, read the bible, as well as choose and lead the song.

From their family custom, Ronald became interested in participating in various church activities for children. Among the various activities, he loved the choir and child camp. He remembered that even though the camp was meant for Christian children, his Muslim friends also participated in it. It was easy for Muslims to be involved in it since the camp was held in the army housing complex where they all lived.

Ronald's exposure to Muslims was not only because they were neighbors. They had many Muslim relatives from the family of his father's side. His father's Muslim relatives lived in Weda, Tobelo. They rarely met, they only met a few times when his relatives came to visit to Ternate. However, Ronald admitted that his family bond contributed to his childhood memories of peaceful Islam.

Traumatic Experience and the Growth of Radicalism

The news about Ambon conflict in January 1999 spread to Ternate and its surrounding areas, including the army housing complex where Ronald and his family lived. In August 1999, conflict in North Maluku broke out in Kao and Malifut, North Halmahera Island.² The conflict escalated in October 1999. This condition forced the migrants in

2 Conflict in North Maluku (it was still a part of Maluku Province back then) began from a conflict between Kao and Malifut Community in North Halmahera. Initially, the conflict was underpinned by the issue of new subdistrict formation which overlapped with natural resources conflict. In its development the conflict in this area developed into a conflict between Muslims and Christians and spread to most areas of North Maluku.

Malifut to migrate to Ternate Island and Tidore Island, which heated up the situation in these two islands.

Realizing the heating up situation in Ternate, on the same month Ronald's mother took their family to Gene Dalam, where his father was assigned. At that time, in the complex rock throwing incidents toward Christian houses from outside the complex started to happen. Ronald remembered that their house was probably stoned because on the house's inner wall there was a big painting of Jesus, which could be seen clearly from the outside.

In Gene Dalam they heard that the situation in Ternate had heated up, the conflict broke out. In November 1999, the situation got worse and North Maluku conflict spread to the surrounding villages. A conflict broke out in Saketa, which was not far from Gene Dalam. Ronald remembered that once the soldiers run wild since not all of them had long rifles. Generally, they who were assigned in regencies and subdistricts such as Saketa had only pistols and sten gun weapons. In that situation, all soldiers from far away villages, Muslims and Christians, were called to gather in Saketa. When they arrived in Saketa, Ronald along with his mother and siblings were stayed with his father's relatives who were Muslims. Ronald could still remember clearly, when they gathered at Saketa, his father was almost decapitated. His father was safe because at that time, his Muslim relatives intercepted. Ronald himself experienced the terror when their family residence was almost invaded by the Muslim mass. In that precarious situation, Ronald and his siblings were hidden by his father's relatives. They were then bathed in a ritual bath by the grandfather of his father's relatives. According to him, the ritual was done in order to obtain power of immunity and prevent people from finding them.

Because the situation was getting tense, his father decided to send his family back to Ternate, while he was on duty to reduce the conflict in Saketa and Bacan Island. The journey from Saketa to Ternate was a nerve-racking journey for Ronald and his family. Their ship stopped by

Bacan Island, but the conflict was raging so they decided to continue the journey to Ternate. Then, the ship which took them stopped by Tidore Island which, later discovered by Ronald, sent many Muslim fighters to fight in Ternate. When they stopped in Tidore, they had to disguise themselves as the non-Christian ship crew. That condition was quite traumatizing for Ronald who was still very young at that time.

Once they arrived in Ternate, the situation seemed to escalate. On the road they passed through a pile of burned car tires. The White Troops were seen facing the Yellow Troops.³ From the stories he later heard, Ronald said that at the time, Ternate sultanate was trying to prevent the conflict from breaking out in Ternate as well as protect the Christian minority group. After going through a long tension, they returned to Kelapa Pendek Barracks. Ronald's mother and siblings were placed in the official residence of his father's commander who happened to be a fellow Christian. His mother asked young Ronald to return to their old house in the back of the barracks complex. Even though it was still inside barracks complex, their house location was open toward the settlements and was only divided by a small river. Many people from outside the complex went back and forth to the complex from the back side. Even though they had not done anything yet, their presence was rather nerve-racking. At that time, there was news of people who were kidnapped or missing.

The situation was getting tense when Ronald's father returned to Ternate. Saketa and Bacan Island were already fully controlled by the Muslims. When he met his family, Ronald's father informed that

3 Yellow Troops were the *adat* (custom) troops of the Sultan of Ternate who were dressed in yellow. The troops was formed by the Sultan of Ternate when the conflict broke out in order to maintain peace in Ternate Island. Yellow Troops generally controlled the northern areas of Ternate Island which were known as the sultanate areas. Meanwhile, White Troops were the Muslim community who resided in the southern areas of Ternate Island and mostly consisted of Tidore, Makian ethnic, and other migrant groups. During the conflict in North Maluku, White Troops were considered to be more militant, while Yellow Troops were said to side with and protect the Christian community. Many observers correlate the conflict between the Yellow Troops and White Troops with the tension among ethnic groups in North Maluku in fighting over natural resources and political competition for the governor of North Maluku position as a New Province (Wilson, 2008; Duncan, 2013; LIPI, 2004).

the situation was getting more dangerous. They were requested to prepare to be evacuated to Manado because more *jihad* troops from Tidore Island had entered Ternate. They even dared to ask for food support from soldiers' families.

Finally, in early December 1999, Ronald's mother decided to take the three siblings to Manado along with a group of other Christians in Ternate. Ronald refused to come along and decided to remain in Ternate assisting his father. Because he insisted on staying, his father gave him a piece of "*berang* cloth" (a red cloth worn as a headscarf as a symbol of courage), a piece of woven cloth worn around himself (believed to be a protector from calamity), and a short machete for self-defense. Ronald said that after receiving these items from his father, he felt like he was equipped with courage to face the raging conflict in Ternate.

In Ternate, the conflict between Yellow Troops and White Troops was inevitable. Ronald was in the middle of that situation. He described his experience when he saw dead bodies on the ground with his own eyes and the use of supernatural power in that conflict:

I watched the war between White Troops and Yellow Troops on the street. Each of them used magic power. I saw it myself how a machete could fly in the air and return to its owner. The security forces couldn't do much. They tried to make a line which was not allowed to be crossed by both groups, with a threat that they would shoot anyone who crossed the line. However, when each group had crossed the line and the security forces shot, I saw many of their bullets fell to the ground before it hit anyone. Fighters of both White Troops and Yellow Troops could jump as if they were flying in the air and fought there. There were many corpses lying around. I once took a piece of hand, and returned it to the body which was my neighbor's.⁴

The above experiences extremely traumatized Ronald. He even lost his speech ability for a while. He drastically changed into a quiet child. In his quiet and traumatic condition, Ronald's militant behavior as a child fighter started to grow. He said that in that situation, his father

⁴ Even though it is difficult to believe and rationalize Ronald's story on the use of magic power in the conflict between Yellow Troops and White Troops, these kind of stories are widely spread in many conflict areas, during the conflict in Maluku as well as in North Maluku. Duncan (2013) told a story of Kao ethnic fighters in North Maluku who used magic power to fight Makian ethnic during the conflict.

reinforced the belief that Islam was no longer the Islam they used to know. Therefore, they had to prepare themselves to fight against Muslim community. Ronald observed that Christian families in the complex started to make various types of assembled weapon. Guns and homemade rifles, bazookas, some types of arrow, and various models of other gun made in order to defend themselves.

Bloody Christmas and Long Sail to Ambon

December 25, 1999 and the subsequent days are recalled by Ronald as Bloody Christmas. According to him, at that time the Yellow Troops had been pushed back to the territory of Ternate Sultanate to protect the palace and Sultan of Ternate. As a result, the Yellow Troops declared their loss and ended their fight against the White Troops. This defeat gave a freedom to the White Troops to raid houses to seek Christian families. There were more corpses found on the streets.

In that tension, Ronald's father returned home to find him. Right in front of their house they found a mutilated body. Seeing that body made Ronald very terrified so he hid behind his father. Ronald's father kept encouraging him and convinced him to never let go the *berang* cloth, woven cloth, and machete that had been given to him. According to his father, those three items contained magic power that could protect him. Ronald was evacuated by his father to the Kabaressi Battalion Headquarter which was safer. They stayed there for a few days before they were evacuated along with other Christian families to Manado using Herkules aircraft at the end of December 1999. Since that moment Ronald lost contact with his father.

When they arrived in Manado, Ronald was placed in a shelter along with other Christian families. Even though the service from Manado residents for the refugees was excellent, Ronald felt he did not belong there. He felt lonely in his deep trauma. According to him, he could not initiate conversation with other people nor respond to them. He moved to another shelter to seek his family, yet his effort

failed. He received information from some people that his mother and siblings already fled to Ambon and Ronald was determined to follow them. In early March 2000, he boarded on Cantika ferry along with other refugees toward Ambon City. He dared himself to go to Ambon because he knew that the ship was owned by a Christian businessman and it would stop in one of the Christian areas in Ambon City.

During the trip, Ronald heard many stories on how the situation in Ambon was far more dangerous than in Ternate. It scared him for a while, but he felt strengthened by the items that his father gave him which he always carried with him. Entering the bay of Ambon at night, fire and smoke was seen rising. There were various gunshot and explosion noises in various places. When the ship docked, a group of children violently got into the ship and raided the passengers to seek Muslim passengers. When they discovered that there was no Muslim passenger in there, they asked the passengers to wait for a moment so that they could arrange a safe route for them. Ronald did not expect that it was the first time he met the child soldiers from the Christian community.

Ordained as a Child Soldier

When Ronald got off the ship, a child went to him and greeted him. Apparently, he was Boyke Baker, a cousin of Ronald from her mother's side. Ronald was overjoyed when he met Boyke who later took him to a gathering place for children of his age. In that place he saw a crowd of children who were painting their faces like soldiers in the battlefield. Ronald then discovered that they were child soldiers from the Christian community who were called the *Pasukan Cicak* (House Lizard Troops).⁵ They were divided into four groups: Machete Group (mutilator), Arson Group (tasked with arson), Shooter Group,

⁵ In addition to the House Lizard Troop, *Agas* Troops was known as another group of child soldiers in the Christian community. *Agas* Troops were divided into some groups, one of them was known as *Agas Brutal* Group. The name *Agas* was taken from the name of a small insect which commonly lives on the seashore and its bite causes extreme itch. "*Brutal*" was the abbreviation of "*Berjuang Untuk Allah*" (fighting for God). In the Muslim community, the child soldiers are known as *Linggis* Troops.

and Bombing Group. Boyke was a member of the Shooter Group.

After some time, Ronald was invited to inspect a coastal area which had been abandoned by Muslim community. The purpose was to see if there was any Muslim who was left behind. At that time, Ronald did not feel confident because almost all children were carrying rifles and bombs. Ronald complained that in Ternate he brought only a machete, while all the children here were well-equipped. Along the streets in the area, he saw burnt corpses, destroyed Muslims' houses, and family belongings which were scattered on the streets.

It did not take long for Ronald to join the city war arena. According to him, he was assigned to carry the gasoline cans and sometimes foods. They moved around and entered Christian strongholds which directly faced the Muslim troops. He started learning shooting and arson skills from his friends. Ronald admitted that he also learned infiltration and self-rescue skills from them. Often they went to the coordination points of Christian troops and met the adult troops. There, they established their coordination and division of tasks before returning to the border areas.

Ronald said that he was no longer afraid in Ambon. In Ternate, the fights were done face-to-face, in Ambon they did not fight face-to-face since they used firearms. It enabled him to stand far away from his enemies. In order to clarify the troops' identity, the child fighters wore uniforms. The child troops where Ronald joined wore dance uniforms. Other groups wore uniforms in colors which were suitable for camouflage and infiltration in war zone.

They did not only fight on land. Ambon Coast was also a conflict area at that time. Speedboat chase and gunfight on the sea were daily occurrences. Ronald said that in the conflict escalation, he was shaken up when his cousin died by his side on early July 2000. At that time they were involved in a speedboat chase in Ambon Coast. Boyke, Ronald's cousin, lit a homemade bomb and wanted to throw it to a Muslim's speedboat which was shooting at their ship. After it was thrown, the lit bomb was stuck at the mast of the ship and bounced

back to their direction. Boyke immediately covered that bomb in order to save his friends. His body was torn and he died instantly.

Acclaiming Conflict as a Holy War

The use of religious element as a conflict generator legitimized the development of interpretation of the conflict as a holy war. Holy scriptures were given meaning that support war. Prayer and blessing for the war troops were done by pastors in or outside the church building. The meaning of hymn of praises changed into hymn of war. Religious legitimization on war led the fighters from both Christian and Muslim communities to have what Kimball (2002) called as “blind obedience”.

Ronald and his group were a part of a Christian community that was immersed in that interpretation. They followed their war ritual obediently. On their necks, they wore a small Bible that they believed as a shield in the war. Ronald also said that in the holy war, they must guard their behaviors so it would not taint the purity of their struggle: “In the war, we were not allowed to raid, curse, get drunk, or do any kind of behavior and attitude that contradicts Christian values. Breaking that rule could lead to fatal consequences for us.”

Because the conflict was interpreted as a holy war, it was rare to see a group of fighters went to fight without starting it with a prayer or a short worship which was led by the pastors or people who were considered to be mature to lead the prayer. Later on, Ronald and his friends got themselves used to managing their own ritual. From his story, they took turn in leading the prayer and reading part of the bible passages which reinforced their spirit to fight. With the spirit of a holy war, they did guerilla with their groups: infiltrated, burned, shot, and killed as many as they could. ⁶ According to Ronald, there was no more fear left in him to reject the violence. Even when his friends were killed in the conflict, he could accept it as a consequence of the holy war. He asserted that kill

⁶ One time, I asked the feeling of child soldiers when they performed their special ritual. They gave a brief and assertive answer that they felt they received extra strength when they performed it.

or be killed were the only options given to them back then.

Ronald's first experience of killing of who he called "the enemy of his faith" was still fresh on his mind.⁷ At that time his group were standing face-to-face with the enemy in a close distance. He aimed and shot the bullets from his rifle, then an enemy was hit and fell due to his bullet. Along with his friends, he went to the corpse in order to ensure his death and he took all his war equipments. "There was no fear," said Ronald. His chest was tight with anger. From his first killing, he admitted that he was possessed with the ambition to kill even more. When he was asked how many enemies he had killed, Ronald said that it could not be counted. Sometimes on the frontline conflict he went face-to-face with child soldier from the Muslim community.

According to him, child soldiers from the Muslim community had a lot of courage to challenge death:

Muslim children troops were very agile and brave. They were great at infiltration and arson. Their equipments were better than ours. Their homemade bombs were also more sophisticated than ours. Many of them were also equipped with organic weapons, while we mostly used assembled weapons.⁸ We did not often meet Muslim child soldiers at the frontline. Most of the times we met them when we sent logistic aids. We often met *jihad* troops from outside of Maluku on the frontline. We thought that they were not very good at making war strategy. They usually attacked in groups and it became an easy target for us.

Ronald told a story of when he accidentally met a Muslim child soldier in a close distance. In their shock, they could only greet each other, "Hey, Acang!" which was returned "Hey, Obet!" Both of them then ran away.⁹

Trapped in the Vortex of Hatred

7 The term "enemy of faith" was used collectively in Christian community during the conflict. This term indicated Muslims as the enemy in what was believed as the "holy war".

8 Ronald's statement was confirmed by IR, a former Muslim child soldier. In an interview in 2012 that involved former child soldiers as interviewers, IR disclosed his role as a shooter using both arrow and organic firearm. Even so, IR also acknowledged the skill of Christian child soldiers who according to him were very good in combat.

9 The term Acang or Hasan was given to Muslim children, while Obet or Robert was for Christian children. Acang and Obet were originally an advertisement of peace of children of Maluku made by the singer Franky Sahilatua in order to promote peace in Maluku. These terms were adopted to mark the Muslim and Christian child groups during the conflict.

Even though the war was interpreted as the holy war, the hatred toward the enemy's faith was always reinforced during the conflict. Qurtuby (2013) described how religion was capitalized to motivate both parties. In other places, he stated that the hatred toward one another was the direct result of the role of many religious leaders who prayed for and blessed the fighters before they departed to the battlefield of holy war (Qurtuby, 2015). Therefore, grudge and hatred were intensively produced in order to raise the spirit of the fighters. For Christian fighters, Muslims must be hated and destroyed because they were considered as aggressors and enemies of faith, and vice versa.¹⁰ It was not surprising that during the conflict, a religious song like "Advanced Christian Army" was considered war booster. According to Ronald, during the conflict, there was no positive opinion concerning Islam in his mind. His mind was only filled with hatred and desire to destroy the Muslim community.

In the field, he did not only take out his hatred on those who lived. Enemies who were already deceased were also treated inappropriately. Ronald said that in a few occasions he was involved in cannibalism practices which improved their morale to kill the enemies. He admitted that after participating in that practice, his hatred, grudge, and desire to kill was getting stronger and unstoppable. Especially when he was chosen to be the vice field commander of child soldiers from Agas Brutal team in 2002 overseeing approximately 30 people.¹¹

Hatred and violence in Ronald and his friends directly correlated to the internalization of Christian supremacy ideology which was reinforced through various preachings and sermons by many pastors. According to Ronald, he truly believed that Christianity was far more superior than Islam. He believed that he and his friends were the

10 IS, former child soldier from Muslim community, expressed his hatred: "I still hate and hold a grudge against them [Christians] because my older sibling was hit by their bomb. The Christians are the most ruthless, rough people with no compassion. They are like non-believers."

11 IR, former Muslim child soldier, expressed similar feeling. When he was questioned about his most memorable experience, IR openly answered: "I was very impressed when I dressed like Arab fighters in the midst of conflict. The most fun thing for me was when I could kill Christians. I was even more excited when I saw that my friend was shot beside me."

“Children of God”; therefore, God himself would fight alongside them to destroy the Muslim aggressors.

In the middle of that vortex, Ronald stated that it was forbidden for him to have compassion. Compassion would weaken his and his friends’ war spirit. Concerning this matter, he said, “We were not allowed to have compassion for the enemy because it may get us trapped by their trick. During the war, the tongue and the heart must be discarded. The tongue was discarded in order to keep a secret, while the heart was discarded so there would not be any compassion.” In that spirit, the corpses of their slaughtered enemies were sometimes put on display. Therefore the spirit of war would not dwindle. He recalled that the very things that once made him shudder now in Ternate is what he did ruthlessly without compassion.

Ronald’s combat skill was getting better when he later joined the adult fighters group which was led by some phenomenal Christian figures at that time. According to him, there he got to know organic weapons within the class of AK47, M16, Mini Roger, SS1, and others. Being with them, he was trained to identify the type of weapon from its gunshot sound. They also often learned war strategy from Hollywood movies. He recalled that there was always an adult who accompanied them to give commentary on the movie scenes that could be put into practice in the battlefield of Ambon conflict.

In addition, Ronald also got a role as the liaison between Ambon City and Masohi City in Central Maluku. He was assigned to carry a backpack containing *Suara Maluku* newspaper, acting as if he was a newspaper boy. In that backpack, there were always bullets and grenades to be given to someone in Masohi whose identity remains unknown up until this moment.¹²

¹² Ronald was also tasked to buy bullets which were sold by a soldier on the back of a Soldiers’ Hospital (RST) in Ambon. Ronald said that he was like a regular customer there. In that location, Ronald also met Muslim chield soldier who went there for the same purpose. Since that location was a neutral area, they only stared at each other in hatred, without disturbing one another.

Emergence of Turning Points

After the Malino II Agreement for peace was held in Maluku in 2002, the conflict was de-escalated. At that time Ronald decided to continue his education that was once neglected. His family enrolled him in SD Negeri (State Elementary School) 71 in Wainitu, Ambon, which was not far from home. He was not really serious about his education even though he really wanted to go back to school. The situation was not completely peaceful yet, sporadic conflicts still happened. Members of his troops used to wait for him at school and drew him back to fight.

At school Ronald was quite respected, including by his teachers. He was known as one of the commanders of child soldiers. On one occasion he had an argument with a teacher's child. He then hit the child in front of his father who was a sport teacher at that school. He did not receive any punishment, since in front of the school his child soldier group already gathered. Some of them held homemade bombs.

However, the exposure to his school peers slowly changed his behaviors. After school they often did dance practice together. At that time, break dance was getting popular and it caught the attention of youth in Maluku, including Ronald. Later on, this activity helped him in building social integration with interfaith youth. Even so, Ronald stated that anytime a gunshot was heard, dance moves could turn into war moves at once.

Ronald admitted that the most memorable turning point for him was when I met him at his house. At that time, in mid 2004 UNICEF was looking for some conflict victim children to participate in a two-day program in Gadjah Mada University (UGM), Yogyakarta. I immediately thought to recommend one of the child soldiers. Ronald's name was recommended by a fellow pastor colleague. In short, I decided to visit Ronald at his house. Ronald was not there when I came. I only met his mother and his older sister. Their eyes shone with happiness when I told them the reason for my visit. They asked a child to find Ronald at once.

Not long after, Ronald came with a suspicious look. In days to come, he admitted that he was suspicious that I came to arrest him concerning the arson of a Muslim school. He did not automatically believe me when I told him the purpose of my visit. Ronald explained that he was trained to be skeptical toward all people whom he had not known well. We had a conversation for a long time and I tried to convince him to take the opportunity to be a peace fighter. Eventually he agreed to go to Yogya with me.

In the UGM event, he was introduced to two child conflict victims. One of them, came from Aceh, was used as a spy by an armed civil group. The other child, came from Poso, was suffered from trauma because he watched his parents got slaughtered in front of him. Both of them were Muslims, they sat side by side with Ronald, a Christian. It was interesting to note, while the other two children tensely narrated their stories, Ronald, on the opposite, confidently talked about his involvement in the conflict. "There was no need to be afraid because it was the holy war. I had surrendered myself fully for Jesus in this war," he recalled.

From Yogyakarta Ronald was invited to Jakarta, where he was introduced to various circles which cared about children's fate in conflict area. Ronald was also brought to meet a psychologist who stated that based on his analysis, Ronald experienced a very severe psychological trauma. Ronald considered that his trip to Yogya and Jakarta had a huge contribution to his transformation process. In that journey, he felt like he gained a lot of knowledge concerning the impacts of war on children. There, he started to consider himself as a victim and not as a perpetrator. In a banquet in Jakarta he suddenly wept and stopped eating. When asked, he said that he remembered his peers who became the victims of conflict, both those who had died and those who were still alive. While crying, Ronald admitted that he was shaken up because he suddenly did not know about their future.

Healing Embrace of Community

When he returned from Yogyakarta, Ronald was made involved in many youth community's activities for peace. Among others, Ronald was involved as a peer facilitator for drugs and HIV/AIDS prevention program in 2006, in addition to protection activities for women and children. His involvement was published widely various local media, which improved his confidence to keep walking on the path of peace. On many occasions, he was encouraged by senior peace activist friends to deliver speeches on peace in various youth events. Other than that, Ronald's skill as a dancer was also capitalized to grow his confidence. Ronald then utilized street dance as his main medium to interact with various youth groups across religions and ethnics.

Ronald's meeting with his peers from different religions and ethnics slowly built his trust toward Muslim community. They invited Ronald to train street dance for youth in some Muslim areas. He was even requested to teach dance to the students of SMA Negeri (State Senior High School) 11 Ambon which was located in Galunggung region, a Muslim area in Ambon. As a dance instructor, Ronald then brought together Muslim and Christian groups whom he trained, and together, they participated in various youth events in Ambon.

In 2006 Ronald was assigned to participate in a child event, it coincided with ASEAN Civil Society Organizations meeting which was held in Philippines for a month. At that time Ronald was a freshman in SMA Negeri (State Senior High School) 12 Ambon. Along with Dahlia Talo, a young Muslim female friend from Ambon City, Ronald departed to represent Maluku and Indonesia accompanied by Helena Rijoly.¹³ The trip was incredibly memorable for Ronald, he admitted that it was an important moment in his transformation process. He felt that he was hailed when he told his story. When the committee screened a movie

13 Helena Rijoly is a staff of Maluku Interfaith Agency. She, along with some other LAIM staffs, such as Kiky Samal and Warni Belly, later organized Young Ambassador for Peace (YAP) community which accommodate many youths from different religions.

about child soldiers from other region, Ronald spontaneously stood on a chair and requested some time to speak. He conveyed his deep empathy for the children in the movie. Ronald expressed to the audience that he could empathize because he felt like he was a part of them who were also victims of conflict. According to Helena, Ronald's spontaneous speech sparked a high appreciation from the participants. He was then asked to perform his dance in front of hundreds of participants from ASEAN countries who were present.

In another meeting which was held in a university in Mindanao, Ronald's transformation story also drew empathy. He was also asked to show how to make a homemade bomb. He was also brought to meet the young community of "Mindanao Brotherhood", which were the former child soldiers in Mindanao Island. The meeting was very memorable for Ronald since he could meet with his peers who shared the same fate. When Ronald returned to Ambon, he initiated an interfaith youth movement to sign a peace agreement on a piece of white cloth.

Ronald's meeting with senior youth activists at the Maluku Interfaith Agency (LAIM) office before he departed to Philippines strengthened his foundation. Ronald remembers clearly his meeting experience with Ustad Abidin Wakano, Rudi Fofid, Helena Rijoly, Kiky Samal, Olivia Lasol, and other friends, who according to him, have become saviors, teachers, and parents who assisted him in leaving the path of violence. That meeting brought Ronald to join Young Ambassador for Peace (YAP) community, a youth community for peace across religions and ethnics in Ambon.

In YAP Ronald was required to hone his patience when he met his Muslim friends whom he used to hate. A former child soldier from the Muslim community who also joined YAP once had an argument with Ronald. The tension almost ended with an open conflict. Iskandar Slameth, the name of the "mini jihadist", had a fierce argument with Ronald and both of them defended their respective opinions concerning the conflict that had happened. Luckily, the senior facilitators in YAP

successfully mediated them. Two of them became best friends. This gave a valuable lesson for Ronald: "I can conclude that all this time my Muslim friends and I were never together. We were always separated, and apparently we were deceived. Ow, through the process in YAP, Iskandar and I can get to know each other well."

The encounter in YAP stirred Ronald's initiative to visit Iskandar and other Muslim friends in their area. As told by him, after going through the process in YAP Ronald used his house as a hangout place for his friends who were former Muslim and Christian child soldiers. Iskandar and Muslim friends who were YAP alumni were the ones who encouraged more youths from the Muslim community to gather at Ronald's house. They called the house "Red Home". While reminiscing about that house, Ronald said,

In that house we met and got to know each other. We wrote poems together, we painted, we sang hip-hop songs, and we shared our stories. The point is we did a lot of positive activities. Likewise, we as the Christians also came and met Muslim friends in Iskandar's or other Muslim friends' house. At one time, there was a small chaos, and we (Christian children) were at the house of a Muslim friend (in Galunggung region), but our Muslim friends protected us.

Until this day Ronald still maintains his relationships with Iskandar and other Muslim friends. Ronald's friendship solidarity even caused him to be imprisoned in March 2011. At that time, Ronald, as usual, was hanging out in Muslim area in Batu Merah. While he was there, a group of youths from Christian area in Karang Panjang region threw rocks at their direction. At once Ronald's anger was sparked, then along with Muslim friends he tried to chase and attack those Christian youths. In the middle of that tension, the security forces came to intervene. Ronald was arrested because he stood while holding a long machete. He was imprisoned for almost six months due to that incident.

Being open and independent was one of Ronald's strengths, which helped him in going through the transformation process faster

compared to his friends. About this, Rudi Fofid said that during the time he assisted Ronald in various activities, he was always impressed by Ronald's open attitude and his ability to interact with anyone. According to Rudi, Ronald had a courage to reveal all of his roles during the conflict to the public when he considered that it would be a valuable lesson. On one occasion, when Ronald had just returned from Philippines, Rudi invited him to participate in a peace journalism meeting. In that meeting, Ronald wore a full face mask, and he shared his experience in a very calm and clear manner.

In later development, Ronald was not the type of person who got awkward easily and created some distance with people he just knew. Conflict honed him to be an individual with a very high solidarity. Rudi said that Ronald's good adaptability enabled him to go back and forth in Muslim area with no awkwardness. Ronald's Muslim friends in Lei Hitu, Ambon Island,¹⁴ said that Ronald was a popular figure because he visited that Muslim area to help the youth there in arts activities.

Change of Prejudice and Efforts to Pay Debts

Ronald admitted that his integration with various figures and peace activist communities had helped him in changing his view on Muslims. He believed that the assistance of peace workers could build safety walls which helped him to truly change:

I feel like that all this time I had been wrong about Islam. I hated people whom I should not have hated, and I was provoked when I heard that my father's family had died. That information was apparently wrong. Now I am grateful that although I used to hate Islam very much, I could finally leave that hatred. The most important thing is that my hatred toward Islam was because of my own stupidity. In reality, Islam is not like what I used to think. Islam is not as evil as what people say. During the war, people said that Islam is a murderer and thief, but in fact not all Islam is like that. Even if the Muslim friends killed, we as the

¹⁴ Ambon Island is geographically divided into two peninsula. Lei Hitu region is a peninsula that stretches on the western side of Ambon Island. The settlements are dominated by the spread of Muslim countries. On the contrary, Lei Timur is another peninsula that stretches on the eastern side of Ambon Island and dominated by the spread of Christian countries.

Christian ones were also involved in killing. We all are victims of a tricky situation. I was grateful when I directly met Muslim friends. From that encounter, my knowledge of Islam became very different, drastically changed from my knowledge before I met and interacted intensely with Muslim friends.¹⁵

Ronald's transformation encouraged him to embrace more of his fellow former Christian child soldiers. Ronald believes that he can influence his hard-core friends to think about the importance of peacebuilding. Mathematically, Ronald estimated that 75 percent of Christian friends in his surrounding group can be influenced by him. It is true that there are some friends who lost their parents during the war, and therefore, it is extremely difficult for them to change. However, for his other friends, Ronald could successfully changed their perspective toward Islam: "They no longer hate Muslim friends because I often bring them to meet each other in group activities."

Ronald honestly admitted that their meeting as youth often involved alcohol consumption, but there their friendship was built. Ronald could detect that trust among them had improved, it was proven when they could share stories about war in the past. According to Ronald, there was no boundary when they shared stories about past conflicts, and there was no anger and grudge when they told the stories. It was possible because they shared the stories as fellow friends. They trusted each other to tell the stories openly.

For Ronald, the most important aspect from his experience in building peace was that he was always surrounded by positive activities. He gave an example, in addition to being included in activities mentioned above, in 2012 he was also sent to Hanafi Studio in Depok to participate in East Indonesia Young Artist Residency which was organized by Perkumpulan Masyarakat Indonesia Cipta (Indonesian Creator Community - MIC).

Ronald might have not read *Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah* [Exposing

¹⁵ IR, former Muslim child soldier who was interviewed in 2012, also gave a similar statement. "When I was still a part of *jihad* troops, I hated Christians the most. They were infidels who must be killed. Now that feeling is gone because I have made friends with many Christians. Maybe back then we never socialized together so we knew nothing."

Jamaah Islamiyah] by Nassir Abbas yet. However in a meeting in Ambon in January 2018, he had a friendly conversation with that former leader of Jamaah Islamiyah, a terrorist group. The story of Nasir Abbas on his life path which was violent and radical but then turned into a peaceful path of Islam, also reinforced Ronald who was in strengthening process to break loose from the conflict trauma for a future in peacebuilding efforts.

Ronald's regret due to his involvement as child soldier was atoned through his decision to continue his education in Nursing Major, Institute of Health Sciences (STIKES), in Pasapua, Ambon, in 2009. This was not a common choice for a former child soldier. When asked about his motivation for becoming a nurse, Ronald said, "Back then I killed a lot of people, and at that time I could not help many lives. Now, through nursing education, I want to help a lot of people." Ronald completed his nursing education in 2013. Now he is trying to continue his professional education in order to obtain a license as a nurse which enables him to get a job in a hospital.

Conclusion

Ronald is a small portrait of the grim reality of children who are trapped in conflict. He represents many children who have nightmares and trauma concerning hatred, violence, stigmatization, fear, and slaughter. He has become an example of children who are separated from their families and walk in the path of bitterness and pain due to the scars from the past.

It is sad that psychosocial counseling for child soldier group such as Ronald is not available widely. So far there has been no serious effort done by policy-makers to manage the healing process of children who were involved in armed conflict, including effort that is done by religious institutions. In Malino II peace agreement, the fate of children such as Ronald and his friends was not even discussed seriously. Their condition did not become a part of Maluku agreement formulation in

Malino. This shows a very minimum support from the state as well as groups who were fighting in Maluku conflict.

Ronald's recovery process shows that community-based transformation is an effective method for a permanent transformation process. Ronald started to find a footing for his demobilization and transformation process when he returned to school and intensively interacted with peace activist communities. This indirectly becomes a corrective memo for many actor recovery efforts which tend to focus the process on actor-based approach and ignore the role of community and social structure around the actor.

Ann Mercer, a theology professor in Virginia Theological Seminary conducted an ethnographic research on the counseling handling for children in Maluku conflict and wrote her observation on community-based trauma recovery model for children in Maluku (2015). She criticized "Western Model" which tends to focus on the perspective and narrative of mental health which dominate traumatic experiences. According to her, trauma in child conflict victims could not be understood as a mere individual intrapsychic experience. Also, trauma recovery should not only addressed toward those who are categorized as victims. Children who were involved in conflict as child soldiers should as well be categorized as victims who need to be handled. They suffer from a severe trauma in the process, and their trauma is an accumulation of violent incidents which occurred repeatedly and in a long time. Based on that fact, handling trauma of children who were involved in conflict violence must also consider the impact from the community where these children live. She underlined that conflict tore a social environment which was supposed to support the growth of these children. Therefore, the recovery of child conflict victims must also involve the recovery efforts for the social environment from its damage due to conflict. In other words, community transformation from violence culture to peacebuilding culture will provide a sufficient space for the transformation of actors who live in that community.

Mercer's research was based on her observation on post-conflict reconciliation and social integration efforts in Maluku. She discovered that interfaith community consolidation that was built by the peace workers had become an effective safety zone for Ronald's recovery and transformation process. Her conclusion shall be an important lesson to fix the actor recovery and transformation approach that is often done by the government as well as institutions in post-conflict areas. After the conflict, for example, Maluku Provincial Government built a Trauma Recovery Center with hope that it will be visited by people who suffer from conflict trauma. In reality, the center did not last long, it was dissolved because there was no interest from the people.

Ronald's experience shows that the trauma caused by involvement in violence is deep and happens in various levels, whether it is individual, family, or community. That trauma also happens in various aspects: psychological, physical, intellectual, relational, as well as spiritual. Therefore the recovery and transformation efforts for them must be thorough and comprehensive. Actor, family, community, religious institution, government and other related parties must be involved in a strategy managed together. This effort certainly requires a long and exhausting time and process.

Ronald's transformation process proves that community has an important role in radicalization as well as actor transformation process. He is an example of an actor transformation process through community-based approach. Community network and peace workers involved him in various activities which were done to build social integration across various segments of society which used to be in conflict with each other. In that process, public and domestic space were managed strategically to build peace atmosphere and social integration. Music, theater, literature, dance, photography, film-making, and others, are the mediums which are utilized as integration power for youth communities post-conflict.¹⁶ In that network Ronald

¹⁶ In Ambon City there are approximately 13 interfaith and interethnic youth groups that became a group based on the same hobby, post-conflict. They do not only

blended in and went through a recovery and transformation process from a former child soldier to child peace worker. Unfortunately, Ronald is only one of the few children those transformation process could be assisted among so many neglected former child soldiers.

The story of Ronald and all former child soldiers in humanity conflict leaves us with an important lesson that children always become the first victim of every conflict and war. They are separated from their families, they often live alone in the refugee shelter, they cannot continue their education, they become involved in violent conflict, they become disabled and died due to the conflict and they suffer from a prolonged trauma caused by conflict. Participating as a child soldier in an armed conflict made Ronald and hundreds of other child soldiers lose their childhood. When we hear stories about them, we understand the conditions that forced them to become child soldiers. This understanding leads and strengthens our efforts to build a comfortable condition for these children so they can grow healthily. It is clear that family and social community where they live must be managed as a safety zone for their growth.

Another lesson to note here is the position of religion both in radicalization process and violence ideologization, and in the opposite, as the transformation of violence and peacebuilding efforts. The story of Ronald and child soldiers in Maluku conflict become an appropriate medium to portray two contradictive sides of diversity. When a conflict is waged on behalf of the holy war, those who are involved in the conflict will be trapped to risk their lives for what Juergensmeyer called as “cosmic war” or “holy war” (2003). In this kind of conflict, the fighters consider themselves as true believers who fight against falsehood. Juergensmeyer underlined that violence and

build friendships inside the community, but also across communities. In many activities, they work together and support each other. Environment advocacy movement #SaveAru to save Aru Islands, Maluku, from forest deforestation in 2013-2014 was initiated by the network of these young friends. Their success in revoking the development license for a large scale sugar cane plantation in Aru Islands motivated them in organizing other actions in environment and humanity advocacy efforts.

cruelty happen in religious conflict because the perpetrators carry the image of cosmic war as a mean to serve various secular interests.

Even though many conflict researchers argue that Maluku conflict was not a religious conflict, it is difficult not to find religion's role as the motivator of that conflict. The child soldiers as well as the adult fighters from both communities that fought clearly show that interpretation of religious teachings had motivated and justified the emergence of violence in the name of the religion. Religion becomes the binder for the rise of group solidarity and collective identity. Young child fighters become the segment that is highly susceptible to religion glorification in conflict and war.

Regardless of the vicious side of religion's role in Maluku conflict, the transformation process experienced by Ronald also proves that religion can be a source of transformation from violence toward peacebuilding. It is true that in Ronald's transformation story, how religion was managed to support his transformation process was not visible. Glorification of theological concepts concerning peace done to combat the glorification of holy war was also not seen.

In Ronald's transformation case, religion played a role beyond approaches with conventional theology, which tends to emphasize the neutralization effort toward interpretation of religious-based violence concepts. On the contrary, religious actors,¹⁷ or those who act based on the inspiration from their religious values, perform more exploration in all sectors related to the conflict and violence in the name of religion. The examples are the peace activists of communities that work to enforce the rights of women and children, communities that give advocacy to fight against corruption, communities for environment defense, or communities for peacebuilding. It is clear that in the transformation process from violence to peacebuilding, the role of religion does not

17 In peacebuilding efforts during or post-conflict, religious actors play an important role, even sometimes more important compared to the institutions which have the authority to organize religious life. Women, youth, informal leaders in society are often the key actors in the structure of diversity.

have to be limited to producing theological teachings in order to combat radicalism and violence. Religion will have a more significant role in peacebuilding process when it can inspire the struggle of religious actors in fighting injustice and other factors that often drive extremism and radicalism of the perpetrators of violence in the name of religion.¹⁸

These important lessons must be heeded in our life together as a nation, especially when hate speeches in the name of religion, ethnic, and social group are massively produced and structured for the fulfillment of political and economic ambitions. Ethnic and religion differences that are not managed well will spark a conflict that cause many children to participate in armed violence. The story of Ronald and other child soldiers proves that they were involved as child soldiers in order to defend their families, their houses, their ethnic communities, or their religions. In that conflict situation, they tend to have no alternative other than to take arms and join the war. Especially, when they feel like they are supported by their families, the religious leaders, and the community that they defend. The development of Ronald and his friends as child soldiers was an example of the result of a community which was provoked by hatred and grudge. For years he was exposed to negative contents in the middle of communities that fought with each other, the contents of hate speeches, prejudice, and grudge that turned him into a strong war machine in his young age.

In any case, Ronald's story underlines many important factors that must be considered in order to formulate an effective intervention policy for children in conflict. Their voices must be heard in order to understand the factors that cause them to participate in armed conflict, as well as to prevent similar cases from happening in the future. Ronald, just as the other former child soldiers, truly hopes that their experiences

18 Throughout 2005-2006 LAIM for example organized a Peaceful Sermon program. In this program, Muslim ulemas periodically sat together with pastors to discuss social community issues that became collective challenges. From that discussion, they agreed to formulate Friday as well as Sunday sermons to talk about the same issues, such as corruption, HIV/AIDS, refugees' rights, and other issues. See further in Manuputty, 2015: 213-237.

will not be repeated by children anywhere. He truly hopes that his story can be listened by all children and policy-makers in this country.***

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Chapter II

“Way Back Home” according to a Former Terrorist-Jihadist: Violence and Peacebuilding in Poso, Central Sulawesi

Ihsan Ali-Fauzi

I am one of the victims of a conflict that destroyed lives in Poso. I am also a former terrorist convict. This [movie] is a form of my accountability for what I have done to other people – and I will keep conveying the messages of peace through any kind of media....¹

The statement above was conveyed by Arifuddin Lako, usually called Iin Brur, the scriptwriter and director of *Jalan Pulang* [Way Back Home], a semi-documentary movie about the reintegration of a former terrorist-jihadist convict in Poso, Central Sulawesi, which was inspired by his own experience. That statement was conveyed in a movie screening in Tentena Christian University (UNKRIT) campus, which is located only half a kilometer away from the beautiful Lake Poso.

I attended that event on October 30, 2017 and so did a dozen of women and girls in hijab – and I could feel the sudden silence that suddenly enveloped the room when Iin stated that he was not only the

1 This writing is based on some interviews that I did with Arifuddin Lako or Iin Brur, and my observation on some of his activities in July 2010, December 2016, October 2017, and February 2018 in Poso, Palu and Jakarta. Reference to the sources in this writing will only be given to other sources. These interviews were done together with Julie Chernov Hwang and the late Rizal Panggabean in 2010, whose results were published in Hwang, Panggabean and Ali-Fauzi (2013). I thank Iin Brur for his friendship and trust. I also thank Julie and Rizal, also Adriany Badriah, Rival “Pallo” Himran, Yono, and other friends in Katu House Community, Poso, for their supports. Any error in this writing is certainly my own responsibility.

director of that movie, but also a former Muslim terrorist convict, and that the movie was based on his story. At the end of that event, three Christian young women raised their hands requesting some time to speak. Having allowed to speak, trying to contain themselves, all of them said that they just wanted to say how important the meeting and the movie were. Later I found out that it was the first open and mass event, which involved Christian and Muslim communities as well as invited a former Muslim terrorist convict as the interviewee, that took place in Tentena, the most important Christian community center in Poso Regency.

On the previous two days, October 28, 2017, a similar event was held at the Regional Development Planning Board (Bappeda) office of Poso Regency, in Poso City, which is approximately one hour ride away from Tentena. Even though it was delayed for a moment due to a power outage, the event held while celebrating National Awakening Day was attended by all local elite ranks, including the regent and his deputy. Rival "Pallo" Himran, a reggae musician from Palu who had worked in Jakarta for a long time and was once a member of Steven & Coconut Treez group, was also present and sang "*Jalan Pulang*" [Way Back Home], the theme song of the movie, titled the same as the movie. At the end of the event, I watched a friendly discussion between Iin Brur and his friends with the Vice Regent of Poso, who had an objection with a scene in the movie which implied that the local government did not provide any assistance for former terrorist convicts. Iin Brur said that, "The word 0 [zero] that was collectively said in the movie was a movie language, which did not mean there was no [assistance] at all, literally. We meant that the available assistance was not optimal yet or maybe the assistance target might not be completely appropriate."

Iin Brur and his movie are considered to be recent and important developments in research and policy discussions concerning violent conflict, terrorism, deradicalization, and peacebuilding efforts not only in Poso, but also in Indonesia as a whole. A brief description

above about *Jalan Pulang* movie screening in Tentena and Poso City is hoped to be a medium for us to see wider issues and to learn. To my knowledge, this was the first time in Indonesia that a former terrorist convict made a movie told his own experience and invited his (prospective) audience to learn from that experience.

There are many interesting layers of issues there, but in this writing I will only discuss three of them whose points I hope can be taken home. Some of the issues are strongly conveyed in the movie, but some others are less or even not discussed at all – and I hope that the discussion in this writing can show and emphasize them, or give them a more complete context. First of all, Iin himself, a former Muslim terrorist convict, represented his transformation from a victim of communal violent conflict to a perpetrator of terrorist acts two things which contain extremism elements. Second, Iin Brur stopped doing violent actions, at least up to this day, which according to his own confession, not because of the deradicalization program as often emphasized by some group, including National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), but because of other factors. The extremely important point about Iin's personal transformation or *hijrah* is the point that is not adequately conveyed in the movie. Finally, after getting out of extremism, Iin did not stop only at himself, but he also preached about his *hijrah* to the general public, such as through a movie. Why and how he could make a movie such as *Jalan Pulang* not long after he got out of prison is something that is very important to learn.

I will discuss the points above on the final two-thirds of this writing. After this introduction, I will provide a brief description of violent conflict in Poso that becomes the context of Iin Brur's transformation from a conflict victim to one of the perpetrators. After that, I will discuss Iin's growth and involvement as a jihadist-terrorist, important moments and factors which prompted him to get out of extremism, and his activism after he got out of prison, including making *Jalan Pulang*.

Poso Conflict: From Communal Violence to Terrorist Acts

Poso is one of the regencies in Central Sulawesi Province which is located at the coast of Tomini Bay in the center of Sulawesi Island and it is also a strategic route that connects provinces in Sulawesi Island. This region stretches from the seashores to mountains and is passed by Poso River which flows from Lake Poso in Tentena, Pamona Puselemba Subdistrict. Before the violent conflict broke out in 1998, Poso was known for, among others, the Lake Poso Festival which is held annually and attended by local, national, and even international tourists.

Following the end of New Order era in 1998, a violent conflict broke out in this region as what also happened in Ambon and North Maluku. However, different from other regions, in Poso the violent conflict could be divided into two big categories: the first one was a communal violent conflict between Muslims and Christians, which took place between 1998 and 2002; and the second one was terrorism, which was violent acts that generally targeted Christians, which took place between 2002 and 2007. Both conflicts had different origins, dynamics and end result, in which one type of violent conflict transformed into other types of violent conflict.

Communal conflict in Poso initially broke out as a series of riots between Muslim and Christian gang. The first riot started at Christmas Eve 1998, which subsided in Ramadan month of the same year. This conflict episode was triggered by an incident where a drunk Christian youth stabbed a Muslim youth, which later developed into rumors and war between gangs of both communities. Alcohol was blamed for that incident, so the Muslims demanded liquor stores to be closed during Ramadan month. Approaching New Year's Eve, the Christians objected this decision. However, after a meeting between government representatives, security forces, and religious figures was held, all parties agreed that the sales of alcohol during Ramadan were forbidden (HRW, 2002; Aragon, 2001).

The alcohol issue hid the conflict locus which was actually bigger and more complicated. Some factors which were considered to contribute in the communal violence are: (a) economic competition over land and crops between the indigenous residents of Pamona village who were Christians, the Bugis community, and the Java transmigrants; (b) uncertainty and concern on the status and position of various competing groups after Suharto was dethroned in 1998; (c) competition among government officials over bureaucratic positions; and (d) disintegration of bureaucratic power division structure between indigenous Christians and Muslim migrants (Aragon, 2001; HRW, 2002; van Klinken, 2007; Braithwaite et al., 2010; McRae 2016). Concerns over political power and access to state patronage as well as weak law enforcement created a permissive condition for a conflict to occur.

New episode of violent conflict in Poso happened on May 24-28, 2000. This phase was the most violent episode of Poso conflict, both in terms of damage as well as the fatalities. This time, the violence was triggered by the murder of a Muslim in Taripa, East Pamona. This phase of violence was considered as Christians' revenge after two series of violence which were mostly dominated by Muslims. The most famous incident of this phase began on May 28, when a Christian militia attacked a Muslim village and pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Kilometer 9, Togolu Village, Lage Subdistrict. Hundreds of people were killed in the third phase of the violence, most of them were Muslims (HRW, 2002; ICG, 2004).

The last violent conflict above attracted other groups to come to Poso, generally the "jihadists".² Those who came could be categorized into two big groups. The origin of the first group was related not only to the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion which happened in Indonesia in 1950 and 1960s, especially Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) and Mujahidin KOMPAK, but also to smaller groups such as Jundullah Troop. They arrived a few weeks after the Kilometer 9 incident on May and June 2000 and

2 The term "jihadist" is used here following the way they identified themselves.

consisted of hundreds of trained Indonesian Muslims who were veterans of Afghanistan war or had gone through training in South Philippines. The second group was Jihad Troop, a militia of Ahlus Sunnah Communication Forum (FKAWI), which arrived in Poso in 2001 (McRae, 2016: 181-188).

Even though Jihad Troop, Mujahidin KOMPAK, and JI considered themselves as protectors of Muslims, they had an important ideological difference. *First*, Jihad Troop viewed their struggle in an ultranationalist framework; they tried to defend the Muslims and the state from Christians' attack when the state capacity was weak. On the other hand, JI and Mujahidin KOMPAK considered the Indonesian government itself was not Islamic and therefore, they tried to dissolve it. *Second*, due to the reasons mentioned above, while Jihad Troop ceased their involvement after Malino peace agreement (see below), JI and Mujahidin KOMPAK did not do so, and this led the development of communal conflict in Poso into a terrorist violence (McRae, 2016: 188-190).

Meanwhile, the main difference between Mujahidin KOMPAK and JI lied on the plot toward active participation in what they called as "jihad". For JI, participating in *qital jihad* (holy war) was the culmination of a month of religious indoctrination done by JI members, a month of military training led by JI leaders, and continuous religious preparation through smaller *halaqah* (religious study circle) (ICG, 2004: 8). Meanwhile, Mujahidin KOMPAK required a shorter preparation period, between three weeks up to a month, which centered mainly on the military training and emphasized the "learning by doing" approach (ICG, 2004: 8). Because Tanah Runtuh area became the fort of JI jihad activities, the local jihadists were generally called Mujahidin Tanah Runtuh. Likewise, because Mujahidin KOMPAK was entrenched in Kayamanya area, they were often called Mujahidin Kayamanya. However later on, according to ICG, "After the leader of Kayamanya fell from power in 2004, the members slowly switched to the the leader of Tanah Runtuh" (2007: 6).

In Poso jihadists from both sides recruited local youths to receive military training and religious teachings, including about jihad. Prior to the conflict, many of those youths preferred drinking alcohol to reading the Quran. Most of them joined jihadist groups for the sake of revenge after the death of their relatives. According to ICG, prior to JI's arrival, the Muslim fighters in Poso relied on traditional weapons such as spears, knives, and fish bombs (2007: 3). JI trainers, who were mostly war veterans from Afghanistan, gave them military training and taught them how to use firearms. Jihadists of Tanah Runtuh were divided into two groups: military wing (*askari* group) and Islamic preaching wing (*diniyah* group) (ICG, 2007: 5).

It is important to note that the majority, if not all, of the JI members from Poso did not realize that their teachers were in fact the members of JI until they saw them being arrested and broadcasted on television. A jihadist from Tanah Runtuh, who was clearly aware of JI, said that he participated in a military training camp in Mindanao. The certain thing was that the arrival of jihadist militia marked the determining transition in the conflict, which gave the Muslims a significant military advantage during the riot in 2001.

In Decemer 2001, based on the initiative of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla (at that time they were the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs and Coordinating Minister for Social Welfare respectively), religious figures from both parties announced the Malino peace agreement. Armed forces also increased their role in maintaining order and tranquility in that region (Braithwaite et al., 2009: 260-261). In August 2002, conflict seemed to escalate again, but after that the security in Poso improved so that many jihadists felt like they no longer needed to continue the violent attacks (McRae 2010: 408).

However, for certain jihadists from JI Tanah Runtuh and Mujahidin KOMPAK Kayamanya elements, Malino agreement was a big mistake and an insult to the Muslims. Haris, a senior jihadist from Tanah

Runtu, expressed his view on the peace agreement:

In my opinion, Malino peace agreement did not touch the real root of the problem... Since the conflict broke out, Muslim victims in Tentena or Kilometer 9 could not obtain land ownership. Refugees had to start over their lives from scratch. The government failed to see this. Why did this happen? That was *why* we often held protests. [Initially] we heard the old generation figures, including Mister Adnan [Arsal]...

We expressed our dissatisfaction but the government did not listen. To put it politely: diplomacy was [closed]. [Initially] we attacked their [Christians'] villages. Then all of us became more vicious. [We did] *fa'i* [robbery]. We recruited new people and expanded our operation.³

What Haris described above was the attack that many people called as "terror". The period of terror was characterized by bombings, shootings, and murders, and most of the targets were Christians. The incidents included the murder of 13 Christian residents in Poso and Morowali by a mysterious shooter in October 2003, *mikrolet* (public transportation minivan) bombing killing six people outside Poso market in November 2004, detonation of two bombs around Tentena market on 28 May 2005 killing 23 people, mutilation of three female students in October 2005, bombing of Palu market on 31 December 2005 killing 8 people, and detonation of two homemade bombs killing a man and a woman in 2006. Based on the estimation of Dave McRae, approximately 150 people, most of them were Christians, were killed between 2002 and 2007 in counterattacks (2016: 10).

After learning the situation above (Karnavian, 2009), on January 11 and 22, 2007, Indonesian counterterrorism squad, Densus 88, conducted two raids in Tanah Runtu. The raid was done after months of failed negotiation between the police, mediators, and jihadist groups. The police gathered the list of 29 most-wanted names who were considered to be involved in many post-Malino attacks and murders in Poso and Palu. During the raids, 16 people were killed, more than a dozen people were arrested, and the police discovered the

³ The interview of the author and Julie Chernov Hwang with Haris, a former senior jihadist from Tanah Runtu and close friend of Iin Brur, in Jakarta, July 2010.

biggest hideout of manufactured weapons and explosives throughout the conflict (McRae, 2016: 270-272).

Due to the arrest above, most of the JI ustads fled and the criminals of “terror period” were arrested, tried, sentenced, and imprisoned without any counterattack (ICG, 2008:1). In other places in Indonesia, the arrest of jihadists who once “operated” in Poso was also conducted. The life in Poso after that was relatively safer.

The Formation of a Terrorist-Jihadist: Trapped in Extremism

When the violent conflict broke out in Poso in 1998, Iin had just graduated from Senior High School (SMA) for a year, which he passed with great difficulty. According to his mother, which he also admitted, during those years he was one of the youths of Poso City who liked to join gangs and get drunk. “When it was time for Magrib azan, he did not go to musalla, instead he went to disturb the veiled girls who were going to musalla to read the Quran, while smoking at the side of road” his mother recalled. How did this young man develop into a jihadist and then a terrorist?

Iin was born on September 20, 1987 from Abadia Lako (father), a government employee, and Rusmin Hamdja (mother), a housewife. His father came from the Ampana tribe and his mother from Bugis, but both of them had lived in Poso for a long time. Iin is the second child of four siblings; the other three are Mohammad Rusdi Lako (older brother), Mohammad Riski Lako (younger brother), and Miranti Lako (younger sister). They lived in Bonesompe Administrative Village at the heart of Poso City, which Iin considered as “children creativity center of Poso” prior to the conflict.

According to Iin, before his father passed away, his father’s last position was the subdistrict head (*camat*) of Ulu Bongka, a subdistrict that was a territory of Poso Regency but now it is a part of Tojo Una Una Regency, which is located approximately four hours of car ride

away from Poso City. Following his father's last assignment, their family moved from Bonesompe to the new subdistrict. His father suddenly passed away when he was supervising a new roadwork in the subdistrict he led, when Iin was still in the third grade (senior year) of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Alkhairaat in Palu, capital of Central Sulawesi. At that time, Iin was lucky because it was school holiday (accompanied by two friends from Palu and Maluku), so he could meet his father before parting for the last time. After his father died, Iin and his family returned to Bonesompe. They lived from the income of his mother who opened a small kiosk in Bonesompe, his father's retirement fund, and crops from the farm his father left behind.

With the exception of the time where he was sent to Palu for three years (from 1992 to 1994) for his lower secondary education in Pesantren Alkhairaat, Iin spent all of his childhood in Poso with his family. He went to Muhammadiyah Elementary School and graduated in 1991. Then, after graduating from Alkhairaat in Palu in 1994, Iin continued his upper secondary education in three different senior high schools: State Senior High School (SMAN) 3 Poso (first grade); Aliyah Muhammadiyah (second grade); and Alkhairaat Senior High School (third grade).

Iin admitted that his school activities during senior high school was often distracted by his hobbies in sports and music, while also joining a gang and getting drunk. Iin and his friends had their own basketball and soccer club. However, the hobby that took his attention the most was music. Since he was still in the first grade of senior high school, and even more when he was in the second and third year of senior high school, Iin already had a band called "Ngudu" (it means pouting lips in Poso language), it was inspired by The Rolling Stone, one of the most renowned rock bands in the world. With Iin as guitarist and other changing members, this music group often performed in various music festivals in Poso and Palu. They often played songs from Boomerang or Jamrud, two renowned rock bands in Indonesia in 1990s. Iin remembers

that he and his band often practiced together with other bands, especially at the back of Paniel Church in Lombudia Administrative Village, which was completely burnt when violent conflict broke out in Poso.

When the conflict broke out for the first time in the end of 1998, Iin was living with his family in Bonasompe. Because the conflict duration was not long, only around one month, they remained there during the first phase of the conflict. They fled from Poso when the violent conflict broke out again with high escalation in mid 2000. While his mother was evacuated to Ampana in the eastern part of Poso, Iin fled to Palu, which is five hours ride away from Poso.

Other than becoming refugees, Iin Brur's extended family also became conflict victims in some other definitions. The house of one of his relatives was burnt due to the conflict. In the year 2000 conflict some of his relatives also went missing and their whereabouts remain unknown up to this day. One of them was the grandfather of his uncle who lived in Pandiri Village, Lage, while his uncle's wife and child were safe. In addition, some of his family members in Tentena also died in refugee shelter due to illness.

All of this events sparked Iin's anger and desire for revenge. This was the beginning of what brought him to become the person we know right now: a former terrorist convict. His steps toward this path began since he became a refugee in Palu. There, Iin and his fellow refugee friends liked to watch television and read news concerning the violent conflicts which happened at the same time in Ambon, Maluku, and the involvement of Jihad Troop in it. "In my heart I wanted to be like that, joining Jihad Troop for revenge," he recalled. Indeed, that was what he did when he returned to Poso, marking the beginning of his involvement in the conflict:

When I returned from Palu and arrived in Poso [again], some of my friends from the refugee shelter and I already agreed that if there were Jihad Troop in Poso, we would inform one another so we could join them. At last, when in Poso, I went to the mosque often. One time, [when] there was a *taklim* (Islamic teaching) in the mosque, I participated and I was interested by the discussion

in that study. What I heard back then was nothing like I had ever heard before: about jihad; about not running away [when attacked by the enemy] unless if it was to join other group or as a war tactics...I joined, I was interested, I even joined several meetings. In the end, I was offered to participate even further. I was told there would be a training for one week. I joined it.

Iin and his friends only knew his teachers above as “teachers of Java” due to their languages. Iin and his friends did not remember their names because they used alias names such as Mustafa or Abdullah, and some of them even used the same very popular nicknames, such as Ahmad. “So when someone mentioned Ahmad, we all became confused, ‘Which Ahmad?’” Iin recalled.

At that time Iin and his friends could not make sure if those teachers came from Jihad Troop, like the ones who helped Muslims in Ambon.⁴ However, he said, “All of them were already considered as heroes by the Muslim community in Poso.” Later, after Bali Bombing (2002) happened, through television Iin discovered that some of the Javanese teachers who gave him *taklim* (Islamic teaching) were part of the JI terrorist network, which was renowned not only in Indonesia but also in the world.⁵

According to Iin’s admission, almost all youths in Poso were involved in those studies because they were held in every administrative village, “Each administrative village had their own teacher.” In another occasion, he called this kind of study as public *taklim* (Islamic teaching), different from special *taklim* or training which was only given to a special group carefully chosen by those teachers. In the last one, the youths of Poso were give a paramilitary training for a week or more in a secluded place.

Iin was a part of the group chosen to join this training, also called

4 As previously mentioned, jihadists who came to Poso actually came from two different groups: derived groups of DI, related to JI, and Jihad Troop mentioned by Iin. Both groups had an interest in building alliance with local Muslim groups. In Poso conflict the involvement of the first jihadist group was much more important compared to the second one.

5 The arrival of JI to Poso was done quietly because the members did not directly reveal the identity of their organization to the local Muslim community (ICG, 2004: 7-8).

as *askari* group (armed). Later on, he was also chosen as one of Team 10 members that received special training from the "teachers of Java". Among various Muslim groups in Poso, Iin came from Tanah Runtuh group.⁶ He admitted that he was trained in self-defense, military, war tactics and strategy, and other things, so he was trained in, for example, assembling and using guns, including S-1. Nothing was difficult for him because "we had a direct practice and all the items were there."

Due to the support of Muslims from outside of Poso, especially the "teachers of Java", the military ability of Muslims in Poso improved drastically, as previously mentioned. "When I started to join, at that time it was 2000 or 2001, we as the Muslims did not wait to be attacked and ran anymore. We were the offensive ones, attacking Christian neighboring villages," Iin recalled.

Does that mean Iin and his friends were involved in JI terrorism network? He decided that his and his friends' involvement with JI members above was mutually beneficial. "I saw [the cooperation] in the local context of Poso. In Poso [there was a] conflict, I defended my brothers in Poso... So, in Poso we saw that they helped, and we welcomed." In another occasion Iin also said, "The hatred [toward Christian community] was there even before the arrival of the teachers from Java. Their [role] was more in teaching the knowledge."

Anti-Christianity attitudes and behaviors were something new in Iin's life. When he was a child and a teenager, he admitted that he had some Christian best friends, including those who were active in the band. In fact, one of his extended family, his uncle from the maternal side who lived in Kuku, Pamona, married a Christian woman. Even though later the wife converted to Islam, some of the children in that family are still Christians up to this day. Their relationships always went well. "During school holiday, I always visited them. Likewise, when we celebrated

6 One of his close friend, who was also chosen to join the training and became a Team 10 member and always with him since school period in Pesantren Alkhairaat, was Dedi Muhbiarto Parsan. Later, he was killed, shot by the police force in his hideout in Gebangrejo, Tanah Runtuh.

Eid Mubarak, they would definitely come to Poso,” he recalled.

However, that relationship model totally changed when the conflict broke out:

The reality was, most of them no longer saw the family or tribe background....what they saw was only religion. So if someone went to a Christian area, whether he came from Papua, Jakarta, or anywhere else, and he was a Muslim, he automatically became a victim, and vice versa. If a Christian came in, we did not care where he came from. Follower of Hinduism or Buddhism were not treated that way.⁷

Based on the reasons above, Iin Brur, a young man who liked to smoke and a guitarist of local rock band, became involved as a jihadist in what they called as an *amaliyat* (operation) concerning violent conflict in Poso. When he was running the *amaliyat*, he admitted that he was involved in some villages attack; one of them was Mayumba Village. “The journey was around four days and four nights by foot [from Poso] through the forest.” He also recalled, “There were around 30 of us. The victim from our side was someone who got shot in one hand, but no one died. As for the victims from the Christian side, I did not know how many because there was police who guarded [the village]. So as soon as we got into the village, we had a shootout. Houses were burnt.”

However the *amaliyat* that caused Iin to be called a terrorist was his involvement in the murder of Ferry Silalahi, a prosecutor in Central Sulawesi High Court, in Palu on May 26, 2004. Even though Poso had become a safer place after the Malino peace agreement (2002), Iin was a part of the group that was unsatisfied with the agreement contents and carried out unilateral attacks that specifically targeted Christians, as previously discussed. The murder of Prosecutor Ferry was one of the attacks.

Iin’s involvement in this project began when he was summoned to

⁷ In another occasion, Iin also stated: “I was often asked, is it true that the war [in Poso] was between Islam and Christianity? When meeting face-to-face, that side said ‘Haleluya’ and this side said, ‘Allahu Akbar.’ If that side shouted PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) and this side shouted Golkar, that meant it was political party [which was involved]. [So] there was a religion issue.”

Palu by Ustad Hasanuddin, the "teacher of Java" who was considered as the highest leader of jihadist group in Poso.⁸ Apparently Iin was asked to assist Haris, who proposed this project and was involved in other similar projects.⁹ In Haris's assessment which was agreed by Hasanuddin, Prosecutor Ferry must be killed because he had insulted Islam in public, when he tried one of the terrorism cases.¹⁰

Iin said that initially he was reluctant to participate in it since the target worked in Palu, not in the war zone of Poso, and the target never directly attacked and harmed Muslims in Poso. However, Hasanuddin and Haris managed to convince him that the concerned target also harmed Muslim indirectly. Iin also admitted that he tried to dodge by saying that he had no weapon. But once again Haris managed to encourage him by providing the weapon. "You carry a weapon, I carry one as well," he recalled. At the end Iin gave up because he ran out of argument and there was a strong solidarity among them.

The project above was successfully executed on one night, when the target just got out of church after going to a service in Indonesian Christian Church. "The choice of place and location was a mere coincidence because based on observation, the condition was the most favorable one. Haris was the one who shot first, using a M-16 rifle. I shot

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- 8 The real name of Hasanuddin is Slamet Rahardjo, a JI member who was appointed in October 2002 as a high official of the organization to lead a JI operation in Poso. He lived in Tanah Runtuh and married the daughter of Adnan Arsal, whose pesantren was used as the headquarter of jihadist activities in Poso (ICG, 2007: 5). Nasir Abas called him as the head of JI *Wakalah* in Poso. Under Hasanuddin's leadership, local residents of Tanah Runtuh and their instructors from JI were responsible for most of the violent acts in Poso since late 2004 and forward (Karnavian, 2009: 292-307)
 - 9 Haris is Lilik Purnomo, a local youth of Javanese descent who played an important role in planning a series of attacks on Christian targets in Poso and Palu after Malino Peace Agreement, including the mutilation of three Christian female students in October 2005. ICG (2007:4) noted that Haris's relationship with JI began on his first training in Poso, in late 2000. When he was arrested and tried, Haris admitted his actions above and he was sentenced to prison for 14 years.
 - 10 According to Iin's story, Haris viewed that Prosecutor Ferry must be killed because in the trial he said, "If Islamic Law is enforced in Indonesia, then it is a setback." Iin was also convinced by Ustad Hasanudin who told him the conversation between the prosecutor and the wife of the terrorist accused. Prosecutor Ferry asked, "You knew that there wasn't a guest in the house?" The wife answered, "I did not know. In our religious teaching, we are not allowed to meet anyone other than our *mahram*." Responding to that answer, Prosecutor Ferry commented, "What kind of teaching is that?" This offended Haris and Ustad Hasanudin, and they viewed that the prosecutor had insulted Sharia.

after him, using a Revolver,” Iin recalled. According to the admission of prosecutor’s wife which he later heard, Prosecutor Ferry did not die on the spot, he was brought to a soldier hospital after the shooting.

After the act above, Iin returned to Poso and lived as normal. He admitted that he was restless because of that action, but the feeling was gone because many friends gave him *tausiyah* (advice) that “what we are doing is God willing the truth.” Two years after that event, around October 2006, Iin was shocked finding out that his name was included in the most-wanted list (DPO). At once he knew that “it was no longer a game”.¹¹ This was strengthened by the distribution of leaflets containing the names included in DPO, complete with the photos and violent cases where they were involved. Facing this new situation, he joined his friends who were also in DPO and the others in Gebangrejo, Tanah Runtuh, which was their usual headquarter.

When the National Police finally attacked Tanah Runtuh in the morning on January 11, 2007, coincidentally Iin was not there, he went home to Bonesompe and stayed overnight there. He was woken up by his older brother, who also informed him about the attack. When Iin insisted to go to Tanah Runtuh at once, his mother forbade him. His mother said while crying, as told by Iin, “You cannot go. If you go, it is not you who die, it is me who die.” He obeyed, there was nothing he could do.

Surrender: “When We are Alone...”

Four days after the police attack, Iin Brur fled and hid in his friend’s house in Palu. There, again through television, he watched the second police attack on Tanah Runtuh on January 22, 2007, and he was sad to see some of his friends getting killed. When asked why he did not surrender himself just as advised by Ustad Adnan Aarsal, the most

¹¹ Before that, he received information a few times that he was being sought after and so on. For him it was normal because “it had always been that way”. There was police coming to his house, but never more than that. He also knew some police, one of them was his brother-in-law. However, the case was different this time because his name was broadcasted on national television.

charismatic Muslim figure in Poso,¹² Iin said that he and his friends did not want to surrender because "our understanding was like that, not to surrender." Moreover, he added, at that time they were together with high solidarity.

Iin stayed in his hideout for three years. At that time, he admitted that he often helped his host in doing houseworks. Sometimes he also went to the market and played soccer with the kids around that house. His family and friends knew he was still alive, but they did not know where he lived.

However living in a hideout, far from his old friends, also provided a valuable opportunity for Iin to reflect on his future more objectively. He also gained new inputs, such as from the television and his host, to consider further in his free time. "When we are alone, we have more time to reflect," he recalled.

The arrest of terrorists by Densus 88 force was among many events that were covered on the television at that time between 2007 and 2009. After watching them all and remembered especially about his mother at home, on November 18, 2009 Iin was certain to surrender. Before surrendering, he went home to Poso in order to meet his mother and ask for her blessing. His mother's words as told by Iin:

I have been waiting for a long time for you to surrender. Everytime I pray, I pray so that your heart will be moved [to surrender]. Even though you will be imprisoned, the important thing is that I know where you are. No matter how long [in prison]. The important thing is that I know where you are. If I have long life and blessing, I can see you. But if I do not know where you are, it will be difficult....

According to Iin, the consideration about his mother was the strongest factor that prompted him to surrender. "My mother lived alone because my father had been dead for a long time. Since long

¹² According to Iin and other sources (see for example McRae 2016, 184), this figure was very respected by the society in Poso because during the conflict period, especially early violent phase between May and June 2000, he remained in Poso when many public figures fled to evacuate. His figure was also acknowledged by jihadists from Java and his competitors in Christian side.

ago she [mother] kept encouraging me to surrender myself." Iin knew about this matter because he always heard about it when he met people during his hideout. He also thought about his younger siblings because "there are still many things that I have to do for them."

But Iin's decision was also strongly influenced by the friendship with and the input from his host, the Adriany Badrah and Maskur couple, a pair of NGO workers in Palu with long working experience in Poso. "Although they did not dare to directly suggest that I should surrender, because they respected me, they took turns in asking me to reflect, 'Iin, think about this You have a long way to go. Also think about your family in Poso,'" Iin recalled. For Iin, their input was incredibly helpful because "all this time I [only] socialized with [my own] group, so all the knowledge I had was from them." They, according to Iin, for example viewed the conflict in Poso was not purely between Islam and Christian but it was prolonged and accompanied by revenge.

Iin needed quite some time to decide whether to surrender because he still considered what his fellow jihadists would say. He remembered his commitment in Tanah Runtu not to surrender and now he was worried that he might be accused as a traitor. The guilty feeling kept haunting him until he was convinced by Ustad Nasir Abbas who visited him in prison. "You do not need to think [about that]. Before you, many have already surrendered," so he said. This support was important, because Iin felt that an ustad "was higher than me in terms of *askari* (military) as well as *diniyah* (religion)."

Iin also felt that there was no longer any Muslim-Christian conflict in Poso. He also saw it himself that the state apparatus was not as bad as he had thought before: "Now I can see that in the police force there are still Muslims. The chief of regional police is a Muslim, the President is also a Muslim. I cannot judge what is in people's hearts. [I can only judge] only the *zahir*, the visible ones. I cannot judge what is inside the heart or faith," he added. When he surrendered to Palu Regional Police and accepted by the Chief of Regional Police, Iin was

accompanied by Haji Adnan Arsal, a Muslim figure in Poso who was previously mentioned.¹³ According to his admission, when he surrendered, he was treated nicely and was not tortured, like what he heard had previously happened to his fellow jihadists. The Chief of Regional Police said that, as quoted by Iin, "Iin has surrendered peacefully, we must also welcome him peacefully." When he heard that, he felt safe.

When the court sentenced him for 8.6 years in prison, Iin accepted it gracefully even though he expected to receive a lighter sentence. "I thought that it was all right, just accept it, sincerely. After all it was because of what I did [murder]...I do not want to see it anymore... Now I want to make more friends. It is difficult to live with many enemies, it is better to have many friends.." Iin recalled. In the trial process, he also met the wife of the person he killed and he was glad to know that the wife had forgiven him since a long time ago.

"Way Back Home": Peacebuilding Efforts

After coming out of prison in April 2015, Iin lived with his family in Bonesompe. Somewhat different from the one shown on *Jalan Pulang*, he told me that he did not have any reintegration problem because his return was even welcomed with a thanksgiving event which was attended by the community figures. He also did not face any significant problem in finding a job after getting out of jail because his friends helped him by giving him the initial capital or inviting him to work in their place. Before being active in Rumah Katu Community that he leads, Iin had worked in a printing shop, as he once did back then prior to the conflict and which becomes the job of the character Ahmad in the movie.

However, in addition to his own story, *Jalan Pulang* is also based on the stories of his other friends. In the movie he felt that he needed to include these stories. He said,

¹³ One of Iin's requests to the Chief of Palu Regional Police was to let his "host", Maskur and Adriany couple not to get imposed by any sanction if he surrendered. Iin said that the request was granted by the Chief of Regional Police.

The society needs to know more about the lives of former terrorist convicts. There is a new challenge after they go through the sentence period in prison. There are those who face difficulty in getting a job. There are those who face their neighbors or community that still have not accepted their presence and there are those who deal with internal conflict whether to join the old community or “separate” and socialize with a new community. Or feel that they are ostracized by the old community if they socialize with the new one.

Iin’s life after prison underwent a considerable change when, in mid-2016, he and his friends received an offer from the Marine Colonel Werijon, who was then in charge of leading the marine army in Operation Tinombala,¹⁴ to open an marine park in Poso. After conducting an observation, Iin and his friends successfully built the marine park, which they named “Rumah Katu Marine Park” (Taman Laut Rumah Katu) located in Madale Beach, approximately ten kilometer from the center of Poso City.¹⁵ In the marine park they provided outbound games such as banana boat and flying fox. Tourists in general also go there for diving, fishing, snorkeling, or relaxing with their families.

On August 19-20, 2016 Iin and Rumah Katu Marine Park held what they considered to be one of the biggest marine festivals in Poso, called the Katu Festival. This festival, which was widely covered by mass media, featured music, dance, poetry, art and photography exhibitions depicting the culture of Poso. The regent of Poso at that time, Darmin Agustinus, who opened the festival, among other things stated: “I truly respond and appreciate the creativity of Poso youths who are willing to do positive things for the progress of this region ... [What] Poso youths show at this Katu Festival is a positive thing that prompts the increase of tourist visits in Poso Regency.”¹⁶

While working on these projects, Iin always invited his old friends including former terrorist convicts. Some of them were willing and

14 Iin Brur met him for the first time when he was imprisoned in Palu. At that time, Werijon still worked in National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT).

15 In Poso language, “katu” refers to the rumbia roof made from sago leaves. “Rumah Katu” can be interpreted as “Our Home”.

16 See, “Pesan Damai Warga Poso Dari Rumah Katu,” Pemda Poso, August 22, 2016, <http://posokab.go.id/pariwisata/pilihanwisata/wisataumum/2218-pesan-damai-warga-poso-dari-rumah-katu> (accessed on October 29, 2017).

even enthusiastic to participate, while others did not partly because they felt that the area was "not my field." When organizing the Katu Festival, Iin also contacted his former jihadist friends to ensure that all plans would run safely without any disturbance.

Unfortunately, Rumah Katu Marine Park could not last long because Iin and his friends failed to obtain a special route for vehicle entrance to the park location. Therefore, they focused on the development of the organization's institutional aspect by strengthening the Rumah Katu Community. This community consisted of people who became the victims of Poso conflict, both Muslims and Christians. Iin served as chairman here while the secretary position was held by Fery Djamorante, a Christian activist from Tentena. Adriany Badrah or Adi, who in 2007 along with her husband hid Iin in their house in Palu and now served as the director of the Celebes Institute which had a wide network, actively assisted them from behind the scene.

Through various creative activities, the community wanted to encourage peace in Poso. "Together with Rumah Katu, I want to create a positive stigma for Poso. All this time Poso has always been considered unsafe, a terrorist nest, and a conflict area. In fact, it is no longer like that. Poso has become a safe, peaceful, and must-visit region," said Iin. One of their most recent activities was to prepare and assist the famous band, Slank, in their concert titled "Piss Poso Concert" on the shores of Lake Poso, Tentena on Monday November 6, 2017.¹⁷

Representing Rumah Katu Community too, Iin sent his work, a video with three minutes duration titled *2/3 Malam* [2/3 Night] about daily life of a former terrorist convict to Tempo Institute in Jakarta. At that time, around October 2017, Tempo Institute was holding a short video competition with the theme "*Karena Kita Indonesia*" [Because We

17 See, "20 Tahun Menunggu, Impian Slank Manggung di Poso Bakal Terwujud," Kapanlagi.com, October 26, 2017, <https://musik.kapanlagi.com/berita/20-tahun-menunggu-impian-slank-manggung-di-poso-bakal-terwujud-7a28e0.html> (accessed on October 28, 2017); "Slank Gelar Konser Perdamaian untuk Poso," Kompas.com, <http://entertainment.kompas.com/read/2017/10/25/165835710/slank-gelar-kon-ser-perdamaian-untuk-poso> (accessed on October 28, 2017).

are Indonesia] which he learned from Adi. Because the video produced by Rumah Katu Community attracted the judges' attention and was chosen as the first winner of the competition, Iin was invited to Jakarta, along with other 20 people from across Indonesia to participate in a filmmaking workshop.

In short, the *2/3 Malam* video was the beginning of the continuous development of Iin's and Katu Rumah Community's creativity that later on they could produce *Jalan Pulang*. In terms of substance, the theme that Iin used in *Jalan Pulang* was similar to the theme he used in *2/3 Malam*, or the extension of it. Thanks to his relationship with Adi and Tempo Institute as well as several other institutions, Iin and his friends did not only improve their capacity and expand their network concerning filmmaking, they also gained confidence in making the art.

This experience above gave Iin and Adi the courage to contact Rival Himran to write the theme song of the movie and become his voice actor. When he was contacted by Adi for the first time for this purpose, Rival was reluctant because what knew about Poso in Jakarta was conflict and terrorism. On the journey from Palu to Poso, Rival's feeling was even more uncertain once Adi told him that the director of this movie, Iin Brur, was a former terrorist convict! However, the early worries were gone when he met and became roommates with Iin for one week during the filmmaking. In the end, not only did Rival write and sing the theme song, he also acted in *Jalan Pulang*. "I am so happy to have played a role in the filmmaking. Iin Brur is awesome! I am truly impressed!" He recalled.

I am not credible to rate the *Jalan Pulang* in terms of cinematography because I am not an expert in that field. However, in terms of substance and from a general audience point of view, I was not truly satisfied, such as when I watched the scene where Ahmad mentioned one hadith to reinforce his opinion because it felt patronizing and not quite natural. On the other hand, I loved the scene where Ahmad was looking for a job and "declined" not only by a Chinese shopkeeper,

but also by a veiled shopkeeper. This shows that Iin was susceptible in viewing the relationships among the diverse religious and racial groups in Indonesia. What I consider important but not shown in the movie is how Iin, or Ahmad, experienced the self-deradicalization as I have discussed above.

Regardless of those aspects, I could capture the important message that Iin tried to convey through this movie that: former terrorist convicts are also victims, they can or even have changed, the war has brought many victims, and the trauma it caused can keep haunting many victims, the government must do more efforts in order to resolve the challenges faced by former terrorist convicts, and the efforts to bring back the former terrorist convicts to the old organization and movement still exist. Some of the messages are explicitly conveyed in *Jalan Pulan* while the rest are conveyed implicitly.

In my opinion, the positive contribution of this movie could be seen when *Jalan Pulang* was released in Tentena because the release already brought together parties who had never met before, as previously discussed in the beginning of this writing. When it was released in Poso City, the movie even started a discussion between the Deputy Regent of Poso and the filmmakers! Positive responses to this movie were also given by many parties who represented the main stakeholders in Poso, from the Regent and his apparatuses to the Chief of Police Resort (Kapolres) and Military District Commander (Dandim), in addition to the religious figures from religions that were in conflict, such as Kyai Haji Adnan Arsal (Muslim) and Pastor Rinaldy Damanik (Christian).

Conclusion

I first met Iin Brur at the Densus 88 office in Palu Regional Police (Polda) Complex where he was detained after he surrendered and his case was on trial. Even though I had read and heard about him before, I was still surprised to find out that the "terrorist-jihadist" was wearing dark check pattern shirt with rolled long sleeves, jeans, and

smoked – far from what I imagined as the representative of jihadism and terrorism. He looked very “trendy”, he spoke casually, as if he had no trouble, even though his murder case was on trial and he was threatened with prison sentence. During the interview with him on the (religious) ideological basis of his involvement with jihad and terrorism, I felt that I – a graduate of pesantren and Ushuluddin Faculty of IAIN Jakarta who understand Arabic – was more well-informed compared to him. After the first meeting, my impression was, “This young man was lost, became jihadist and trapped in terrorism network.”

The more I knew him, the more I believed in that impression. Iin Brur, or Arifuddin Lako, is a case example where the solidarity of a person toward his family and friends as the victims of violent conflict – a noble value –, transformed into a supporter of terrorist-jihadist group or movement he initially did not know (because it was deliberately hidden). In this case, because it was not resolved quickly and appropriately (for example in Malino peace agreement), the communal conflict between Muslims and Christians in Poso developed into a locus which terrorist groups such as JI used for their own purpose. In the middle of that conflict dynamics Iin Brur did make choices consciously; however, the choices were also determined by the very limited information that he had.

Due to the reasons above, as a former terrorist convict, Iin did not have to undergo a “brainwash” program like the deradicalization model that has often been implemented by the government as well as the civil society. He surrendered in November 2009, his case went on a trial and he was imprisoned, these happened because he had already experienced self-deradicalization. This self-deradicalization process took a long time when he was in his hideout in Palu, when he had free time to reflect on his past and future, and when the information he received was not from his usual friends.

However this does not mean that the government does not need to do anything for former terrorist convicts like Iin Brur. Instead of giving sermons on the danger of terrorism in a hotel, or providing a

certain amount of cash assistance without adequate assessment and assistance (which is susceptible to be corrupted from many aspects), what is required from the government is the provision of peacebuilding infrastructure that can support the development of each former terrorist convict's potential. This is what I saw happen in Iin and Rumah Katu Community, its establishment and development was well-supported by the government as well as the civilians. With that support, Iin and his friends could create new job opportunities in order to develop Poso as an important tourism site in Indonesia, while keep developing their potential as artists.

I think the aspect above, the development of peacebuilding infrastructure, was what Iin Brun meant when he and his friends criticized the assistance of local government for former terrorist convicts in *Jalan Pulang*. In Galtung's (1964) term, Iin wanted former terrorist convicts to not only stop acting as a threat to security (negative peace), but to also create and give positive contribution for peacebuilding (positive peace).

On one occasion, I told Iin Brun that Lorraine Aragon, an Indonesianist, wrote about the Poso conflict with the title "Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People" (2001). He chuckled and winced. He could not hide his sadness with that image of Poso, and he wanted to change it by inviting as many people as possible to visit the region where he was born, grew up, and lives now. I think all parties, in their own way, have to support this too. Indeed, Poso is worth visiting because in addition to being safe now and having beautiful beaches, the grilled fish is also delicious. ***

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Chapter III

From Victim to Defender of Human Rights: Transformation of Pastor Palti Hatoguan Panjaitan

Husni Mubarak

Pastor Palti Panjaitan (referred to as Pastor Palti)¹ did not choose which church he would lead; his organization – the Headquarter of Huriah Batak Protestant Church (HKBP) – was the one that assigned the location of his ministry. After leading some churches, he had been assigned by HKBP Headquarter to lead HKBP Filadelfia Church, North Tambun Subdistrict, Bekasi Regency, West Java since 2007. The experience of leading a church in the capital city was the most important moment of his life and it sustained the change of paradigm from the victim of religious-based discrimination and violence to a human rights defender in Indonesia.

This writing describes and discusses the transformation experience of Pastor Palti after experiencing years of discrimination, and even violence, due to the religion difference. According to one of the studies on how victims respond to stigmatization (see Fleming, Lemont, and Welburn, 2012), at least there are two kinds of response: deflating conflict and confronting. Those who choose to deflate conflict reason

¹ This writing is based on a few of my interviews with Pastor Palti between November 2017 and January 2018 in Yogyakarta. The reference of these interview sources will not be provided in this writing. I would like to thank Pastor Palti who always took the time for interviews and also for friendly conversations. Any error in this writing is of course my own responsibility.

that they need to avoid direct conflict in order to save energy, focus on being a professional, and prove that the stigma is wrong. Meanwhile, those who confront argue that the incident of discrimination and stigmatization is the perfect moment to educate the perpetrators that stigmatization and discrimination are wrong. Pastor Palti is the type of victim that chose the second path: confronting. However, he did not just confront to defend the religious freedom of his community, he also confronted in order to fight for the recognition and equal treatment for other communities which were discriminated in the name of identity.

By writing the transformation experience of Pastor Palti, this description would like to show that (a) experience in suffering as a victim of discrimination based on religion and faith provided a relatively strong footing for someone who chose to become a human rights defender; (b) sharing the experience and feeling with fellow victims and survivors would open up a new horizon on the meaning of humanity, so it would easily for him to recognize when a human rights violation happened to a member of society; and (c) the knowledge of liberation theology, human rights and conflict resolution supported the consistency of the paradigm in defending the people whose rights were deprived with all of its risks. These three points are the strongest factors which explain the transformation of his thoughts as a human rights defender.

For that purpose, after the introduction, this writing will describe his life journey up to this moment. The next part is the sociopolitical context behind his struggle as a human rights defender pastor. This writing will continue with the story of two phases of transformation: from community paradigm to freedom of religion and faith; and from victim paradigm to human rights defender. I will conclude this writing by showing the factors that encouraged him to transform into a human rights defender and their implication for human rights advocacy and peacebuilding efforts in Indonesia.

Journey

Pastor Palti was born and grew up in Balige, Toba Samosir Regency, North Sumatra. Since he was a child, he was guided and educated by his father, Pahala Panjaitan, who was assertive and had a firm conviction. His father was a teacher at the Teacher Education School (SPG) who was known in the village to be assertive in educating his students. On the other hand, his mother, Tiomas Lubis, gave plenty of examples in being patient and persistent in doing various things. On many occasions, she always advised him to be patient and persistent in facing various trials and obstacles in life. From both of them, he received valuable lessons on firmness, strong conviction, patience, and persistence in facing various problems.

He completed his kindergarten and elementary school education in institutions owned by HKBP in his hometown.² The man whose childhood hobbies were playing with kites and played soccer completed his Catholic Junior High School (SMP) education in Balige. He once moved to the capital city to attend his Senior High School (SMA) for a year. "At that time I was naughty. I went there only for the first grade. Then I moved to Siantar and completed my senior high school education there," he recalled with a smile.

After graduating from senior high school, becoming a pastor was not one of his dreams. He applied for university, but he did not pass. While waiting for the registration to open in the subsequent year, he followed his father's advice to live with his uncle in Padang. His uncle, Pastor Badia Panjaitan, was a pastor in HKBP Padang. Throughout the year he helped at the church, especially in cleaning. He recalled, "I really never thought of my father's purpose in sending me to Padang. I just followed it rather than staying at home." The experience with his uncle more or less contributed to his knowledge when he became a pastor later on.

² HKBP is one of the many denominations in Christianity whose members are the Batak Toba tribe. This denomination which was established since 1861 in South Tapanuli now centres in Pearaja, Tarutung, North Tapanuli, North Sumatera. HKBP is the biggest denomination in Indonesia, and it has branches in Singapore, Malaysia, United States and Europe. See Aritonang and Karl (2008).

On the next university registration period he went home to ask his father's permission to apply to a general university. Unexpectedly, his father refused. "If you still go to a general school, pay for your own tuition," he recalled his father's answer, who wanted young Palti to attend HKBP Theological Seminary (STT) in Siantar, North Sumatera, and became a pastor. "Paying for my own tuition was not an option. Besides, there is nothing wrong with pleasing your parents. In the end, I applied to STT HKBP." He already knew the STT location and region because when he was in elementary school and senior high school he often passed through the campus of HKBP pastoral candidates.

His early days at college, according to him, were not his best days. He often made troubles since studying at the institute was not his desire. "I often spent the money for my tuition and dormitory to shop. Approaching the end semester I started to realize that this is my life path," he said. The situation changed when he often heard from his seniors about a pastor's life and things that a pastor did. Listening to these stories, he started to study seriously and prepared himself to live as a pastor. On the last semester, along with his friends, he was willing to travel hundreds of kilometers, from Siantar to Medan, to write his thesis. He wrote throughout May-June 1998 because at that time there was no computer rental at Siantar. Even though there were riots in some places in Medan, he managed to complete his thesis safely and he officially became a bachelor of theology on July of the same year.

Pastor Palti started his pastor career as a pastoral candidate in 1999. On the first year he was assigned as an assistant pastor who served approximately 300 people in HKBP Sei Meranti, Bagan Batu, Riau. After a year had passed, HKBP headquarter transferred him to HKBP Tiga Baru, Sidikalang, Dairi, North Sumatera for a year. After passing the probation period two times, HKBP finally ordained him as a pastor in HKBP Matiti, Dolok Sanggul, North Sumatera in early 2002. Since then, he had officially become a pastor and he was ready to be assigned anywhere according to the organization's decision. HKBP

headquarter then first assigned him in HKBP Terowongan, North Jakarta.

In addition to becoming the first ministry location, HKBP Terowongan also became the witness of his love story with Emeliana Tambunan. Emeliana was his junior high school friend in Balige who at that time worked in Jakarta. After being in a relationship for six months, they tied the knot as husband and wife in 2004 in Jakarta. They were blessed with a daughter, Asima Rohana Panjaitan. From HKBP Terowongan, he along with his wife and daughter, has built a family through joy and sorrow up until now.

During his time in HKBP Terowongan, which he classified as a middle to lower class church, Pastor Palti faced challenges of poverty, health and drugs. Most of the congregants of HKBP Terowongan lived in simple shacks and only few of them lived in proper places. They were susceptible to diseases since they lived in slum areas. Some congregants' children were found consuming drugs. "I was trained to face various sufferings, especially those related to health and drugs," he explained.

During his leadership, on an occasion Pastor Palti along with the church management decided to renovate the church building. At that time there were some people who mobilized the mass to protest that renovation. When they arrived at the location, they faced H. Sanan, a local public figure. "This is my region. Go away!" he quoted. He defended the church because they had a long history with the church founders since HKBP Terowongan was established. During his time leading the church, he could serve the congregation peacefully without any protest from intolerant group other than that incident.

After five years of dedication in Terowongan, in July 2007 he was transferred to HKBP Filadelfia, North Tambun, Bekasi Regency, West Java (Panggabean & Ali-Fauzi, 2014). There, he replaced Gr. Elmun Rumahorbo and led the congregation of 131 households, or 521 people of Batak ethnic. In addition to ministering, other task as a

pastor was to strive for the construction of a church building, which had been initiated a year before. A year before he served this church, the committee had bought a piece of land of 1.088 M² belonged to Ibu Sumiyati. At that time the committee explicitly said that the land would be used for church construction before the transaction took place. Ibu Sumiyati and her heirs had no objection concerning the purpose of the land purchase. In addition to ministering, he had the primary task of continuing the initiative until the church could be used for worship.

Pastor Palti along with other committees began to socialize the church construction plan to the community, as one of the requirements for the church construction as stipulated in the Joint Ministerial Regulation (PBM) in 2006. At that time they managed to collect 300 Identity Cards (KTP) and 259 resident signatures on a piece of paper which stated that they did not object the construction plan of Filadelfia church. Therefore, the head of Jejalan Jaya Village also stated no objection and even issued a letter of recommendation for the church construction. On that basis, the committee then submitted an application letter for permit to the Bekasi Regent, requesting for recommendation from Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bekasi Regency and from of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Harmonious Religious People Forum) Bekasi Regency. He went through the step-by-step process to obtain the building permit.

Their effort was hampered when Camat (Subdistrict Head) of North Tambun issued a statement of disapproval on the church construction plan. After that, the second letter from the Head of Religious Affairs Ministry of Bekasi Regency was issued and it stated that it could not issue a recommendation for the church construction yet because there was an objection from the local residents. Considering there was no recommendation from the Religious Ministry Affairs of the Regency level, the Regent did not reply to the application letter for building permit from the committee. Instead, Regent of Bekasi issued a Decree on the cessation of construction activities as well as worship activities

at the location, Jalen Subvillage, Jejalen Jaya Village because at that time the committee was building a fence to clarify the land border. Since that moment, the committee was hampered by the government's permit to build a church up until now.

The obstacle that they faced was not only in building the church but also in worshipping. Pastor Palti and the congregation were sure that they could worship on a vacant land, even though there was no building on it yet. They had the right to use it as a place of worship. This activity apparently caused the mass to react negatively. At the insistence of the mass and using the decree above, the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) sealed the building so the Filadelfia congregation could not access their land. Therefore, he decided to worship next to the vacant land with makeshift tents. This decision apparently attracted more protesters. On one occasion, he along with the congregation went to the location next to the land for the prospective church to worship. Just across the site, less than three meters, the protesters installed a loudspeaker normally used for outdoor events, and they played Arabian songs throughout the service. The congregation could not hear or listen to the content of the sermon, and the worship process was not solemn at all. Since that moment, they could not worship peacefully.³

From week to week the conflict escalation on the decision to worship next to their land was getting worse. One day on mid-2012 people flocked to block the path toward the location. In addition to blocking, when both parties were near each other, they also pelted the Filadelfia congregation with plastic filled with water from the gutter which smelled when it broke. This situation continued and peaked in the end of 2012 for Christmas service. Once again the people blocked the congregation approximately 300 meters from the location. After a long negotiation, the congregation of HKBP Filadelfia decided not

3 A clearer depiction of the condition can be seen in the video "Jemaat Gereja HKBP ini Tetap Beribadah Meski Diganggu Alat Pengeras Suara Umat Lain", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwppfj0ITKg> (accessed on February 8, 2018).

to worship in front of their land. The police gave an opportunity to the congregation to worship at the office of Tambun Sectoral Police (Polsek) on the next day. On the afternoon after the Christmas service, Pastor Palti invited the congregation to the opposite side of the palace joining the congregation of GKI Yasmin which experienced similar incident in Bogor to worship. Until now they no longer come to the land that was meant for the church building to worship.

Temptation to fight for religious freedom could come from any side. Pastor Palti admitted to have been contacted by someone who offered to settle the Filadelfia case at the cost of one billion rupiah. He firmly rejected that offer. "If I had accepted that offer, it would have been a bad sign for the struggle. That is if the church or the community has the money, if it does not it will only be a burden. I remember the HKBP Terowongan church in Jakarta, where most of the congregants were from middle to lower class. Besides, religious freedom should be guaranteed by the constitution, not money," he explained.

Another offer came from the local government which offered church relocation to another land. They promised to find a new location where they could definitely build a church. For him, it was a classic offer like what has been offered to HKBP Cikeuting after a violent incident that harmed Pastor Luspida Simanjutak. The case in Cikeuting proved that relocation did not guarantee the church could be built. Until now the fate of HKBP Cikeuting is still uncertain. The government did not keep the promise that they gave when they proposed the relocation idea. According to him, the source of the problem was not the location but the absence of guarantee from the government concerning the religious freedom of the citizens. "If the state is involved by providing assurance, guaranteeing the religious freedom, and facilitating house of worship construction, we can solve this problem without relocation. Relocation will be futile without all of those," he said.

In the midst of huge pressure and temptation, he felt lucky because there were so many parties supporting the efforts to obtain the right

to worship and own a church building. One of the supports that he considered very valuable was when he was brought to meet other communities suffering from the same fate, whether churches in Bekasi or in other regions across Indonesia, or communities such as Ahmadiyya, Shia, Lia Eden and the others.

One of the meetings with fellow survivors became a turning point of his life. In March 2013 Setara Institute invited several representatives from the communities whose rights were violated to attend a workshop in Jakarta. In addition to discussing the development of the problems faced and action strategy, the workshop also resulted in the establishment of a new community, that is The Civil Society for Freedom of Religion and Belief (Sobat KBB) where Pastor Palti was appointed as the National Coordinator by workshop participants. Being a coordinator of Sobat KBB created an opportunity for him to gain knowledge and get new experiences as an activist of religious freedom from the victim's perspective.

Pastor Palti then continued his studies at the Graduate School of Conflict and Peace Studies at Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW), Yogyakarta, in 2014. He completed his education at UKDW in 2017 with a thesis titled, "*Missio Dei* HKBP Filadelfia's Insight in Facing Violence in the Name of Religion."

Through this thesis I would like to see what is God's mission in relation to the violence in Filadelfia? If the mission of God is truly executed by the congregation, maybe there won't be any conflict. I discovered that what exists in Filadelfia is the church's mission, not God's mission. The church's mission is to build churches everywhere. Meanwhile, God's mission is to bring peace upon the earth. Therefore, we must be willing to work with everyone, with all religions, without discriminating. The purpose is not to increase the number of Christians or churches, but how their presence can solve the social problems in this country.

Since graduating in mid-2017, Pastor Palti has been waiting for the decision of HKBP headquarter concerning where he will be assigned. During his wait, he has no income while his family's needs can not be

postponed. In order to fulfill the needs, he works as an online driver for *Gojek*. At first, according to him, this profession was very difficult.

I never imagined being treated badly by a hotel security guard, for example, when I delivered a food order. I've also been protested by my daughter. I go through all of this because if I don't know how else to afford my wife and daughter. I deliberately shared my experience through Facebook. Maybe the lessons I learned would be useful for many people. Now I know how difficult it is to get money for house rent. If one day I'm reassigned as a pastor, I can understand the difficulties of the congregants because I have experienced it directly.

Sociopolitical Context

Pastor Palti was assigned in HKBP Filadelfia in the midst of sociopolitical change after the fall of New Order authoritarian regime. There are at least five changes which are directly related to his life journey. *First*, the transition from the New Order regime to the Reform Order accompanied by religious and social conflict. These conflicts consisted of: communal or intercommunal conflicts (Ambon, Poso and Sampit), sectarian or conflicts between religious sects within one religion (anti-Ahmadiyya, anti-Shia, Lia Eden, etc.), conflicts in the name of morality, and terrorism. According to PUSAD Paramadina team (2009), conflict data from 1990-2008 shows that the number of communal violence incidents tended to decline, but violent cases in the name of religious sects difference or sectarian conflict tended to increase (see Panggabean, Alam, and Ali-Fauzi, 2010). Meanwhile, most of the interreligious conflicts are related to the construction of houses of worship. HKBP Filadelfia is one among other houses of worship that has faced various objections from local residents for more than 10 years.

Second, Bekasi Regency, the administrative area where Filadelfia is located, is the new space for new residents who try their luck in the capital city, Jakarta, who have more heterogeneous ethnic, religion and belief background compared to the old residents. Referring to the data of Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Bekasi Regency, the average

population growth in Bekasi is 4.2 percent of 3 million population per year. Of the 4.2 percent, the population growth due to migration reaches 3.1 percent, or in average 70 thousand people, per year. They come from various regions with ethnics and religions which are generally not from Java and not Islam in Indonesia. They buy land and build new houses in Bekasi but in general they work in Jakarta. The population growth goes hand in hand with the increase of public facilities and infrastructure needs, including houses of worship. With the growing number of non-Muslim population, more houses of worship are required. That is why there are a lot of suggestions to build new houses of worship in Bekasi, including HKBP Filadelfia.

Third, religious-based mass organizations which promote violence and vigilante actions have sprung up over the last 20 years. Islam Defenders Front (FPI), Muslim People Forum (FUI), Islam Reform Movement (Garis), and similar organizations established branches in various regions in Indonesia, including in Bekasi. These mass organizations actively mobilize the mass regularly to stop Christianization or development of deviant sects which are considered to taint Islam. The basis of these mass organizations is located in Jakarta and its surrounding area, especially Bekasi. They, at least the flags of these mass organizations, always appear in the midst of the mass objecting churches constructions, including Filadelfia in North Tambun, Bekasi Regency.

Fourth, the government set a new regulation on the mechanism of house of worship construction, as stipulated in Joint Ministerial Regulation (PBM) of Religious Affairs Minister and Home Affairs Minister of 2006 concerning Regulation of Regional Head/ Deputy Duties in Maintaining Religious Harmony, Empowering the Forum of Religious Harmony, and Constructing Places of Worship. This regulation, which is an extension and improvement of the old regulation, is considered to be better than the previous regulation by many people (Ali-Fauzi et al., 2012). Even so, the mechanism details

in this regulation, especially the requirement of 60 local residents who state no objection, are often used as a reason to foil the house of worship construction plan. The same pattern applies in various house of worship construction conflicts in Indonesia, including Filadelfia church.

Fifth, at the same time, the discourse on human rights in Indonesia is developing. After the government ratified the international convention on civil and political rights, Indonesia legalized the Act concerning Human Rights in 1999. As the implication, the government formed the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), which spread, assist and supervise the implementation of human rights principles in Indonesia. In addition to state institutions, human rights also becomes a public discourse which has been enriched by reading materials, such as books or columns on the media. As a big framework, discourses on human rights often merge with other discourses, such as freedom of religion and belief, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Since leading the Filadelfia church, Pastor Palti often had discussions on freedom of religion and belief with his colleagues in Jakarta.

Up to this point, we understand that Pastor Palti led HKBP Filadelfia church and suffered from discrimination and violence, in the context of transition toward democracy marked with religious-based violent conflicts, including the issue of house of worship construction. The construction of a new house of worship, in this case a church, in Bekasi becomes an issue because there is a gap between the increasing Christian population due to migration from various regions in Indonesia and the limited church availability. Meanwhile, for some conservative groups in Bekasi, the demands for church construction show the efforts of Christianization in Bekasi.

Transformation

The sociopolitical context above transformed Pastor Palti's thought:: his paradigm changed from community freedom to religious freedom; and changed from victim paradigm to human rights defender which has a wider context. The first phase, transformation from the paradigm of community freedom to religious freedom, happened after he reflected on what he and his community experienced, and then saw other communities which suffered from the same fate. Meanwhile, on the second phase, he interacted with the victims of other sectors, such as justice protesters in Papua, environmental issue protesters, and victims of persecution due to different sexual orientation. His experience made him realized that the state needs to be pushed harder in order to guarantee the fulfillment of citizens' rights in various sectors. For his attitude and struggle, he is willing to sacrifice for a big notion: humanity.

From Community Paradigm to Freedom of Religion and Belief

As previously mentioned, paradigm of Pastor Palti developed from community to religious freedom in general after he struggled with many parties: experienced discrimination along with his congregation, communicated with main organization, and struggled with other victims in Indonesia.

The first lesson he reflected from his personal experience when he suffered from violence and threats in fighting for the rights of his community. During the weekly service, he and his family received threats and terrors, both directly and indirectly.

In addition to physical violence to the congregation, there were still other violent incidents that my family and I experienced. Terrors through anonymous texts, anonymous calls, news from intolerant groups that cornered me in the online media belonged to intolerant groups (*VoA Islam, Arrahmah, Sabilli*), online 'wanted' news by radical Islamic group which was also taped on walls, intolerant mass came to my house, murder attempts on me, and police criminalization.

On the next experience, he had to maintain the unity of a community whose members had different thoughts and desires in facing the problem in Filadelfia. Dealing with more than 300 households was not an easy matter. He needed to maintain their stamina and unity in facing the external pressure.

I had to convince them over and over again. I also needed to formulate a narrative that could maintain the congregation unity. In the midst of a conflict, dissent among the congregation is inevitable. The only way was to face it. There were people who wanted to fight, using weapons if needed. There were also calm people, not emotional. I conveyed to them on many occasions, through sermons or other meetings, over and over again, that the end goal was of this struggle was so we can have a comfortable and safe house of worship. This end goal that I always said on many occasions.

Other struggles that influenced the paradigm change was the parent organization of his church, HKBP Headquarter. He recounted that “misunderstanding was not uncommon when communicating with the organization. For example, I had to make a quick decision on the field whenever I dealt with protesters. Meanwhile, each decision must be coordinated with the organization, which was not always fast. Apparently my decision was not approved. Sometimes the organization could not do anything about the situation on the field.”

He felt fortunate because there was HKBP Filadelfia Advocacy Team which included Defense Team for Religious Freedom (TPKB), a group of lawyers led by Saor Siagian who assisted the Filadelfia case. They provided advice concerning the most strategic stance and statement in responding the protesters and the government decision. For him, Saor Siagian and colleagues in HKBP Advocacy Team were informal “educators” for him and the congregation on what and how the human rights and freedom of religion and belief should be realized in Indonesia. They also actively motivated and reminded the congregation so that this struggle would be free from violence because violence would only harm the struggle.

In order to nurture optimistic feeling and attitude, Pastor Palti

coordinated with other communities in Bekasi which experienced the similar thing. Together with them, he shared his experience and hope. He coordinated, made a network and shared experience with other HKBP, churches, and Ahmadiyya community. "From them, I discovered that there were the same actors behind the scenes, who were involved in various cases in Bekasi. I knew that they were close to the government. I felt like there was a systematic conspiracy from the government against the minority in Bekasi," he said. The experience and knowledge that he considered still limited brought him to think about the rights of other parties from different communities that also suffered from discrimination.

The experiences above brought Pastor Palti to not only think about the rights of his community, but also of other communities that suffered from the same thing in Bekasi. This new awareness encouraged him to always attend many invitations to discuss the resolution of problems experienced by Filadelfia and other victims in Indonesia. That meeting, as previously mentioned in early part, gave him a mandate as the National Coordinator of Sobat KBB with the main duty to share his experience and strengthen other victims in Indonesia.

Pastor Palti admitted he could not perform that duty when he visited Sampang, Madura, with the purpose to meet hundreds of Shia followers. They evacuated to a Sports Building (GOR) after their hometown was burnt by the mass because they were considered as deviant sect followers. In this location Pastor Palti was supposed to strengthen the victims by sharing his experience in Bekasi. However, he could not bring himself to do so.

I was speechless. I was sad to see what they went through. I could only observe their suffering. Instead of consoling them, I learned that what happened in Jejalan was nothing. We did not suffer to that extent in Bekasi, in Sampang they had worse suffering. They lost their homes. They lived in shelter that was almost inhumane. The water was limited. There was no room for privacy. The state was not present. Their basic human rights were taken away.

He felt a similar thing when he visited Wisma Transito, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara on the following year. Wisma Transito is the place provided by the government for Ahmadiyya followers who were evicted from their hometown, Ketapang Village, West Lombok. He visited that place when they had been living there for seven years. According to him, what they experienced was the same as the suffering of Shia community in Sampang. In that place, he also could not say much to the inhabitants. He only saw how they suffered from human rights violation.

On another visit, he was fortunate that he could visit and meet religious and public figures of Nur Musaffir Mosque in Kupang where the construction of house of worship was also hampered like Filadelfia in Bekasi. He visited Kupang to discuss various religious freedom issues in Indonesia, including the construction of that mosque. Martin, the house of that event as well as the commissioner of Judicial Commission, invited Pastor Palti to the house of the Nation Unity, Politics and Community Protection (Kesbangpolinmas) Agency Head. After the conversation that night, the head of Kesbangpolinmas invited him to attend and speak in front of the participants consisting of the representatives of Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), Nation Unity, Politics and Community Protection Agency (Kesbangpolinmas), Subdistrict Head, and mosque protesters. Pastor Palti agreed to attend and speak in the forum. He had heard that one of the reasons that mosque was disputed was because the churches in Java were also disturbed, just like HKBP Filadelfia church. Therefore, he felt the need to convey the thought that was in accordance with religious freedom principles, not revenge. He stated,

I am the pastor whom you often use as an example of a disturbed church. I am the pastor of HKBP Filadelfia, which you support by closing the mosque here. I disagree. Evil cannot be requited with evil. Kupang is the city of love. Love never requites evil with evil. Love must be from East to West. Just as the sun rises from East to West.

According to him, on that afternoon, the petition that stated there was no objection on the construction of mosque was signed by the participants. In fact, there were even some residents who offered to include their family members if needed. On April 2016, the government laid the first stone as a sign that the mosque had already received a permit to be built. He felt that his presence in the meeting with local figures also contributed to the completion of mosque construction in Kupang.

In addition to Kupang, Pastor Palti also attended celebrations and workshops in Sunda Wiwitan community, Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java several times. He already knew Dewi Kanti, a Sunda Wiwitan figure, before his visit in early 2013. Followers of Sunda Wiwitan is one of the ancient religious communities that experienced the ebb and flow of recognition from the government since the independence and became victims since they were 'born' until 'buried' (Maarif, 2017: 6). "They do not get Birth Certificate like us because their marriage are not registered like the followers of major religions in Indonesia. Their basic human rights are taken away because are considered as "infidels" by other parties. In fact, referring to constitution, they should not be discriminated," he explained.

Based on those experiences, Pastor Palti reflected that the problem is wider than the discrimination experienced by his community. The problem is not specific to Jejalen Jaya village, where there is a difficulty in building his church, but it is the state's stance that is not firm in protecting the freedom of religion and belief of its citizens. As a result, sufferings of the citizens, which he saw himself, were unresolved. Instead, similar violence and discrimination happened in other regions with different scale and damage power.

From Victim Paradigm to Human Rights Defender

He experienced the second transformation especially when he started befriending and socializing the victims of persecution and

discrimination across sectors and issues. The struggle with them and the struggle with the new knowledge in campus had prompted him to not only defend the victims in the name of religions and beliefs, but also those who demand for justice in border issues such as Papua, victims of 1965 tragedy, sexual orientation differences, and even HTI's right to associate. The basis of his defense is the universal principles of human rights, which he often discuss with his colleagues on many occasions.

According to him, he obtained knowledge on religious freedom and human rights from some activists and workers of institutions that fight for freedom of religion and belief in the framework of human rights in Indonesia. For example, the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM). Pastor Palti had met and discussed with Ifdhal Kasim, former Komnas HAM Commissioner 2009-2012 a few times. Discussing with people like Ifdhal, in his opinion, brought the feeling of relief and optimism because there were people who supported him. In addition to Komnas HAM, he also met activists from non-governmental organization which assisted such as the Union of Journalists for Diversity (SEJUK), Association 6211, the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta), Wahid Institute, Setara Institute, PUSAD Paramadina and the others. However, as soon as he returned to Bekasi and faced the protesters, moreover the objection from the local government, he could not hide his pessimism in his community.

Stance in protecting those who are treated unfairly by the government and intolerant groups is now more explicit, especially during and after completing his postgraduate education of Conflict and Peace Studies at Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW), Yogyakarta. In his opinion, fighting for the human rights of those whose rights are snatched and discriminated is an important part of peacebuilding and political transformation efforts in the society. Even though some people may not like it, he defended discriminated individuals and communities through various methods and medias.

For example concerning the shooting in Papua in 2014, he stated:

I am also guilty of the shooting victims in Papua. My mouth is silent and my heart is frozen. Forgive me my brothers in Papua. Pak Joko Widodo, do not be silent. Don't only do *blusukan* (impromptu visits). These images are unnecessary, what is required is real action to liberate this country from violence. You have been trusted as the peacemaker; do it Pak Jokowi even though you have to pay the high price, for that you are chosen by God. Save Papua.

He publicly questioned the actions of the state apparatus against people of Papua. In his opinion, "The actions of the authorities were cruel and inhumane. When dealing with our brother Papua, law enforcement officers are always malignant, vicious, cruel. It is very different from when they are dealing with our brothers from non-Papua tribes. The state is partial". On another occasion, he participated in a protest which opposed the apparatus's attitude in an event in Yogyakarta.

Other defense, for example, was done for those who were discriminated due to their sexual orientation or those who were Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT). In 2013 when he was still leading Filadelfia church and was on his first year leading Sobat KBB, he expressed his view:

Back then I was close-minded, it could be said that I "hated" LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), Ahmadiyya, Shia, Sunni, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions. Hated black people, white people, etc. Now I love them all especially after socializing with them. However, the most fundamental reason is because they are all humans just like me. What is my right to hate them? Who am I to hate them?

In relation to religion, he said that religion should speak out and provide a solution for them, instead of becoming a source of problem. In his words, "Religion should be a solution for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) instead of being an obstacle or even a judge that condemns that they are wrong or deviant." This view is not uncommon to be the question of congregation, whether religion allows it or not. He explained to them that religion teaches humanity. In his opinion, they are the people who need religious guidance so religion must be there for them.

He expressed his amazement to other Christian denomination, in this case GKI, which dared to discuss LGBT topic casually. His story,

Lunch atmosphere of participants of LGBT and Church Seminar. The participants were dominated by GKI pastors who came from various ministry regions. The situation was far from formal. There was no tie, no suits, no minister-like shirts, no shiny shoes. It was very different from what I saw in my community which was really formal. The GKI pastors were deepening the church's stance on LGBT. This GKI conference had included God, the Father and the Mother. This recognition also created an opportunity for gender recognition. Bravo. I hope my church will do so too. What was meant by God the Father and God the Mother was God takes care of His creations like father and mother.

In addition, he appreciated the stance of PGI (Indonesian Communion of Churches) on LGBT issue. PGI in its statement of stance acknowledges that we live in diversity in terms of race, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, as well as religion. On that basis, PGI recommends the Christians to start accepting the diversity as a social fact. Furthermore, PGI acknowledges that if LGBT is determined at birth, in Christianity it is not a sin. The implication is that PGI advises the pastoral to prepare themselves in providing counseling for families with LGBT tendency.⁴ Considering that the stance and view of PGI is the result of reflection, according to Pastor Palti it is not a big matter, it needs to be appreciated.

In addition to LGBT, he also spoke up on the government's decision to dissolve organization such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). He classified HTI as an intolerant group because he saw it himself and confronted with HTI members who objected HKBP Filadelfia in Bekasi. HTI members were among those who firmly objected the church construction, in Bekasi as well as across Indonesia. However, he did not agree with the dissolution. In his opinion, "Opposing the Government Regulation in Lieu of Legislation (Perppu) is the same as supporting HTI". He warned that this prohibition could lead to

⁴ The complete version can be read in "Pernyataan Pastoral PGI tentang LGBT," June 20, 2016, <https://pgi.or.id/pernyataan-pastoral-tentang-lgbt/> (accessed on Februari 13, 2018)

persecution. "After its dissolution, the names of HTI followers surfaced. What does that mean? Is it to make it easier to persecute them? Will the persecution stories of PKI members in 1965 will be repeated for members of dissolved mass organizations? Hopefully not."

It is interesting that Pastor Palti conveys the defenses using religious language, persuasive language, pastoral language. He does not pretend to be a human rights activist who does not consider religious argument. "On various occasions where I met him, he always saw the humanity aspect in his defense in the name of the religion that he believed in and fight for," said Thowik Anwari, an activist of Union of Journalists for Diversity (SEJUK), who also assisted during the time in Filadelfia. In his opinion, the change of paradigm which now emphasizes human rights principles is inseparable from his struggle as a religious leader.

As we have seen from the description above, Pastor Palti consistently adheres to the principles of human rights no matter how conflicting those are with the congregation or organization. He tried to explain that he will defend anyone from any background on the basis of humanity. In his opinion, the core of religious teachings is basically to defend humans and humanity. Those who demand justice in Papua are humans; those who demand their rights because they are discriminated due to their sexual orientation are humans; even those who are intolerant and now are being treated unfairly such as HTI followers are humans.

Three Factors

Based on the explanation above, this writing identifies three factors which have transformed him significantly: experience as the victim, struggle with the victim, and new knowledge. These three factors have gradually influenced his paradigm transformation on the meaning of human and humanity.

Experience as a victim became the first factor why Pastor Palti

recognized and understood the importance of human rights as a citizen in practicing religion and belief. Although he had already been exposed with these issues during college, human rights issues and ideas were not the main purpose as a pastor at HKBP Filadelfia church, Bekasi. Here, he was tasked to serve the congregation. Upon arriving at the site, he realized that he had to lead a community that was facing an obstacle in constructing a church because they were opposed by some residents. He also faced not only a problem in constructing a church, but also the anxiety in worshipping. In the middle of his exhaustion due to the objection from various parties, he had a firsthand experience of the suffering of victims of discrimination and unfair treatments from the government as well as intolerant groups. He was also criminalized based on an unclear accusation with no evidence. This personal experience, according to his admission, will not be forgotten and it prompted him to understand the citizens' rights in religion and belief.

The next factor that prompted him to transform was his meeting with victims of violence and discrimination in the name of religion in other regions of Indonesia. He directly heard and saw the suffering of Shia followers in Sampang and Ahmadiyya in Transito who were evicted from their hometown. He became even more convinced that there is a big problem with the religious freedom in Indonesia. What Filadelfia went through was a small fraction of a bigger problem, which is the inconsistent guarantee of freedom of religion and belief from the government. His direct meeting with victims in other communities had expanded his perspective from struggling for his own community paradigm to struggling for all marginalized people paradigm.

Not only with those who had different religions and beliefs, he also met and struggled with victims of discrimination due to differences in opinion, ideological and sexual orientation. He directly heard the stories of injustice experienced by people of Papua, both by those in Papua or those who was struggling in other cities such as Jakarta or Yogyakarta. He also directly heard the stories of those who were persecuted due

to their different sexual orientation. Even though he had to go against the congregation, organization or other parties, he would still speak out to defend their rights. In fact, he also defended the rights of people who were previously the perpetrators of discrimination and intolerance acts when they were being treated unfairly such as experienced by HTI community. He admitted that this was the most difficult dilemma, but human rights principles which are based on humanity must be fought for, no matter what the identity or ideological background is.

The *third* factor which prompted his transformation was education. He often heard about liberation theology, the theology which takes side with unfortunate people, at the STT HKBP Pematang Siantar. Sometimes those teachings were out of his perspective when he tried to calm the congregation who were getting angry and tired of the suffering. The knowledge that he received from the institute influenced his efforts in defending the religious rights of the citizen all this time. However, he was never satisfied with the knowledge that he already had. While dealing with the problem in Filadelfia, for example, he never missed the forums that were organized by various institutions, campus or non-campus based, which discussed the freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia. In his opinion, those forums informally taught him religious freedom and human rights principles.

It is not surprising that he decided to take the master program concentrating on Conflict and Peace Studies in UKDW. He deliberately chose this program because he realized that the principles of human rights must be enforced using various methods. As a pastor, he felt the need to study how conflict resolution and transformation in society could be done. In addition to firm actions from the government, he thought that as a religious figure he had to have the skill in managing differences in the society. Another reason why he chose UKDW was because the conflict transformation was discussed in the framework of Christian theology. This aspect, in his opinion, is very important considering this aspect is where he would contribute for

peacebuilding and human rights defense in society. From this campus, he became more determined to be a human rights defender as part of the peacebuilding efforts, no matter how much it conflicts with the thoughts of congregation or the organization's policy.

Implication

Pastor Palti's experiences have given some lessons for human rights advocacy, especially religious freedom in Indonesia. *First*, victims of violence and discrimination have the potential to become human rights and peacebuilding defender, something that other people do not have. They will not forget what they have been through. That experience becomes their greatest asset in fighting for their stolen rights and also for other victims. Therefore, it is time for us to leave the perception that the victims of violence and discrimination in the name of religion and belief are helpless. Even though someone does not need to be a victim to be a human rights defender, their bad experience is their greatest strength to reverse the situation, which is to maintain peacebuilding, struggle for equality and fight for the guarantee from the state concerning basic rights as citizens as humans.

Second, the opportunity to meet and struggle with as many people and perspective as possible also opens up the insight of human rights defender. The opportunity to meet and interact directly with the other victims in the name of religion, or other victims due to differences in sexual orientation or ideology, is a luxury. The encounter paved the way to explore the issue deeper and encourage to consistently fight for the rights of citizens. Paving the way for victims to meet other victims is an effort that needs to be developed to increase the number of human rights defenders and peacebuilding proponents in Indonesia. Human rights advocacy and peacebuilding will be stronger in the future if sharing experience and insight as well as synergy have become the tradition of human rights defenders and peacebuilding activists, especially those who have experienced discrimination.

Improving victims' skill and ability in dealing with discrimination is the next implication in strengthening human rights advocacy and peacebuilding efforts in Indonesia. Referring to the experience of Pastor Palti, this knowledge aspect is determined by two factors: internal and external. Basically, he is a learner. He is never satisfied with the knowledge that he has. The other key is the opportunity to obtain new knowledge even though it is filled with sacrifice, in terms of soul and wealth. Therefore, knowledge and skill of victims of violence and discrimination in the name of religion and belief must be another priority in strengthening human rights advocacy and peacebuilding efforts in Indonesia.

Pastor Palti might not be able to choose where he would serve the congregation. However, he does not want to miss every available opportunity to keep learning in order to understand God's command concerning love and humanity. The bitter experience of being treated unfairly and discriminatively does not make him lose heart. He keeps fighting not only for the justice for his community but also for all citizens of Indonesia. Even though he has to live an uneasy and solitary life, he is firm in his belief to fight for the human rights in this country. Quoting Gus Dur, he believes that "peace without justice is an illusion."***

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Chapter IV

***Inong Balee* Sought for Justice: Khairunisak Rusli between Political Struggle and Women Struggle**

Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem

Introduction

The photo of that small family was framed neatly in the living room. In the frame there are Khairunisak Rusli¹, her husband, Mulyadi, and their two children with happy expressions. On the television there was a photo of her husband along with his name. The photo was a simple memoriam, reminding the household and the guests about his departure to The Creator. Mulyadi passed away on January 2018 after suffering from a prolonged illness. His departure did not only create an emptiness in their house, but most of all, it created an emptiness in the heart of Nisah and her children.

1 I thank Khairunisak Rusli who had welcomed me for an interview even though she was grieving after the death of Mr. Mulyadi. Nisak also gave me some contacts so that I could interview her friends who are also former combatants from Bireun (Ramisah Ali, Fitri Wahyuni, and Mahyunizar) on Aceh Women Congress (*Duek Pakat Inong Aceh*) in Banda Aceh. I realized that the information from the interviewees could spark a reaction especially from high officials of former Free Aceh Movement (GAM) that might not approve some information here. However I can take responsibility for the data and information presented here, because in addition to interviews, I also used secondary sources that can be accounted for. I am also grateful to Arabiyani Abubakar who had introduced me to Nisah and was willing to accompany me during the interview. Arabiyani also introduced me to some of the children whose parents were killed in Aceh conflict, as well as Umi Anida in Bireun, and had the opportunity to discuss with them to provide more information on the context and experience of the conflict period and its impacts. I convey my gratitude for them. Finally, I would also thank M. Fariz, my old friend who was once active with former *inong balee* in Inong League of Aceh Bireun (LINA) on the valuable information given, as well as Dara Mutia Uning, a friend who became my discussion partner in this writing and many other things.

In regular house dress and pink hijab, Nisah said that Mulyadi was a husband who had never left her in any situation. The sorrow was visible on her face. Her appearance that seemed vulnerable covered her background which was actually tough. Losing Mulyadi was the most difficult thing in the three decades of her life. They met when the shooting between Indonesian army and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) surrounded her while she was leaving a small kiosk belonged to Mulyadi. At that time, Nisah was assigned by her superior to go down the mountain and buy some logistic needs for the troop. Nisah, a GAM female combatant, or usually called *inong balee*, was forced to hide in Mulyadi's kiosk until the shootout was over, and the situation was safe for her to return to the mountain and join her troop.

Nisah's life story is a complex story when a woman fell into and got out of violent extremism due to a utopia of justice for her people and at the same time she also chose to live her specific role as a woman. There are hundreds of stories from other female combatants that had multidimension in understanding their role in the history of Aceh. However, not all of them could represent their individual "*hijrah*" journey from the values of extremism violence where they took part, to the values of peace. Also, not all female combatants could freely tell their stories without worrying the intervention from organization hierarchy where they used to be involved. Nisah is one of the individuals who could tell her transformation stories without being too restricted by the political authority where she was or is still under now.

At a very young age of fifteen years old, Nisah decided to join as a GAM combatant and take arms in order to fight the presence of Republic of Indonesia in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam for a joint purpose which was independence. As a female in a highly patriarchal society, this choice was not easy. The choice of going to war meant letting go her female identity for a greater struggle. There was almost no space to articulate her identity as a woman in a very masculine war norms.

Even so, Nisah made her own choice and strategy. She went to war, and she became a real woman who fought for her reproductive rights as a wife and a mother.

This writing will discuss Nisah as one of many stories which show the tensions between personal and collective values in the discourse on resistance in the name of “nationalism” of Aceh and justice. These value tensions have never been shown in the narratives or studies on the conflict in Aceh as well as women heroism in resistance history of Aceh. Extremism, in this case, shows its other aspect, and this aspect could be the one that leads someone to the decision to transform to peace as another method to fight for a belief of justice.

The first part of this writing will discuss a brief flashback on the history of resistance and conflict in Aceh, especially in New Order era. The repressive conflict sparked the anger of Nisah and many other civilians, which made her believe that justice for “Aceh nation” could only be achieved with armed resistance. The second part talks about female combatant unit in GAM and Nisah came to join it. This part also reexamines the involvement of Aceh women in the resistance narrative since Dutch colonialism era. The third part discusses Nisah’s life, including her family and values that she received. This will provide a description that later on would influence Nisah’s choices in her struggle. The next part is about the sociopolitical change in Aceh after the conflict and how Nisah then chose her new struggle. The last part is the conclusion.

“Nationalism” of Aceh Nation: GAM and Resistance against the Central Government of the Republic of Indonesia

The history of Aceh contains a long narrative of resistance against abusive power. Since Portuguese colonialism era, the Kingdom and the people of Aceh rejected the authority that controlled the land and state which is often referred to as the “Veranda of Mecca”. Aceh joined other insurgents to fight for the independence of Indonesia, and remained as a part of the Republic of Indonesia until the Indonesian Government

adopted the form of a unitary state in 1950 and made Aceh a part of North Sumatra Province through Act No. 5 of 1950 (Hasjmi, 1985). Local elites, especially the ulama group under the Association of All Aceh Ulemas (PUSA), rejected this policy and under the leadership of Daud Beureuh, they declared an Islamic State on September 21, 1953. This was the first resistance of Aceh people against the central government of Indonesia. Although this war ended with Lam Teh peaceful pledge in April 1957, and Aceh regained the status of Special Region in 1959, dissatisfaction with the central government continued and culminated during the New Order government.

People of Aceh's dissatisfaction to the military regime government was multidimensional, starting from economy to social, and politics. In terms of economy, the Aceh revenue was controlled by the central government and it left only a small fraction of the income which Aceh contributed through oil and gas mining.² In addition, the forestry and various downstream industry sectors, such as fertilizer and paper, also gave a substantial contribution to the state revenues. In total, Aceh contributed in average Rp 31.7 trillion annually (Ahmad, 1999). Meanwhile, in average Aceh only received approximately 0.05% of that total revenues (Wahyuningroem, 2000: 78). This gap resulted in social gap and political dissatisfaction especially from the local elites of Aceh. The social gap happened due to the uneven population distribution in eastern and northern Aceh and the conflict between the immigrants (especially the Javanese) and the local communities. In terms of politics, the transformation of a highly centralized government system by the Soeharto regime changed the social and political structure, including the local leadership in Aceh. In addition, depoliticizing through the floating mass system, and the hegemony of Golkar as the only center of political power, increased the political dissatisfaction (Wahyuningroem 2000: 78-82).

2 Large scale of natural gas sources were discovered in Arun, North Aceh in 1969 and it began operating since 1977 with average annual income of US \$2,600,000 (Ahmad, 1999)

The culmination happened on December 4, 1976 when the resistance movement against the central government was declared by Hasan Tiro, one of Daud Beureuh's followers. This movement was called Free Aceh Movement (GAM). GAM concentrated its resistance in three areas: Pidie, East Aceh, and Aceh Utara (Wahyuningroem, 2000: 85). Tiro promoted "nationalism" of Aceh and pitted this collective identity against "Java" nation which was propagated as the colonialist of Indonesia. This movement was responded by the central government of Indonesia with massive pursuits and arrests until 1982. Hasan Tiro and some other prominent figures fled to Sweden in 1979, but the resistance continued even though it was on a limited and sporadic scale. This resistance movement was further expanded by those who were inspired by Tiro, and Tiro himself continued to do international diplomacy to support Aceh's disintegration from the Republic of Indonesia. From 1989 to 1990 GAM targeted the Indonesian military by committing violent acts that caused casualties, especially among the soldiers (Amnesty International, 1998). The Government of Indonesia responded by formally designating Aceh as a Military Operation Area in 1990. Since then, Aceh almost could not be accessed by the world, including the United Nations (PBB),³ and violence by Indonesian military continued to the point it targeted normal civilians (Amnesty International). Some GAM figures were killed by Indonesian soldiers, such as Yusuf Ali (1991), Keuchik Umar (1992), Ahmad Musa (1993), and so were many of their followers (*Kompas*, May 24, 1999). For several years, the resistance movement was quite successfully paralyzed, up until the approach of economic and political crisis in Jakarta that ousted Suharto in 1998. Starting from 1997, when Suharto's rule began to falter, reports

3 In 1990 and 1991 The Indonesia Legal Aid Institute (LBHI) conducted an investigation on the human rights violation in Aceh, however the government forbade the publication of the report and LBH was closely monitored. In addition, *Special Rapporteur* of UN, Peter Kooijmans, was also prevented from visiting Aceh by the central government. Amnesty International conducted an investigation in Aceh and East Timor for 15 years, and was given a stern warning by the Indonesian government (Amnesty International, 1998).

on human rights violations in Aceh⁴ started to emerge, both in the country and overseas, and it put great pressure on the Indonesian government to take responsibility for what happened. Not long after Habibie succeeded Soeharto as President, the official DOM status was revoked in 1998, and the President sent a special team to investigate human rights violations that occurred during the DOM.

The resistance did not stop in the year of Soeharto's fall from power; in fact the momentum of political instability became the opportunity for GAM to move more freely and continue their resistance on a wider and more massive scale. Amidst the international spotlight on the track record of human rights violations in various places including Aceh, the Indonesian government responded with a political choice: to create and legalize the Act on Aceh Special Autonomy in 1999, similar to the strategy that was done by Soekarno and Soeharto in the past, with reaffirmation on the specificity of implementing Islamic Sharia. President Abdurrahman Wahid tried the negotiation approach with a peace negotiation but it failed. When Megawati Soekarnoputri became the president, the tension escalated after she established Aceh as a Military Emergency (DM) area in 2003. Instead of controlling the situation in Aceh, this DM status even made Aceh become more unsafe for civilians, and the resistance of GAM was growing. The ceasefire was done by both Republic of Indonesia and GAM in 2004, but it did not last long. The situation only changed drastically when a tsunami hit the coastal areas of Aceh, including the capital city Banda Aceh, on December 26, 2004. No less than 200,000 people died, and Aceh was devastated. Humanitarian aids came and at once it opened up Aceh for outsiders so that aids and reconstruction of Aceh could go well.

4 Several parties investigated the number of human rights violations in Aceh during the conflict period. Amnesty International, which had documented the violence in Aceh earlier, said that at least 2,000 people had been killed since 1990 to 1998. President Habibie's Advisory Council had mentioned 1,300 casualties and thousands of other forms of violence and impacts. Komnas HAM found 781 casualties and thousands of victims and impacts of other violence. Several local institutions in Aceh in the Human Rights Care Forum (FP HAM) recorded 1,321 casualties during DOM, and thousands more became victims and were affected by the violence (Wahyuningroem, 2000: 107).

Indonesian government, at that time led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, took the initiative to start a peace dialogue with GAM leaders, especially Hasan Tiro in Sweden. With mediation assistance from Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) led by President of Sweden Martii Ahtisaari, a peace memorandum of understanding or MoU was agreed by both parties in Helsinki on August 15, 2005. The points of MoU agreement were reaffirmed in Act No 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh (UUPA), which marked the new political round in Aceh with its specificity.

***Inong Balee* in the Discourse of Aceh Resistance**

On the early post-Reform period, many photos of Aceh women wearing GAM uniform and attribute emerged in various national and international mass media. These photos emerged for the first time in 1999, taken by a journalist and published widely for the first time by Agence France-Presse (AFP) (Clave-Celik, 2014: 302). The women in these photos looked gallant in rows while holding weapons and carrying GAM flags. For people outside of Aceh, this picture gave a new information about the existence of female special forces (combatants) who later were called *inong balee* (literally means widow troops).

This troops has its own history in the literature of Aceh. During the sultanate of Ala' Addin Rijat Sjah (1585-1604), there was a special women troop led by Admiral Malahayati. This special troop consisted of women whose husbands were killed in the war against the Portuguese invaders. This troop was called *inong balee*. Both Malahayati and her *inong balee troops* remain controversial to this day, as no historical documents or archives confirm their existence.⁵ However, the name of

⁵ Malahayati is a popular figure in history of Aceh and Indonesia in general. In 2017 the government of Indonesia awarded this figure a national hero title. Even so, the real figure of Malahayati is still not fully confirmed. Clave-Celik (2014: 277-282) mentioned that the story of Malahayati could not be found in the existing documents and historical archives. Malahayati's biography had only emerged in popular historical writings in the last five decades even though Malahayati is said to live in the sixteenth century. The only classical document that mentions the name Malahayati, or Keumala-hikmat, is a 1935 fiction novel written by a Dutch woman named Marie van Zeggelen. Just like the story of the figure Malahayati, the

women special troop in GAM resistance was taken from this history even though not all members of *Inong Balee* in Gam were war widows.

GAM never confirmed the members of this troop as female combatants which became a part of GAM armed forces.⁶ The exact number of this special troop members is unknown. This is because there is no valid membership data in GAM, and also because the scope and definition of female “combatant” is unclear. Uning (2014) mentioned the uncertain number of GAM combatants in general, and in particular the number of female combatants. In the Helsinki peace agreement MoU, an estimated number of 3,000 former combatants participated in the reintegration program. The list of combatants’ names that was given by GAM never reached that number due to the mistrust toward the Indonesian government at that time (Uning, 2014). Meanwhile, the World Bank, which conducted an initial study in 2006, mentioned two categories of involvement in GAM, which were: (1) “combatant”, referring to those involved in the military hierarchy of GAM during the Helsinki peace agreement process and the Nangroe Aceh Army (TNA or Aceh National Armed Forces); and (2) “non-combatant”, referring to GAM members who had civil roles, including those who joined the police and the education structure (World Bank 2006: 4). In that study, women were mentioned as “a small fraction” of the total number of active GAM members. Multi-Stakeholder Review (MSR) in 2009 estimated that of the total 14,333 members of GAM, there were approximately 680 female combatants and other 3,800 women who had supporting roles (MSR, 2009: 18). In this report, “combatant” is defined as “people who become the

existence of the widow troop (*inong balee*) that she led is also not confirmed to this day. The only excavation of a historic site done in 1997 could not confirm the story of the fortress that was mentioned as the headquarter of this widow troop.

6 In the interview of Clave-Celik (2014: 296-297), for example, there are two different perceptions of GAM elites in viewing the role of *inong balee*. Nur Djuli, a GAM senior figure, stated that the recruitment of women who spontaneously wanted to join GAM was conducted based on the decision of each commander of the concerned area. Meanwhile, Sofyan Dawood, a commander of Pase region and GAM spokesperson, stated that the involvement of women was limited as cooks, nurses, intelligence, and logistics supporter, and most of them followed their husbands who became GAM soldiers.

members of TNA, the military wing of GAM (become the commander or part of the military structure) for at least one month within the 1998 to 2005 period.”

Active involvement of women in military or armed resistance was not a new thing in GAM resistance period. In Aceh, women joined the military since the 16th century (Umar, 2000; Zainuddin, 1961). Old Dutch archives mention that women become part of the royal guards during the Sultan Iskandar Muda era (Clave-Celik, 2014: 282). Even if they did not join the official military, women were involved in guerilla army since the Dutch colonial period. Some women figures who fought against the Dutch were Cut Nyak Dien and Cut Nyak Meutia who are officially recognized as national heroes by the Indonesian government. Women of Aceh in the past were also known for their political leadership. For example the four Sultanah who lead Kingdom of Aceh and created many policy reforms, including providing seats for female representatives in the parliament at that time. However, the role of political leadership was not as popular as the women leadership and involvement in war. Historical narrative, both written and oral narrative, selects the historical role of women according to the hegemony of values that exist in society. In this case, the selection of women’s dominant role in war is due to the strong masculinity value in Aceh’s daily life and culture (Rashidah et al., 2016).

GAM truly understood the popularity of narrative on women’s role in war and heroism of some women figures in the resistance against the colonials. Exposure on the existence of *inong balee* more or less was done by GAM to strengthen the propaganda of resistance against the government of Republic of Indonesia and for internationalization of conflict and human rights violation issue in Aceh (Clave-Celik, 2014L 295, 301) as well as to support the narrative of Aceh “nationalism”. Discourse on masculine nationalism always merges female identity and specific experiences experienced by female combatants, anywhere in the world. In this discourse, women are considered as the same,

but not equal, as men (UNDP, 2011). In the context of Aceh, specific experience of *inong balee* members were rarely exposed to the public unless after the conflict was over. In reality, starting from the decision to join GAM to the self-defense strategy during the war, women had special experiences which were excluded from the narrative of masculine struggle. For GAM, the role of female combatants was insignificant, as were their voices and aspirations; they were present solely to implement GAM's policy as commanded by their male leaders (Siapno, 2009).

It is interesting to note that for women, as told by many female combatants that the author had met throughout 2005 and 2017, their involvement in GAM reversed the gender relation which had been subordinating them. Uning (2014) recorded the views of some female combatants who reaffirmed similar thing. Members of *inong balee* stated that their involvement was a proof that women were equal, even greater, than men in terms of physical strength, courage, strategy and hierarchical position within the organization. Women also proved themselves as independent and autonomous figures without having to rely on men. The military exercises they went through made them feel special, stronger and more confident. For members who came from ordinary villages, becoming members of the army made them feel that they had the power that they had not possessed before due to their poverty and remote origin (Uning, 2014: 8). Nisah's experience, the main character in this writing, also confirms these matters, as will be discussed next.

Family, Life Choices, and Struggle of Nisah along with GAM

Khairunisak Rusli, or usually called Nisah, was born in 1986 and grew up in Peudada, a village in Bireun County. She is the youngest child of four siblings. His parents were prominent religious figures in the village. His mother, Shariah, was a Tengku (ulema) who taught religion and recitation in her village. Unlike his mother who came from

the ulema family, her father, Rusli, came from the *uleebalang* family (Aristocrats of Aceh, bearing the Teuku title). Teuku Rusli used to help his father during the war of Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Armed Forces (DI / TII) in the 1950s. Blood of resistance flowed within him, so he joined GAM and became a commander of GAM's army for Pase region during the DOM period.

Teuku Rusli was Nisah's role model. Though she also had a close relationship with her mother, Nisah admired her father and made him her role model. When he met Sharia, Rusli could not read the Quran because he spent almost all of his life to fight with his father against the central government of Indonesia. It was Sharia who taught him to read the Quran until Rusli even became a teacher in their village. The firm and courageous nature of Teuku Rusli made Nisah admire him. Nisah who had been a tomboy since childhood already wanted to follow her father's footsteps. From her father, she also began to recognize many injustices around her due to the repression of the Indonesian army. Her village was one of the villages that was marked by the Indonesian army as the base of GAM. It was not surprising that she often witnessed the violent terrors committed by the authorities against civilians since she was young.

Nisah was angry at this injustice. She believed that the wealth of Aceh was exploited by the Indonesian government, and "Aceh nation" became the victims of injustice. This anger attracted her to join GAM. One day, she heard a rumor that GAM was looking for many Acehnese people to join the struggle for independence. In the late 1990s, GAM expanded its resistance almost to all regions of Aceh, hence they recruited large numbers of new members, including women.

It was in year 2000. Nisah had just turned 15 years old and was still attending Junior High School (SMP) in her village. After asking to some people about this information, she expressed her intention to join GAM to her parents. Her father supported Nisah's decision with enthusiasm. Of course, his involvement in GAM and the DI/TII war also gave him

the conviction that his daughter's choice was good for the struggle of the Acehese people. On the contrary, her mother was worried even though in the end she did not forbid Nisah's choice. Misah was the only one who chose to join GAM among their four children. For Nisah, her decision only affected herself. But for her mother, this decision affected her whole family, especially her beloved daughter, so it was not easy for her to immediately approve of Nisah's choice.

However Nisah was sure about her decision. Since that moment, she left her village and went in and out of the forest. Nisah was not the only young woman who joined GAM. According to her, there were hundreds of other women who also joined at the same time as her. They came from many regions in Aceh.⁷ Just like Nisah, most of them joined due to their anger over the injustice suffered by the people of Aceh. Even so, some of them also had other reasons. Uning (2014: 8-10) noted that there were at least three motivations for women in joining GAM: (1) out of anger over the violence they witnessed during their lives, and felt obliged to defend the people of Aceh; (2) because their families also joined GAM so they were also encouraged to be involved; and (3) because of the revenge element since their family members were killed by the Indonesian military. After joining GAM for several months, this motivation no longer mattered because they believed that the struggle of GAM was the struggle of the Aceh nation.⁸ Nisah's motivation could be the combination of (1) and (2), where she joined because of her awareness of her anger towards the situation of injustice and her admired father figure, who had been a part of the resistance movement for a long time.

For three months, she went through a military exercise in the middle of a forest on the mountain in Pidie region. This military exercise

7 The members were divided into troops that were spread in 17 regions in GAM structure; each of the region was led by a commander.

8 On various occasions, including the last interview with three former members of *inong balee* who were also Nisah's friends in November 2017, almost all of these female combatants referred the people of Aceh with Aceh "nation". Ideologization done by GAM during the time they joined was quite internalized, even after Aceh signed the peace agreement and politically remains as a part of Indonesia.

included marching, physical training, introduction and use of firearms (AK47, M-16, pistols and grenades), and war strategies as well as materials concerning ideology. This experience left an impression on Nisah because for the first time she had control over large weapons even though the weight made her quite sore. Weapon was of the utmost importance to them, or in the words of a former female combatant, Ramisah Ali, “the weapon was our life.” (interview, November 2017). They were also assigned in dangerous locations for stake-out or ambush, and they had to pass through fire and difficult terrain. Even though it was difficult, Nisah enjoyed the military training period, and considered the difficult exercises as the beginning for the real struggle. After their training ended, they would be sworn, or *bai’at*, by their commander and at the same time it marked them as official part of GAM.

GAM was quite conservative in separating female and male combatants, both in training and at the headquarters. Women were placed in special barracks or section separated from the men. The women did not discuss their problems with men, so women’s issues such as menstruation and the others were simply kept alone or discussed as a secret among female combatants.⁹

After officially becoming GAM member, the war demanded Nisah to do multiple roles: shootout with the Indonesian army, intelligence, logistics, and even training new recruits (to the point she was called *Mualim* or female trainer). When she was involved in a shootout, Nisah recalled some incidents where they were ambushed and surrounded by the Indonesian army. Even though they kept moving around so that their location remained unknown, sometimes they were still identified. In these ambushes Nisah once was shot on her leg, but she managed to save herself. In another incident, a female friend of hers was shot dead, and it left a deep sadness in Nisah.

She also often performed intelligence and logistics role. Leaders of GAM generally delegated these roles to women because women were

⁹ Interview between the author with Ramisah Ali, Fitri Wahyuni, and Mahyunizar, in Banda Aceh, November 2017.

less suspicious. Nisah often went down the mountain and safely went into the city or village. Some other female members even spent more time in the village, disguising as regular civilian. In order to obtain information, various strategies were used (Unig, 2014: 19), including dressing provocatively such as wearing tight clothes or left a shirt button undone in order to attract the soldiers' attention. Women also camouflaged by presenting themselves as innocent figures in order to avoid suspicion.

People in Nisah's village and the surrounding areas knew about her involvement and position in GAM, but they did not report it to the army or police because they supported GAM's struggle. It was not rare for the local residents to give assistance such as foods and other logistics needs, in addition to important information. As time went by, the soldiers knew about Nisah's involvement in GAM and her name was included in the most-wanted list (DPO). Nisah and her friends often used alias so they would not be recognized and could escape when they meet the army. Unfortunately, good luck was not on her mother's side. One time, a group of soldiers came to their house looking for Nisah. Her mother refused to talk, and as a result, she was hit and tortured repeatedly. Not only that, their house also became the temporary basecamp for the soldiers for three months, and her mother must serve their needs, including cooking for them. A few months after the torture, her mother passed away due to illness, most likely because of the torture. The loss of a good friend and beloved mother in the war blew Nisah. However, instead of causing her to give up, this made her become more militant and convinced in GAM's struggle.

From a Female Fighter to Fighter Female

One time, the troop's commander commanded her to go down the mountain and buy food supplies in the city. Nisah went down with some friends. He visited a small kiosk whose owner often helped them with various basic needs. When she was at the kiosk,

a shootout happened between the soldiers and some of her GAM colleagues. The kiosk owner, Mulyadi bin Zakaria, hid her in his kiosk until the situation was safe. Somehow, they fell in love with one another. Nisah did not refuse when the man asked her to marry him. At that time, Nisah was almost 17 years old. It was too young indeed, but the conflict situation did not allow them to date because it would endanger both of them, the group and their families. This was also done to avoid adultery, which is a taboo in Aceh society.¹⁰ Nisah was not alone. Some members of *inong balee* also married young when they did guerilla. Conflict and role as a combatant made women more confident and autonomous in choosing whether to marry or not, including in choosing their life partner.¹¹

For Nisah, the choice of getting married opened a new chapter in her experience of struggling in a masculine world as a woman. Mulyadi chose to follow Nisah by going into the forest on the mountain, doing a guerilla, and entrusting his kiosk to someone else to manage. According to her, her new role as a wife was not difficult for them because her husband helped her a lot. When Nisah was pregnant with her first child, her husband remained faithful in assisting and helping her through various difficulties especially when they were in the forest and fought. Even though many people suggested Nisah to return to the village until she gave birth, Nisah firmly refused. Likewise, when the baby was born, a baby girl named Farsyah, Nisah insisted on taking care of the baby herself even though her friends and GAM high officials suggested that she handed over her baby to her parents in the village. Nisah said, "I could not be separated from her. We were always together even in tough situation. So I refused to leave my child in the village."

10 Because it is considered as a taboo, in various places in Aceh, especially in the villages, early marriage is more advisable than having a relationship outside of marriage (Umar, 2000).

11 In some cases, matchmaking by GAM leaders was also carried out, including as part of an intelligence strategy to avoid suspicion by the Indonesian army. Their marriages were conducted by Islamic Sharia by a council that consisted of GAM leaders and *tuha peut* (local elders) (Uning, 2014: 13-15).

Carrying a baby, giving birth and taking care of a vulnerable newborn became a personal experience for Nisah. Even though her husband remained by her side to help, still she had to make a strategy to be consistent in her struggle for the people of Aceh. The small baby came with her into and out of the forest, moving around, so they were safe from the ambush of the Indonesian army. One time, when she was in her late pregnancy, Nisah was trapped in a shootout with the Indonesian army. God still protected her and the baby, so they survived because of the protection of her friends in the troop.

This is a woman struggle, a new experience that could not be negotiated with her struggle as a combatant. There were times when the baby got sick and hungry, but her friends as well as the local residents did not hesitate to help them. The next three years, Nisah got pregnant again with her second child. She was still accompanied by her husband and first child in the guerilla from forest to forest. Compared to her first pregnancy, the second pregnancy was relatively easier because her body had started to adjust to it. Nisah performed her activities as usual, going in and out of the forest and did guerilla with her troop.

Experience as a woman who gave birth and raised her children in a difficult condition reminded her of her mother, Tengku Syariah. Nisah felt a great loss, especially because within the last years before her mother died, Teuku Rusli remarried and lived in Lhokseumawe. His second wife was the daughter of a villager who came to receive a medical treatment from him. In addition to teaching Quran recitation, Teuku Rusli was often trusted by the villagers to treat various diseases and health problems. Feeling indebted to the Teuku, this man offered his daughter for him to marry. Syariah, who later found out about this young woman, initially could only resign herself and accepted a polygamy. Nevertheless, eventually she offered a divorce to Rusli. Rusli then took his second wife to live in Lhokseumawe and since then he was divorced from Syariah.

Her parents' separation affected Nisah. On one hand, she admired and respected her father, on the other hand, she was disappointed with her father's betrayal to her mother. In addition, she could never be close to her stepmother until this day, after her father died several years ago. Deep in her heart, she does not want to experience the bitterness of polygamy and betrayal as experienced by her mother. She witnessed and experienced herself the impact and damage caused by polygamy. That is why Nisah considers the polygamy practice in Aceh as a serious problem, and that women must truly understand the loss and damage that arise when they marry the husband of another. This concern becomes one of the important advocacies done by Nisah after MoU of Helsinki in Aceh.

Peace of Aceh: New Political Round and New Struggle

Near the end of December 2004 came a news which shocked everyone in GAM, including Nisah: a tsunami destroyed Aceh especially in almost all coastal areas. Many GAM members lost their relatives and possessions. The tsunami was a severe blow which shook the spirit and struggle of GAM members, including those who struggled in the forests. Many of them went down the mountain to look for their families. There were also many GAM members in prison who were washed away when the tsunami hit.¹² After the tsunami, Aceh suddenly became an open region to anyone. Those who came, both from other places across Indonesia as well as other countries, brought aids to respond the emergency situation in Aceh due to the tsunami. The conflict suddenly subsided by itself. Some time later, President Yudhoyono, through Vice President Yusuf Kalla, formed a special team to have another peace dialogue with GAM. President of Sweden, Ahtisaari took the initiative to mediate the dialogue.

¹² The current governor of Aceh, Irwandy Yusuf, is one of the former GAM commanders who were in prison in Banda Aceh along with some high officials and other GAM members when the tsunami hit. Irwandy survived the disaster, but some figures such as Nurasyikin, a female leader who was critical toward the Indonesian government, were swept away by the tsunami.

In the field news concerning the dialogue effort never reached Nisah. Not until August 2005 did Nisah hear about the process for peace in Helsinki from the television, radio, and friends from GAM who told the news from far away. When the MoU was finally signed on August 15, 2005, Nisah and other members were still in disbelief. She had a mixed feeling. On one hand, she was relieved because the war ended, but on the other hand, she regretted that the peace only happened after years of conflict which caused so many victims. She said, "If peace could happen, then why did it not happen since a long time ago?"

Despite the confusion and disbelief, not long after the MoU was signed, all combatants on the mountains and forests returned to their villages. So did Nisah along with her husband and children. They returned and settled in the house of Nisah's parents in Peudada, and rebuilt her husband's business which had been destroyed by the conflict. They ran various businesses: from selling clothes to building materials. Nisah established the business from selling foods by bicycle to owning a timber business from some post-tsunami reconstruction projects that she received.

Other female combatants also returned and adapted to an entirely new situation, which was different from their lives during their involvement in the armed conflict with GAM. Some of them returned to being ordinary citizens, while some others took on more roles in the community. Here, the role of family socioeconomic strata affected the reintegration of these female combatants.

Similar to the historical analysis of women leadership in Aceh proposed by Clave-Celik (2014), women with higher social standing in the Aceh society were generally successful and even became renowned compared to those who were "just" ordinary women from villages. In the post-MoU context, female combatants who were generally out of school or never attended school at all faced a great difficulty in re-adapting to the society. Unless they came from a family which had

a good social and economic strata, they generally became ordinary citizens and even fell into poverty because they had no access to decent jobs. Another factor that determined their repositioning in the society was their status and position within the GAM structure. Some women were good enough to be the commander, or *mualim*, in the troop, which allowed them to have a close relationship with GAM leaders. These women, including Nisah, gained good access to jobs, political positions, or business projects from GAM elites who controlled most of Aceh's post-tsunami infrastructure projects (Aspinall, 2009; Tajima 2010; Tornquist, 2010) .

Some former female combatants formed or joined new non-governmental organizations such as the Inong Aceh League (LINA), an NGO formed by activists Shadia Marhaban and Nur Djuli, Tjut Nyak Dien in Bireun, and others. Nisah once joined the Bireun branch of LINA. Around 2008 LINA held a workshop which invited former *balee inong*. GAM officials rejected the event, so out of 300 people who were invited, only 100 people attended. Although she did not participate in the whole program, it was the first time Nisah was involved in LINA.¹³ Nisah was active in that organization until she discovered a mismatch of perspectives with other members. Nisah then formed Inong League of Aceuh Bireun (LIAB) and became active there.

Furthermore, Nisah also became active in Aceh Party (PA), a local party which was a transformation from GAM. Later on, according to Nisah, there was an incompatibility between her and some policies of the party's leader, Muzakkir Manaf, which made her leave the party. On a close period, Nisah had the opportunity to get to know Irwandy Yusuf who was the pioneer and chairman of Aceh National Party (PNA). Through her active membership in PNA, Nisah decided to run as a legislative candidate on the regional election in 2014. Unfortunately, the number of votes she received was insufficient to win a seat as a regency-level parliamentary member in Bireun. In

¹³ Phone communication with M.Fariz, former coordinator of LINA in Bireun, February 15, 2017.

her opinion, the lack of her party's support for her candidacy and campaign also contributed to her defeat.

After the regional election, Nisah decided to re-join PA. PA, in her opinion, "is our home". What she meant is that PA is a political organization which was born as a manifestation and mandate of GAM where she was actively involved for years. As a collective house for the struggle of Aceh people, PA must be fully supported. She believes that the struggle of PA is in harmony with the struggle of GAM in achieving justice for people of Aceh even though it utilizes a different approach (political). This statement, which shows a form of loyalty toward GAM, is shown by many former combatants, especially women. Some studies have written that most female combatants decided to put their trust in their commanders and leaders in GAM rather than in their relatives in the village. Experience in the long conflict, common struggle, and prejudice that arises in the society have made them loyal to their superiors even though the GAM institution no longer exists officially. Their allegiance is demonstrated by adherence to the instructions or directions of their superiors just like the obedience in the army hierarchy (Uning, 2014; Musfirah et al., 2015). In addition, most of these women joined GAM in their childhood, so psychologically they would feel more secure following the direction of their superiors, especially men (Uning, 2014). It seems that hierarchy is still maintained in the structure and decision-making system, especially in PA (Sindre, 2010). In such system, women remain in the lowest hierarchy. In fact, women are used to attract votes by displaying the fighter figure, even though after the regional election in 2012 PA began to involve women to assist its various policies. *Inong Balee* itself was divided into two when GAM was divided into PA and PNA (Uning, 2014).

Despite her loss in the 2017 Regional Election, Nisah will not stop her struggle. Her late husband had always supported her in this struggle: fighting for justice for women. Just like her works all this time,

Nisah focuses on gender equality and women empowerment issue. In her opinion, women's position in the society is still very vulnerable. One of the indicators is the polygamy issue which is getting rampant where the rights of women are not well-protected. Post-conflict, there are more polygamy cases, especially those which are done by former GAM members. Unfortunately, even though women often become the victims, the number of women who actually want to be a part of polygamy with men of good social and economic standing are not few. This also becomes Nisah's concern.

The issue of violence and the lack of women's empowerment are also observed by Nisah from the experience of her former female combatant friends. Post-MoU, various government programs and other programs from local as well as international organizations have not paid enough attention to post-conflict trauma recovery and meaningful empowerment of former female combatants. Some studies have shown the impacts of trauma that are still experienced by former female combatants (Uning, 2014; Halimah, 2008). In addition to the programs which disregard trauma recovery, most of the assistance programs from humanitarian institutions and donors also do not give appropriate empowerment for female combatants (Marhaban dan Affiat, 2017). This includes the social assistance such as *jadup* (living allowance) and *diyot* (a form of compensation mandated to former combatants in MoU of Helsinki). The women empowerment programs are limited to special skills such as sewing and so on, whereas former female combatants have leadership and political abilities, and such abilities are needed to strengthen their roles in the new political era in Aceh.

In terms of recovery, Nisah may have a better situation than most of her comrades. Nisah always feels strong because she has a husband and children who always bring her back to the important meaning of the struggle itself: justice and humanity. Nisah learns about love from her children. Children are her struggle, and she always feels strong with them. The struggle of demanding justice for people of Aceh, in

Nisah's opinion, does not have to be done with violence. Peace brings a positive impact so that Aceh will no longer fall into a conflict which will only cause victims from its own people. She conveyed her trust in peace in her campaign slogan during the Regional Election period: "Female Fighters for Peace."

As much as she can, Nisah teaches anti-violence to her two children. When her youngest child, Farhan, on one occasion stated his desire to follow his mother's and grandfather's footsteps in joining a resistance group like GAM in the future, Nisah firmly forbade him. She said, "Let war become the era of his mother. It is better for children to grow in peace."

After saying that, Nisah hugged her son, Farhan, while smiling in front of her husband's photo. Nisah has to lose the person who loyally supported her, but she depends her life on her two children just as they depend their lives on their mother. Peace is the only way they can stay together and support each other's struggle.

Conclusion

Nisah's story is one of the many stories of former members of *inong balee* who chose to struggle in a masculine world, and at the same time her special experience as a woman influenced their struggle. Becoming a part of GAM military soldier made them confident and feel equal to men, something that they could rarely experience in a patriarchal society in Aceh. Even though they had different motivations in joining GAM, in the end they believed in a collective struggle for justice for the people of Aceh. This collective struggle made them militant and repress their experience as women.

Nisah chose differently. She had the experience of struggling as a woman when she got married and had children during the war. If other people chose to continue the collective struggle, Nisah chose the collective struggle and her own struggle in raising children even in the most difficult situation that was unsuitable for their growth. Her

children are a part of her, and she did not want to be separated from her children. Together with her husband who always supported her choices, Nisah still fought using her chosen strategy even though at the same time she also had to endure the sadness of losing her mother and her best friend.

After a peace agreement between GAM and the Indonesian government was signed, Nisah still fought for her family. Her career in GAM and her family background paved a way for her in organizing her social and economic life in order to fulfill the needs of her family. Even so, she still tried to be involved in the collective struggle.

Her choice was to be active in organizations and works of NGO, and the last one was to participate in the regional election as a legislative candidate in Bireun. Failure is not a reason for Nisah to stop moving forward. Nothing changes other than her perception on the conflict itself. Nisah learns a lot from her private life as a woman. For her, violence causes many victims, both in public and domestic space. This perspective made her turn to peaceful methods in her struggle. Democratic politics is one of them. Being an activist and a mother is the her space to teach peaceful and non-violent struggle.***

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Chapter V

From Bomb-Maker to Peacemaker: Getting to Know Baihajar Tualeka from Ambon

Fini Rubianti

Introduction

After spending two days getting around Ambon, I had the impression that the city was a safe place; vehicles were passing quietly, the drivers obeyed the traffic signs, and there was no group of suspicious youth on the corners of the city. However, a straightforward sentence from the voice of a woman who now works for women's empowerment and peacebuilding in that city caught me off guard. "Ambon is like fire in husk; everyone says it is peaceful but a conflict can break out anytime."¹ This statement surprised me because the speaker was Baihajar Tualeka, usually called Baihajar or Kak Bai, who was involved in the communal violent conflict between Muslims and Christians there.

Through her long reflections and social interactions, Baihajar finally got out of her old dreams about heaven and dying as a martyr

1 This writing is based on a series of interviews and other means of communication between Baihajar Tualeka and me, especially in Ambon on November 9 and 10, 2017. Unless concerning special matters, the reference to these sources are not mentioned in the next parts of this writing. I would like to thank Kak Baihajar for the opportunity and trust that have been given to me. I also express my gratitude to Ihsan Ali-Fauzi on his guidance, and to the colleagues in PUSAD Paramadina who have helped the success of interview until this writing is completed. I take responsibility of this writing.

in order to defend her group, the Muslims. Education, especially for children, and women's empowerment at the community level, become her priority now. For her the definition of peace is not just the absence of war. More than that, according to her, grassroots activists in Ambon have to work hard. "It is not just the physical infrastructure that needs to be fixed, the damaged social cohesion also requires attention," she said. She is not someone who becomes an activist as a result of theoretical struggles. Personal experience is her greatest asset in understanding peacebuilding efforts that she does now.

Recently, an event that became an indicator of the achievement of Baihajar's works was held. On October 27, 2017 a series of women's organizations consisting of the organizations she leads - Circle for the Empowerment of Women and Children (LAPPAN), *Suara Hati*, Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesian Christian University of Maluku (UKIM), Ambon, Indonesian Islamic Students Movement (PMII),; Pattimura University, and Baku Mangente House - collectively held an event titled "*Napak Toleransi*" [Journey of Tolerance]. The Health Care and Social Security Agency (BPJS Kesehatan) Ambon was the donor of that event.² The theme of that event was "*Merawat Damai dan Merekatkan Kebersamaan dalam Bingkai Hidup Orang Basudara*." [Nurturing Peace and Building Togetherness in the Framework of Brotherhood]. During the event, these hashtags #PerempuanAgenPerdamaian #PerempuanPecintaDamai #PerempuanPerdamaianMaluku as well #PerempuanPegiatPerdamaian [#FemalePeaceAgents #PeaceLoverWomen #WomenofPeaceMaluku #WomenPeaceActivist] became their "weapons" to promote this activity on social media.

This writing will describe and explain the personal transformation of Baihajar from a bomb-maker to a peacemaker in Ambon conflict. There are some objectives of this writing. The first one is to reveal how someone could get out of extremist environment and actions to become a peacebuilding activist. In Baihajar's case, when the Ambon

2 Interview with Maliha Notahubun, an advocacy staff of Circle for the Empowerment of Women and Children (LAPPAN), Ambon, November 13, 2017.

conflict first broke out in 1999, she had been involved in making and detonating molotov cocktails along with some fighters from Muslim side. She had been a bomber for one to two months, until she finally decided to quit. After leaving that role, she began doing activism works, until the peacebuilding efforts that she has done surpass her dark past as a combatant. Second, specifically, this writing would like to identify the women's role in Ambon conflict. Communal conflict in Ambon showed that women's status was not dichotomous as a victim or a combatant. These two aspects are shown in Baihajar's profile.

This writing would like to emphasize that a transformation from extremism to peacebuilding activist is possible, and this is caused by certain factors such as feeling of trauma, loss, or fear of dying. In addition, referring to literatures on gender and conflict analysis, we can find that women's status in conflict is divided into two categories: as a victim and as a perpetrator. Through this writing, I can be categorized that Baihajar's status was a combatant as well as a victim of mobilization and stigmatization prompted her to get involved in the conflict. Nevertheless, when the conflict broke out for the first time, she was one of the victims who had continued her life in a refugee camp.

I have divided this writing into some sections. On the early section, this writing will describe Baihajar's personal background, including her childhood, family and education, until her initial involvement in Ambon conflict. Next, this writing will describe Baihajar's experience on extremism, some factors that made her involved as a combatant in the conflict, her roles, and reasons for quitting as a combatant. Afterwards, this writing will describe the efforts that she has done in her community which became the entrance of her life as a peace activist. This writing will be concluded with a conclusion that reflects on Baihajar's life journey.

Personal Background

Baihajar Tualeka was born into a Muslim family on February 4, 1974 in Pelauw village on the north region of Haruku Island, Central

Maluku Regency. She is the fifth child of nine siblings. Her father worked as a civil servant (PNS), while her mother was a housewife. His father's status brought Bai and her family to live in Papua since she was a child. There, she attended elementary school in SD 1 Wamena, Jayawijaya Regency.

As a child, Bai was often reprimanded by her parents because she was considered as the naughtiest, weirdest, and most stubborn child. On one occasion, for example, her mother was annoyed with Bai because she spent her time playing with marbles from seven in the morning to seven in the evening with her younger brother. As soon as she arrived at home, her mother asked him to eat all the marbles that had been placed on a plate (Tualeka, 2006: 46).

In the early days of her education, Bai had a little difficulty in socializing because she was the only child who came from outside of Papua. Her peers at the time were inclined to socialize with those who were born and raised in Papua. However, because her family was quite well-off, Baihajar was placed in a special class, equal with the Papuans who were wealthy. In fact, her peers of Papuan descent did not get the special access as Baihajar did. This particular childhood experience of Bai made her interested in topics concerning discrimination, segregation, and intolerance.³

Starting her junior high school in SMP Negeri (State Junior High School) 1 Wamena, Baihajar still felt that she received different treatment from her peers. Native children of Wamena did not socialize with migrant children. Even so, Baihajar was not awkward concerning the difference in religion. She had a high curiosity to know the life of her friend's family. On junior high school, she visited the house of her seatmate, native student of Wamena called Ep who came from Wailes region. Bai was invited to *honai*, Ep's house which was made from reeds. When she got there, Bai was shocked to see Ep wearing the

3 This information is also included in the profile of Baihajar Tualeka as one of the recipients of Asoka Fellowship, "Baihajar Tualeka," <https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/baiha-jar-tualeka> (accessed on November 2, 2017).

traditional female clothes of Wamena which only covered her genital, while her body and chest were not covered.

In 1992 Bai went to Pattimura University, Ambon, majoring in agriculture cultivation of soil science study program. She joined the Islamic Students Association (HMI) in campus and was also active in Campus Da'wah Association (LDK). On semester VII, she participated in an Islamic organization that was exclusive and closed toward the perspective of other groups. She had joined that organization for seven months.

On one occasion, Bai commented on her family's behaviors at home. In her opinion, the behaviors of her family were wrong and they did what was forbidden. She often felt that she was pious and she gave advices to everyone. She spent her time in *murobiyah* (recitation activity for women) community and did not socialize with her close friends, or even her family. Her family and friends considered Baihajar as being extreme and having a identity crisis.

On the fifth month of becoming a member of that organization and requested to wear hijab by her mentor, Baihajar was hesitant. She said that she needed her parents' approval. When Bai asked for her father's permission to wear hijab, his father forbade him and hoped that Bai would change her mind. Her father argued that if Bai wore a hijab based on other people's command, it would hamper her choices and limit her movement. It would be better if the suggestion to wear hijab came from her heart conviction, not due to a command, her father advised. In the end, Baihajar changed her mind even though she was confused on how to explain it to her organization (Tualeka, 2006: 46).

After graduating as a bachelor and due to her active track record in some agriculture organizations, in 1997 Bai was accepted to work in an institution that helped the distribution of agriculture produce to the markets. Her duty was to strengthen and conduct socialization to the farmers in Seram Island. Her organizational experience during college made it easy for her to get a job which required her to go

the community and explain the success tips of agriculture business, especially how they could distribute their harvest to the supermarkets.

In 1999 when returning to her village, the conflict started to escalate in her region. Her family house was burnt and she evacuated with her family. Bai was placed in a camp located in People's Amusement Park (THR) in Ambon City. Bai's life dynamics began here. She was involved in bomb-making and finally stopped, and initiated an alternative school for children and opened up a space for dialogue between women (Tualeka, 2006: 49).

Baihajar in the midst of Ambon Communal Conflict

Violent conflict in Ambon, which began on December 22, 1999, was triggered by a dispute between thugs from Ambon who were domiciled in Ketapang, Jakarta, that consisted of Muslims and Christians. The riot was triggered by the fight over parking lots in an entertainment area and gambling place which was controlled by Christian thugs. The dispute which was actually small escalated because of the news in the next day reporting that a group of Christian gang had beaten up a Muslim and burnt a Mosque.⁴

The scale of conflict expanded after the police repatriated more than 100 gang members who were involved in Ketapang riot to Ambon. This is the point where the Ambon conflict began. It was continued with a mobilization from the Muslim and Christian groups to extend the dispute. The circulating rumors said that there was a mobilization to defend their respective communities, the massacres by or of Muslim groups, the urge for Christians to not become cowards, and others. There were also reports which said that Muslim provocators were riding around on motorbikes to spread false news, for example concerning a burnt mosque, when in reality it was only a stack of burnt tires behind the mosque. The legitimacy of the conflict was also reinforced by the transcendent belief that a group of people saw the

⁴ For these parts I mainly rely on John Braithwaite et al. (2001), The Indonesian Institute of Sciences et al. (2011), and Graham Brown et al. (2005).

appearance of Lord Jesus and Virgin Mary on the Christian side, or the war horse on the Muslim side (Braithwaite et al., 2010: 152-159).

The deadly violent conflict first broke out on January 13, 1999 on the small town of Dobo, Aru Island, far on the southeast side of Ambon. This conflict began from a small incident between young men which increased the hatred toward both Muslims and Christians. Subsequently, several people were killed in the next four days. The spread of mobile brigades (Brimob) officers to handle that situation and the local reconciliation finally succeeded, and the violence was not repeated in Dobo (Braithwaite et al., 2010: 156).

Later, in May 1999, another violent conflict broke out when Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) won the election. The PDIP was in coalition with the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and five other supporting parties, one of which was the Indonesian Christian Party (Parkindo), supported by the Christian community in Ambon. Therefore, PDIP was associated as a “Christian Party” in Maluku. When PDIP was declared victorious, civil war broke out. People were mobilized to defend their religion and declare war with those of different religions (The Indonesian Institute of Sciences et al., 2011: 18). The peak of the conflict coincided with the Christmas celebration on December 26, 1999 at the Church of Silo. The church was located in the center of Ambon City and was one of the largest Maluku Protestant Churches (GPM) that was burnt. On the same day, approximately 800 Muslims who were in a mosque in Tobelo Village of North Maluku Province were killed by the Christian community. During the conflict period, many villages were attacked. Churches and mosques were destroyed, the civilians were killed and stranded.

The inability of the Indonesian Government to control the conflict in Maluku above opened up an opportunity for the groups outside of Maluku to exploit the situation. On January 7, 2000 following the Tobelo massacre, over 100,000 Muslims held a demonstration at Jakarta National Monument to call for jihad in Maluku. This

demonstration was initiated by a political party and a number of Muslim organizations. One of the well-known Muslim organizations, the Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah Communication Forum (FKAWJ), led by Ja'far Umar Thalib, held a grand meeting at the Senayan Main Stadium on April 6, 2000 and later formed Laskar Jihad (Jihad Troop), a Muslim militia group that would later will engage in vengeance of Muslims in Ambon (Hasan, 2002). Previously, a smaller unit called Laskar Mujahidin (Mujahidin Troop) had joined in defending the Muslim group in Maluku with an army of approximately 100-200 people (Braithwaite et al., 2010: 158).

In May 2000 Jihad Troop began announcing that they launched jihad in Maluku and would send its members to that province. They stole more than 800 weapons from police gun shops in June 2000 and then attacked the police. With the involvement of Jihad Troop and other factors, the conflict dynamics in Maluku changed significantly, with more Christian targets attacked. According to the data, Maluku conflict that lasted from 1999 to 2002 claimed around 5,000 casualties and 700,000 people evacuated (The Indonesian Institute of Sciences et al., 2011: 16).

Baihajar's circumstance was also affected by the violent conflict dynamics above. Even though in general perspective women and children are often mentioned as conflict victims, in reality women and children are also actively involved as combatants, both formally or informally. In such situation, women become victims as well as perpetrators in conflict (Soetjipto & Trimayuni, 2013: 45).

In an interview (Asi et al., 2011), Baihajar openly revealed her involvement in the violent conflict in Ambon. On December 1999 a mosque located in Karang Panjang near her residence was burnt. That was the beginning of people's mobilization which happened immediately. The residents were suddenly picked up by the army to evacuate to a safer place. She recalled that in the midst of the terrifying situation where her survival was uncertain, what she felt was anger

and grudge. There was a desire to defend her own group and lead into the justification that Christians were considered as infidels and had to be killed. This kind of provocation was getting more massive with the appeal from Jihad Troop to fight the Christians. Therefore, since the beginning of the conflict, Baihajar did not see the vengeance of Muslims to Christians as an act of violence.

“Indirect” mobilization was experienced by Baihajar before she joined as a combatant. During the conflict, she felt how women in particular were affected by violent conflict. She recalled that living in a refugee camp was not comfortable at all. There were not enough public facilities; people were forced to sleep on the floor in a dingy and crowded environment. There was also no privacy; when the night came, some married couples who wanted to have intercourse were hampered by the cries of children who were frightened when the lights were turned off. Baihajar said that on every corner of the refugee camp, only frightened and uncertainty faces could be found (Tualeka, 2006: 33).

One of the horrifying experiences for Baihajar was when she got her period at the refugee camp. Non-sterile sanitation made her unable to wear sanitary pads during her menstruation. As an alternative, she often used unsuitable cotton or clothes. At that moment, she even prayed that her menstruation shall not come again (Tualeka, 2006: 34). Furthermore, Baihajar also admitted that she was sometimes confused about how to change clothes when there were so many people who evacuated with very limited number of bathrooms. For several days, she and her friends did not even change their clothes.

At the refugee camp the food availability was very scarce. It was normal for the refugees to eat instant noodles which were expired or almost rotten. Due to the limited supply of food, it was not uncommon for the growing of social jealousy at the refugee camp. Baihajar recalled that she often witnessed disputes among families because of the unequal distribution of staples. The complexity and the suffering that

she experienced had strengthened her conviction to join the Muslim group in launching attacks toward the Christians.

Two Sides of a Coin: Extremism and Transformation of Baihajar

When the Ambon conflict escalated, Baihajar had participated in making molotov cocktails and slingshots. She explained that there were not many women who got involved in the activity, only about four to five people. She along with her female friends helped in supplying the bombs, while their male colleagues composed the urea, prepared the glass or bottle for gasoline, ensured the availability of axis, and other equipments. Then, they detonated the bombs in places like market corners, highways, or any place where the opposing group was located. Bai explained:

“I only came to the group of people who were making bombs, then I asked questions on how to make it. I was then told about the shards of glass, urea, and other elements. The bombs would be distributed in the area of Christian community, strategic places like markets or crossroads. When making the bombs, there were men, women and even children. However, I was never told by anyone that this was risky.”

Baihajar chose to be involved as a combatant because of some reasons. First, women were considered as “disturbance” to the men’s strategy in launching the attacks to the rival. Women’s movement was limited so they were not free to go when they needed to go somewhere. On one occasion, she, along with some women, wanted to go to the market to buy groceries but they were stopped by a group of men. The group said that if there were women who went outside (especially those who were not determined as the fighting group), it would only distract concentration and weaken the capability of their group. Baihajar was instigated by this “disturbance”. She realized that at that time she completely ignored her common sense. As a result, she decided to join the militant Muslim group in order to show that women could also be at the frontline in conflict. Expressly, she decided to compose molotov cocktails and slingshots as part of the division of

strategies to combat, which had been collectively determined.

Second, Baihajar was driven by certain ideological beliefs. The context of the Maluku conflict had motivated her to intervene. She often thought that death by jihad was more meaningful because such death was “guaranteed” to be rewarded by heaven. She often heard the call for becoming martyrs when she started becoming a bomb-maker. She recalled:

“In Muslim group, there were many *takbir* and appeals for jihad. At that time, all we thought about was just anger and revenge. We also faced a situation where there were corpses everywhere. I was moved to participate in defending Islam. At that time, it did not cross my mind that what happened was violence, even though we knew that there is no religion that legitimizes violence.”

However, that appeal did not turn Baihajar into a combatant who was ready to face death. Gradually, Bai started to question her involvement status as a combatant. She began to doubt the dominant notion that said the conflict in her hometown was solely caused by a religious issue. Baihajar stated: “Each day, more people died. Who exactly is our enemy? Why does our bodies seem to worth nothing? Doesn’t the Christian side also experience the same thing? Even if the victory is in the Muslim’s side, we will not have anything.”

There was one traumatic event that Baihajar had experienced, that is when she saw five small children making molotov cocktails. Baihajar asked the children: “Do you know [that] this is dangerous?” Simultaneously, the children replied that they did not know and they wanted to do jihad. She tried to stop them, but the children still went away. Not long after that, an ambulance arrived carrying victims. She and a group of other refugees were wondering who the victims were. As Baihajar approached, she was shocked to see those five children with shots in their chests (Tualeka, 2006: 37).

Baihajar’s status which from the beginning was a victim of conflict did not automatically disappear by becoming a perpetrator. The more she was in extreme position, the more she felt the experience as a

victim in the other side. She thought that the Christians experienced the same suffering. She was involved in a group of male jihadists for a rather short period of time, approximately one to two months.

There were several factors that prompted Baihajar to stop being a supplier of molotov cocktails in the Muslim community. First, she saw that her actions did not necessarily bring a positive impact for her Muslim group. She started to reconsider her decision. She began to realize that this step would only make her suffer even more.

Second, one of her female friends who was a fellow bomb-maker passed away. Her friend was often complimented by men because she dared to plan attacks and place bombs to be detonated in Christian areas. However, one day, she died due to being shot by an opponent. Since no one was willing to take responsibility for the death of her friend, Baihajar saw it as something terrible:

“There was a female combatant who went to war and did not come back. She was my acquaintance when we both fled to the refugee camp; if I am not mistaken her name was Sari. Meanwhile, many of my good friends fled from Ambon. She was shot at that time; previously she had been hailed for daring to defend her religion. Then, shortly after her death, I was asked if I wanted to follow? I said, ‘No. I did not want to follow’.”

At the same time, her personal relationships with the friends in the refugee camp also got better. Baihajar and a group of women who evacuated intensely shared stories, opened dialogues, sang, and reminisced the *pela-gandong* culture which was the principles of relationships among people in Maluku.

In addition, when she was involved in making bombs with her group, she discovered many fatal mistakes. The mistakes happened when the bombs suddenly exploded unexpectedly. It was not uncommon, her friend died because a bomb exploded on the hands, when it was about to be put in some attack points. Witnessing those events, Baihajar became increasingly afraid:

“Many fatal mistakes happened when I and my group made and detonated the bombs. For example, the bombs often exploded on the hands before they were put in attack points, and the

corpses were put in sacks. Witnessing such incidents made me increasingly afraid and decide not to get involved any further.”

In addition to the factors above, the context of how some aid contributed to the conflict transformation also influenced Baihajar’s stance. Thanks to post-conflict aid, various reconstructions of infrastructure such as markets, schools, to health facilities took place, which began to normalize the lives. In addition, what was more important is that the aid contributed in peacebuilding, diminishing the anger and frustration, buiding the sense of security and trust that were lost due to the prolonged conflict (Petesh, 2011: 7). Therefore, reconstruction program in conflict period could provide many choices for women.

When Maluku conflict was taking place or immediately afterwards, institutions such as the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) also contributed to reconciliation efforts. With the support from the New Zealand Official Development Assistance, the institution established the Commission for the Investigation on Human Rights Violations and Mediation in Maluku (KPMM), with the aim of anticipating the problems of human rights violations caused by the conflict (Komnas Perempuan 2003: 29-31). Some of the KPMM’s mediation efforts were: meeting with the people of Southeast Maluku and its leaders, meeting with women, and Iftar (breaking the fast) with Muslim women- all of which took place at Fort Victory, Battalion 733 Base, Masariku. In this Iftar event, Christian women had a role in preparing the Iftar meals. In all of these processes, Baihajar participated as one of the beneficiaries of the program initiated by Komnas Perempuan

In early 2000 Baihajar also started to become actively involved in a number of capacity-building programs initiated by Komnas Perempuan. However, at that time, the discussion was not about peace yet. “At that time, people tended to avoid the word of peace because peace meant giving up to the rival,” she said. However, gradually the

communication that was built by the women's initiatives has paved the greater way for dialogue with the Christian community.

One of the strong initiatives of the time was *Gerakan Perempuan Peduli* (GPP), or Caring Women's Movement, initiated by Muslim and Christian women, Pastor Etta Hendriks and Yul Latocosina (wife of the deputy governor who was in office at the time). The purpose was to mobilize the women to strive for peace, persuade their husband and children not to be involved in the conflict. Baihajar is one of the women involved in GPP's works. Since 2001 until this moment, GPP is a partner of LAPPAN in continuously striving for peace in order to increase the resilience of people of Maluku so that they are not easily provoked by all forms of conflict trigger in the future.

Baihajar's Peacebuilding Steps

Baihajar's peacebuilding efforts began at the refugee camp. She thought of initiating many agenda in the camp because there was no regular activity established there. She commenced an alternative school for the refugee children, a forum for dialogue as well as economic activities for the refugee women.

An alternative school was a medium for refugee children to learn similarly with the formal school. The level of education consisted of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) to Senior High School. The teachers were recruited by Baihajar using a voluntary system, both from those who was living in the refugee camp and the network of her colleagues in Unpatti, Ambon.

Together with the women, Baihajar organized a forum for dialogue to express their conditions. She and the women named their group SANUSA (*Saniri Satu Rasa*). In SANUSA, the women told stories, sang, and dance, sharing their sorrow until they cried. Bai recalled: "On one occasion, while we were gathering in SANUSA, a woman came running to us when her child just died from getting shot. That woman immediately cried and we all were crying."

At that time, women of the community encouraged her to establish a more formal institution so that these works could be replicated in various places. Strengthening the initiative, they said that for an established institution the government's support would also be more open.

LAPPAN becomes the most important benchmark in viewing Baihajar's peacebuilding efforts. LAPPAN, the abbreviation for "Lingkar Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak" [Circle for the Empowerment of Women and Children] was established in 2002. The vision of this organization is "the realization of gender equity society that is independent and whose basic rights fulfillment is assured." LAPPAN is the "extension" of some activities initiated by Baihajar when she still lived in the refugee camp.

Initially, LAPPAN was mobilized by a number of volunteers such as college students and members of society who had the initiative to carry out the strengthening of peace for the community, by involving women and children as the vulnerable groups that receive less attention. With the optimal role of women in the future, LAPAN encourages active participation of women from the community to get involved in building interfaith relationships in their neighborhood. When I met them, two LAPPAN mentors from the Christian community, Juliana Kappuw and Joice Appono, explained how they started to improve the interaction with the Muslims. One of the initiated activities was done through an Iftar event on Ramadan. "Usually we went to the Muslim community to deliver foods, and then we also had cooked together so that our relationship with Muslim women could improve."⁵

In October 2017 Baihajar along with other female activist network organized an event called "*Napak Toleransi*" [Journey of Tolerance] with the theme *Merawat Damai dan Merekatkan Kebersamaan dalam Bingkai Hidup Orang Basudara.* [Nurturing Peace and Building Togetherness in the Framework of Brotherhood]. During the event, these hashtags

5 Author's interview with Juliana Kappuw and Joice Appono, Ambon, November 9, 2017.

#PerempuanAgenPerdamaian

#PerempuanPecintaDamai #PerempuanPerdamaianMaluku
as well #PerempuanPegiatPerdamaian [#FemalePeaceAgents
#PeaceLoverWomen#WomenofPeaceMaluku#WomenPeaceActivist]
became their “weapons” to promote this activity on social media.

Napak Toleransi became the portrait of other Baihajar’s works. This program received a good response from the government and is scheduled to become an annual program in Ambon due to its contribution for the social cohesion improvement in the city. Despite her dark experience in the refugee camp, now Baihajar can do something beyond the cost of conflict which she suffered. She did not even hesitate when asked to tell her involvement in bomb-making.

The event above was presented in a long march from one place to another, and then stopped for a while for a discussion and movie screening. The word “*Napak Toleransi*” was defined as a form of “journey” to reflect on the social relation in Ambon which once was broken due to the conflict. On the first round, the participants walked from Pattimura Park to Maranatha Church, where they had been expected to be welcomed by a female pastor named Etha Hendriks as the discussion facilitator. After that, the participants continued their journey to Catholic Cathedral Church, where they were welcomed by a pastor and Muslim leader to discuss the themes concerning religious tolerance.⁶ Not only discussion, the event was also complemented by the a screening of the movie *The Imam and the Pastor*, a documentary movie about an imam and a pastor who have reconciliated in Nigeria after a religious conflict. According to Juliana Kappuw, a paralegal and volunteer from LAPPAN, the figures of Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye who were presented in the movie have become good examples in improving the interfaith relationship in Ambon.⁷

6 Author’s interview with Juliana Kappuw and Joice Appono, Ambon, November 9, 2017

7 About this movie and the role of both religious leaders, see Ali-Fauzi & Agustina 2017.

This event ended with a journey from the Cathedral to Waringin Village in Ambon, the foremost village that was burnt when the conflict first broke out. Long story short, this village has been burnt three times since the conflict in 1999, 2002 and 2011. The journey of tolerance ended in this village as a marker and hope that the conflict will not happen again in Ambon.

In addition to the programs mentioned above, another activity initiated by LAPPAN and Baihajar was the lesson at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hasyim Asyari in Airbesar, Ambon. The initiative arose when Baihajar passed by and volunteered to help. This school was just established in 2017 with the total of 19 students and one teacher. Baihajar explained that the theme of this month's lesson in that school is about tolerance because children need to be gradually introduced to peacebuilding efforts.

I watched Baihajar manage this class in a relaxed manner while playing without losing the substance. She began to "enter" the world of children with the games so that they would not feel burdened after going to the formal school in the morning. After that, the students were divided into two groups: boys and girls. The boys were asked to draw the girls' faces, and vice versa, and then they were asked to describe the good characteristics of each picture. Some of the good characteristics were helpful, helpful to friends, helpful to mother by washing the dishes at home. Then, representatives of both groups were asked to describe the picture and report the result of discussion on good characteristics of the pictures. From there Baihajar began to introduce the difference. First, with both pictures drawn, she explained the gender difference of boys and girls. Second, she elaborated that difference into the physical differences of each student, and then religious difference. She then asked, "Because we are different from one another in terms of gender, ethnic and religion, should we respect or be hostile to one another?" The children simultaneously answered, "Respect one another."

In addition to the education aspect, the aspect of economic empowerment also becomes the focus of LAPPAN. Currently, the cooperative which was formed by LAPPAN Foundation in 2006 already has approximately 900 customers who are spread, for example, in Seram and Central Maluku Regency. When there was a tension in 2011, LAPPAN Cooperative stopped operating for a while due to the unsafe situation and some customers became victims. Efforts to revive the cooperative began in 2012 by developing the family's economic endeavors for farmer groups in Waralohi and Uraur, Seram Regency. In addition, productive economic activities for the female victims of flood were also initiated in Ahuru region, Ambon.

Baihajar's activist works have received strong support from her mother, Binur Latuponu, "Mom said that all humans, no matter the religion, have the same purpose. No matter what, we have to be kind and spread kindness among humans. Never harm God's creations," Baihajar said quoting her mother's message.

Baihajar remembered her mother's agility when she and her family were trapped in Waringin Village, Ambon, when the conflict escalated again in 2011. Mother Binur asked Baihajar and all of her children to stay in the house, and all information only came from her mother. When Baihajar was asked to evacuate her siblings and nephews in the middle of the critical situation, Mother Binur still asked her not to be provoked and not to hurt, harm, or kill. "A lost life cannot be replaced because the one who can appropriately take someone's life is the creator. God is the highest authority who decides who gets to live and die in His earth," Baihajar recalled her mother's advice.

In addition to her family, especially her mother, the ones who inspire Baihajar to consistently do peacebuilding works are her friends and women of the community. She also admires many humanist religious figures who spread love. One of them is Mother Theresa, a woman who spread peace throughout her life. From Indonesia, she also admires Saparinah Sadli, Musdah Mulia, and Quraish Shihab as

the figures who spread humanism and fight to resist discrimination based on religion, ethnic and other identities.

Baihajar's works have received appreciation and acknowledgment from various women and human rights groups in Indonesia and the world. In 2012 she received Saparinah Sadli award as a woman who actively promote human rights. On the following year, American cultural center in Indonesia @america gave her "Indonesia Women of Change Award"

Conclusion

Baihajar Tualeka is a living example of conflict complexity which could mobilize someone to be involved in extremism, yet it did not erase the possibility for her to get out of extremism and do peacebuilding efforts. Reflecting on Baihajar's experience, someone could stop from doing violent acts due to some driving factors such as traumatic experience and availability of choices such as the existence of dialogue partner and assistance from some institutions for capacity-building.

The increasing number of victims and the uncertainty of life in the daily situation made Baihajar choose to stop from being a molotov cocktail maker. The role transformation from being a mobilized person into a perpetrator of violence, did not make her blatantly believe that violence was the right thing to do. This is shown by the contemplations which she shared when I interview her, such as whether she was on the right path as the opponent of Christian group, to the conclusion that in reality the Christians also suffered from a similar thing as the Muslim group.

In addition, the aid from humanitarian institution was one of the driving factors that could contribute why someone chose to get out of extremism. Maluku conflict which arose in 1999 had a big "appeal" for institutions that helped the reconciliation and peace process in that region. Baihajar's desire to get out of extremism was also made easier or even facilitated by the availability of support from these institutions.

Through Baihajar's profile, the reasons for women's involvement in conflict can also be seen through an intersexual approach. This approach states that in addition to gender element, women's involvement in conflict is also influenced by other important factors, from religion, race, to class - all these factors influence one another and encourage women to be engaged as combatants (see Soetjipto & Trimayuni, 2013: 45). In addition, women's decision to play the role of combatant is also based on consideration and critical awareness toward the reality of injustice, where "justice" can only be realized if women participate in conflict (Soetjipto & Trimayuni, 2013:51). As described above, Baihajar's involvement in the conflict was not solely based on her status as a woman, but also by her status as the part of a particular religious group. ***

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Chapter VI

“Cultural Reconciliation” Offer: Imam Aziz and Efforts to Build NU-PKI Bridge

Ali Nur Sahid

Introduction

Imam Aziz, one of the chairmen of PBNU (Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board), made three trips back and forth to discuss with *Tempo* editorial staffs when the magazine prepared the main report on *Pengakuan Algojo 1965* [Confession of 1965 Executioners] (October 2012). In addition to explaining NU's involvement in the 1965 incident as he believed, the Imam cautioned that *Tempo* in its coverage not to clash his organization with PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). This was important because the coverage would have high relevance for the “cultural reconciliation” efforts which he had been striving for. Imam proposed the need for a non-judicial resolution, namely a political and cultural resolution, for the 1965 incident. For him, a resolution using a model which combines human rights trials and amnesty as in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) could not possible done immediately since there was no legal agency for that purpose after the KKR Act was revoked by the Constitutional Court in 2006. At the moment non-judicial resolution is the recovery of victims' rights. He emphasized the need for the President of the Republic of Indonesia to issue an apology and acknowledge the occurrence of human rights

violations because with that decision, the victims will become equal citizens again (see Aziz, 2012).¹

Although it was very important as it involved publication in a national prestigious magazine, discussion with Tempo was only one of the many efforts done by Imam Aziz to achieve the purpose above. Since 2000 he built the Santri Community for the People Advocacy (Syarikat) for the same purpose. He invited all parties to examine the dark history of NU and PKI relationship with *ukhuwah wathaniyyah* (nationalist brotherhood) as the footing, as well as to strengthen the dialogue between the two parties. For that purpose he also encouraged the release of recommendations on reconciliation to a number of NU Congresses. For him, the 1965 issue was a “democracy barrier” that had to be solved and letting the 1965 issue drag on would only burden the next generations.

Imam does have a strategic position because he stands in the midst of the dark history of conflict between two big communities in Indonesia. Political turmoil in the 1960s had caused the growth of tension and polarization in society that led to various forms of violent acts against members or sympathizers of the PKI, which among other things involved NU members. Since this issue was a taboo throughout the New Order history, the discussion on it in the Reform era is also controversial and even hot. The same thing also happens in NU community where Imam grew and developed into one of the elites.

This writing would like to highlight Imam Aziz’s involvement in building reconciliation between NU members and former members or sympathizers of PKI. His invitation toward “cultural reconciliation” between NU and PKI was an important breakthrough

1 In addition to being based on the author’s interview with Imam Aziz, this writing is also based on the author’s interview with Hairus Salim H.S. (Executive Director of LkiS Foundation, Yogyakarta), Ahmad Murtajib (Director of Syarikat Indonesia), Pipit Ammirmirah (Coordinator of Kiprah Perempuan 1965), Alfu Ni’am Alwi (Deputy Chairman of PP Rabithah Ma’ahid al-Islamiyah NU), and Ulin Ni’am (Economic Institution of NU Sleman, Yogyakarta) in November 2017. I would like to thank all of them. In this writing references to source are only mentioned concerning other sources.

since the invitation came from the NU itself and the initiator faced many challenges and obstacles which were not easy to overcome. Considering the dark history of relationship between NU and PKI after September 30, 1965, efforts done by Imam (and Syarikat) reflect the efforts to perform "*hijrah*" from violent extremism to peacebuilding that are worth learning and following.

The Anxious Santri

Imam Aziz was raised in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) neighborhood in Bulumanis village, Margoyoso, Pati, Central Java. This man of five siblings, was born in 1962, had grown in "modern santri" family that was open in accepting differences of political views. His family's livelihood was sustained by selling clothes in the market, in addition to managing fish ponds and other agricultural produce.

Growing up in a family environment that gave the freedom to determine his own way of life left its own meaning to Imam. His mother is a graduate of a Religious Teacher Education (SGA) school in Salatiga, Central Java. His father, Kyai Aziz, is a graduate of pesantren Ali Maksum in Yogyakarta, who has also taught there. Everyday he regularly teaches the classical Islamic books to the people around his house. Even though he is a "*kyai langgar*", Kyai Aziz's knowledge is acknowledged by many young kyai of NU, among others are Kyai Asyihari Marzuqi, an official of pesantren Nuruh Ummah Kotagede, Yogyakarta, and NU young activists in the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies (LkiS), Yogyakarta. Therefore, it is not surprising that after the passing of Kyai Sahal Mahfud, PBNU General Chairman, it is Kyai Aziz, the father of Imam, who continues the regular recitation of the Yellow Book in pesantren Maslahul Huda, Kajen, Pati.

According to his confession, Imam's anxiety concerning the 1965 incident had begun since he was five years old. Even though he did not exactly remember what happened, incidents around 1965-1967 were stuck on his mind as a his and his family's experience,

including those concerning some of their neighbors who experienced discrimination and physical violence. For young Imam, all of these events left some questions behind. On one hand, he witnessed how his father gave lessons on “religious teachings” to the people who would later be accused as PKI member or sympathizer. “Father personally served and taught how to read Quran on the morning regularly,” he recalled. On the other hand, he also witnessed many people in his community stigmatized, alienated, and looked down on people who received lessons from his father. This memory left an impression and resurfaced when Imam grew up, became a college student and later on read some studies on the 1965 incident.

After completing his madrasah aliyah education (equal to Senior High School) in Pesantren Mathali’ul Falah, Pati, Imam went to college in Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic Institute (IAIN) , Yogyakarta, in the 1980s. His involvement in the movement began since he was active in Indonesian Islamic Students Movement (PMII) in Yogyakarta, by doing an internal remodelling concerning the cadre training system which he considered monotonous and indoctrinative. He proposed a more participative method by introducing an education system pioneered by Ivan Illich. Even though it was initially rejected by some PMII seniors, eventually the model is used up to this day. He was also active in Students Press Institute (LPM) and was involved in assisting the community in Kedung Ombo case. Due to this reason, in 1988 the soldiers from Pangdam IV Dipenogoro reprimanded Imam as the LPM Chairman since *Arena* that they published used Kedung Ombo reservoir as a theme.

Later on, Imam’s journalistic interest was channeled by being a reporter for *Kedaulatan Rakyat* in Yogyakarta. He also kept building network with many activists in Jakarta and became the coordinator of the activists of Yogyakarta-Jakarta axis from Center of Information and Action Network for Reform (PIJAR), a major alliance of student activists from several universities in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta that was established in 1989.

Getting wider exposure to democracy and human rights issue increased Imam's interest to strengthen the awareness of these values within NU internal circle. Therefore, he actively organized a number of trainings on the values of democracy and human rights in many pesantren.

While he was active at the Human Resources Research and Development Institute (Lakpesdam) NU of Yogyakarta in 1989, he also developed the *Bangkit* magazine, the monthly publication of the office, and carried more social issues in it. He also brought the same spirit when he established and led the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies (LKiS) between 1996 and 1998, which is known throughout Indonesia for its prominent publication in the themes of Islam, democracy and defense for marginal groups.²

It is not surprising that in the community of NU activists in Yogyakarta, Imam is highly respected. The man who is often called "*Kyai Rebo*" (calm kyai) is considered as an inspiring senior: a warm dialogue partner, a little bit quiet but has sharp social analysis. For Hairus Salim, another NU intellectual who is cadred by Imam since establishing and leading LKiS, Imam is the movement mentor who have brought him into many communities of both artist as well as intellectuals, and introduced him to many victims of the 1965 incident. Because of these efforts, Imam Aziz received peace award from The Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation (*Yayasan Perdamaian Jeju 3 April*), South Korea, on April 3, 2015. He is considered to have contributed in advocating the rights of violence victims of The Thirtieth of September Movement (Gestapu) in Indonesia.³

Polemic on 1965 and Reconciliation in NU Community

The special position of Imam Aziz and the importance of his appeal

- 2 Imam himself had translated and become the the editor of some books published by LKiS, among others were the work of Kazuo Shimogaki, *Kiri Islam, Antara Modernisme dan Posmodernisme: Telaah Kritis Pemikiran Hasan Hanafi* [Left of Islam, Between Modernism and Post-Modernism: Critical Study on the Thoughts of Hasan Sanafi] (1993) and *Galaksi Simulacra: Esai-esai Jean Baudrillard* [Simulacra Galaxy: Essays of Jean Baudrillard] (2001).
- 3 See "Imam Aziz Akan Terima Anugerah Perdamaian di Korea." NU Online, January 28, 2015, <http://www.nu.or.id/post/read/57263/imam-aziz-akan-terima-anugerah-perda-maian-di-korea> (accessed on January 24, 2018).

to strengthen the “cultural reconciliation” could not be understood well if we are not adequately informed on two important matters: (1) NU’s involvement in anti-PKI actions in the mid- and late 1960s; and (2) related controversies and the possible form of reconciliation between the opposing parties, which just emerged in the Reform era. Since there are already many studies on the first matter (for example Cribb, 1990; Hefner, 1990; Fealy 1998; Feillard, 1999; Sulistyono, 2000; and Ali-Fauzi, 2008), I do not want to repeat it here. It can be said that NU was deeply involved in the actions mentioned above, something that has already been acknowledged even by the NU elite itself (see Ali-Fauzi, 2008).

Concerning the second issue, that is a controversy on the possible form of reconciliation between NU and PKI, this issue only emerged in the Reform era. Previously, in the New Order era which adopted authoritarian political system built to save this nation from the “betrayal” of PKI, public discussion on this matter was not possible. With the fall of Soeharto and the New Order in 1998, the public started to discuss this sensitive issue, along with the emergence of demand for justice for the victims of human rights violations in the past.⁴

In the NU community polemic concerning the 1965 reconciliation arose when President Abdurahman Wahid (or Gus Dur), who had also served as PBNU Chairman for three consecutive periods, in 2000 expressed the idea on the need to build national reconciliation and proposed the revocation of TAP MPRS No. XXV/MPRS/1966 on the dissolution of PKI and the spread of Communist teachings, Marxism and Leninism. On a statement in 2004, he even stated:

Tens of thousands or perhaps hundreds of thousands of people were imprisoned because they were accused of being “involved”

⁴ Currently there are several organizations or groups that struggle for the rights of the victims of the 1965 incident. Some of them are the Research Foundation of 1965 Murder Victims (YPKP), Association of the New Order Victims (PAKORBA), Institute for the Rehabilitation of the New Order Regime’s Victims (LPRKROB), Institute of the 1965 Victims’ Defender (LPKP), Committee for the Victims of Human Rights Violations in the 1965 Incident (KKP HAM 65). To the author’s knowledge, they have different views on how the 1965 problem should be resolved.

with PKI. Many people died in terrible condition, while many of those who are still alive do not have any political rights, including the right to vote in general elections. Their houses and possessions were taken away. Meanwhile, the stigma that they are traitors of this nation is still attached to them until this day (Quoted in Munawir Aziz, 2017)

The statement above sparked a debate within the NU. There were two prominent factions. The first faction stated that reconciliation was necessary, but it did not have to be followed by the revocation of TAP MPRS 1966. The PBNU Chairman at that time, Hasyim Muzadi, was in the first faction. In his opinion, a reconciliation was needed in order to move forward, not as a bridge to revive the conflict. However, concerning the revocation of MPRS decree, he disagreed on it because of the reason that the decree was important to protect poor people from the influence of Communism teaching.

Meanwhile, the second faction stated that there was no need for apology because PKI had involved in rebellion and slaughter of the kyais in the past. There were even more NU senior kyais in this faction, such as seperti As'ad Said Ali (Deputy Chairman of PBNU), Yusuf Hasyim (uncle of Gus Dur), Gus Maksum (Kediri), Kyai Yusuf Muhamad (Jember), and the others. They completely rejected Gus Dur's idea. For them, in the PKI conflict, people of NU had no choice other than to kill or be killed. They also associated PKI's atrocities with previous incidents happened in 1926 and 1948, which they considered as the background of the 1965 incident. As'ad considered that there had been a distortion of historical facts so the government had to clarify it before the reconciliation (see for example Ali, 2012).

A similar polemic resurfaced when *Tempo* published a special coverage titled *Pengakuan Algojo 1965* [Confessions of the 1965 Executioners] on October 1-7, 2012. The PBNU Chairman Said Aqil Siraj questioned *Tempo's* intention in raising the theme. In a meeting with *Tempo's* Chief Editor, he stated that some regional kyai considered the report to be unbalanced and some NU officials were upset that

the report did not cover the PKI rebellion in Madiun in 1948. All of this prompted *Tempo* to hold a series of clarifications (*tabayun*) to many NU elements in various regions. In addition to explaining that *Tempo* did not intend to corner the kyai and pesantren community, representative of *Tempo* also apologized for the magazine report if it was considered to have opened an old wound (Muryadi, 2016).

As a response to the *Tempo* publication, PBNU published *Benturan NU-PKI:1965* [Clash of NU-PKI: 1965] book, which was launched in December 2013 and explained why NU used to be opposed to PKI (Munim DZ, 2013). According to the book, the PKI had harassed the pesantren first so that all elements had to fight communism. In his introduction, Munim DZ stated: “NU had to do something when facing the attacks of PKI and its supporters as launched by the *Tempo* magazine in the October 2012 edition which represented the Western view in general, both of Amnesty International and International Court.” On another occasion, Munim DZ (2017) stated that “natural reconciliation” had taken place between NU and the former members of PKI along with their families since the 1965 incident ended. Therefore, the 1965 issue was solved and should not be revived on behalf of anything, as it would disrupt the national harmony and spark conflict. He considered that the political reconciliation preceded by the courts and the dismantling of the graves was considered as a method to blame the government and NU.

Helping Gus Dur, with Other Methods

Among the factions above, Imam Aziz was present. Slightly different from Gus Dur’s method, these methods were less confrontational and moved more at the grassroots, he wanted to encourage reconciliation between kyai and former members or sympathizers of PKI. Even so, he emphasized the need to support Gus Dur’s idea. “The 1965 problem is complicated, therefore we must be involved. Reconciliation is important and we must also help Gus Dur,” he said on one occasion.

Support for Gus Dur's idea also came from Imam's colleagues in Lakpesdam NU, who saw reconciliation as the best way to achieve democratic society that upholds human rights. For them, without the revocation of TAP MPRS, reconciliation was impossible. For them, the most important thing was to help reconciliation and victim rehabilitation efforts. In this context, they were anxious because there had been no initiative toward it from the civil society groups, especially from NU and other Islamic mass organizations (Redaksi Tashwirul Afkar, 2003).

The efforts above, among others, were developed through Santri Community for the People Advocacy (Syarikat), which since 2000 has actively brought together the victims of the 1965 incident with the santris and kyais in some regions in Central Java and East Java. The institution, which is led by Imam, actively facilitates the meetings of both parties in order to eradicate grudge and end stigmatization. For Syarikat this reconciliation is a part of empowerment of civil society efforts that is inseparable from the development of democratization and peace.

Farid Wajidi, a colleague of Imam who used to serve as his Secretary at LkiS, called Imam's move with the Syarikat as an experiment to find the right reconciliation model in a situation that is not entirely ideal. According to Farid, the reconciliation idea was inspired by South Africa's experience in resolving post-Apartheid sociopolitical trauma. However, they all recognized the difference between the case in Indonesia and South Africa. In South Africa, the current rulers who encouraged reconciliation used to be the discriminated parties, while in Indonesia the victims remained marginalized after the political change in 1998. This situation prompted Syarikat to prioritize cultural reconciliation at the grassroots level instead of a political national reconciliation. National political and legal reconciliation efforts remained important, but that would not necessarily solve the discrimination issue on real and daily level.

At the institutional level of NU Imam insisted on the importance of reconciliation in the discussion of 33rd NU Congress in Jombang in 2015, where he became the Chairman of the Executive Committee. He succeeded in pushing for a recommendation which stated: "The resolution of severe human rights violations in the past is a precondition for national reconciliation." Even though it did not explicitly mention a model, form or process of reconciliation, it was important for that recommendation to be communicated to the government.

Digging for Facts, Changing Stigma

Imam admitted that he was moved to start striving for the reconciliation between NU and the 1965 victims after he was insinuated by Ben Anderson when the famous Indonesianist gave a public lecture in Yogyakarta in 1999. When he mentioned the role of Gus Dur as the Forum of Democracy (Fordem) figure, Ben stated, "It is impossible for NU to become a pioneer of democracy in Indonesia if [they] do not explain the 1965 issue." Stung by this allusion, Imam and a number of young NU scholars in Yogyakarta began to discuss this theme and encourage the NU youth networks to do the same.

Imam's early meeting with NU youth network took place in Pekalongan in 2001, attended by representatives from pesantren in Cirebon, Semarang, Jember, Batang, Banyuwangi, and others. This Forum agreed to conduct a research in each region to explore the experiences of both parties (NU and PKI) using preliminary sources such as Cribb's book (1990). Later on, LKiS itself translated a book by Anderson and McVey (2017), where in the introduction Imam wrote, "This becomes an alternative discourse on the New Order's version of history which has been developing all these times, or a kind of repertoire to fight against the monopoly of truth" (Aziz, 2017).

In order to explore and deepen the facts, the NU youth network also shared the task to find local victims and kyais to be interviewed about their personal experiences in the 1965 incident in some cities.

Their conclusion from the investigation in 35 cities showed that there were different levels of NU's involvement in the 1965 incident. For example, it was generally discovered that in West Java and Central Java, the involvement of NU was only moderate, different from in East Java where the involvement was very high. On the more local level, it was also discovered that NU's involvement in Banyuwangi and Kediri was very high, directly proportional with the violent conflict background between NU and PKI in that region.

Imam and Syarikat also tried to change the perspective that NU was the only murderer post-1965. He invited the public to re-examine various facts by exploring the testimonies of many parties on the situation at that time. Imam saw that there were many mistakes in the narrative of NU's involvement at the time, and unfortunately, many people of NU believed it, even proud of it. In the National Symposium "*Membedah Tragedi 1965*" [Dissecting the 1965 Tragedy] in Jakarta on April 2016, Imam firmly stated, "At that time NU was mobilized by the soldiers, there was no command from the kyais to commit murder." He also dismissed the notion that the 1965 incident was a "civil war", like the growing opinion, because many santris and kyais were mobilized at that time.

When discussing with *Tempo* in 2012, the Imam reaffirmed two things. The first one was concerning the theory about the murder. He said that killing someone was not an easy feat. Without training, someone must be unskilled. From there, mobilization and intimidation on NU members happened. Secondly, he disagreed with the growing opinion that that the 1965 conflict was the conflict between NU and PKI. He was troubled because all along santris and PKI were always associated in the 1965 issue, as if both were victim's block and perpetrator's block. "In reality, there are a lot of experiences which vary in many places," he added.

In addition to the varying dynamics of violence, Imam also stressed that the perpetrators of violence against PKI differed in some places, and

they were not necessarily the members of NU. For example, in Klaten, the one that led the murders was due to the conflict between Masyumi and PKI in the area. Likewise in Yogyakarta, where Banser (Barisan Ansor Serbaguna) had not existed back then: "So the perpetrators were 'Bon-bonan', who came from other regions," said Imam. Meanwhile, the mobilization of soldiers in some places were even faced by the resistance from the santris, many kyais and pesantrens which became shelters when PKI members were pursued. In other places, such as Langitan, Tuban, Kiai Abdullah Faqih did not allow his santris to get out of the pesantren when the incident occurred.

Imam also dismissed the general notion that land reform was the only cause of conflict between NU kyais and PKI. "It is true that land reform happened in some places, but that was not the main cause," he revealed. In his opinion, land reform was a collective need at that time. For example, in Jepara and Pati, Central Java, the program was proven to be successful. The reason, Imam said, "Many NU kyais did not have vast lands, most of the pesantren lands were waqf lands (donation), and not objects of land reform." He shared the story of his grandfather as an example, whose land had run out because it was shared.

In short, because of those reasons, Imam invited the public to open the fact of 1965 incidents together. "If there are mistakes in the narrative, let's admit them humbly," he stressed. With the strategy of bringing PKI members and NU kyais together, for example, Imam wishes new awareness grow, especially among the young generation. For this reason too, he and Syarikat published an autobiography of two communist Muslims, namely Hasan Raid and Achmadi Moestahal. Both were PKI members but are also obedient Muslims.

Supporting Victims, Fellow Citizens

Imam and Syarikat also performed the reconciliation steps on the grassroot level. All this time the issue of "communism latent danger" became a serious problem in the society, which increased the suspicion

toward the victims of the 1965 incident and their families. Imam and Syarikat developed reconciliation through these four phases: (1) search for the victims and the kyais to be interviewed on the incident that they experienced; (2) arrange a meeting between the kyais and the victims so they can share stories; (3) explore the stories of the female victims; and (4) establish an organization for the victims and organize various public activities to strengthen the reconciliation.

There were many obstacles and challenges which hampered these steps. Ahmad Murtajib, current director of Syarikat, for example, almost gave up because after months of searching, he could not find any victim who was willing to be interviewed. In 2002 he was assigned by the Syarikat to look for someone whose family had been murdered or imprisoned in Kebumen region. "At first, the victims and the kyai whom I met said that there was nothing; Kebumen was safe. I came a few times, almost frustrated. It took six months for the victims to tell about the incident they experienced," he recalled. Later on he discovered that the victims also looked for information about him, his family and background. Fear and trauma was one of the reasons why the victims did not want to open up to new people. In the end, Murtajib managed to interview the victims after they felt sure of Murtajib's purpose and earnestness.

Another challenge was the case exploration through focus discussion in villages, regencies, or provinces, which was not always easy. The purpose of this activity was to enable the kyai and victims to meet in a place to come up with a recommendation. Murtajib said that many people, including the internal circle of NU, did not support this activity, like what happened in Kebumen in 2003. "On the afternoon just before the event began [in one of NU's offices], suddenly the lamps in the room were gone. In the end, I called Mas Imam Aziz to resolve this problem," he recalled.

The same challenge was found when Syarikat planned to organize similar meetings at the regional level in Semarang in 2003. Since every

city was required to attend by bringing two representatives, one NU representative and one victim representative, Murtajib invited Kyai Nur Sodik and a victim in the same car. "At first, during the four-hours trip, they did not say a word. However, during the journey home, they laughed and joked together." The same thing happened in the formal meeting. On the first day, the participants from both parties did not greet each other. However on the second day, the situation was friendlier and there were even participants who sang together on the top of the table.

In 2004 Syarikat initiated a new movement involving women victims. The reason was, when gathered with men, women victims tended to be quiet. In order to go deeper into the personal experiences of women victims, Syarikat involved women volunteers and children of the 1965 victims to assist. Another purpose was for trauma healing and recovery by listening to the stories and building solidarity among the families of victims. "Apparently, the stigma toward female supporters or sympathizers of PKI had a greater impact," Imam revealed. This happened to the victims who were imprisoned in women prison in Plantungan, Kendal, who suffered from violence and torture - as had been reported by Komnas Perempuan (2007).

Due to the reasons stated above, Syarikat facilitated the meetings for the women victims of 1965 incident, which was held for the first time in Yogyakarta in 2005. Even though initially there was a concern for possible interference, the meeting titled "*Temu Rindu Menggugat Senyap*" [Break the Silence Reunion] was attended by hundreds of victims, it looked like a reunion, who came from many cities in Central Java. The purpose of that activity was to unite the victims of the 1965 incident so they could break the silence and heal the trauma. In addition to discussion on women's agenda in resolving past violence issue, the event which was opened by Imam Aziz and Christina Sumarmiyati (Ibu Mamiek), a victim from Yogyakarta, also presented arts about the life in women prison.

The Yogyakarta meeting formed Kiprah Perempuan or Women's Actions (Kipper), led by Pipit Ambarmirah, the child of a victim. Pipit herself started joining the Syarikat in early 2005. Later on Kipper also prompted the government of Bantul, Yogyakarta, to conduct mapping and work on victims' recovery. By involving the victims' children and college students, Kipper also strived for health access to Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) in assisting the psychosocial and medical recovery. "Meanwhile, 34 women victims will receive psychosocial assistance from LPSK," Pipit revealed.

Thanks to those efforts, in some cities in Java currently many organizations that fight for the victims' rights have been established. Cooperation between NU and the 1965 victims has become a normal thing. In Blitar, for example, the 1965 victims and NU cooperated in economic development through cooperative management. Because of these meetings, a kyai of NU concluded: "There is no need for us to label someone as an ex-PKI or something like that. We [shall treat them] as fellow citizens. All of us have blended," he said as told by Murtajib. For Murtajib currently the relationship between the 1965 victims with the youth of NU has become akin to the relationship between children and their parents. "Not just me, the other victims' companions are also like that," he explained.

Similar stories have been told in *Catatan Rekonsiliasi Kultural Tragedi 1965* [The Note of Cultural Reconciliation of the 1965 Tragedy] (Budiawan et al, 2016). Also from Blitar, Lakpesdam NU in that region had initiated a reconciliation through religious ritual by revoking Hijra New Year. The event titled "*Rukun Agawe Santoso*" (Harmony makes life peaceful) filled with recitation, *shalawat* (*shalawat* reading), and *campursari* music was held in the court of Trisula Monument in Blitar. This place, built in 1972 to commemorate the PKI destruction, was deliberately chosen to "cleanse" it and give it a new meaning.

Kyais' Blessing for Reconciliation

Bringing together two parties that used to oppose in a conflict was not easy. By sitting together with the victims, Imam and his friends opened up a new understanding to reduce the tension and get rid of the psychological barrier between former PKI and NU. The situation at that time where many santri were threatened, pressured if they were not involved, and evidences that showed many NU people were accused to be involved without any trial, became the discussion topics in many meetings. Imam always stressed that reconciliation was for their common interest in the context of living as a nation, not to seek fault in one party.

In preparing the meeting, long before the event began, Imam had already asked for the blessing of local elderly kyais. Even though there was a dissent concerning the reconciliation, Imam tried to minimize it by visiting the kyais to avoid any friction. For example, before an event was held in Semarang, Imam went to visit Gus Mus (Kyai Mustofa Bisri) in Rembang and Kyai Sahal Mahfud, Pati, to obtain their blessings. "Even though I have a different opinion, I will still help you," said Kyai Sahal as told by Imam.

Without any confrontation, through various discussion forums, Imam held many meetings with the internal circle of NU. In an event in Nganjuk, East Java, Imam was confronted by hundreds of NU members who had opposing opinion. A meeting was held with Kyai Yusuf Hasyim (uncle of Gus Dur), who had often rejected the idea of reconciliation. The meeting took place, it was welcomed by the event organizers, but it did not bring a satisfying discussion. Despite the dissent, they still ate together after that. "In that meeting, they came and talked at length. However, when we tried to explain, they stopped us. When questioned about the data and sources, they did not have any," Imam revealed. As time went by, the view of Pak Ud (nickname of Yusuf Hasim) began to change. When Imam went to visit him again, while joking, he reminded about the past event in Yogyakarta, when

Pak Ud agreed to be the witness in "left activist" trial regarding the book of Pramoedya Ananta Toer.⁵

Imam had a similar experience when dealing with the internal circle of PBNU. On one occasion he was requested to meet As'ad Ali, one of the PBNU chairmen who was also a former Deputy of State Intelligence Agency (BIN), to talk about the concept of reconciliation to be conveyed to President SBY. Previously, As'ad Ali was one of the figures who rejected the idea of reconciliation. After special coverage by Tempo, Imam was requested to make a reconciliation formulation concept and discuss intensively with him. In the end, As'ad agreed with the idea of an apology from the President, even though with moderate redaction, "The state must apologize because it could not control the situation at that time". However, the continuation of the concept draft never resurfaced after the change of President.

Imam Aziz felt normal when facing the dissent within the NU. "The threats usually came from the outside, such as when organizing the 1965 photo exhibition titled *"Habis Gelap Tak Kunjung Terang"* [After Darkness, the Light Did Not Come] in Yogyakarta Cultural Park in 2006. The building management admitted to being reprimanded by the District Command (Kodim), but the event went on. Event dismissal also happened in Bandung in 2006. The event, which was held together with Komnas Perempuan, entitled *"Menggugah Memori, Menggapai Rekonsiliasi, Memperkuat NKRI"* [Reviving Memories, Achieving Reconciliation, Strengthening NKRI] attended by the 1965 victims from some cities in West Java, failed because it was seized by Youth of Siliwangi Mass Organization; the participants were then evacuated and the committees were interrogated by the police. The situation could be handled along with Bandung Legal Aid Institute (LBH) by holding a joint press conference. On another occasion, a person who claimed to come from the Military Resort Command

⁵ In 1989 student activists in Yogyakarta, Bambang Isti Nugroho, Bonar Tigor Naipospos, and Bambang Subono were tried and sent to prison because they were found carrying a book by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Rumah Kaca* [House of Glass].

(Korem) came to his residence in Kaliurang, did an investigation on him, but he was answered by the Head of the Neighborhood, "He is a good person," Imam revealed.

Developing the Reconciliation Theology

The importance of reconciliation and rehabilitation of the 1965 victims became a special concern of NU youth. This was apparent when NU discussion group, Tashwirul Afkar, discussed about it in 2003. The considerations of Lakpesdam NU were: 1) it was a large scale tragedy in terms of area as well as number of victims; 2) there was a stigma faced by the victims and their families; 3) the impact of the stigma toward the victims on the restrictions of civil and political rights; and 4) the perpetrators of the violence included Islamic civilian groups and there had been no initiative from civil society groups such as NU to support the reconciliation and rehabilitation process of 1965-1966 political victims (Aziz, 2013).

Imam Aziz developed the theology of reconciliation as a humanist approach based on the teachings of the Quran. In a review titled *Teologi Rekonsiliasi: Mengungkap Kebenaran, Menegakkan Keadilan* [Theology of Reconciliation: Revealing the Truth, Upholding Justice], he explained: a discriminatory sociopolitical system will spark a perpetual conflict. He also explained the *fuqoha* view of Islam on resolving the root of a systemic conflict, the disclosure of truth as a path of justice, and admitting mistakes and giving forgiveness as the supreme glory in the Quran.

Imam began his review by explaining that difference is a natural thing and we need to be thankful for it. Conflict that arises due to differences is caused by a terrible management of differences followed by humans greed. One of the conflict forms that continues to exist today is the struggle for power and claims of 'truth' among Muslims themselves after the death of Prophet Muhammad. This conflict is not followed by a process of reconciliation between groups which

leads to mutual exclusion or exclusivity within Islamic groups. Imam considers this as a big challenge for Muslims in understanding the conflict as a systemic problem. Actually, such view has been explained in the Quran, concerning the requirement to protect the right to live of humans. In Quran killing any human is equivalent to killing all mankind.

Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. (Al- Maidah: 32)

From the verse above, Imam considered that crimes against humanity such as corruption could not be regarded as a mere individual crime, but a crime against society and humanity as a whole. In this perspective, crime and conflict are seen in a broader and more comprehensive framework compared to the *fiqh* approach which seems to stop only in individuals, that is *qishas*, which the resolution is limited to retaliation or compensation (*diyat*).

In order to protect human life as a whole, the disclosure of truth and the enforcement of justice are required. Imam considers judgment on the past as a purpose so that people could see their past mistakes and build a life together in a fair, harmonious, and peaceful future, as written in Al-Hashr: 18, "O you who have believed, fear Allah . And let every soul look at what it has put forth for tomorrow." Looking at past mistakes is impossible to do without revealing the factual (fact of event) and actual (justice) truth. Therefore, the efforts of witnesses and victims in revealing the truth need to be guaranteed and they must be given freedom to do so.

The next thing to do is to admit and forgive. In this case, Imam stated that even though the law of *qishas*, which is adapted from pre-Islam customary law, states that forgiving has a higher virtue compared to exacting retaliation, compensation from the crime perpetrators is still necessary. In crime that is systemic in nature, a reconciliation is needed as *ittiba' bi al ma'ruf* by rehabilitating the

victims' rights. The manifestation of regret is to abolish discriminatory regulations and guarantee the human rights of all people. In the Quran, people who have done so are considered as "those who repent and correct themselves and make evident [what they concealed]...whose repentance will be accepted by Allah" (Al-Baqarah: 160).

Imam concluded that reconciliation is a result of the process that is called in the Quran as "*islah bi al adl wa al qisth*" (Al-Hujurat: 9): a peace after going through the process of truth disclosure (*tabayyun*), guarantee that crimes against humanity will not be repeated in the future by making non-discriminatory regulation (*taubat*), rehabilitation of rights and compensation (*ittiba' bi al ma'ruf*) and forgiveness.

The reconciliation issue was brought up by Imam Aziz at the institutional level of Nahdlatul Ulama since the congress in Kediri in 1999 until the 33rd Congress in Jombang in 2015, where Imam became its chief executive. For Imam, the result of this Congress was very important because it could be a 'formal weapon' against the opposition within NU's internal circle. According to Alfu Niam, RMI NU, who had been the Congress secretary for a few times, Imam Aziz often worked behind the scene in every Congress. Imam conceptualized some parts, including the draft of *ahlul halli wal aqdi* (the system of deliberation for consensus in selecting Rais Aam NU), and held meetings before the congress took place. Imam's work was fruitful; it was evident from the conclusion of three Congresses (Kediri, Makassar, Jombang) which recommended the government to apologize and build reconciliation.

The results of the 33rd Congress were: (a) Encourage various reconciliation efforts that happen socially, culturally and religiously in the society. Community-based reconciliation becomes the backbone of real and long-term reconciliation; and (b) Commend the government's commitment to resolve past human rights violations using the most possible and beneficial method for Indonesia. Endeavor to get out of the burden of the past must always consider the interest of the nation as a whole (PBNU, 2016: 388).

These recommendations were based on the issue to look forward and therefore resolution of severe human right violations became a precondition for national reconciliation. According to the agreement of PBNU (2016: 376):

The issue of reconciliation concerning past wounds must be healed in order to look forward to a better national future. Resolution of severe human rights violations in the past is a precondition for national reconciliation. An important element in reconciliation is the spirit of unity and forgiveness in the framework of *ukhuwah* trilogy, which are *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah* (Muslim brotherhood), *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah* (national brotherhood), and *ukhuwwah insaniyyah* (human brotherhood).

Imam’s idea of cultural reconciliation faced pro and con, not only from the internal circle of NU, but also from the 1965 victims. They reasoned that it would hamper some fulfillment of justice or national reconciliation. In this case Imam firmly did not distinguish the principles of justice fulfillment and reconciliation. Both are equally important to do. Likewise, when there was a dissent among victim groups, between group that prioritized justice than reconciliation, the decision was left to the stance of each victim’s organization.⁶ Because for Imam, the duty of Syarikat is to reduce the tension so that the society is ready to face differences. Therefore, if one day something happens, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) or Human Rights Court, the society will be ready. “We only prepare the soft landing,” he stated.

Imam Aziz hopes that in the future there will be new variations in developing reconciliation at the grassroots level, in the midst of the stagnation of reconciliation at the national level. As time goes by, a number of new documents concerning the 1965 incident have

⁶ Syarikat has a network with a number of institutions that focus on the advocacy of human rights violation cases such as Kontras, Elsam, National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), and groups of the 1965 victims: Research Foundation of 1965 Murder Victims (YPKP), Association of the New Order Victims (PAKORBA), Institute for the Rehabilitation of the New Order Regime’s Victims (LPRKROB), Institute of the 1965 Victims’ Defender (LPKP), and Committee for the Victims of Human Rights Violations in the 1965 Incident (KKP HAM 65)

emerged⁷. When the issue on the rise of PKI has resurfaced lately, District Command (Kodim) apparatus circulated a letter so people would watch the G30-S PKI movie again, including to pesantren; however, not many santri groups were willing to do so. "The people at the grassroot level have actually understood about the parties who keep bringing up the issue. They understand the situation, and they learn not to repeat the violence acts like in 1965," Imam said.

Conclusion

Reconciliation requires an acknowledgement. Imam Aziz is one of the NU members who is anxious concerning the terrible tragedy in 1965. As an "insider", he tried to correct the internal history, remove the specter of his organization as "executioner" in the 1965 incident, invite people to admit and clarify. Imam tried to polish the organization he led, to become an Islamic organization that is democratic, tolerant, and respect the principles of human rights. As though reviving Gus Dur's idea on reconciliation, with the basis of pesantren tradition, Imam utilized the network of young NU intellectuals in developing the idea of cultural reconciliation in various cities in Java, Bali, and Sulawesi. The presence of political opportunity, era of reform and local autonomy opened up further opportunities to carry out some reconciliation agenda at the local level with the cooperation of many parties, not only NU but also some non-governmental institutions and the local government.

The methods of exploring the stories from both parties, avoiding argument on who was wrong, and positioning himself as a fellow victim, became Imam's entry point in the cooperation. Bringing together two parties to meet and share stories could remove the bad image that had been attached to the victims that PKI is vicious, atheist, traitor of the state and others. Once the psychological barrier was

7 There are 39 documents of 30,000 pages of United States diplomatic cables concerning the 1965 tragedy revealed to the public. See the article of Brad Simpson, Oktober 2017, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/indonesia/2017-10-17/indonesia-mass-murder-1965-us-embassy-files> (accessed on Februari 15, 2018).

gone, there came the understanding, acknowledgement, and regret, so that the similar conflict would not happen again in the future. The other impacts were the support for victims' rights such as restitution and rehabilitation, as well as economic development cooperation.

Aware of the social risk that it would cause, the conflict within NU was minimized by carrying out friendship visits to the elderly kyais. They also conducted intensive discussion without confrontation, and involved the government institution at the local level in many activities. Imam also maintains good communication with a number of senior kyais even though it was not uncommon for them to have different opinions. The result of the investigation of the 1965 incident in various cities became a discussion topic among many kyais, explaining the situation and context of the event, one of which was the fact that many innocent NU members became victims.

Imam did a contextual *ijtihad* by developing the theology of reconciliation. He explained that the Quran verses concerning human's right to live, dissected classic ulema *ijtihad* on the theory of crime and justice, and elaborated them using the approach of conflict resolution and principles of human rights. Armed with the understanding of Islamic classical teachings, Imam promoted the humanitarian perspective in harmony with *ukhuwah wathoniyah*, the NU nationalist principle, so reconciliation had successfully become the recommendation of the NU Congress.

Cultural reconciliation is blending into cooperation without being divided by prejudice. In order to end discrimination and stigmatization, Imam began to remove the hurdles in reconciliation, that were suspicion and stigma, by building a bridge between NU and ex-PKI. Developing various dialogues and cooperation between communities in the society continued with the efforts to recover the victims' rights. In case the current national reconciliation is still stagnant, Imam has opened up the way from the grassroots, which can be developed in many regions in Indonesia.***

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Chapter VII

“Healing” to Make Peace with the Past: Mery Kolimon and Efforts to Transform Church¹

Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem

The situation at that time rendered the church to be unable to analyze well. We regret that when the 1965 tragedy took place, the church could not carry out its pastoral duty. This is a self critic. When the tragedy occurred, there were pastors in Sumba yet they could not perform their duties. But it has happened and this book exists. Let us learn to move forward.²

This statement was conveyed by Pastor Dr. A.A. Yewangoe, Chairman of the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI), in the book launching event for *Memori-Memori Terlarang, Perempuan Korban dan Penyintas '65* [Forbidden Memories, the 1965 Female Victims and Survivors], in October 2012 in Kupang. This book contains the research of Eastern Indonesia Women's Network (JPIT), which reveals

- 1 Most of the information in this writing came from the interview with Mery Kolimon, which was reinforced by the book called *Memori-Memori Terlarang* [Forbidden Memories] in which she was involved in the editing (2012). As a comparison of the context of the Catholic church, the author used information from a book published by Ledolero Publisher which was edited by Madung and Prior (2015) in which Mery also contributed her writing. Additional information related to Mery was obtained from an interview with Bapak Yustus Maro, Mery's husband; Pastor Yetty Leyloh, a pastor of GKS and Mery's colleague in GMIT; and three former students of Mery who become partners in Eastern Indonesia Women's Network (JPIT): Merlin, Ando, and Ira. The author extends her gratitude to these sources. The author especially would like to thank Mery Kolimon for her trust in the author and for telling her stories. Considering her current leadership position, the decision to tell her stories certainly was not easy. However, the author believes that this writing tells something that inspires the public and strengthens Mery's current institution.
- 2 Quoted from <http://weslyjacob.blogspot.co.id/2012/11/launching-buku-memori-memori-terlarang.html> (accessed on Desember 7, 2017).

the mass violence incident post-G30s in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and focuses on the experience of victims, especially women.³ The research that was conducted between 2010 and 2012 involved more than twenty researchers and staffs, including pastors and vicars, from Artha Wacana Christian University (UKAW), Theological Seminary (STT), Christian Church of Sumba (GKS) Lewa, Christian Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT), and GKS. Using oral history methodology, this research covered six regions: Kupang, TTS, Kupang Timur, Alor, Sumba, and Sabu.

The main focus of that book is the church's role in the mass violence after the murder of seven high-rank and mid-rank Army officers in Jakarta, an event commonly referred to as the September 30th Movement or G30S 1965. The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) accused the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as the mastermind of these murders which led to mass arrests and execution of people who were PKI members or accused as PKI members across Indonesia. In NTT this incident began in December 1965 and continued until the end of 1967 (Kolimon and Wetangterah, 2012). In a telegram sent from the United States embassy in Jakarta to the government in Washington, James Fox, a researcher, reported that between 800 to 1,000 people were executed by the Indonesian security forces in some areas of NTT (Simpson, 2017).⁴ Jacob J. Herin mentioned that 1,162 people died in NTT (quoted from Prior, 2015: 39). Meanwhile, from his research in Maumere, Gerry van Klinken stated that 800 people died in the region alone (van Klinken, 2015). The Church, according to the *Memori-Memori Terlarang* book, knew about the violence and directly or indirectly perpetuated discrimination and stigmatization

3 Later on, this book was translated to English by Herbert Feith Foundation, Monash University, Australia, in 2015, and becomes one of the most complete sources concerning research on the 1965 mass violence in East Nusa Tenggara. See Kolimon & Wetangterah et al. (2015).

4 This secret document was declassified by the National Declassification Center (NDC) in cooperation with the National Security Archives (NSA) based in George Washington University (GWU) in October 2017. See the briefing report in <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/Indonesia/2017-10-17/Indonesia-mass-murder-1965-us-embassy-files> (accessed on December 6, 2017).

against survivors and their families. After more than five decades, the statement given by the GKI Chairman above has its own meaning for the church and has affected its congregation, especially the survivors and their families.

The research that led to the publication of the book mentioned above was led by Mery Kolimon, a female pastor who is currently the Chairman of GMIT Synod. People know Mery as an assertive woman who really cares about her congregation. She actively speaks out about the approach of diversity, anti-violence, and reconciliation to the general public and in particular the GMIT congregation. However, not many people know that she grew up in the culture and legacy of the 1965 incident that was filled with violence.

This writing will explore and uncover the process of how Mery recognized the violence which had a long-lasting impacts on the society and did many efforts for families and especially her church in order to solve the problem of past violence. The main thesis of this writing is that transformation from violence to peacebuilding involves some stages: starting from the acknowledgement of the violence that happened; efforts to improve and recover oneself; doing more for other people, especially those who were affected by the violence, including the society, so that they can learn from past experience in order to build a better future. Mery refers to this process as a "healing" effort. Her purpose is to make peace with the past, no matter how dark the past was, and to learn from the mistakes so that moving forward, we have a standard of virtue and can do more to ensure that the past will not be repeated.

The first part of this writing will explain the social and political context in NTT as well as the church's position, especially GMIT, both in the present and in post-G30S mass violence. In this explanation, the story of the mass violence that occurred in 1965-1967 will be an integral part of the life experience of NTT people and the church, which also influenced Mery's life journey since she was born to this day. The second part will constrict into the violence that surrounded

Mery's life and how the people and institutions in her neighborhood were directly related to the violence: her father, the society, and the church. The third part will highlight the process and turning point that happened to Mery which led her to transform into an individual who emphasizes peace in resolving the legacy of dark past and in the current period. The fourth part is the description of Mery's development of thinking and her activities concerning peacebuilding, which stresses on the acknowledgement, reconciliation, and recovery of victims and the society in general. The last part is the conclusion.

Sociopolitical Context and the Role of Church in NTT

NTT has been one of the provinces that becomes the barometer of interfaith harmony in Indonesia. In 2015 the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia chose NTT as the first champion of religious harmony at the national level. Religious-based conflicts almost never happen in this place even though its people have different religions and beliefs. The role of religious institutions and religious leaders is the key, especially the church as the largest religious institution since Christians and Catholics are the majority in NTT. Demographic data in 2010 stated that among the NTT population of 4,683,827, as many as 4,163,094 or 88.88% of them are Christians and Catholics.

One of the churches with the largest distribution of congregation in NTT is the Christiam Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT). GMIT was established in 1947 although its existence could be traced since the Portuguese colonial period in 1556-1613. The idea of establishing ethnic churches (Minahasa, Ambon, Timor) had been discussed in Edinburg in 1910, but its preparation only began in 1945 by Dutch Pastor Ds. E. Durkstra. On October 31, 1947 GMIT was officially established independently with six cluster regions, namely Kupang, Camplong, Soe, Alor/ Pantar, Rote, and Sabu.⁵ The number of GMIT congregation until 2010 was 1,050,413 people, or 22.46 percent of the

⁵ See the GMIT official website <https://sinodegmit.or.id/sejarah-gmit/> (accessed on December 7, 2017)

total population of NTT. This included 828 pastors, and 167,262 church volunteers (deacons, Sunday school, vicars).⁶ This number places GMIT as one of the largest Protestant denominations in Indonesia.

For GMIT, the 1965 mass violence was not far from the history of the institution and its congregation. This incident is a dark historical chapter for NTT, as well as for other regions in Indonesia. A series of mass violence incidents such as arrest, torture, and murder of civilians occurred post-G30S in Jakarta and spread across Indonesia. The Church, in this case GMIT and the Christian Church of Sumba (GKS), officially rejected the PKI on the basis that communism denies God and hates all religions (Kolimon and Wetangterah, 2012). Not only the Christian churches, the Protestant Churches and their pastors also rejected it and even became involved in the mass violence (Prior, 2015).

The church at that time already had a history of tension with Marxism and communism since the 1950s. Relationship between the two of them in the past was marked by mutual suspicion. Marxism was born as a protest against capitalism in the early nineteenth century and saw Christianity as a religion that favored the oppressors by providing divine justification for social injustice. On the contrary, Christianity attacked Marxism and communism because of their followers' disbelief in God (atheism) (Kolimon, 2012: 350-351). In NTT the suspicion of Christianity toward Marxism and communism was brought by the European missionaries who spread Christianity in this region (Kolimon dan Wetangterah, 2012).

The testimonies of three *zendeling* (evangelist from overseas) who came from Germany and Netherlands, as narrated in the *Memori-Memori Terlarang* (2012: 101-119), have shown this. GMIT and GKS firmly rejected Marxism and communism before 1965. The decree of GKS XI Synod in Tanggaba, Sumba, in 1957 declared the danger of communism, and it was further reinforced by the rejection of PKI with the decree of GKS Synod in 1966 in Pameti Karata. Meanwhile, GMIT rejected communism through

6 See <https://profilgereja.wordpress.com/2010/05/06/gereja-masehi-inji-li-di-timor/> (accessed on December 10, 2017).

Synod assembly in 1960 in Soe, and in 1965 it stated its rejection of PKI in the Special Synod Decree in 1965 (Kolimon, 2012: 351).

The political tension that occurred in Jakarta between the Indonesian Army and PKI, which spread to other regions, became a momentum for the church to formally reject communism and justify violence with the issues and propaganda produced by the rulers in Jakarta. The Church was ultimately influenced by this propaganda and it had difficulty in separating religious and political area due to the uncertain situation, and the church itself was not in the position to clarify the information it received at that time. The impact that the church had to face was the pressure to submit to power which at that time was held by the Indonesian Army. The Church and its pastors did not only give their blessings and join in praying for those who would be executed, they were also forced to facilitate the violence, for example in a place where the church became the location for confinement and torture (Penpeda and Peka, 2012: 277). According to one source in JPIT research, the church was silent and tended to approve because the church did not want to risk being attacked (Taedini, de Haan, and Risi, 2012: 235-236).

Individually, some pastors believed that PKI had a list of murder targets, including pastors, and that PKI were preparing mass graves as well as grenades to be detonated in some locations. Even though the truth of these news could not be verified, the pastors considered PKI as a threat for them. Nevertheless, the perception that communists were astray strongly remained in some individuals within the church, and consequently made it difficult for the church to separate state interests from the church interests, as the decree of the GKS Synod Special Assembly on December 4, 1965. The decree, among others, called for:

to give understanding and awareness to all members of the Congregation, so that they are always ready to help the government and state organs in taking actions against 30th September Movement without deviating from the applicable government's provisions and the law of God that we obey (Quoted from Yetty Leyloh, 2012: 65).

The decree also stated that there were Church officials and

congregants who were directly or indirectly involved in the Communist organization, and the church must impose the church's tactics on them or even fired them (Leyloh, 2012: 64). This was also to respond to a number of pastors who were also arrested because they were alleged as communists, as well as a large number of congregants who were also arrested and executed. GMIT also imposed church discipline on its congregants and officials who were perceived to be involved in communism by not letting them attend church services and take part in the sacrament. The Synod Assembly on December 8, 1965 decided to clear the church by expelling all people who were associated to PKI from the church (Bhoga, Bire, and Sooi, 2012: 204).

In addition to JPIT research, some Catholic researchers and pastors also had investigated the church's role in the 1965 mass violence. In Maumere the culmination of violence happened during February to April 1977 (Prior, 2015:39). The chairman of Catholic Youth of Sikka Regency revealed that on February 27, 1966 all components of political party/mass organization/Golongan Karya were forcefully gathered in the house of the Staff Head of Operations Command (KOMOP, the name later changed to KOPKAMTIB), Major Soemarno. Included in that meeting was Catholic organization and a number of pastors.

During the meeting the G30S Examining Team, a team consisting three people assigned by the Army to record those who were involved in the PKI, and Staff Head of KOMOP pressured those who were present to list names of people that had to be "secured".

In the presence of fully armed soldiers, they were asked to determine their stance and help the government eradicate the PKI (Prior, 2015: 53-54). In his explanation, the Chairman of the Catholic Youth said:

The night of February 27, 1966 was the moment where the Catholic leaders began to lose their footing, or in other harsher words, they had left the Catholic principles. These leaders did not dare to speak out for justice and truth because of their fear when facing the weapons, fear of death in defending the truth and justice (Quoted from the manuscript "*Menjaring Angin*" [Catching the Wind], in Prior, 2015: 55-56)

Behind the church's silence another finding from JPIT research was the side effect that the church got from the mass violence: a significant increase in the number of congregants. These new congregants generally came from the indigenous communities that had local beliefs. In Sabu the church intensely approached the indigenous people to embrace Christianity. Those who did not convert to Christianity get the stigma as people who did not know God and were labeled communist/infidel/atheist (Bara Pa and Wiwi, 2012: 125-185). In other places indigenous people embraced Christianity either by force or because they were afraid of getting violent treatments since they were considered to have no religion. Although in South Central Timor (TTS) there was once a "spirit revival movement"⁷ that began in September 1965, this movement did little to increase the number of congregants from conversion (Penpada, Peka, and Salukhfeto, 2012: 252-254).

The 1965 Violence as Part of Mery's Life

Mery's life is inseparable from the 1965 incident. Mery was born in Soe, NTT, after her parents vowed to God about a sacrifice. After four years of their marriage, Mery's parents had not had a child. Mery's mother, Sarlin Boimay, miscarried a few times. The local belief said that there was hot blood flowing in her father's body, which also made her mother's womb hot, and that eventually made it difficult for her parents to get an offspring. Various rituals were carried out in order to "cool" her father's blood and her mother's womb, yet all of them failed. Eventually, Mery's parents chose to pray every midnight at church and made a vow in front of God: if they had an offspring, they would surrender the firstborn child from her mother's womb to serve Christ. Shortly after that, her mother conceived and gave birth to Mery on June 2, 1972 – since that moment, serving God became her life path (interview with Mery Kolimon, September 2017).

7 This movement was basically a huge service that made many divine healing miracles that influenced people to repent and stay away from local mystical beliefs.

The family believed that her father's hot blood came from his role as an executioner in his youth from 1966 to 1967. Mery's father, Bernadus Kolimon, was a policeman who had only been assigned for two years in Soe Timor Island, approximately 100 kilometers from the city of Kupang. At the age of 22, Bernadus was entrusted to be a Criminal Investigation (Reskrim) Officer in the Capital City of South Central Timor (TTS). Becoming a police officer was a pride for Bernadus since he came from underprivileged family and his last education was senior high school. However, that pride only lasted for a while, it was replaced by doubt and deep trauma, when in January 1966 until the end of 1967 he was ordered to execute innocent civilians for alleged involvement in the PKI. During that time, he noted that not less than 700 people were executed in TTS District alone. He himself executed 17 people. According to his testimony in Junita (2011), this massacre happened in three phases. The first phase was when the execution order came from Jakarta without any investigation. The criminal prisoners in prison were "cleansed", including the police detainees, and all of them had nothing to do with PKI. The investigation on the involvement in PKI and its affiliated organizations only began in the second and third phase (Junita, 2011: 31-32). During that time, the soldiers went around fully armed, creating tense atmosphere in the society because anyone could be arrested and executed based on the allegation of being a rebelling PKI after the murder of seven high-rank and mid-rank officers in Jakarta. People who received assistance from PKI and its affiliated organizations such as BTI and the others, were arrested and executed without knowing their mistakes.

The experience of executing people as described above left a deep impression and it was believed to turn Bernadus's blood "hot". Bernadus said,

The first reason why I wanted to be a police officer was because of the gallant uniform. But not only because of the uniform. That uniform would enable me to protect those who are weak and enforce the truth. But the two-year experience that was filled with the blood of those who died without being tried made me wonder, is it true that the Police are the enforcer of truth? (Junita, 2011: 31)

When he followed his family's advice to cool his hot blood by butchering a dog in a river, then drained its blood and drank some of the dog's blood, the first thing that crossed Bernadus's mind was the faces of 1966-1967 murder victims. Violence became the necessity for him to solve his problems. For years, he became a police officer who was feared by the local community. Not only due to his position as the Chief of Sectoral Police (Kapolsek), but also due to his hard and vicious temperament. Such character could control the local community who also had a hard character.

In 1978 Bernadus was assigned as the police chief (Kapolsek) in South Amanatun, approximately 40 kilometers from Soe. The majority of people in this region were the Amanatun Tribe. This tribe was known as one of the tribes in NTT which adopted violence as a local value and method to resolve problems, especially with war. This violence came from the strong masculinity culture and values in this tribe. The word "ama" from Amanatun means male tribe, different from "molo" tribe which means female tribe. Violence was common in the daily life of the community, including in child care and education. The expression "*di ujung rotan ada emas*" [at the end of rattan there is gold] was a local expression that was always used in child care. It meant that rattan beating to the children would only bring positive impact to the children in the future. In practice, this meant that physical violence was always used to control the behaviors of their children. Not only toward the children, the same practice also applied to wives and other family members who were weak at home or in the society. Mery's father, for example, in addition to being tough in child education aspect, he was also very tough in almost every aspect of life, including toward her mother. Her mother got married at a very young age of 17 years old and had to live a tough life accompanying a temperamental figure like her father.

It is not improbable that Mery's exposure to the values of violence made her ignorant of the violent practices in her neighborhood. Later

on, when Mery continued her education in Faculty of Theology, Artha Wacana Christian University (UKAW) in Kupang, the forms of discipline with violence done by the seniors and educators in her campus were something that she considered normal and must be experienced by the students. This campus practiced hazing on the new students by the senior students, with the reason to forge the students' mentality so that they would be ready to face the congregation in the ministry. This practice was often done beyond the reasonable limit, and it has only been a big concern in the last two years due to the emergence of various victim testimonies, including women, on the violent acts they endured as well as the trauma that still remained even after they have become alumni (interview with Mery Kolimon, September 2017).

Mery's experience of hearing the story of her father's past strengthened her awareness in recognizing violence. Even though initially she was opposed by her six siblings, Mery still decided to have a heart to heart conversation with her father. Unexpectedly, her father did not oppose her. After a few meetings, her father admitted his past and felt that such moment became his release from "hot blood" that he still felt. For him, telling stories was his healing.

It took two casual meetings for me to talk to my father at length. At first he told me a lot about what happened around those years, but when I asked about his role, he paused for a long time. Then he choked up, and after quite some time he slowly told me what he experienced bitterly. I know that it was hard for him, because he felt so guilty. Many people died, and he remembered their faces. But he said that he was relieved to tell me this. I feel that this was a healing for him (Interview with Mery Kolimon, September 2017).

Mery recounted her father's experience in a book of collection of victim stories edited by Putu Oka Sukanta in 2011. When her father was sick and passed away in 2014, he died peacefully. According to a local belief, a person can only die peacefully when he has managed to let go of his burden during his life in the world, something that Mery's siblings were grateful for.

Change, Choice, and Transformation

When someone becomes a part of violence and live with violence, usually he will not be able to recognize violence and its consequences. In this case, violence has become a collective norm; it is accepted as something that is necessary in daily life. Only when that person leaves his community and finds a new way of life, then he can recognize violence and re-think about keeping it as a norm.

In the life of Mery Kolimon, there were two things that prompted her toward the transformation from violence to peace and anti-violence methods. The first one was the change of environment, and the other one was the availability of choices.

Mery experienced a change of environment when she graduated from junior high school. When attending senior high school, Mery had to live far away from her family because in the village where she lived, South Amanatun, there was no senior high school. Mery went to live with her mother's distant relative. Unlike in her family, in her new place Mery hardly ever saw violence perpetrated by parents against their children, including in terms of education. Initially, this was something of a surprise to Mery, but over time this amazement was explained when she went to college in Kupang. Mery fulfilled her parents' vow to become a pastor, so she continued her studies at UKAW, in the provincial capital.

In this higher education Mery discovered many new readings that opened up her horizons. Her critical thinking ability was awakened when she took the liberation theology course. The lecturers who led her to these critical analysis were Pastor Andreas Yewanggoe, Pastor Junus Inabuy, and Pastor John Campbel-Nelson. These people are still academicians as well as congregation leaders who become her role models to this day. Mery also had a great interest in topics and literatures concerning feminism. Feminism, for her, was a new perspective on freedom for women. It did not only offer a new perspective in viewing the relationships around her that had been dominated by masculinity

and violence, but also the options to achieve equality and glory. Later on she got these options in her life journey: becoming a housewife, academician, and leader of a congregation.

In addition to the learning process at the campus, Mery was also actively involved in the Indonesian Christian Students Movement (GMKI) and diligently followed social and political news in the country from sources such as *Detik*, *Tempo* and others, especially about the violent situation in Indonesia before and after the fall of President Soeharto from power. From these news she sharpened her critics toward the violent methods that most definitely brought negative impacts to this nation.

After graduating from college, Mery took up the teaching opportunity at her alma mater. It was one of the choices she made, considering her love for knowledge and her desire to contribute in the change of perspective in the students community. In 2003 Mery had the opportunity to continue her studies in the Netherlands. There, she had more exposure to critical thoughts and studies from her courses, literatures as well as discussion with her lecturers and peers. Her great interest in feminism led her to a book written by Saskdia Wieringa, a sociology professor in Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), called "The Politicization of Gender Relations in Indonesia: the Indonesian Women's Movement and Gerwani until the New Order State" (1995). This book is a study on the role of the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani) in the Indonesian struggle and democracy period before 1965, and systematic destruction not only of that organization but also of women's movement in general in Indonesia post-G30S.

Part of history about post-G30S mass violence in that book forced her to reflect in the context of her region: NTT. Events surrounding the G30S mass violence were vaguely told by the people and congregation. The existing narrative was that in mid-1960s there were massive arrests of PKI. PKI itself was described to be very bad in the narrative of formal history as well as the official narrative created by the church.

Communists were those without God and the common enemy even though there was no information that explained who they were nor proof that they wanted to harm the church and its congregation. Just like the narrative on Gerwani, these 'communists' and their families were stigmatized and alienated in the community as heretics. However, this book reverses and questions such narratives based on historical evidence which clearly shows the systematic effort of propaganda and destruction of left-wing groups in Indonesia, including women's movement. Not only that, mass violence also sacrificed many civilians who were not a part of any political movement, and it happened evenly and patterned across Indonesia.

Mery was intrigued to find out more about the incident in NTT. When she returned from her studies, she tried to seek information from her congregation, friends, and family. She discovered a lot of new things which revealed different facts from what she had formally heard and read. Among her congregation, apparently there were individuals who experienced stigmatization even until their children and grandchildren. As a result, many of them had to accept the church discipline because they were considered as heretics, for example, by not being allowed to attend church services or take part in the sacrament.⁸ Women in particular, received inhumane treatments. Those who were arrested and detained without a trial had to struggle on their own to support their families, to years of mandatory reporting to Subdistrict Military Command (Koramil) or police station that could be located tens or hundreds of kilometer from their residence. Various feelings raged in her, but these new facts gave her the courage to know more, especially concerning the role of the church where she served.

Awareness that arose because of these facts prompted Mery's desire to do more to uncover the truth of history and fix the church's role. However, her desire was postponed for a while when Mery got an opportunity to continue her doctoral education in the Netherlands

8 See also Kolimon and Wetangterah, 2012: 234-239

through *sandwich* program. She also had married a man from Alor island, Yustus Maro, after eight years of relationship. They did not get married earlier because Mery chose to finish her postgraduate studies in the Netherlands first. After they had been married and Mary had a chance to continue her doctoral education, Mery once again chose to work in the academia while playing the role as a wife and mother of their three children: Merdiana, Rulien, and Alberd.

After completing her education in 2008, Mery finally gathered some colleagues and established an organization called Eastern Indonesia Women's Network (JPIT). This organization focuses on studies of women in the eastern region of Indonesia. Their study included the violent events around 1965 and after, which then became a book called *"Memori-Memori Terlarang"* [Forbidden Memories] which has been discussed on the previous part of this writing. The biggest challenge on the research on 1965 was to uncover the dark veil of the past and remind about the trauma that had been kept well by the victims and the society. The researchers also had to face the church institution, which had been closed off to the stories throughout the dark past of NTT in 1965 period and afterwards. Therefore, the epilogue of that book is dedicated to theologically reflect and provide the suggestion of comprehensive pastoral actions based on the research findings.

Make Peace with the Past and Build the Future

Her father's experience made Mery realize about the importance of "healing" the wounds of the past that becomes our burden in the present time. From her experience of meeting and interviewing many perpetrators who was involved in executing the victims in the past, Mery found that many perpetrators were still trapped in the master narrative created by the New Order regime concerning the 1965 incident, that PKI was evil and must be eradicated before they eradicate the people. For the perpetrators, the violence they experienced was a form of heroism, this was what they believed in for years to justify their actions, even

though deep down in their heart they knew that they went against God's command not to kill (Kolimon, 2015: 71-76). Such narrative would only perpetuate impunity and open up a way for violence to happen again.

Even though there were perpetrators who still maintained that narrative, Mery also met some perpetrators, such as her own father, who felt that they were carrying the burden of sin that did not only make them feel the shame but also the guilt. These feeling of guilt and shame came from the understanding of personal failure and wrong actions. The feeling of shame focused more on one's relationship with other people, so it could play a role in prompting him to fix and recover his relationship with other people and their condition especially those who became the victims. Meanwhile, the feeling of guilt tended to focus on himself, so the perpetrator would tend to hide or aggressively defend himself (Kolimon, 2015: 83-83). In such conception, we can conclude that those who managed to get out of extremism and violence were those who felt the guilt because it motivated them to do kindness to others in order to strengthen their social relationship. In his effort, the perpetrator would seek "healing". In the context of NTT, JPIT findings show that there were at least four "healing" rituals done by the perpetrators, which were drinking a bit of victim's blood, rubbing their bodies using cooling wood (*hau hainikit*), draining dog's blood to the river, and praying at church (Kolimon, 2015: 88).

With the same reflection, Mery also saw the same thing in the church where she served. *Memori-Memori Terlarang* was one of the turning point for Mery. Through the research that she led, she believes that at that time there were injustice toward alleged PKI members, and this must be uncovered as a collective memory so that the current generation can learn from that mistake. The church must be aware of and acknowledge bad things involving the institution and its congregation. The feeling of guilt and shame must be part of that awareness, so it will motivate the church to assume responsibility and improve itself for the sake of its presence in the eyes of congregation and general public.

The assumption that "suffering of the victims is a sign of punishment for those who turn away from God" (Kolimon, 2012: 338) is a mistake that led the church to perpetuate the stigmatization of its congregation who became the victims of the 1965 mass violence. The church, according to Mery, implemented what she referred to as "theology of success", where "success" is a sign that someone is blessed by God, while suffering is the sign of His punishment (Kolimon, 2012: 338), where the victim is believed to suffer because they do not live according to God's will. Therefore, the church discipline was applied, and the victims had to confess their sins before they were allowed to participate in the Holy Communion.

Mery saw the need for change in church's perspective and pastoral service to the congregation, in this case, including the survivors of the 1965 incident and their families, as well as to bring together the people who were divided at that time. This is done so that the "healing" did not only happen at church, but also in the society. The first thing to do is for the congregation and church to make peace with the past. For Mery, the church acknowledgement at the book launching became a starting point to strive for something more: reconciliation and recovery for the victims by the church as a formal institution. Based on the study of Judit Herman (1992) on trauma recovery, Mery saw that there are three things that must be done by the church in its pastoral recovery: create a sense of safety, give space to speak, and create the future.

Creating a sense of safety means that the church must first liberate itself from the fear of past trauma and make the church a safe space for the victims to share their stories and give proper burial for the 1965 victims. Giving space for the victims to tell their stories means giving the heart and lending an ear of the church to listen and respond to the victims' stories and do things that are perceived necessary to bring justice and healing for the victims. Finally, creating the future for the church itself by seeking the potential to heal itself and declaring its stance to show its new self. The church must also build relationships

with other parties that also perform the same recovery.

In addition to the efforts above, in Mery's opinion, the church must also reconstruct the theology of politics. This means to question the church's teachings on politics, and how the church should play its role in politics, both at the organizational and individual level. Learning from the position and role of the church in the past 1965 mass violence, this theology of politics must be reconsidered by the church because the theology itself is strongly related to politics. Some of the things that the church can do include the empowerment of civilians, education to raise awareness not only for the congregation but also for the society, and, for women in particular, the church needs to create a space for recovery, nurture and development of women's political ability so that women "can be optimally involved in organizing the life together at church and in the society" (Kolimon, 2012: 362).

Mery got the opportunity to lead the church to recover and find its new identity when she was appointed as the Chairman of GMIT Synod. This made history after for eleven times the leadership was always entrusted to men. The role of women in church has had significant progress. From over 2,000 churches belong to GMIT, approximately 300 of its pastors, or more than 60% of all GMIT pastors, were women (interview with Mery Kolimon, September 2017). This tendency shows optimism considering all this time the church tends to be conservative in viewing the role of women that is subordinated, the same thing that Mery experienced when she ran for the chairman in 2011. Another optimism comes from Mery's current leadership, where GMIT organizes itself especially in terms of the revitalization of church educational institution and the ministry to its congregation. This includes the perspective on past violence and injustice. Not only did GMIT establish a Disaster Management Section, including humanitarian disaster, which focuses on the victims' need, GMIT also gave acknowledgement and respect to the victims of past injustice. For example, in Christmas celebration in 2016, GMIT for the first time gave a space for the victims of severe

human rights violation in 1965 to give welcome speech.

The church's openness to discuss this dark history enables the creation of healthier dialogue space for the church and its congregation. Mery is completely aware that there are still many pastors and their congregants who refuse to talk about the 1965 mass violence. However, Mery believes that pastoral recovery and reconstruction of the theology of politics have become a common need, and it can also be applied on other things beside the 1965 mass violence incident. Even though the issue is still very sensitive in NTT, Mery believes that her role as a pastor leads to the trust of her congregation on messages of justice, truth, and peace. She is not hesitant to introduce herself as the daughter of a perpetrator, because she feels like it is important for her to make peace with her father's past, and also because she feels that she is in a more equal position with her congregation, where many of them became the victims. Her openness and support to discuss the past incident is also done to embrace the pastors, church officials, as well as congregants who were affected by this incident. There are some pastors who are the children of victims and they covered their identities because they were worried that the past might interfere their ministry and pastoral role. Pastor Kondraad Penlaana, chairman of Alor Island cluster, said,

I never talked about my father and my family's past before I met Ibu Mery. The first time she came to visit when she was doing a research which was made into a book called *Memori Terlarang*. She came to meet my mother. She openly talked about her father's role in the past. She did not hide it, and it made us trust her, and felt like we also had to share our story. People need to know about what happened to my father, to our family, to the society. Because the was injustice there, and the church has a mission to bring justice (Interview with Mery Kolimon, September 2017)

Kodraad recalled that meeting as his first moment in gaining the strength to talk about truth and justice. In 1966, his father was the village chief who was arrested because he refused to submit the list of villagers' name who were alleged as communists. His uncle, the older brother of his father, the soldier that was commanded to execute his father

and many other people, was the first person who informed his father's death, yet to this day he refused to tell where his father was buried. Kondraad, like Mery, is active in speaking out for the truth disclosure and reconciliation for the 1965 incident. The stories of his father and family along with other victims and survivors was made into a book by the Cultural Creativity Institute (*Lembaga Kreatifitas Kebudayaan*) in 2016.

For Mery, the greater challenge comes from the outside of the church. Her works in the 1965 issue are not without risk for her. When she ran as the Synod Chairman in 2015, exactly on September 20, one day before the election of synod chairman, Mery was threatened to be brought for interrogation by the soldiers concerning the *Memori Terlarang* book which was sold at the location of church leader election. However, the local Agency for Nation Unity and Politics (Kesbangpol) succeeded in stopping the soldiers, and in the morning Mery was elected by the majority of votes as the new chairman of GMIT church. She still practices caution in matters concerning her efforts to recover the trauma of the church and congregation from the 1965 mass violence incident, because she is aware that with her current position, the church is the most vulnerable to become the target of the political interests by the rulers who do not want the 1965 issue to be brought up. This also becomes the church's challenge in "healing", because the efforts to recover the victims and families as well as the society become the threat for the parties who have been perpetuating the G30S master narrative.

Conclusion

A person can get out of extremism if he has gone through some important stages: acknowledgement of bad things that happened in the past which leads to shame and guilt, efforts to improve and recover themselves, and the desire to improve the social relationship and recovery for other people. These stages are what Mery Kolimon refers to as "healing". Healing in this case serves for someone to make peace with the dark past that burdens their life, as well as create a

better social life and ensure that the violence will not be repeated. This applies not only at the individual level, but also institutional and even national. As for Mery's context, this reflection influences her journey and leadership as the leader of GMIT church.

Mery was born and grew up in an acute norm of violence, both inherited from past political violence as well as violence that is culturally embraced by the environment. She required two things to recognize violence and get out from it: change and new choices. The first change happened for the first time when she had to live with another family in order to attend senior high school. In this family, violence was not a method to educate children. Another new environment was when she went to college as a student. There, she struggled not only with a new life, but also with new perceptions which opened up her eyes to recognize that violence is never a solution for all problems. In addition, her exposure to various new perspectives gave her options that she never had before. Feminism and theology of liberation were the two things that gave her a broader perspective and new options. Mery chose to further explore violence and trauma, which gave her the perspective to uncover the truth on the social trauma that had existed in her environment for decades. From there, she strengthened her conviction to bring the church out of the past trauma in order to strengthen its role and build a better future, not only for its congregation but also for the society in general.

The reflective journey and role of Mery are inseparable from her position as an academician who conducts researches and a religious leader who leads a congregation. These two positions give her different perspectives and skills in viewing and cutting off violence, and in particular, in solving the historical burden from the legacy of 1965-1966 mass violence. These two positions also result in a different perspective in viewing this past legacy, and this difference completes the values of humanity that becomes the foundation of a more essential peace in the land of NTT.***

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Chapter VIII

***Bakalae* in the Morning, *Bakubae* at Night: Transformation Dialectics of Jacky Manuputty**

Irsyad Rafsadie

Introduction

When the communal conflict in Central Maluku was at its culmination in mid-2000, a group of combatants went to visit Reverend Jacklevyn (Jacky) Manuputty and asked his blessings. They admitted that they had just killed the enemy from Muslim community. Jacky, like many Christian pastors in Maluku at that time, was often asked to pray by the combatants before or after a battle. Blessing them was not an easy matter for Jacky who at time already began to work in secret for peace. With a heavy heart, Jacky prayed for them. He did not know that among the casualties killed by the troop he blessed, one was his colleagues in the underground movement who was on duty in peacebuilding effort in the Muslim community.

Jacky was shocked when he heard the news about his colleague. "I worked with him and yet I prayed for those who killed him," he thought.¹ However, in the conflict at that time, Jacky and many residents of Maluku were in a very difficult situation and often they did

1 The main source of this writing was the several interviews between the author and Reverend Jacky Manuputty and the colleagues in Ambon and Jakarta between May-June 2012 and October-November 2017. Other references will only be given if the sources that the author used were other sources and not the interviews.

not have many options; it was either kill or be killed. He never raised arms. However, he prayed and gave justification for the combatants to go to war. He did it for the sake of his personal and community's safety, and also so that they would not make their own interpretation which could be wilder. Therefore, he emphasized to them to only kill to defend themselves and their closest people, to protect lives – the main reason that later on would base his calls for peace.

It was not difficult for Jacky to realize that all people in the conflict were victims, that the his community and the enemy were both vulnerable and suffered. Violent conflict had taken everything away from them, family, relatives, occupation, residence, and many others. However, Jacky's biggest loss was his own emotion and feeling. Finding his childhood house burnt, witnessing children who played and picked body organs at the streets up, Jacky was shocked. For years of violent conflict, he could not cry or express his feeling. He even seemed to not care about himself. All he was worried about was his community, not just because their safety was threatened, but also because they were manipulated to go to war. He wanted the violent conflict to be over soon.

Jacky decided to risk his life by playing a double roles. He stayed with his community (with the risk of being the enemy's target) while at the same time he worked secretly to build a bridge and ease the tension (with the risk of being considered as a traitor and killed by his own friends). Just as he wrote in one of his poems, "*Pagi bakalae (berkelahi), malam bakubae (berbaikan).*" [Fighting in the morning, reconciling at night]. At a glance, those seem to be contradictory. However, in the process, the two were dialectic as a whole. For Jacky, that is how the people of Maluku solve problem and restore the balance, something that he thinks often misunderstood by people. "*Sebagaimana kami adalah anak-anak bakalae, begitu pula kami adalah anak-anak bakubae,*" [As we are *bakalae*, so we are *bakubae*] thus Jacky ended his

poem.²

The personal transformation that Jacky experienced, as well as conflict transformation efforts that he did, are in the dialectics between *bakalae* and *bakubae*. He believed that both have norms and the norms are interrelated. *Bakalae* is not just fighting blindly, but it is framed by the dream of *bakubae*, just as he emphasizes to his followers. Likewise, *bakubae* does not mean surrender and ignore the problems that sometimes must be faced by *bakalae*, like what he did against the forces that destroyed the community and harmony. This is because violence, whether it is obvious or not, should not only be criticized or cursed but it also has to be fought. Likewise, peace will not be achieved by silencing and forced subjugation. In this context, *bakale* and *bakubae* become an important catalyst to fight violence and a strong premise to build peace.

Therefore, instead of rejecting it, Jacky explores and uses the norm of *bakalae* to promote non-violent opposition to the things he considers as tyranny, deceit and injustice. His charisma and career as a peace worker among others come from his acceptance and struggle with *bakalae* and *bakubae* tendency in him, his followers, and his opponents. Jacky, in his own words, transformed the energy and patriotism of *bakalae* into the energy and patriotism of *bakubae*. "If back then *katong* (we) dared to die for war, then now *katong* (we) must dare to die to maintain peace," thus the message that he always reminds to himself and his colleagues.³

That expression reflects the transformation experienced and strived for by Jacky Manuputty, a pastor, fighter, community activist and border-crosser who went through the hard way in achieving peace. This simple writing tries to retrace that path to recognize and learn

2 The title of his poem, "Biarkan Kami Bakalae," [Let Us Bakalae] was used as the title of the anthology of poetry book by 28 poets from Maluku (Fofid, 2013). See also the poetry reading in the peace reflection night on September 11, 2011 in di <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kocPeU-4D2gA> (accessed on January 3, 2018).

3 See the discussion on "Bakalae and Bakubae" in the journal *Kanjoli*, October-December 2011, 62

its main elements. After briefly describing his life from childhood until he has become a pastor and social activist, this writing follows Jacky's struggle in the violent conflict in Maluku that forged him into an influential peace worker, not only in Indonesia but also across the world. This writing will be concluded by emphasizing the main elements of his experience in order to think about the directions that can be developed in the future for peacebuilding.

A Good Fighter Who Dreams of Becoming a Pastor

The national political situation was critical when Jacky was born in Haruku, Central Maluku, in July 20, 1965. President Soekarno was at the end of his power and his successor, Soeharto, would rule until Jacky grew up and change many institutions in Maluku. However, the rumors of that time did not leave a deep impression in Jacky's memory. He reminisced on his childhood in Haruku as a heaven filled with warmth and joy, far from the wickedness which he would fight later when he had grown up.

Haruku, the hometown of his mother, Els Ririmasse, is only about 20 minutes away by speedboat ride from Tulehu port, Ambon island. Meanwhile, the village of his late father, Godlief J. Manuputty who was often called Om Otis, is somewhat further away on Ullath, Saparua Island. Jacky almost never returned or stayed long in Saparua Island until he was assigned to serve in Haria in the late 1990s. The village of his mother's family in Maluku which was a Christian village had a brotherly relationship with Rohomoni,⁴ its Muslim neighbor village. Jacky often came along with his late uncle, Berthy Ririmasse, the king (village chief) in Haruku, to visit that village. Likewise, the people from Rohomoni often came to visit his village.

He completed his kindergarten, junior high school, and senior high school education in top schools of Ambon city. In contrast to his village

4 The Muslims in Rohomoni village is known to be tough but also unique compared to the Muslims in other places. For example, until now, the female Muslims in that village do not wear hijab or veil.

and many other customary villages which were segregated by religion because of the Dutch legacy, the residents of Ambon city were very plural and blended in. However, Jacky never really felt comfortable living there. Every school holiday, even though it was just one or two days, he always went back to Haruku to play with his village peers. Therefore, even though he grew up in the city, he was closer with village atmosphere, catching fish in the sea and picking fruits in the forest. Until this day, he still frequently visits the outer islands and feels the magical atmosphere of the ocean and forest that is far from the reach of signal and frenetic city.

In junior high school and senior high school period, Jacky was known as a good fighter. He and his friends liked to challenge the students from other school for a battle of strength. After school, they gathered at Merdeka Square surrounding the fighting fighters in the middle. One by one, the fighter from both school had a duel with bare hands. Jacky was one of the champions in his school. They simply fought without any agenda or interest, and normally after the fight, they would reconcile right away.

However, Jacky was respected by his friends not only because he was good at fighting, but also because he was very loyal to his friends and was willing to sacrifice for them. The number of his possessions that he sold to help his friends was countless. Once, he even traded his new uniform with *martabak* because his friends did not have any cake. He recalled that he never discriminated his friends based on religion, until he went to senior high school.

The reinforcement of religious identity and fanaticism was felt when Jacky was in senior high school in the early 1980s. At that time, President Suharto began issuing policies and conceptions that were considered to favor the Muslims. Among the influential ones was the transmigration policy. The wave of transmigrants that was dominated by Muslim Javanese, plus the self-initiated transmigrants from Sulawesi which had happened for a long time, entered some regions

in Maluku. This event did not only trouble the Christian community that was worried of “Islamization” but also the local people who felt marginalized in the economic aspect.

This domestic development coincided with the escalation of the political situation in the Middle East during those years. The wave of euphoria from the Iran Revolution in the late 1970s swept the world, including Indonesia. Meanwhile, Camp David Peace Agreement on September 17, 1978, between the President of Egypt, Mesir Anwar Sadat and the Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, which among others acknowledged the existence of Israel, also elicited strong reaction everywhere. The world news was obtained from international radio such as *Suara Amerika* or BBC England that were commonly played by parents but were also often heard by youths.

As Jacky recalled, since that moment, short-term pesantren and recitation began to be held in Ambon, which was responded by the Christians by organizing joint school worship session. Jacky was involved in organizing the worships. Student organization in school began to split. Students of the same religion got closer and took care of each other, for example not dating with student from other religious community. Meanwhile, students of different religion began to be suspect and compete with one another, for example by fighting for the leadership position in students organization at school. Similar atmosphere was also felt in campus, marketplace and government institution.

Jacky also remembered that during those years, there were many murals of David’s star around his neighborhood. These murals were made by a group that called themselves as the Jewish gang. As stated by Qurtuby (2016: 86), some militant Christian communities used the story of Jews’ struggle from the Old Testament to mobilize war during the conflict. They considered themselves as a part of Israelites and compared the land of Ambon to the land of Canaan, where the Muslims were described as the Goliath who wanted to seize the land.

During those years, religious purification and reinforcement was felt, both in the Christian as well as Muslim community. Traditional customary brotherhood started to be replaced by universal brotherhood such as Pan-Islam and Christian triumphalism. As described by Bartels (2017: 702), at that time, Muslims and Christians were more welcoming to people of the same religion from other region than to people of different religion even though they came from the same region. Local Muslim-Christian brotherhood was weakened, even though it had not escalated to an open conflict.

Jacky grew up in a devout family, even though they were not as extreme as what has been described above. He learned about prayer and faith confession from his parents at home. Each night, Jacky and his three younger siblings, Filanni, Leviana, and Arthur took turn in memorizing the prayer. Filanni often teased him because he always prayed the same prayer. Jacky's father was not a pastor, he was an athlete and a teacher. He used to be a national fencing athlete and had become the Chairman of the National Sports Committee (KONI) before returning to serve in education. When he was in elementary school, he watched his father compete in National Games (PON) VII in Surabaya. Jacky inherited his father's athletic figure. However, he did not follow his father's footsteps and preferred to follow his grandfather by becoming a pastor.

Even though he regarded his children's religious education very important, Om Otis did not expect Jacky to become a pastor. This was because he had experienced how difficult it was to be a pastor's child during Japan war era. Due to the very difficult situation, Om Otis and his six siblings were born and raised in separate places. They were sent to Ambon for school. Because the inter-island transportation was very limited at that time, they had to stay in different families. After school, they had to work as corvee-labours to build the road. They grew up as tough people who did not know each other. Therefore, when Jacky expressed his intention to become a pastor, his father and

siblings were disappointed. They expected Jacky, as the oldest child, to become an engineer or other job other than pastor so that he could take care of his siblings.

His paternal grandfather was the one who mandated and kept praying so that Jacky would follow his footsteps as a pastor. If Om Otis began to question Jacky's choice, Tante Els always reminded him that he must not deny his own father's wish. Later on, before Jacky got married, his father accepted his decision and supported him to become a pastor. However, the desire to become a pastor came from Jacky himself, and later on it was strengthened by the support of his wife. His experience in organizing worships in senior high school made him realize the importance of the role of religious figures in the society. Therefore, after graduating from senior high school, he ignored the result of entrance examination for state university where he passed and continued his education in Jakarta Theological Seminary (STT).

Just as his choice to become a pastor was characterized by "rebellion", that was how Jacky understood the core of Christianity, which is as a protest and resistance. Jacky felt compelled and moved by Jesus' first sermon in the temple as written in Luke 4: 18-19:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus' mission above that inspired Jacky was the mission that also inspired figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. who opposed discrimination against black people in United States and Archbishop Oscar Romero who defended the poor in El Salvador.⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising that when he was undergoing his pastoral education, Jacky was actively involved in political activism and community empowerment works.

5 See for example King Jr. (1958: 93-94) and Romero (1998: 72-73, 116, 198).

Living the Role of Pastor and Social Activist

Jacky was 19 years old when he left Ambon to continue his studies in Jakarta. He studied to obtain bachelor degree in STT Jakarta for five years, from 1984 to 1988-89. One of his favorite lecturers at that time was the late Professor Richard Haskin, Biblical professor who was known to teach critical theories in Bible interpretation, especially the interpretation of the New Testament. Jacky was quite close with him and even participated in a choir that he led in Erasmus classical music room.

During his studies, Jacky was also actively involved in Mass Communication Foundation (now People's Communication Foundation, Yakoma), which is a part of the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI). In Yakoma Jacky learned the skills which he would use later in his activism. There, Jacky met NGO activist pioneers such as Asmara Nababan, Remy Sylado, Albertus Patty, Budiman Sudjatmiko and Indera Nababan. Jacky and the activists in Yakoma were among the ones who managed Indonesian Labour Theater (TBI). Established in 1989, this theater did not only become a medium for labours to have fun, but also to share their problems and grow mutual awareness. They did some performances before they were banned by the government.⁶

A year after graduating from STT Jakarta, Jacky went to study for bachelor degree in Driyarkara School of Philosophy (STF). Actually, there was no requirement to study philosophy in STF Driyarkara in order to become a Protestant pastor. However, Jacky felt that he had to be more critical in reading the bible and struggling with the philosophical battle behind it. The topic he was most interested in was the 20th-century German social philosophy and its derivatives which were taught by Father Franz Magnis-Suseno, a religious clergy, cultural expert and social activist.⁷

6 This theater was known for the *Senandung Terpuruk dari Balik Tembok Pabrik* [Sad Humming Behind the Factory Walls] performance. See "Teater Buruh: Sebuah Kesenian untuk Meringankan Beban." *Kompas*, Oktober 15, 1995.

7 The philosophy extended course taught by Father Magnis was once stopped after a democratic activist who attended his class was detained by the government.

Jacky admired Father Magnis whom he thought could explain complex philosophical thoughts straightforwardly. Previously, Jacky used to write in complicated and bewildering manner. After reading the works of Father Magnis, he felt ashamed and drastically changed his writing style. He also began to write for the public in Maluku using daily local Ambon dialect.

Jacky's thesis in STF Driyarkara discussed the Rousseau social contract. Father Louis Leahy, the expert on theism philosophy, who was appointed to become his thesis adviser, asked him to learn French language beforehand. He was even willing to pay for it. However, Jacky gave up. In the end, Father Magnis replaced Leahy as his adviser. Jacky graduated from STF Driyarkara in 1993 and he received an A for his thesis got.

The close relationship between Jacky and Father Magnus continue after he graduated. He even asked him to officiate his wedding with Louise, his best friend and darling since junior high school. This had caused a controversy since Father Magnis is a Catholic while he and his wife-to-be were Protestant couple. In the end, their wedding were officiated by Father Magnis and the official of Maluku Protestant Church (GPM) Synod who is also Jacky's uncle, Reverend Broery Hendriks.

After getting married in 1995, they lived in Jakarta. Louise who previously worked at the branch office of a renowned bank in Yogyakarta transferred to the headquarter in Jakarta. Meanwhile, Jacky remained working in a theater studio and a number of other places. Jacky had been involved in a theater led by Remy Sylado before joining Kebon Pala Popular Theater studio led by Teguh Karya. At that time, Jacky was unemployed for most of the time since Teguh Karya who was disappointed with Indonesian movie industry did not produced any movie anymore. However, at that place, Jacky could meet national figures such as the late Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid, chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama), who was often invited to discuss

about movie. Jacky and his friends were often invited to events such as Forum for Democracy, a forum established by Gus Dur in 1991 which became a milestone in democratization process in Indonesia.

They did not live in Jakarta for long. Louise herself asked Jacky to take her home to Ambon and chase his childhood dream to become a pastor. She felt that his dream could not be achieved in Jakarta because Jacky would always be distracted by his theater work and other affairs. Meanwhile, Teguh Karya kept convincing Jacky to stay in theater. "Preaching using a movie has a wider influence than preaching from the platform," he said to Jacky one day while promising to send him abroad to study about movie.

However, in the end Jacky chose to go home to Ambon in 1996. It was a big decision for the young couple. Teguh Karya was disappointed because Jacky just walked away. Jacky's mother-in-law was also disappointed because he was taking home her only daughter who had a great career in Jakarta. Eventually, she could accept the decision after seeing them live their decision happily. Louise applied for a job in a small bank in Ambon and started her career from the bottom, while Jacky began his career as a GPM pastor.

Jacky went through the vicar period (a sort of field practice before the pastor ordination) in his village in Maluku. He was disappointed because he had requested to be assigned in the furthest ministry area, if necessary in a place without any transportation and electricity. But it turned out Jacky faced an interesting challenge in Haruku. He faced Aneka Tambang Company (PT. Antam) and its affiliate, Ingold from Canada, that barged in to explore the gold in the area.

Jacky went through the vicar period in 1996-1997 while leading an advocacy. At one time, he even argued with his mentor and synod chairman because he considered that they were inclined to support the company. The synod felt that the government had agreed to it and they had to comply. However, Jacky knew that the mining company got into the area using manipulative methods. He could not let his childhood's

heaven that already received Kalpataru in 1985 become damaged due to their actions. Since there was no civil society organization that was involved at that time, Jacky took the initiative to perform consolidation. He prepared dozens of big envelopes containing data and sent them to various institutions. His efforts succeeded in gaining the attention of national and international institutions.

At that time, Jacky was almost arrested by the army. Each day he was threatened with anonymous letters, insulted, and considered a provocator. He was also summoned by the Synod and was asked to explain his actions. But rather than retreat in defending his rights and land, Jacky preferred to leave his position and resign from GPM. Not getting any support from the church, he requested for help to other parties, including the Chief of Anshor Youth Movement, the late Iqbal Assegaf, who came from Ternate. However, eventually he could resume his career as a pastor and continue his advocacy.

After the vicar period, Jacky was assigned to minister in Haria, Saparua Island. His advocacy efforts still continued. He did it with his uncle, Berthy Ririmasse, the recipient of Kalpataru and former king (village chief) of Haruku. Another controversial action was done by Jacky at the regional level annual church meeting in Saparua. He asked Professor J.E. Sahetapy, a Saparua-born scholar who was known to strongly oppose mining companies, to replace him preaching at the opening of the meeting. This made the Synod Chairman furious because Professor Sahetapy was not a pastor and his action was prohibited by the Synod regulation. But Jacky did not care and even did worse. Throughout the meeting, he protested the Synod Chairman who really loved him and gave him special treatment.

When it came to principles, Jacky would not compromise. He once protested a department head who was his father's best friend and was really close with his family. This incident occurred in a meeting with the government and the mining company which was held in Haruku. The department head teased Jacky to soften his attitude by saying

that when he was a child, he used to call him Om. Instead of being softened, Jacky became angrier. "If right now my father sat with you and acted like you (supporting the mining company), I would oppose my father," Jacky said sternly in front of many people.

Thanks to the persistent resistance of Jacky and the people of Haruku, the mining activity finally stopped. Not long after that, communal conflict broke out in early 1999 and the mining company's camp was burnt along with the surrounding villages. Due to his efforts, Jacky has always been asked to help the advocacy of communal land cases. The latest one was when he participated in mobilizing the resistance toward a sugarcane company that threatened the natural forest in Aru Islands.

Jacky's advocacy skill was forged in the community development works in which he participated. Before moving to Jakarta, he already met the activists of Maluku NGO who performed COCD (Community Organization / Community Development) works from island to island. There were at least two big NGOs at that time, which were Baileo and Hualopu. Baileo which was pioneered by Roem Topatimasang focused on advocating customary rights, while Hualopu which was pioneered by Sven Loupatty and students of Faculty of Fishery, Pattimura University, focused on the issue of coastal islands.

When he migrated to Jakarta, Jacky still maintained a communication with the activists from Maluku. They were united by the same purpose, to serve for the empowerment of people of Maluku and fight the tyranny of the rulers. Jacky also made a network with activists from other regions. For example, he was involved in an advocacy to oppose the Newmont company in Ratotok Minahasa through the media and short movie. Jacky's experience in Yakoma, Jakarta, was just as important in forging his activism. He and his colleagues were used to being tailed and terrored by the intelligence due to their involvement in protests and resistance at the end of New Order regime.

In addition to being a pastor, Jacky also taught in the Indonesian Christian University of Maluku (UKIM). He used this opportunity to

involve his students in the movement. After the tragedy of Trisakti which killed four demonstrators, Jacky mobilized his students to Jakarta to hold a solidarity act. They walked from Semanggi carrying a long cloth that was smeared by blood. When they entered Trisakti campus wearing traditional clothes and carrying tifa, the traditional music instrument of Maluku, one by one the people came out to welcome them in silence.

In Ambon Jacky also mobilized his students to hold a demonstration for the course practice of Eastern Philosophy which he taught. He knew that if his students demonstrated like in Jakarta, they would be killed by the army. Therefore, he sought other non-violent method that still create a big echo. They also walked while carrying a coffin with a picture of Suharto complete with the sound of trumpet, just like a funeral procession to the cemetery. This act drew the media's attention, including international media such as BBC. Jacky was phoned by many people who told him that the Cendana family was very disturbed and enraged by his act.

Six days after that act, Suharto fell from power. However, the tension did not subside, in fact it escalated. Collective violence broke out in a number of cities and regencies. In Ambon, the riot began in the early 1999 and it started a communal violence that raged until 2002.

Struggle with Violence and Peace

When the conflict broke out, Jacky realized that he did not have many Muslim activist acquaintances. He also just realized that the majority of students that held the demonstration in Ambon were Christians. The minimum protest from the Muslims was understandable considering Suharto's tendency since early 1980s who was getting closer to Muslim community. At that time, Suharto began to approach Muslim groups whom he previously repressed in order to gain their support. He, for example, went on a pilgrimage in 1991 a year after he established the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (ICMI) in 1990. Suharto

also replaced most of the Christian officials in his administration and appointed Muslim generals in the armed forces. This sparked fear in the Christian community and interfered the interfaith relationship in Ambon.

Even so, the tension between groups did not necessarily lead to a riot until it was provoked by external forces. Rumors in the midst of uncertainty in the political power and economic transition period in Reform era turned that tension into a crisis and chaos.⁸ Both conflicting communities in Maluku, the Christians as well as the Muslims, had a role in this chaos. However, quoting the expression of Bartels (2017: 709), they were all like “pawns in the national game of chess to obtain power.”

When the conflict broke out, Jacky was confronted by a dilemma. He was the resort to his followers who needed support and guidance. If he did not provide a guidance, they would make their own interpretation that could have been more dangerous, and his own life could be threatened because he would be accused as a traitor. Yet, he knew that if he blessed them to kill, the conflict would drag on. In addition, he felt like the conflict was full of manipulation of irresponsible parties and it did not deserve to be blessed. However, the conflict was escalating to the point where Jacky, who is critical and rational, was blinded by anger, grudge, hatred and anxiety.

Jacky’s involvement in the violence was a rational step that was theologically and culturally justified. He viewed that protecting life was a mandate from his religion and ancestor. If he and his community were attacked, then they must not retreat. He must defend himself even if it meant killing the opponent. Even though he never raised arms before, he had to bless and encourage the combatants who fought. He also participated in planning the strategy and gathering support at the national and international level to defend his community.

8 The study of Samsu Rizal Panggabean (2016, 2017) which compared Ambon (that experienced violence) and Manado (that did not experience violence) in these critical times show that there was a role of state actor (at the local as well as national level) in addition to interfaith relationship in both cities.

In the process of seeking aid, Jacky experienced one of the important turning points⁹ that made him keep his distance from violence. It happened when he was in New York in April 1999 to gather support from Christian institutions. A presbyterian pastor reprimanded him, "Why do you only tell us about the Christians who became the victims? Our staff from Indonesia reported that many Muslims also became the victims." That question stunned Jacky. The party to whom he asked for help as a friend questioned the fate of the party that he considered as the opponent. Since that moment, Jacky kept questioning what he was fighting for.

Jacky realized that all conflicting parties in Maluku were vulnerable victims and he had to do something to end the violence. However, there was not much he could do when he returned to Ambon in September 1999, the violent conflict was still raging and it even got worse. Making a contact with the opposite party did not only risk of being killed by the opponent but also of being killed by his comrades. For many people of Maluku at that time, peace was just as frightening as the violent conflict. "Saying the word peace at that time equals to challenging death," Jacky said. That expression was not an exaggeration considering his parents' house was burnt by his own community during the conflict. Fortunately, the house was empty and nobody got hurt in that incident.

A way out began to appear when external intervention and facilitations came.¹⁰ In August 2000 Jacky participated in a closed meeting in Jakarta that was attended by Muslim and Christian figures from Maluku. After a few meetings, this small group became the *Bakubae* movement, an underground movement which involved youths, indigenous figures, and interfaith figures to talk about peace.

9 This is the term that Jacky himself used and it was in plural form. See his writing in Manuputty 2014: 141-150.

10 For example the facilitations by Ichsan Malik, a psychologist and peace activist, as well as workshops facilitated by World Health Organization (WHO) team together with Gadjah Mada University's Center for Peace and Security Studies (PSKP UKM) led by Samsu Rizal Panggabean and friends.

Jacky was involved in planning of the *bakubae* strategy even though at the same time he was still thinking about the war and defense strategy with his community. The double role which he played not only endanger him physically but it also tortured his mind.

However, thanks to the “*masu-kaluar*” (crossing the community boundary) process, Jacky could slowly build trust and subside the war. He, for example, could get to know the late Haji Jusuf Ely, a Muslim figure who would later become his partner in gathering support and striving for peace in Maluku. For example, both of them were part of the group from Maluku who attended the Meeting of United Nations’ Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. They no longer voiced their concern as Muslim or Christian, but as people of Maluku. This process also built Jacky’s courage to meet Muslim figures who were known to be tough in the Christian community such as Ustad Muhammad Attamimi when the conflict began to subside.

It is interesting that Jacky’s theological argument for peace was not love, patience, or surrender. His basis was no other than the mission that first prompted him to become a pastor, which to a certain degree was also the basis he used to approve violence. The mission was the dream of liberation and deliverance of life, which was in harmony with Jesus’ mission in Luke 4: 18-19 mentioned previously. Protecting life is liberating those who are oppressed, suffered, and manipulated by people who take advantage of the conflict.

These underground works continued until 2002 when both conflicting parties had been tired of fighting. The central government began to facilitate peace between these two parties. A negotiation was held in Malino, South Sulawesi on February 2002 and resulted in Malino II Agreement.¹¹ Jacky was one of the figures who signed the agreement. This agreement had been heavily criticized because it was perceived to be forced by the top and did not come from people’s

¹¹ It is called Malino II because there is Malino I Agreement facilitated by the government to resolve the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Poso, Central Sulawesi.

aspiration. Despite its limitation, this agreement could start the de-escalation of conflict.

After the conflict had relatively subsided, the attention was shifted to post-conflict recovery issues. Jacky attended various meetings at the national and international level for that purpose. Among the most important ones was the meeting in London in January 2004 which was facilitated by the International Islamic Christian Organisation for Reconciliation and Reconstruction (IICORR) and British Foreign Office. This meeting among others recommended the involvement of customary institution and grassroots actors in the reconciliation.

Previously, the reconciliation efforts in Ambon were more often initiated by the external party who was not really aware of the local cultural elements. Therefore, after Malino II, Jacky gathered the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Maluku, Amboina Doicese and GPM Synod to make a joint initiative that came from the people of Maluku themselves. This effort resulted in the establishment of the Maluku Interfaith Agency (LAIM) in December 2003. The representatives from the three religious communities were appointed as the officials. Considering the lack of Muslim activists, Jacky deliberately gave more opportunities to Muslim representatives to get involved.

Jacky and his colleagues in LAIM initiated various programs to recover the inter-communities relationship by involving various parties. In 2005-2006 they initiated a program called "*khotbah damai*" [peaceful sermon], where the inter-religious figures met and discussed common problems such as corruption or refugees. Jacky deliberately did not raise sensitive issues that could divide them such as the issue of reconciliation or theology. He likened this strategy to "eating hot porridge," starting from the edge then slowly goes to the center part that is the hottest part. Therefore, the participants could start cooperating to solve a common challenge without accusing who was the victim or the perpetrator. The awareness and understanding

obtained from the discussion would be continued through the sermon in each community. Furthermore, their sermon materials were made into a book and distributed to a wider public.

The close relationship among the religious program participants was slowly built as they worked together to solve the common problems. They could also freely talk about their essential differences as good friends in a friendlier atmosphere. In the process, they also invited more relatives and followers to get involved so that the movement could continue. "This process was slow and exhausting but the impact is more sustainable," said Jacky when he talked about this program.

In 2007 and 2008 LAIM organized live-in or interfaith stay which involved a dozen of religious Muslims and Christians. They stayed over for one or two nights at the places of people with different religion, whether it was a residence, school, pesantren, or Catholic diocese. The participants who were initially anxious ended up going home feeling touched and relieved. They could overcome their prejudice and fear to people of different religion and re-build trust.

This program received a positive welcome and it is continued to be developed by involving other participants such as teachers and youths. The latest live-in which involved teachers was documented in *Provokator Damai* [Peace Provocator], a short movie made by two young filmmakers, the students of IAIN Islamic Institute (IAIN) of Ambon who won the Eagle Award in 2013.

As the situation was getting better, Jacky continued his master education to Hartford Seminary in 2007 and graduated in 2010. When he returned from his studies, he was immediately entrusted with establishing and leading GPM's Research and Development Agency, where he had a great role in pushing GPM strategic plan toward peacebuilding. Jacky realized that in order to create a wider impact, he needed to influence the policy formulation. He raised regional strategic issues that he thought its strategic plan should be a church's concern. In order not to be only a discourse, these issues

were broken down until the activity level, complete with the budget draft. The formulation draft would be agreed in the meeting and become the church's official document, so it had a binding power to be implemented at the lower level.

In September 2011, when a small riot broke out in Ambon, Jacky gathered youths of different religions to prevent the conflict from spreading. Their effort succeeded and gained many praises (ICG, 2011: 1). Their initiative continued and became the "peace provocator" movement, two aspects that seem to be conflicting, yet in the hands of Jacky and his friends it could unite as a new force. Jacky let his office in GPM's Research and Development Agency become their headquarter. Initially, these youths were reluctant to enter the "strategy center" of the church. However, Jacky managed to convince them that there was no secret in it and they were free to use all of the facilities there. His office became one of their meeting places to discuss the latest situation while warding off rumors and provocation.

When the riot had been successfully stopped, they continued their movement by doing social care acts. They utilized and developed art groups or communities based on hobbies such as photography, poetry, hip-hop, blogging, and others. In the process, they kept inviting more friends to join so their network slowly expanded, "like weaving pandanus mats," Jacky said. Energy, skill, and the friendship of these youths were combined and channeled to prompt changes. One of their success stories was when they raised the case of Aru and gained national as well as international attention and won their resistance toward deforestation there.

The examples mentioned above were only a few of many efforts done by Jacky in peacebuilding. His other efforts, for example in art and culture as well as trauma recovery, have been researched in various studies.¹² For his efforts, Jacky had received national and international

12 See for example the study by Mercer (2015) on community-based pastoral care approach model done by Reverend Jacky to recover the trauma of child soldiers and the thesis of Sandyarani (2014) on the religious-based peacebuilding processes in Maluku that discusses the role of Reverend Jacky.

awards such as Maarif Award in 2007 and Peacemaker in Action Award in 2012. He does not view these awards as the end of his journey, he sees it as the motivator to keep moving. He does not want these awards to turn into praises that make him negligent and harm the movement.

Jacky is fully aware that peacebuilding efforts must be done and celebrated together so that the resistance toward disintegration efforts can keep doubling. Therefore, he, for example, gathered the stories on his colleagues' experiences in eradicating violence and building peace in Maluku. These stories were published in a book called *Carita Orang Basudara* (2014) and it was translated to English in 2017 with the title *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku*.

The number of forums and meetings that Jacky attended, both in the country and overseas, to share his experience is countless. He does not forget to bring his experiences from all over the world to Indonesia either. Last year, Jacky invited his colleagues, who are fellow recipients of *Peacemaker in Action* award from Nigeria and Philippines, to come to Indonesia and share their experiences in building peace. Two of his colleagues from Nigeria, Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa, have similar background as his. They transformed from two conflicting combatants to a pair of solid peace worker partners. This year Jacky had more duties since he was appointed to become the staff of the President's Special Envoy for Inter-faith and Inter-civilization Dialogue and Cooperation at the end of 2017.

Jacky is a versatile peace worker who works in multiple domains together with various actors and stakeholders. He has the vision and influence to initiate a policy on the strategic level, yet he also has the resilience and sensitivity to work on the practical level. He works by setting an example, strengthening the institution, designing organization, and refreshing theological understanding. For him, a pastor cannot only sit still in the ivory tower. There many spaces and roles that a pastor could fill in academia, church and the society in order to realize the social change that is aspired by Christianity.

Synthesis

The roles that have been mentioned above do not only require skill and strength, they also require a lot of sacrifice. Jacky is often questioned by his closest people, why he is willing to work hard for peacebuilding efforts. When he gets that question, he only says that he wants to repay a debt to the young troops whom he blessed and encouraged to go to war during the conflict era. "I feel that I played a role in the destruction. Therefore, I need to fix it," Jacky explained. For him, being a pastor and a peace worker are no longer about pursuing a grandiose dream out there but it is about fulfilling his calling.

When tracing his life story, we often found that Jacky seemed to be in two opposite poles. He could be very stern and uncompromising, yet he could also be very gentle and friendly. He could be very loyal, yet he would not hesitate to oppose his closest people when it came to principles. These elements have been shown since young Jacky grew up surrounded by warmth and exemplary leadership from his mother, father, grandfather and uncle; and then forged by his exposure to activism when he was going through his theological education and going deep into social philosophy; and became stronger through his struggle with violence and peace in the middle of communal conflict.

The extreme episode where Jacky was involved in violence was a momentary drift from his much longer life history as a pastor and an activist. That episode took place in the midst of the communal conflict of Maluku, when Indonesia experienced a transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the late 1990s. Uncertainty and power struggles gave birth to uncertainty and it sparked clashes between two religious communities which had been drifting apart. The state's failure to protect the people made violent conflict spread rapidly.

When the conflict broke out in January 1999, Jacky had become a mature pastor, teacher and social activist. However, the violent communal conflict in Maluku shook him deeply, that even a critical and rational person like himself was dragged into it. At that

time he just wanted to defend himself and protect his community. However, his mind continued to rebel. He knew that the conflict he faced was not a holy war and had to stop immediately even though at that time there was not much he could do.

In the process there were many turning points that enabled Jack to survive and not completely fall into violence. All the turning points led to the realization that his party and his opponent were both victims. Jacky then worked underground to ease the tension, while staying in his community. For several years, his life was threatened by the two conflicting parties. However, he managed to get out of this mess as a braver person and he became more confident in building the bridge with the opponent and convinced his community toward peace.

Behind Jacky's involvement in violence and peacebuilding, religion and culture played an important role as the source of justification and motivation. In both, the most prominent aspect was the mission of liberation and protection of life. In his view, conflicting communities are victims who are manipulated by some parties and they must be liberated or rescued. However, Jacky did not put too much emphasis on theological approach in his peacebuilding efforts. He preferred to start from the common problems faced by the society and only later on he got into the theological issue which was more sensitive.

Jacky's involvement in peacebuilding is far more numerous and rich than his involvement in violence. He works on strategic level (Malino II and GPM's Research and Development Agency) as well as on the practical level (advocacy and protest mobilization). He also uses various approaches (peaceful sermon, live-in, art and culture) and involves various layers of actors (policy-making elites, middle-level civilians, to the grassroots level). His efforts have made Jacky one of the most important figures in the conflict transformation in Maluku.

Jacky's experience gives us another perspective in viewing conflict, violence, and peace as a dynamic and dialectical process. His struggle in *bakalae* and *bakubae* reminds us to Lederach's ideas on conflict and

peacebuilding (1998: 63). According to him, conflict is a progression and peacebuilding is a complex process which involves various roles, functions and interventions to transform it constructively. In Jacky's experience, the transformation did not always occur in linear but it continued to process in a circular manner. He did not stop at one turning point and it did not end with the ceasefire or peace agreement signing. Therefore, instead of looking for one or two "initiating" factors of transformation, the next studies need to learn more about the "supporting" elements of the continuity of transformation process.

Jacky also invites us to think of a comprehensive approach model in peacebuilding that can transform conflict to its roots. We have already seen how the conflict dynamics influenced Jacky's decision in choosing the peacebuilding strategy, and how the peacebuilding process he strived for eventually also influenced the conflict dynamics. A thorough understanding of the conflict and its context is necessary to know when and under what circumstances we should build a discourse, when to confront, when to negotiate, and when to reconcile. It is very important to avoid partial and reckless interventions that often suppress, cover the root of the problem and perpetuate violence.

Finally, the critical reflection of Jacky which is very rational while still taking into account the religious and cultural elements - with all its paradox and ambivalence - is an interesting example to develop, although of course all of it will mean nothing without critical practices and real actions. Just as shown by Jacky, this process can not be done instantly, it is very long, tiring and must be done slowly, from the underground, from the edge to the centre, from the top as well as from the bottom.***

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Conclusion

Learning from Eight *Hijrah*: Extremism, Peace, and Democracy of Indonesia

Zainal Abidin Bagir

Eight life stories of Indonesian written in this book in reality do not tell stories only about themselves but it is broader; it is about Indonesia, their country. Their biographies record not only about very personal affairs, personal transformations, but also about sociopolitical changes in Indonesia. Humans are not just political actors; their lives could be affected, transformed radically, along with the state's political change. In this book, a fairly central political process which affected their individual lives and became the context of their transformation was democratization, with all its positive and negative consequences, which began in 1998.

Eight stories in this book portray that situation and move further: from the perspective of personal transformation of some of those people, we are invited to understand the other side of Indonesia's changes closely. Soeharto fell from power in May 1998. A few months after, in December 1998, Poso exploded, a bloody conflict between Muslims and Christians happened a few years after, and Iin Brur joined a troop. In 1999 Ambon was on fire, and the conflict there spread to other regions in Maluku in a few episodes, and eventually it dragged Ronald Regang to become a child soldier; Baihajar, a female

Muslim who is an Agriculture graduate, became a bomb-maker; and Reverend Jacky Manuputty blessed the Christian youths who were a part of militia to fight Muslims.

The resistance intensity of Free Aceh Movement (GAM) strengthened after the Reform political change in Jakarta. In 1999 political solution in the form of special autonomy was offered to Aceh to end GAM resistance, but to no avail; and in 2000 Khairunisak Rusli, another figure in this book, joined GAM when she was only 15 years old.

The awareness of Imam Azis and Merry Kolimon to review the history of their community's involvement in the killing of PKI members and alleged PKI members may only be expressed when Soeharto's authoritarian regime has collapsed. Prior to that, it was hard to review the historical chapter, as Suharto rose to power in 1965-1966 at the same time with the destruction of the PKI.

The church of Pastor Palti was protested by vigilante groups that were established after 1998 (for example, Islam Defenders Front which was established on August 17, 1998); it was impossible to establish before in a very controlled "stability". "Freedom of Religion and Belief", which became the mark of Palti's awareness transformation from loyalty to community into universal loyalty, is also a norm which, as an argument of advocacy, only lived after the 2000s.

The stories in this book reveal many important episodes of Indonesia after 1998 even though the seeds of those incidents have existed far longer. It became apparent that democratization brought a good news; however, at least during its early periods, it also brought a great challenge. The challenge was really tough so in that period many people were nervous: Would Indonesia survive, or divided?

Democratization, Violence, and Peace

When Indonesia changed quite radically in 1998 and a few years later, the fear of nation disintegration was very real. The atmosphere of the commemoration of August 17, 1998 just a few months after Suharto

stepped down from his throne of more than 30 years, was marked by the optimism of democratization, and at the same time by the worry that Indonesia would break-up. As told by a researcher on Indonesia, Anne Booth (1999), the *Forum Keadilan* magazine of August 17, 1998 edition reported a grim polling result. According to the polling, 90 percent of respondents were worried that Indonesia would break-up; 80 percent felt that the rise of political parties that accentuated religious or ethnic identity brought the danger of disintegration; 85% viewed that the control of minority over Indonesia's economy would make the situation even more dangerous.

Such worry was like a prophecy that came true when violence after violence broke out and became more intense in Aceh, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, East Timor, to Papua. Anne Booth's question which became the title of her essay in *Inside Indonesia*, "Will Indonesia Breakup?" (1999) kept being repeated over the next few years. Observers and scholars from Indonesia and from overseas questioned Indonesia's ability to survive. In 1999, the renowned magazine *The Economist* asked, "An Asian Balkans?" (November 11, 1999); the problem there was that Aceh was still in conflict with Jakarta. In 2000 expert on Indonesia, Donald Emmerson, asked "Will Indonesia Survive?" (2000). In 2001 Edward Aspinall and Mark T. Berger wrote an article titled "The Break-up of Indonesia?" (2001). At that time East Timor was already disintegrated from Indonesia, and some people predicted Aceh and Irian Jaya/Papua would follow –and also possibly some other regions.

In reality, Indonesia has survived, remains as a whole, and the prospect of disintegration is no longer a conversation topic now. Some recent researches on conflict, especially the ones that are identity-based, provide a good description on our situation since 1998. Even though the methods and data sources were different, these researches show a similar conclusion on the change of conflict patterns after 1998. In general, the trend of conflict shows that there is a progress

that can become the basis of optimism. After conflicts broke out in the early years after 1998, there has been a sharp decline in the conflict frequency showing that the impact of regime change transition period has been overcome.

One of the recent research on conflict in Indonesia post-1998 is the report titled *How Large Conflicts Subside: Evidence from Indonesia* (Barron, Jaffrey and Varshney, 2014). Looking at the data presented by these authors, it seems clear that the explosion of conflicts between 1998-2003, and among the most important types of conflict, the ones that caused the most casualties were inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts. However, this report also notes that these big communal conflicts can be said to be over only a few years after. Since 2004 there has been no large scale communal conflict. The graph of the rise and fall of conflicts is very impressive, it shows how big the changes that have happened in those years. It began with a negative development in the first five years after the Reform, followed by no less impressive changes that showed the end (to a certain level) of these large conflicts even though the main causes of these conflicts have not been targeted effectively.

This was seen in some types of these conflict resolutions. For example, conflicts in Aceh, Ambon and Poso were resolved by an agreement. The large conflict that began in Sampit, Central Kalimantan, ended with the domination of Dayak tribe and the expulsion of Madura people from that area. Meanwhile, the conflict in North Maluku ended without any resolution. Of course, this portrayal, especially for the last two conflicts, is not encouraging and cannot be a good example of conflict resolution. However, regardless of that fact, the big picture seen is there is no longer large scale conflict since 2004. Some seeds of new conflicts have been successfully handled before they break out into a large conflict. Even so, small scale conflicts have happened more often after that, mostly in the regions where previously large conflict happened.

Some other studies show a similar idea, but more detail in some respects. Some examples are the research conducted by Ali-Fauzi, Panggabean, and Alam (2009), which sees the pattern of conflict between 1990 and 2008, and the research of the Insitut Titian Perdamaian (Miqdad 2014). In line with the results of the researches cited above, there appears to be a clear picture of the types of conflicts that emerged in the first years after 1998, particularly the Muslim-Christian communal conflicts, such as those in Ambon and Poso, or the ethnic conflict of the Dayak tribe with the Madura tribe in 2001 in Sampit, Central Kalimantan. It is true that these conflicts can be said to have ended in 2004, but life still does not run normally. In Ambon stronger segregation of Muslim-Christian settlements exist. Meanwhile, Sampit remains closed for the ethnic of Madura. Another type of violence is terrorism in the name of Islam whose big explosions occurred between 2002 and 2005.

In terms of terrorism handling, Indonesia is know to be quite successful even though at times some sporadic explosions happen, especially following the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which now has weakened again. Since 2005 a new type of conflict that involves religious people has spread. This is a type of small scale, localized conflict, but it occurs more often in more places. The main two issues are concerning houses of worship as experienced by Pastor Palti (as told in this book) and minor sects religious groups such as Ahmadiyya, Shia, or smaller groups.

From Personal Transformation to Social Transformation

In their own way, the people featured in this book have contributed to the situation of Indonesia, which in its big picture and in some aspects, has improved even though some problems remain unsolved and there are still challenges which are not small. What is interesting is the example like the case of Huriah Batak Protestant Church (HKBP) congregation in Bekasi who have not successfully worshipped in their

own house of worship, yet their pastor, Pastor Palti, has transformed and contributed to the fulfillment of freedom of the minority Muslim religion in Kupang, as told in this book, as well as for other vulnerable religious groups. Palti's personal transformation manifested in social transformation. The same thing is seen from the life stories of other seven figures in this book.

In Nisah's case in Aceh, her dream to bring justice in Aceh does not change, when she left the battlefield in the forest, and later on fight for her aspiration in the political arena as well as for women empowerment of. Baihajar also becomes a women's empowerment activist, and has transformed her skill in bomb-making into a peacebuilder in her community.

Ronald becomes a peace activist who does not only play a role in his small community in Ambon, but also involved in other regions of Indonesia. Movement space of Jacky Manuputty is not limited to Maluku; his experience also inspires other regions in Indonesia, and even the international community.

While Iin Brur, after settling the problem with himself, becomes an agent of peace that helps other former terrorist convicts to do *hijrah*. The reconciliation movement built by Mery Kolimon and Imam Azis whowere both born and grew up in families who had directly confronted PKI, did not only stop in their own families, it also mobilized their communities and spread to the national level.

Those are just few examples of general lesson that can be quickly concluded here: personal transformation does not only change one person, it brings further consequences. The majority of cases featured here show that when a transformation happens, it does not mean that a big aspiration for justice disappears, but it becomes more universal. One of what have changed in all these cases is the commitment to non-violence, even in resistance movement, which now is used to achieve a bigger purpose that they believe in.

The Importance of Attention to Humanity: Reflection on Methodology and Advocacy

Another lesson shown by the approach of this book, which features biographies, has some advantages. We know that there are many explanation for various types of extremism, whether in in the form of terrorism or others. A series of hypothesis for what drives violent extremism, for example, has been discussed often. The scholars argue on the significance of the factors of identity, ideology, or political-economy; the security approach views this issue from a different aspect too. Meanwhile, we know that every social phenomenon is always complex and multidimensional in nature. Perspective that is shown in this book, which is looking at the story of each person closely and in details, helps to display the complexity of the issue when seen from another perspective.

The explanation obtained is not only concerning why a person or a community became “violent extremists” or lived a life of violence for a long time. It is also about how they could get out of the situation or go into a different awareness. This is a phenomenon that is no less complex, involves many factors that interact with one another and, sometimes, unexpected at all. One thing that is almost the same in the stories is how meetings between humans are important to change people.

For example, Nisah’s story shows that sometimes an unexpected event, which was the tsunami in Aceh, could reverse years of conflict into a path of peace. Tsunami forcefully destroyed the walls that isolated one group and brought them to meet other people who were previously suspected or even enemies. Palti gained a new awareness when he met other groups who became the victims of similar force that made him a victim. Jacky was reminded by the church in the United States about his “enemy” (Muslims) who were actually fellow victims too. Mery’s eyes had been opened when she lived with another family who practiced different education method, and when she met

her lecturers during her college period. Imam Azis was moved when he got a challenge to uncover the past of his organization, Nahdlatul Ulama.

While the biography approach could show the complexity and interrelation of many factors, this approach also has its own limitations. Among others, the difficult to make generalization. However, this might be a common trade-off in social sciences. Thus, in this weakness there are other insights that can be obtained.

The stories in this book make the overly firm sorting of “bad person” and “good person” a relative – a trap that can emerge in some advocacy approaches which identify too quickly who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. Had we met Iin Brur, Ronald, Baihajar or Nisag before they did “*hijrah*”, how would we have treated them? They would have been called extremists, fundamentalists, exclusivists, jihadists, intolerant, or other bad labels. Could we have imagined that these “bad people” would become agents of peace one day? The question remains: what if right now we meet people like them who have not done “*hijrah*”? Will the advocacy approach or management by the state leave enough space to see their transformation opportunity to become agents of peace? The reflection of Pastor Palti is important to be stressed here: “They are all humans just like me. What is my right to hate them? Who am I to hate them?”

Finally, this book stimulates us to think deeper on the meaning of “extremism” that is fought for using violence. If read carefully, it will help us reflect on the various ways to deal with it in certain contexts. If at the beginning of this conclusion chapter, it was shown how the stories of eight people who have transformed from extremism are related and become one with the democratization process of Indonesia, it is no exaggeration if we hope that the reflection will help us in looking at the future of Indonesia.***

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Ihsan Ali-Fauzi is founder and director of Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy (PUSAD), Paramadina Foundation, Jakarta. After graduating from the Faculty of Ushuluddin, State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Jakarta, he studied the history of Southeast Asia and political science in Ohio University, Athens, and Ohio State University, Columbus, both in United States. His research interests currently include the social and political aspects of Islam in Indonesia, religious freedom and democracy in Indonesia, as well as conflict and peacebuilding concerning religion in Indonesia. He occasionally writes articles and book reviews in magazines and newspapers in Indonesia. Among his works, individual or joint work with other people, are : *Disputed Churches in Indonesia* (2013), *Policing Religious Conflicts in Indonesia* (2015), *Ketika Agama Bawa Damai, bukan Perang: Belajar dari "Imam dan Pastor"* [When Religion Brings Peace not War: Learning from "Imam and Pastor"] (2017), *Kebebasan, Toleransi dan Terorisme: Riset dan Kebijakan Agama di Indonesia* [Freedom, Tolerance and Terrorism: Religious Research and Policy in Indonesia] (2017), *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* (2017).

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Jacky Manuputty is a pastor of Maluku Protestant Church. He also serves as the assistant of President's Special Envoy for inter-faith and inter-civilization dialogue and cooperation. The Founder and Director of Maluku Interfaith Agency (LAIM) is an alumni of Theological Seminary, Jakarta (1989), Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Jakarta (2003), and Graduate Program on Pluralism and Interreligious Dialogue in Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, United States (2010). The man who was born in Haruku Village, Central Maluku Regency, in July 1965 has received the Maarif Award 2007 for peace worker category, and Tanenbaum Award, New York, in 2012 for "Peacemakers in Action" category. He is often invited as a speaker in a number of seminars and discussions about peace and interfaith relationship, both in the country and overseas. He participated in editing *Carita Orang Basudara* (2014), which was translated to English *Basudara Stories of Peace from Maluku* (2017). He also contributed his writing in *Ketika Agama Bawa Damai, bukan Perang: Belajar dari "Imam dan Pastor"* [When Religion Brings Peace not War: Learning from "Imam and Pastor"] (2017)

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There have been many researches and documentations in Indonesia on how people become radicals, extremists, or even terrorists. However, there are very few researches about the reverse process: how and why people stop from being extremists. This is a process called "personal transformation" or "*hijrah*" from (extremist) violence to peacebuilding.

This book would like to start resolving the scarcity mentioned above. There are eight people whose biographies about *hijrah* are featured here: (1) Ronald Regang (former child soldier in Maluku); (2) Arifuddin Lako (former victim/perpetrator of violent conflict in Poso); (3) Pastor Palti Hatoguan Panjaitan (victim/religious freedom activist); (4) Khairunisak Rusli (perpetrator of Aceh separatist conflict); (5) Baihajar Tualeka (victim/perpetrator of Ambon conflict); (6) Kyai Imam Aziz (kyai and activist of reconciliation between NU and the victims of the 1965 incident); (7) Mery Kolimon (pastor and activist of reconciliation between the church and the victims of the 1965 Incident); and (8) Jacky Manuputty (victim/perpetrator of violent conflict in Maluku and peacebuilding activist).

This book is an important read for every citizen who cares about peace. In particular, this book is a must-read for policy-makers, development workers, and community figures who wish to learn from the experiences of key figures who have done *hijrah* from the dark violence to the light of peacebuilding.