

## **INDONESIA'S MODERATE ISLAM COUNTERING RELIGIOUS RADICALISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE\***

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### **Abstract**

ISIS phenomena, political violence and terrorism which cover by the name of Islam has been bothering and tarnished nature of Islam as a mercy to the world's (rahmatan lil'alam). Counter terrorism effort ideally become mutual responsibility for both government and society. Government of Indonesia has been involved Islamic organization in the effort of prevent terrorism. One of the biggest civil society organization represent Indonesia's Islam Moderate taught is Nahdlatul Ulama. As civil society organization Nahdlatul Ulama has conducted counter-terrorism effort through structural and cultural roles in politics, social activities, and economic empowerment and religious aspect. This paper tends to reaffirm Indonesia's Islam Moderate strategies through Nahdlatul Ulama as civil society to counter terrorism and religious radicalism/political violence in Indonesia. The theory applies are terrorism, cooperation and civil society concept. The identity of being Muslim is the universal primordial —where the humanity concept will be incorporated subsequently— within the global political Islamic movements. Islam must be preserved to maintain the existence of democracy and country's integration. In addition, they have to promote to worldwide as one of the peaceful face in Islam. This study is qualitative research and using descriptive analysis method.

**Keywords:** ISIS, radicalism, Nahdlatul Ulama, civil society, counter-terrorism

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The global war on terror not only shaped the new political balance in the international world, but also influenced the relationships between each country around the world. Recently, the biggest political crisis hit the Middle East, and the terror attack was spread in Europe until Asia. The Islamic resurgence and the growing of democracy in North Africa and the Middle East become increasingly important, when it give more choice to Muslim countries to be more Islamized or secularized. Some groups emerged with religious radicalism ideology. They actively commit a violence, terrorism, and military action on its behalf. One of the military interventions is ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Since declaring its caliphate, ISIS has conducted or inspired more than 140 terrorist attacks in 29 countries other than Iraq and Syria, Such as Tunis, Turkey, France, Egypt, Lebanon, Indonesia, etc. ISIS phenomena, political violence and terrorism which cover by the name of Islam has been bothering and tarnished nature of Islam as a mercy to the

world's (rahmatan lil'alamin).

Terrorist attacks are not new in Indonesia. Following the 9/11 attacks, terror threat alerts rose in many parts of the world. Recent attack occurred in January 2016, when multiple explosions near the Sarinah, Jakarta. The attack was the first to be claimed by ISIS. Currently there exists no formal ISIS presence in Southeast Asia and there is little to suggest a significant ISIS threat to the region.

Counter terrorism effort ideally become mutual responsibility for both government and society. Government of Indonesia should involve Islamic organization in the effort of prevent terrorism. There are two biggest civil society organization represent Indonesia's Islam Moderate taught. They are Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. In the early formation of the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* or BNPT), The International Crisis Group recommends that BNPT should involved Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) by considering that 87% of Indonesia's population is Moslem; and Muhammadiyah-NU representing Indonesian's Moslem communality with approximately 90-100 million followers.<sup>1</sup>

The research questions are the following: "How is the role of Nahdlatul Ulama as civil society organization in Countering Terrorism?"

## 2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Terrorism as one of extraordinary crime. terrorism by the state (or non-state actors) involves deliberate coercion and violence (or the threat thereof) directed at some victim, with the intention of inducing extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim in such a way that they perceive themselves as potential future victims. In this way, they are forced to consider altering their behavior in some manner desired by the actor."<sup>2</sup>The state is obliged to protect every citizen as mandated by the 1945 constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The results of some research pointed out that counter terrorism is a prevention and control effort against terrorism consisting of deradicalization, disengagement, and incapacitation. It is expected that radicalization and disengagement are applied together as a complementary program between social approach (disengagement) and psychological approach (deradicalization).

Civil society is social representation of all individuals organizations, institutions within family and country, where people voluntarily gather by common interest. Some of civil society are multinational companies/institutionss, media, intergovernmental organization, non-governmental organization, academia and mass organization. Civil society has been widely recognized as an essential 'third' sector. Its strength can have a positive influence on the state and the market. Civil society is therefore seen as an increasingly important agent for promoting good governance like transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability. Civil society can further good governance, first, by policy analysis and advocacy; second, by regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action and behavior of public officials; third, by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices; fourth, by mobilizing particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of masses, to participate more fully in politics and public affairs; and fifth, by development work to improve the wellbeing of their own and other communities.<sup>3</sup>

Cooperation between government and civil society can be seen at policy, operational and participation level. In 2006, United Nation released resolution on the importance of civil society to eradicate terrorism and highly important to unite all elements in grassroot level.

## 3. RADICAL MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA

Indonesia as the biggest Muslim population country has certainly experienced its share of radicalism or terrorism and jihadist movements since declaring independence from the Netherlands in 1945. The underlying reasons for a Muslim to radicalize can be (a mixture of) political exclusion, feelings that great injustice has been done towards the Muslim community or feelings of western domination (which results in resentment of the West). Some of them are Darus Islam (1950-1960), The history of *Darul Islam* starts with an explanation of the complex character of Kartosuwiryo, the founder of *Darul Islam*, and his perception of Islam. *Darul Islam* is now promoting *Jihad*, the basic concept of *Jihad* (referred to in The Concept of Jihad

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<sup>1</sup> Indra Putri RS (2012) Anti-Terrorism Cooperation Between The Nationnall Agency For COCntra Terrorism and Civil Society. Study Case of Muhammadiyah Disengagement, Defence Management Vol. II

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Mitchell et al., "State Terrorism: Issue of Concept and Measurement", in Michael Stohl & George A. Lopez (eds.) (1986) *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*, (New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 1-25, 5

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Pasha Aisya Gaus (2005), ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN GOVERNANCE, acceseed from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.625.1861&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

and Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia<sup>4</sup>) is compared with *Darul Islam's* view of Jihad or Holy war. This is particularly important in understanding the driving ideology behind *Darul Islam* which makes its alleged alliance with Jamaah Islamiyah possible.<sup>5</sup>

Similar with *Darul Islam*, *Jamaah Islamiyah* ideology emerge with the radical taught. *Ji* as South East Asian militant group with links to al-Qaeda, has a long track record of bomb attacks in Indonesia and elsewhere in the region. *Jamaah Islamiyah*, has executed the 2002 Bali bombings, JW Mariot hotel bombing, etc. Under the influence of al-Qaeda, *Ji* embraced the idea that its goals could only be secured through a "holy war". But some *Ji* members became unhappy at the disproportionately large number of unintended Muslim victims of the bombing campaign. Indonesian security analysts say the organisation later split into two broad factions - bombers and proselytisers, with the latter attempting to steer the organisation towards using preaching as its main weapon.<sup>6</sup> In the recent year, ISIS was become the main subject of terrorist attack in Indonesia. Recent attack occurred in January 2016, when multiple explosions near the Sarinah, Jakarta. The attack was the first to be claimed by ISIS. Currently there exists no formal ISIS presence in Southeast Asia and there is little to suggest a significant ISIS threat to the region.

Islamic State becomes the common enemy of all country around the world. Counter terrorism strategy and preventive action such as de-radicalization has been taken by all country to face terror threat. The terrorist group is not new in the world of radical and fundamentalist movements in Indonesia. The terrorist is the union of the core teachings of fundamentalist and radical that meets in one point planning a war against what they perceive as the 'tyranny'.<sup>7</sup>

Radicalism is the embryo of terrorism. There are several characteristic from radical understanding. Such as *Intolerant* (disrespect other believes), fanatics, (a person who has very extreme beliefs that may lead them to behave in unreasonable or violent ways), exclusive (distinguish themselves from other Moslem), and Revolutionary (tend to use violent means to achieve goals).<sup>8</sup> Scott M. Thomas (2005) in his book *The Global Resurgence of Religion and The Transformation of International Relation, The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century explain that radical thought and movement are usually associated with ideological and religious factor*. The term radicalism is the result of labeling of religious and political movements that have distinguishing characteristics from mainstream religious and political movements. The radicalism movement associated with religion is actually more related to a community of believers than body of believe.

There are some factors that motivated someone to join terrorist network. First, domestic factors, the condition inside the country like poverty, injustice government, etc. Deviation of religious norms, especially with the inclusion of secular ideology in the life of Muslims, thus encouraging Muslims to re-move on the authenticity of Islam. Second, external factor; the influence of the foreign environment giving the impetus for the growth of religious sentiments such as injustice global and modern imperialism of the superpower. The repressive attitude of the rulers against Islamic groups, as did the New Order has awakened Islamic radicalism. Likewise, the leadership crisis that occurred after the New Order was demonstrated by the weakness of law enforcement, has encouraged the Islamic movement to implement Islamic law as a solution to the crisis. In turn Islamic radicalism was made the answer to the weakness of the legal apparatus in solving cases related to Muslims. Radicalism also occurs in the form of resistance against the West. Radicalism also occurs in the form of resistance against the West. The reactions are in the form of violent opposition to interests or Western multinational corporations. US embassies and US corporations are often subjected to violence inspired by radical understanding as a religious struggle. Jihad became a symbol of effective resistance to wage war against the West. This condition led to continued hostility between Islam and the West. In fact, radical Islamists see the West as in an eternal struggle against Islam. In addition to the above factors, radical Islam in Indonesia was born due to the change of power and uncertain situation. Third, cultural factors are strongly associated with religious understanding superficial and narrow and lexical scripture interpretation (harfiyah).

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<sup>4</sup> Andrea Hynan Poeloengan, (2006) "Mini Thesis" Understanding Terrorism in Indonesia: Jihad, *Darul Islam* dan *Jema'ah Islamiyah* accessed from [https://www.academia.edu/8303411/The\\_History\\_of\\_Darul\\_Islam\\_DI\\_and\\_Kartusuwiryo](https://www.academia.edu/8303411/The_History_of_Darul_Islam_DI_and_Kartusuwiryo)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Profile: *Jamaah Islamiah*, (2012) accessed from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16850706>

<sup>7</sup> Alchaidar, 2014, Millenarianism and the Clash of Civilizations: A Preliminary Anthropological Approach towards the Study of Terrorism, Paper Conference

<sup>8</sup> BNPT, 2015 Strategi Menghadapi Paham Radikalisme Terorisme ISIS accessed from <http://belmawa.ristekdikti.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Strategi-Menghadapi-Paham-Radikalisme-Terorisme.pdf> on 2 June 2017

#### **4. ISIS IN INDONESIA**

After al-Qaeda, ISIS is one of the terrorist groups that have shocked the world with brutal acts and able to capture major influences from several countries. ISIS was originally a national militant force disgruntled by Saddam Hussien's Shia-dominated government. Zarqawi was the early founder of this movement who had previously pledged allegiance to Osama and declared himself affiliated with al-Qaeda or AQI (Al-Qaeda of Iraq) before eventually turning into the Islamic State of Iraq when headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdady. This movement only operates in Iraq, but when an opposition conflict arises in Syria, this movement exploits chaos by widening the area to ISIS / ISIL. In October 2014 since 2011 it is estimated that 15,000 people from around the world have joined ISIS. Ideologically the ISIS has a common belief with al-Qaeda who embraces takfiry and struggles to uphold Islamic caliphs with violence.

Since declaring its caliphate, ISIS has conducted or inspired more than 140 terrorist attacks in 29 countries other than Iraq and Syria, Such as Tunis, Turkey, France, Egypt, Lebanon, Indonesia, etc. ISIS phenomena, political violence and terrorism which cover by the name of Islam has been bothering and tarnished nature of Islam as a mercy to the world's (rahmatan lil'alam). Terrorist attacks are not new in Indonesia. Following the 9/11 attacks, terror threat alerts rose in many parts of the world. Recent attack occurred in January 2016, when multiple explosions near the Sarinah, Jakarta. The attack was the first to be claimed by ISIS. Currently there exists no formal ISIS presence in Southeast Asia and there is little to suggest a significant ISIS threat to the region. Some old radical groups have also declared themselves supportive of the ISIS movement such as the Mujahidin of East Indonesia, Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, Jama'ah Islamiyah, Islamic Sharia Activist Forum, Awhid wal Jihad, Forum Daulah Supporters, Asybal Tauhid Indonesia, Tauhid wal Jihad, KUIB (Bekasi) and many others in the form of a changing name. From this movement found many foreign fighters who have joined ISIS.

In addition to using direct deployment, ISIS is a very clever movement utilizing Internet media as a propaganda medium. ISIS is one of the terrorist movements capable of utilizing social media as a propaganda media as well as membership recurrence. For the context in Indonesia until March 2015 the chirp of ISIS from Indonesia contributed 20% of the total world tweet (112.075 / world 21.722 / Indonesia). The first video appeared on July 31 on Youtube inviting Indonesians to join ISIS. The propaganda continued with other videos containing ISIS threats against TNI Jend Muldoko, Kapolri, Baser and the whole Indonesian nation, will slaughter the 5 people who disagree with them and there are other examples of ISIS propaganda patterns in Indonesia.<sup>9</sup>

The radical ideology that has spread to a group of citizens of the nation needs to be straightened out especially about the ideals of Islamic caliphate, jihad, and non-Muslim. First, the Khilafah Islamiyah: Both Al Qaeda and the ISIS consider the Islamic caliphate as the only Islamic political system, while the other system is considered to be kafir. The difference, Al Qaeda is still in the form of discourse, while ISIS has proclaimed the khilafah. Nahdlatul Ulama as the moderate organization in Indonesia interpret the Islamic caliphate is not a political system or state model, but as a concept of leadership (Qur'an Surah Al Baqarah Verse 30). Nahdlatul Ulama and clerics from other founding mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Sarikat Islam, and other nationalists have agreed on a political system based on Pancasila as collective ijthid, thus requiring no other political system.

Other consideration is about Jihad. Al Qaeda and ISIS interpret jihad in the narrow sense that is only war or violence. Medium jihad in the sense of persuasive, education, da'wah and other social activities is considered not part of jihad. This view differs diametrically from the view of the majority of scholars who think that the greatest jihad is against lust. The jihad in war is only a kind of jihad. For the NU, jihad certainly does not mean narrow (qital), but means broadly including building peace and order as the foundation of world civilization.

The last things is concept of Takfiri / Unbelief: some radical groups such as ISIS believe that the group outside them is kafir. This means that the majority of other Muslims are kafirs. According to Al ISIS, the infidels must be fought (killed), unless willing to pay tribute (jizya). The majority of scholars consider the rejection of fellow Muslims simply because rejecting Al Qaeda and ISIS is the same as eliminating the plurality / diversity that has become the human nature.

#### **5. THE STRATEGIES AND EFFORTS OF THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT**

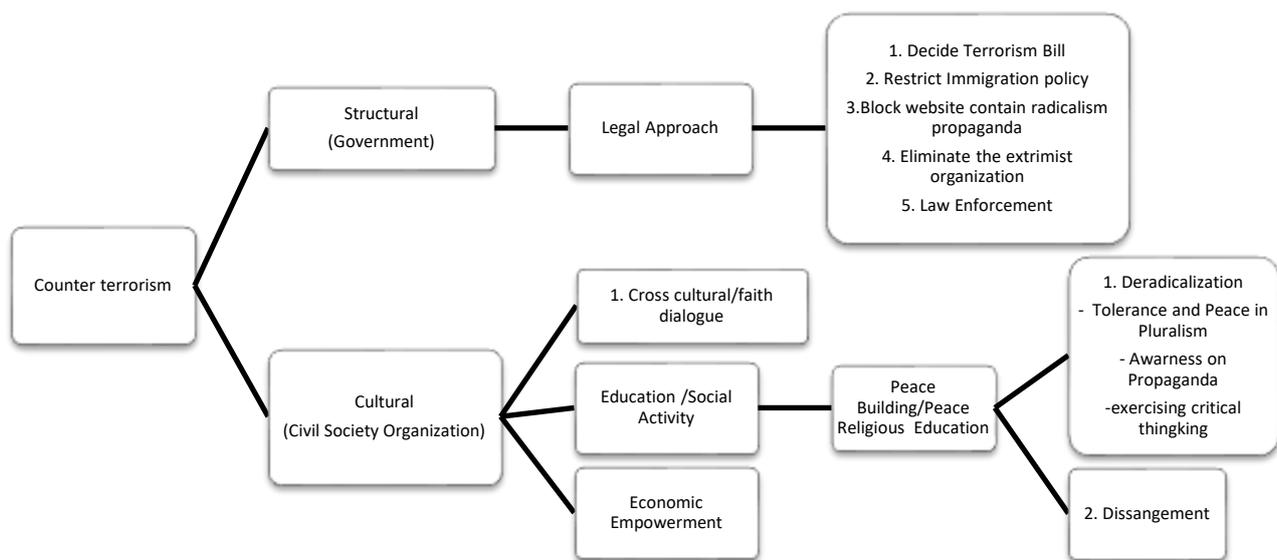
The governance emphasizes more on soft approach than hard-approach, but still considers repression measures. From legal approach, they try to strengthening legal framework which will criminalize those

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<sup>9</sup> BNPT (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Teror), 2016 Strategi Menghadapi Paham Radikalisme-ISIS

propagate hatred and enmity, involve in military training home and abroad, freezing asset belongs to individual who finance terrorism, try to strengthening immigration procedures such tightening the issuance of passport, monitoring the migration of people to and from Indonesia, low enforcing article no 139 of Criminal Law (KUHP), article 23(f) Law No 12/ 2006 on Citizenship, They have arrested Indonesians linked to Issuch as Afief Abdul Madjied, Abu Fida. Densus 88 arrested couple of GN (31) and CL and JW and SH in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, and Agus Rianto and his wife (BIN) in Jakarta Airport depoter by Turkey government.<sup>10</sup> They improving the management of terrorist prisoners, closing down websites whose contents diffuse IS radical propogandas. In the previous time, BNPT has requested Ministry Of Communication (KEMENKOMINFO) and Information to block sites which contain radical propoganda. Based on the request KEMENKOMIFO closed down 22 sites, but was the reopened some of them.

From ideology approach, they try to strengthen the implementation of Pancasila as the state ideology from the bottom level with civil society role and empower moderate Muslims such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah such as deradicalization action, social action and economic empowerment. From political security, they try to strengthen intelligence measures such finding, mapping and monitoring the Indonesian citizens who become IS supporters and sympathizers. They also strictly monitoring Indonesian citizens who have joined IS, ANF, preventing the Indonesian citizens who will go to Iraq and Syria and suspected foreigners in Indonesia, and increasing awareness and supervision areas where radical groups reside such as Poso and Ambon. Improving monitoring the sea and land border especially the so called "rate road". Number of Indonesian youths who study in the Middle East countries have joined IS and other rebellion groups in Iraq and Syria. One of them has been found to conduct suicide bombing. Besides that, the tolerance and plurality also maintain by conducting a routine intra faith dialogue about peace and tolerance.



## 6. NAHDLATUL ULAMA AS ISLAMIC MODERATE ORGANIZATION

In the last five years, Nahdlatul Ulama has made concrete steps radical ideology, radical religion and ultra-liberal, so it is feared to dim the moderate attitude that characterizes Indonesian society. The action program includes 3 things, namely da'wah, social activities, and economic empowerment. Implicit in it is the will to build the independence of the ummah, reducing the socio-economic disparities strengthening the tolerant and tolerant teachings of ahlussunah wal jamaah (Islam Nusantara) and away from violence, justice and civility.

The field of da'wah in the form of affirmation measures ahlussunah wal jamaah an-nahdliyah values as well as to negate the radical ideology in the community especially through intensive regeneration program. The core of the da'wah affirms the importance of Islam Nusantara developed by the spreaders of Islam since the

<sup>10</sup> Yunanto Sri, PHd, The Influence of IS To Radical Groups in Indonesia and The Strategies and Efforts of the Indonesian Government to deal With it. Paper Conference 2015

beginning of Islamic da'wah in the archipelago that is able to realize civilized culture and civilization, tolerance, harmony and peace love. Included in this activity is participating in realizing the harmonization of religious life in the global level. For example, NU organized an international dialogue through the delegation to Afghanistan and also invited Afghan clerics to visit Indonesia. The main purpose is to introduce the values of Tasamuh (tolerance), Tawasuth (moderate), Tawazun (balanced), 'Is (justice), and Ukhuwah (brotherhood) which includes ukhuwah Islamiyah (fellow Muslims), ukhuwah wathoniyah (fellow citizens) Ukhuwah basyariah (fellow human beings). The dialogue and mutual exchange resulted in the formation of the Afghan Nahdlatul Ulama in August 2014 in Kabul.

Second step, the social field: includes social services through the utilization of zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh. Special educational services directed to improve the quality of the people through the renewal of a balanced curriculum between the religious substance and worldliness in order to form a generation that is broad-minded, firm and independent. Studies on Islamic archipelago began to be developed in order to become an alternative model of the Islamic world to overcome the decline of Muslims. This social activity is important to bring empathy to those who are socially marginalized.

Third step, the field of economic empowerment of the people. This activity is directed to create an entrepreneurial spirit among nahdliyin and the development of syariah economy with medium and long term goals to fortify the ummah from the dominance of global capitalism. This activity is simultaneously to practice the spirit of pluralism in the economic field between the rich and the poor, a synergy between those who are economically strong and the weak for the sake of mutual benefit.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> NU Online 2016, Peran NU dalam menangkal radikalisme accessed from <http://www.nu.or.id/post/read/58396/peran-nu-dalam-menangkal-radikalisme> on June 2 2017