

Returning Indonesian Extremists: Unclear Intentions and Unprepared Responses

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A number of Indonesian nationals who support the self-styled Islamic State have now returned home from the Middle East. Some may have received military training or even seen combat, but so far the majority have been those who failed in their attempts to enter Syria and Iraq from Turkey and were subsequently deported. While recent updates to anti-terrorism legislation offer potential avenues for prosecuting militants returning from abroad, many of those coming home with extremist convictions will be reintegrated back into society. Since 2017, over 200 forcibly repatriated Indonesians have been sent back to their communities following a one-month 'rehabilitation' period in state care. Additional funding, human resources and effective coordination among stakeholders will be required for such reintegration efforts to produce positive outcomes.

Keywords: Indonesia, Returnees, Forced Repatriation, Foreign Terrorist Fighter, Rehabilitation, Reintegration

Introduction

The call for international recruits to join the jihad and associated nation building efforts in Syria and Iraq attracted several hundred Indonesian nationals over the past five years. While the majority of international recruits originate from Europe and the Arab world, Indonesian Police Chief Tito Karnavian said in May 2018 that 500 Indonesians were still in Syria and Iraq, 500 had returned, while 103 were thought to have died fighting.¹ Data from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), an authority on the subject, put the number of Indonesians in Iraq/Syria at 574 as of September 2017. At least 97 had been killed; 66 had been stopped at airports while trying to leave Indonesia; and over 500 had been deported, though this includes Indonesians forcibly repatriated from a number of countries for concerns over involvement in violent extremism.²

Since early 2016, there has been a resurgence of terrorist attacks in Indonesia, principally targeting police officers. Operations have been largely amateurish but their perpetrators had all pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), which has infamously called for worldwide assaults on infidels and ‘apostate’ governments. There is concern that battle-hardened returning fighters may inject a level of professionalism that could generate larger-scale attacks. In May 2018, three families including their children conducted a series of suicide bombings in Indonesia’s second city of Surabaya, which killed 25 people and injured dozens more. One of the families was initially thought to have spent time in Syria, but this claim was ultimately unfounded.³

Expert observers in Jakarta remain uncertain of the specific threat posed by returning extremists. Militants with the Islamic State may have decided to fight to the death in Syria and Iraq or attempt to reach other conflict zones, such as Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula or Libya. Many of those returning home may simply wish to resume normal lives, as did 60 per cent of Indonesians who trained along the Afghan-Pakistan border with the mujahidin in the 1980s.⁴

This policy brief will focus on efforts by the Indonesian Government and civil society organisations to mitigate the threat posed by returning Indonesian extremists. It begins with a look at precedents set in the 1980s, which is followed by discussion of today’s dynamics and obstacles to addressing the problem. Finally, an examination of attempts to reintegrate repatriated extremists will show that a large number of Indonesian citizens with overseas experience harbour subversive convictions, and that the government response has so far lacked coordination and funding. Findings are based on a series of interviews with non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives and researchers in Jakarta in January 2018, as well as relevant secondary source material.

¹ Amanda Hodge and Nivell Rayda, “Surabaya bombings: Police comb apartment after ISIS family attacks”, *The Australian*, May 17, 2018. Accessed June 13, 2018. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/isis-family-bombs-churches-kills-11-as-indonesias-christian-community-terrorised/news-story/54a5cof81cacf190360cda604f9b8b69>

² Data from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC); See also, Richard Barrett, “Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees”, *The Soufan Center* (October 2017).

³ Sidney Jones, “Family Suicide Attacks: Indonesia Must Deradicalize Mothers and Kids Too”, *NPR* (24 May 2018). Accessed May 25, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/05/24/613383263/family-suicide-attacks-indonesia-must-deradicalize-mothers-and-kids-too>.

⁴ Ken Conboy, *The Second Front* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2006): 51.

Background

During the 1980s and early 90s, around 200 Indonesians journeyed to the Pakistan-Afghan border to train with the Afghan Mujahidin.⁵ Two exiled Indonesian clerics named Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir facilitated travel to military camps, where education was also provided in the Salafi teachings of 13th century scholar Ibn Taymiyyah, infused with the militant interpretations of jihad espoused by Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden and others.⁶

The opportunity for foreign military training coincided with events in Indonesia that were conducive to radicalisation among Muslim activists. From 1982 to 1983, President Suharto's New Order government introduced a policy forcing Islamic organisations to adopt the founding national philosophy of Pancasila (rather than Islam) as their sole ideological basis.⁷ Defying the new measure, hundreds took to the streets in the Jakarta port suburb of Tanjung Priok, prompting a swift government crackdown that left at least 33 dead, provoking further outrage.⁸ Over the next few years, Sungkar reportedly spoke to each batch of militants on their way to Pakistan, making clear they were not going to fight the Soviets but to upskill for jihad back home.⁹

Under pressure from the Pakistani authorities in the early to mid-1990s, Sungkar relocated the operation to the southern Philippines.¹⁰ With permission from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which was waging an insurgency on the island of Mindanao, Sungkar's then recently established Jemaah Islamiyah organisation set up shop near the local militants' Camp Abu-Bakar (around 100km south of Marawi) and resumed training led by Indonesian Afghan veterans.¹¹

Then in 1999, amid the fragile residue of Suharto's demise in Indonesia, communal conflict erupted in the Maluku islands, later spreading west to Sulawesi.¹² Jihadis wasted no time injecting themselves into the conflicts. Organised violence progressed to terrorism and eventually evolved into an indiscriminate bombing campaign against symbols of the West, beginning with devastating explosions in a nightlife district of Bali.

Suharto had gone but years of pent up aggression combined with inspiration from al-Qaeda's new global prominence and anger over the US-led War on Terror propelled the jihadi violence forward. Many Afghan veterans opposed the bombings, however, as they achieved little but public condemnation and a strong response from the state. Jemaah Islamiyah officially relinquished violence in 2007, choosing instead to focus on recruitment and da'wah (proselytizing).¹³

This brief retrospective is important, as it contrasts the motives of Indonesia's trailblazing jihadis with those of today's intrepid extremists. Indonesians who travelled

⁵ Dionisius Elwan Swasono, *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT), presentation at the Australian Defence College, Canberra (12 July 2017).

⁶ Conboy, 45.

⁷ International Crisis Group, *Asia Report No. 63* (26 August 2003): 3.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Acquittal Slow Continuing Military Impunity* (12 July 2005), Accessed March 5, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2005/07/12/indonesia-acquittals-show-continuing-military-impunity>

⁹ Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013):134.

¹⁰ Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Radical Muslim Terrorism' in the Philippines", in Tan, A. (ed.) *A handbook of terrorism and insurgency in Southeast Asia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2007): 236.

¹¹ ICG (26 August 2003): 17.

¹² See John Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press 2007)

¹³ Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "The Re-emergence of Jemaah Islamiyah", *IPAC Report No. 36* (27 April 2017): 2.

to Syria and Iraq over the past five years were attracted by the cause rather than seeking to upskill for a fight back home. The Islamic State's unprecedented mastery of social media for propaganda was certainly a key pull factor, as was its rapid success and the allure of its self-proclaimed caliphate, which captivated over 300 Indonesian women to attempt the trip, many with children in tow.¹⁴

A look back at the early to mid-2000s also illustrates the Indonesian jihadi movement's capacity to evolve and splinter. While returning to attack targets at home may not have been the initial motivation of those leaving for the Middle Eastern conflicts, such a development cannot be discounted, particularly following the caliphate's dismantling over the past several months and the attacks already witnessed.

Labels

The first issue to address when considering (violent) extremists returning to Indonesia are the terms used as reference. Over the past 18 months it has become common vernacular among people working on the issue to make a distinction between 'deportees', who have been repatriated by another government, and 'returnees', who have come home independently.

Since the beginning of 2017, over 220 Indonesians have been deported from Turkey after failing to cross the border into Syria. It is possible that a number of these made it to Syria/Iraq and crossed back into Turkey before being detained. Nobody interviewed for this project could confirm this, but many of the deportees were said to have changed their stories frequently in conversations with state social workers and NGO staff.

Returnees

To date there has been only one deadly incident involving an individual who had spent time in Syria. In June 2017, two men named Syawaluddin Pakpahan and Ardiel Ramadhana stabbed a police officer to death outside a provincial police headquarters in Medan. Both were said to be associated with Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), an umbrella organisation for Islamic State supporters in Indonesia.¹⁵ Pakpahan reportedly spent five months in Syria in 2013 with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and was said to have led preparations for the attack.¹⁶

According to data from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), roughly 84 Indonesians had returned independently from Middle East conflict zones by September 2017, though IPAC Director Sidney Jones stressed this remained a vague category. Some may have received training from one of the several militias engaged in the conflicts (including but not limited to the Islamic State and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham). They may also have seen combat action. However, many Indonesians claim to have made the trip in order to assist Islamic humanitarian organisations with delivering aid, and it is possible this profile makes up a majority of the 'returnees'. Such individuals may hold subversive convictions but do not necessarily pose an imminent threat themselves.

¹⁴ Data from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC).

¹⁵ "Indonesian policeman killed in knife attack by suspected militants", *Reuters*, June 25, 2018, Accessed March 7, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-security/indonesian-policeman-killed-in-knife-attack-by-suspected-militants-idUSKBN19G050>.

¹⁶ Chaula Rininta Anindya, "The Syria Alumni Threat: Legal Loopholes and Inadequate De-radicalisation", *RSIS Commentary* (11 July 2017).

Until recently it was not illegal for Indonesians to take part in foreign conflicts. Revisions to the Law on Committing Criminal Acts of Terrorism (15/2003) were tabled quickly following the January 2016 attack in central Jakarta, but disagreements over the legal definition of terrorism, the military's involvement in counterterrorism, and the length of pre-charge and pre-trial detention produced significant sticking points. Speaking in the wake of the May 2018 attacks, Indonesian President Joko Widodo warned lawmakers that if the new legislation was not ready by the following month, he would issue a government regulation in lieu of law (PERPPU) to ensure the right tools were available to law enforcement.¹⁷ The president's ultimatum was well taken, and on Friday 25 May, Indonesia's People's Representative Council (DPR) passed the bill into law.¹⁸

Among a raft of updates and tougher sentences throughout the new legislation is Article 12, which proscribes any training or involvement in foreign conflicts that leads to the planning or staging of a terrorist attack, and any person who recruits others for training or participation in such conflict. Sentences for these offences will range from four to 15 years, and offenders will face the potential revocation of passport rights.

Retrospective application of new legislation is prevented by the Indonesian constitution (art 28I(1)).¹⁹ Precedent in a terrorism trial was set in 2004, when the Constitutional Court ruled the prosecution of a man charged with assisting the 2002 Bali bomb attacks under the revised legislation was unconstitutional, as his case did not meet the 'extraordinary' nature of the perpetrators' crimes.²⁰

According to one insider with knowledge of the situation, there remain hundreds of Indonesians in Turkish detention awaiting deportation. Gathering sufficient evidence of activities abroad will be challenging for Indonesian prosecutors, but the updated laws will be appreciated by security agencies faced with the threat of returning militants. Regarding UN Security Council resolutions 2178 and 2396, which urge member states to establish criminal offences for foreign terrorist fighters, the international community will also welcome the recently updated stipulations in Indonesian law.

Another issue is the control of Indonesia's borders, which span 50,000 kilometres of coastline. In 2016, a member of DPR expressed concern over the border force's manpower, pointing out the nation had only 7,000 immigration officers, fewer than both Malaysia and Singapore respectively.²¹ A recent study on irregular migration in Indonesia, involving interviews with police, government officials and civil society, concluded the nation's borders were "still very porous and only partly policed, despite Australian political pressure and funding".²² Immigration scrutiny may be an additional problem: in 2015, three Chinese Uighur militants hoping to join a small but stubborn

¹⁷ Marguerite Afra Sapiie, "Jokowi to issue Perppu if House fails to revise terror law", *The Jakarta Post*, May 14, 2018, Accessed May 14, 2018. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/05/14/jokowi-to-issue-perppu-if-house-fails-to-revise-terror-law.html>.

¹⁸ Narul Fitri Ramadhani & Moses Ompusunggu, "RI steps up fight against terrorism", *The Jakarta Post*, May 26, 2018, Accessed May 26, 2018. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/05/26/ri-steps-fight-against-terrorism.html>.

¹⁹ Ross Clarke, "The Bali Bombing, East Timor trials and the Aceh Human Rights Court – retrospectivity, impunity and constitutionalism", in Lindsey, T. (ed), *Indonesia Law and Society* (Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press) pp. 430-456

²⁰ Simon Butt & David Hansell, 'The Masykur Abdul Kadir Case: Indonesian Constitutional Court Decision No 013/PUU-1/2003', *Australian Journal of Asian Law* 6:2 (2004).

²¹ Satrio Dwicahyo, "Indonesia, immigration and returning foreign fighters", *East Asia Forum* (27 January 2017). Accessed March 7, 2018. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/01/27/indonesia-immigration-and-returning-foreign-fighters/>.

²² Antje Missbach, "Doors and fences: Controlling Indonesia's porous borders and policing asylum seekers", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35 (2014): 239.

jihadi insurgency in Central Sulawesi managed to enter Indonesia on forged Turkish passports.²³

Forced Repatriation

In January 2017, the Turkish government deported roughly 75 Indonesian nationals, 70 percent of whom were women and children.²⁴ Dozens more followed in subsequent months. In this process the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs receives initial notification from Ankara. Subsequently, the Indonesian National Police are then informed and deploy officers from the counterterrorism unit Special Detachment 88 (*Densus 88*) to collect the deportees from the airport. The cost of repatriation is largely covered by the Indonesian government, but some were reportedly tricked into paying their own way by Turkish authorities, who falsely promised they would not be arrested on arrival if they pay for their own tickets.²⁵

Receiving Densus officers transport repatriated persons to police cells in Jakarta, where they are initially interrogated. A small minority have been charged with crimes committed before they left Indonesia, while sufficient evidence has been found on one or two for prosecutions under existing terrorism financing legislation. Those who cannot be prosecuted are handed over to the Ministry of Social Affairs (KEMENSOS), which has repurposed two of its facilities in East Jakarta to prepare the repatriates for reintegration.²⁶

Parents with children are accommodated at a youth centre called *Panti Sosial Marsudi Putra* (PSMP) Handayani in Jakarta's Bambu Apus neighbourhood, while single adults are housed roughly 6km away at the *Rumah Perlindungan* Trauma Centre (RPTC) in Ciracas. The idea was to hold a 30-day programme before sending them back to their communities throughout the country, but it was soon clear the ministry's staff lacked the required knowledge and resources for an effective reintegration process.²⁷

Word of the Kemensos plan spread quickly, and a Jakarta-based association named Civil Society Against Violent Extremism (C-SAVE) contacted the foreign terrorist fighter task force of the national counterterrorism agency, *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT) with an offer to assist the social affairs ministry and build capacity among its staff. C-SAVE was set up in 2016 with the intention of building a national network of civil society organisations working on combatting radicalism, preventing violence and promoting peace.

Another key organisation named *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (YPP) soon became involved. Established in 2008, YPP has since been actively conducting training and intervention programmes in prisons aimed at disengaging convicted terrorists. The

²³ "Indonesia jails three Chinese Uighurs for trying to join Islamist militants", *Reuters*, July 13, 2015, Accessed March 9, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-uighurs/indonesia-jails-three-chinese-uighurs-for-trying-to-join-islamist-militants-idUSKCN0PN1T820150713>.

²⁴ As of January 2018, eight or nine batches of roughly 226 people had been deported from Turkey, according to C-Save data.

²⁵ Interview with Siti Darajatul Aliah, YPP (January 2018).

²⁶ Indonesia's national counterterrorism agency, *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT) runs separate voluntary prison-based deradicalisation programmes for individuals convicted of terrorism offences, as well as those reintegrating into society. Incentives for participation include the possibility of remissions and post-release economic assistance.

²⁷ Technically, the 30-day programme is voluntary. By law, authorities could hold terrorism suspects for one week before charging them with a crime. Under legislation passed in May 2018, this period is now two weeks with the possibility of a one-week extension given approval from the Attorney General's Office.

organisation also supports former prisoners attempting to reintegrate into society by offering loans for small entrepreneurial projects. While the issue of repatriated persons may present different dynamics (particularly the presence of children), YPP's experience with extremist networks and disengagement offered a valuable resource.²⁸ The BNPT foreign terrorist task force, which is principally composed of police officers seconded from Densus 88, welcomed NGO input regarding rehabilitation. However, the BNPT's deradicalisation division (under a separate wing of the agency) eventually began conducting independent seminars aimed at ideological persuasion.

Rehabilitation

When repatriated persons first began arriving in Bambu Apus, Kemensos staff had little idea of how to engage them. Accustomed to addressing issues such as juvenile delinquency, homelessness and mental health issues, the state social workers did not understand what the new arrivals meant when they said they were members of the Islamic State. They were dismayed when some of the children started calling staff *kafir* (infidels). Many of the deportees refused to pray at the facility's musholla and sometimes declined to eat with those they considered outsiders.

Following support and a crash course in Salafi Jihadism from YPP and C-SAVE, engagement progressed slowly. NGO practitioners advised Kemensos staff to avoid talking about religion and simply chat with them as fellow Indonesians, discussing family, origins, plans and everyday topics. Through this gentle approach, deportees allegedly began to open up, though some more than others.

While the NGOs favour a disengagement strategy focused on developing new relationships and attempting to reconnect the deportees to Indonesian culture, the BNPT's method has embraced the more ambitious goal of deradicalisation. By bringing in Islamic clerics and former prisoners convicted of terrorism offences, the state agency has held seminar style sessions with deportees during the third week of the programme, which attempt to dismantle their religious and political views and reinstall a sense of nationalism. It is unclear how much effect counter-ideological persuasion can have, particularly over such a short timeframe. A secondary mechanism in the state approach to reintegration is to compel deportees to sign a commitment to abide by Indonesian laws and uphold the values enshrined in the national philosophy of Pancasila.²⁹ There has been considerable opposition to this requirement, but it was presented as a necessary condition for release.

Reintegration

After spending one month at PSMP or RPTC, and providing they have signed declarations, deportees are sent back to their communities with no attempt to conceal their identities. An initial problem concerns funding. As of early 2018, Kemensos did not have a purpose-allocated budget for the reintegration of deportees and funds are sourced from different areas of the Ministry's mandate, such as those earmarked to deal with unattended children. In some cases, it has even been difficult simply to find money for bus tickets

²⁸ Representatives of C-SAVE and YPP were interviewed for this project because of their central involvement in the rehabilitation and reintegration process, which they negotiated with the BNPT and National Police.

²⁹ This strategy is also used in prisons under Regulation 99, which was implemented in 2012 to restrict remission procedures for serious offenders. The new measure was not received well. Many previously cooperative prisoners began to withdraw from engagement and some became violent.

from Jakarta to the home provinces of repatriates. C-SAVE has been working with Kemensos to develop a legal framework for the reintegration initiative, which will aim to secure specific funding for relocation and ongoing support.

Ideally, authorities would also help communities prepare for the return of their neighbours. Informal gatherings could raise local awareness and mitigate potential stigmatisation. A 2013 BNPT document titled the *Deradicalisation Blueprint* stressed the importance of facilitating former extremist prisoners' transitions back into their communities. "The most important thing", the blueprint notes, is for reintegration initiatives "to remove suspicion and fear on one hand and develop empathy and mutual respect on the other".³⁰ Unfortunately, such promising intentions have so far not materialised for the return of former prisoners nor repatriated extremists.

With that said, a positive dynamic of the process appears to have been the willingness of some sub-district government authorities to support the initiative, despite budget constraints. Leaders at village (*desa*) and neighbourhood (*rukun tetangga*) levels have helped with administrative issues such as obtaining new identification cards and birth certificates. Similar to their work with Kemensos in Jakarta, YPP and C-SAVE have both assisted local NGOs and district social workers to raise awareness of the deportees' situation, ideology and the best way to attempt engagement.

C-SAVE has worked with 20 local governments and roughly 12 grassroots NGOs, while YPP has operated in 10 towns/cities across Java. Representatives from both NGOs maintain relationships with a small number of repatriated extremists but mostly depend on local social workers. Some of the local NGOs have developed promising projects, such as involving deportees in economic empowerment programmes for women, which both teaches them skills and provides opportunities to interact with other community members. Social workers typically visit their assigned deportees just once a month, because of their heavy caseloads. In Karanganyar regency, outside Solo in Central Java, one social worker has become good friends with a deportee, playing football with him on Saturdays.

However, these few encouraging accounts paint an overly rosy picture. Many of the deportees appear to face significant difficulties readjusting to normal life or simply do not want to. The majority are bitter at being forcibly repatriated, want nothing more than to live under a caliphate, and refuse to engage with anyone who doesn't share their worldview. This is "the brutal honesty" remarked YPP Director Taufik Andrie. Receiving families are often surprised to see their relatives return home; some had not received any word after the initial disappearance. A number of the deportees allegedly consider their families to be kafir and view them with contempt.

Last year, a female deportee from Hong Kong named Anggi, who had spent time in PSMP, was arrested while allegedly preparing explosives for an attack. C-SAVE's Executive Director Mira Kusumarini said she had been sent back to her village in Central Java but soon moved away again and eventually NGO staff lost track. Her family did not know where she had gone and C-SAVE contacted the police. Two months later she was arrested in the West Java city of Bandung. Anggi is now on trial facing the death penalty with her husband.³¹

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³⁰ Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, "Blueprint Deradikalisasi", *Deputi Bidang Pencegahan, Perlindungan dan Deradikalisasi* (2013): 84.

³¹ Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, "Indonesian duo in terror plot face death penalty", *The Straits Times*, March 13, 2018, Accessed March 13, 2018. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesian-duo-in-terror-plot-face-death-penalty>.

When another uncooperative deportee was continually evading NGO efforts to engage, C-SAVE staff asked the police whether they should continue trying. Later they learned the man in question had been under active police surveillance. Ideally, a risk assessment tool would be used to separate the high risk from the low risk, with NGOs and Kemensos focusing on the latter while leaving the former to security agencies. Authorities have experimented with different evaluation systems in Indonesia's prison system, but so far no specific and comprehensive risk assessment tool for violent extremists has been adopted.³² The development and systematic use of such an instrument would also contribute to appraising programmes aimed at rehabilitating and reintegrating both former prisoners and repatriated extremists.

Consistent mentoring or even simple exposure to people with different views can help to bring people back from more exclusionary mind-sets. While interacting on a personal level with the repatriated extremists may be challenging, a better funded and trained contingent of social workers could at least act as a first line of defence for monitoring, which has proven difficult for law enforcement in the most well-resourced of nations.

It is not surprising that security agencies are reluctant to provide state social service providers and NGOs with intricate knowledge of people on the peripheries of police investigations or part of a violent subversive network. Generally speaking, NGOs working with suspected extremists can also be reluctant to work closely with state security agencies as they may lose legitimacy in the eyes of their anti-establishment clients. However, it is crucial to find a balance whereby NGOs and social workers have requisite background information on the people they engage, and freedom to operate with autonomy from security agencies, who in turn have confidence in the mentors to manage their cases independently and pass on any knowledge of impending violence. If senior security officials acknowledged the utility of social workers contributing to the prevention of violent extremism in Indonesia it could be a constructive first step toward such relationships of trust.

In March 2018, Home Affairs Minister, Tjahjo Kumolo, and BNPT Head, Suhardi Alius, signed a memorandum of understanding on counterterrorism and deradicalisation cooperation.³³ This new agreement could open up useful channels of support for CVE initiatives at the sub-district level. Radicalisation is a highly contextual process, and responses should be tailor-made to local conditions as much as possible; the more funding, training and autonomy neighbourhood and village associations have to organise their own programmes the better.

Conclusion

The Islamic State attracted people from roughly 90 countries to join its fight and nation building project over the past five years.³⁴ Many nations have since revised legislation to provide new avenues for prosecution, and fiery debates have emerged between those

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³² Past and ongoing experiments include a variation of the VERA-2 structured assessment, in collaboration with New South Wales Corrective Services; a comprehensive questionnaire developed by the Indonesian office of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI); and contributions from academics at the University of Indonesia and Jakarta-based NGOs. The Indonesian prison system continues to assess violent extremists through an instrument known as LITMAS, which is employed for all prisoners regardless of their crime.

³³ "Interior Ministry, Counterterrorism Agency sign MoU", *Antara News*, March 12, 2018. Accessed March 10, 2018. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/114928/interior-ministry-counterterrorism-agency-sign-mou>

³⁴ The Soufan Group, "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq" (December 2015). Accessed March 10, 2018. http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

demanding an uncompromising state response and others who believe more constructive solutions may be found.³⁵

Indonesia's recently updated legislation does outlaw participation in foreign conflicts (which leads to the planning and/or conducting of terrorist attacks) but many people returning home with extremist views may not have been involved in organising or committing violence. Managing their successful reintegration with society will involve frequent and consistent engagement from people with the ability to build and maintain their trust, while attempting to direct them toward more positive pursuits. Finding the right balance between ensuring security and providing social services aimed at countering extremism is a challenge for any nation.

Another difficult task is attempting to measure a particular individual's level of commitment to a cause or potential for violent action. Indonesia will need to implement a workable risk assessment instrument to tailor interventions and reintegration efforts effectively, evaluate their effectiveness and work towards productive improvements to programming.

The reintegration of repatriated extremists has produced at least one potentially positive development for CVE initiatives in Indonesia, which is the involvement of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Kemensos does not currently have the required expertise or funding to address the issues, but staff at its facilities in East Jakarta have reportedly learned quite quickly and a specific budget may be in the works. The ministry also appears to be more open to working with NGOs, something that Indonesian security agencies have been reluctant to pursue in the past. Building trust with subversive individuals is not always easy for agents of the state to achieve. Community-based NGOs often have more success engaging people with deeply anti-establishment views.

Counterterrorism and CVE initiatives require intricate intrastate coordination to provide each stakeholder with a clearly designated role and the information required to fulfil their respective duties. Relations between Indonesia's large state institutions (particularly those tasked with national security) have generally been characterised more by competition than cooperation. The difficulty was summarised succinctly by a senior official in the Indonesian prisons service, who told the author: "Coordination between agencies is easy; it is the implementation of the coordination that is difficult". Converting words to action may be challenging but recent collaborations and an emerging appreciation of the need to cooperate more effectively appear to be promising developments.

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³⁵ See Lee Berthiaume, "Fact check: Are Liberals welcoming ISIS returnees to Canada with open arms?" *Global News*, November 30, 2017. Accessed March 10, 2018. <https://globalnews.ca/news/3889240/liberals-isis-fighters-canada-open-arms/>; and "Extremists and returning jihadists 'offered council house bribes to reintegrate'", *The Telegraph*, October 29, 2017. Accessed March 10, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/29/extremists-returning-jihadists-offered-council-house-bribes/>.

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