

Terror and Counterterror

3rd civilian dies of wounds in Jakarta bombings

The Jakarta Post, 17-01-2016

Indonesian police said they have arrested 12 people suspected of links to the Jakarta bombings, as the death toll in the brazen attacks by Muslim militants rose to eight after a third civilian succumbed to wounds. An Indonesian man who was shot in the head when two attackers fired into the crowd died at a hospital late Saturday, Jakarta police spokesman Col. Muhammad Iqbal said Sunday.



In solidarity: A woman lays flower outside the Starbucks cafe where Thursday's attack took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, Saturday. Indonesian police said Saturday they have arrested a number of people suspected of links to the audacious attacks by suicide bombers and gunmen on Thursday in central Jakarta, the first major assault by militants in Indonesia since 2009. Writings on the banner read "Indonesia is not afraid." (AP/Tatan Syuflana)

The audacious assaults by suicide bombers and gunmen on Thursday targeted a Starbucks and traffic police post in bustling central Jakarta, leaving eight dead, including three civilians, and more than 20 wounded. It was the first major assault by militants in Indonesia since 2009. Police said the attackers were tied to the Islamic State group through Bahrun Naim, an Indonesian fighting with IS in Syria. National police chief Gen. Badrodin Haiti told reporters the 12 arrests were made in west and east Java and in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo Island. Elaborating on an earlier claim that the militants received funding from Bahrun, he said police have determined money was transferred to Indonesia via Western Union. He said that one of those arrested had received money transferred from IS.

Separately, authorities say they have blocked more than a dozen websites expressing support for Thursday's attack as they try to counter radical Islamic ideology online. Communications Ministry spokesman Ismail Cawidu urged Indonesians to report militant websites and social media accounts. In recent years, Indonesian counterterrorism forces successfully stamped out the extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah that was responsible for several attacks, including the 2002 bombings of bars in Bali that killed 202 people, as well as two hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2009 that killed seven people.

Terrorism experts say IS supporters in Indonesia are drawn from the remnants of Jemaah Islamiyah and other groups, but are also trying to recruit new members. Police on Saturday also released the names of the eight killed. Aside from the already identified Sunakin and Muhammad Ali, the additional attackers were identified as Ahmad Muhazan Saron, who exploded a suicide bomb inside the Starbucks, and Dian Joni Kurniadi. Police said they are still investigating the role of a fifth man known as Sugito. Their ages ranged from 25 to 43. The civilian victims were Canadian Amer Quali Tahar and Jakarta residents Rico Hermawan and Rais Karna, who died Saturday.

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Indonesia's 'Weak' Terror Laws Must Be Strengthened Experts Say

The Jakarta Globe, 17-01-2016

Thursday's terror attack in Jakarta was proof Indonesia needs "stronger" antiterrorism laws, an official has said, pointing to a lack of legal support to make preemptive arrests.

Insp. Gen. Arif Darmawan of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) said the police's "insufficient" authority to move against terrorism suspects is partially to blame for the attack which killed seven people, including five attackers.

"We could do nothing before criminal elements are met," he said, citing Indonesia's 2003 antiterrorism law. "Even if we knew they were forming a group supporting ISIS [Islamic State], it would be useless capturing them."

Under the current laws, terror arrests made ahead of the execution of attacks can be thrown out by courts as charges may not meet the legal requirements, Arif said.

Al Chaidar, a leading terror expert, has also called on the government to revise the "weak" antiterrorism laws. Revisions would leave authorities "unimpeded" in pursuing suspects and preventing further attacks.

"The government should include a list of forbidden groups in the law," he said. "With this, police could immediately move against suspected terrorists before they could start plotting terror acts."

Vicious Jakarta attack shows utter contempt for human life

Amnesty International Press Statement, 14-01-2016

A series of bomb blasts and shootings that rocked Jakarta this morning have killed at least seven people, five of whom were suspected attackers. The armed group calling itself Islamic State (IS) has reportedly claimed responsibility.

In response to the attacks Josef Benedict, Amnesty International Southeast Asia and Pacific Regional Office Deputy Director for Campaign said:

"Today's attack shows an utter disregard for the right to life. This is sadly not the first time Indonesians have seen their loved ones killed in horrific attacks by apparent extremist groups who use bloodshed to further their despicable aims.

"The Indonesian authorities must conduct a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the attack and ensure that all those involved in planning and carrying out this attack are brought to justice in fair trials without the recourse to the death penalty. In order to break the cycle of violence, it is vital that these unlawful killings are met with proportionate and legal steps rather than a harsh clampdown by the security forces whose track record on human rights is patchy at best."

"Indonesia has a long history of dealing with violent extremism and today's deplorable attacks must not be used as a pretext to rollback freedoms in the name of security. The authorities must also do more to address ongoing religious intolerance in the country fuelled by discriminatory laws and regulations"

Amnesty International has documented cases of arbitrary arrests followed by torture and other ill-treatment during the arrest, detention and interrogation by the police, including by the counter-terrorism unit Detachment 88. However,

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there are rarely independent and impartial investigations into such allegations, and the perpetrators are not held to account.

Analysis: Old militants with new brand behind Jakarta attack

The Jakarta Post, 15-01-2016, by Stephen Wriqth, Associated Press¹

Through six years without a major attack, Indonesia's confidence had been growing: It was right on top of any threat from Islamic militants. This week, that notion was punctured.

Reality came on Thursday in the form of a bold attack in the middle of Jakarta, the capital. The style of the attack, and the people who appear to be behind it, suggest that remnants of the networks responsible for the notorious 2002 Bali bombings and later attacks are trying to regroup under the banner of the Islamic State group.

The daylight attack by suicide bombers and gunmen targeted a Starbucks and a traffic police post in a busy commercial district of Jakarta frequented by locals and foreigners. Two civilians, one an Indonesian and the other a Canadian, were killed along with five attackers. Some 20 people were injured.

There had been warning signs of a possible emerging threat for months, including government acknowledgement that hundreds of Indonesians had traveled to Syria to fight for the IS group. At the same time, pro-IS rallies in Indonesia were attracting small crowds.

Some terror experts say an IS network was developing in the suburbs of Jakarta while counterterrorism efforts were focused on hunting down Indonesia's most

wanted militant in far-off Sulawesi. The blog of Bahrun Naim, an Indonesian militant in Syria, urged his Indonesian followers to study the methods of the Paris attackers who killed 130 people in November.

Police quickly tied the IS group to Thursday's attack, labeling Bahrun Naim as its instigator and funder, but they've given scant details beyond saying that an IS flag was found in one attacker's home. Supporters of Islamic State claimed responsibility online.

Experts say that while it's difficult to know how much of a foothold IS has established in Indonesia, the attack achieved two things: It showed that domestic militant groups are still capable of attacks despite being fragmented by the government's counterterrorism campaign, and gave at least the impression that IS now has the ability to launch attacks in Southeast Asia.

Both IS and any affiliate "have an interest in being seen as part of a larger network because it fits with their scare tactics," even if they are tied only by sympathies, said Carool Kersten, an expert in Islam at King's College London.

In Western capitals, Indonesia has long been a kind of poster child for progress: a developing nation with the world's largest Muslim population that has embraced both democracy and moderate Islam.

Its reputation for tolerance took a battering from the Bali bombing that killed 202 people, mostly foreigners, and from other high-profile attacks on Western targets such as hotels by Jemaah Islamiyah militants who wanted to replace civilian government with a caliphate. But the violence also unleashed a sustained government effort — aided by the US and Australia — to break up militant cells, which produced hundreds of arrests and the killings of key figures with the knowhow to mastermind devastating attacks.

¹ Associated Press writers Danica Kirka in London and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report.

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The atomization of militant networks was evident in Thursday's attack, with its low death toll, basic weapons and unsophisticated execution that betrayed limited resources and capacity.

"It was a simple attack. Their arms were pretty limited," said Scott Stewart, a tactical analysis expert at Strafor, a global intelligence and advisory firm. The main impact, he said, is from the "hype and fear that it conjures."

Stewart considers the association with IS a "rebranding" effort by militants who previously identified with al-Qaeda, rather than a sign of a new and rising radical movement. He said Indonesia will continue to see a persistent and low-level threat of attacks, a situation not different from the past six years, when there were no major attacks but several thwarted plots. "It's basically the same people," he said.

National police chief Gen. Badrodin said one of the men killed, known as Sunakim, was previously sentenced to seven years prison for his involvement in Jemaah Islamiyah-orchestrated military-style training in Indonesia's Aceh province. He was released early.

Still, the IS link in Indonesia is likely to raise concern in other Southeast Asian nations, particularly Singapore and Malaysia, which have both thwarted plots. Along with Indonesia, they recently agreed to increase their joint efforts to combat radicalism and share intelligence. Some Malaysians are also believed to have traveled to Syria to join IS.

Southeast Asia's fairly open societies, easy travel and Muslim-majority populations in Indonesia and Malaysia make it vulnerable, said Vikram Singh, a former Obama administration defense official on South and Southeast Asia.

The Jakarta attack, following the extremist assaults in San Bernardino, Paris and Istanbul, suggests that the ability of IS to direct or inspire attacks around the world is building, he said.

"They are sending the message that we are not going to be just a Syria-Iraq issue. We're going to reach far," Singh said.

Soeharto-era community patrols to be reactivated

The Jakarta Post, 16-01-2016

The Jakarta administration plans to reactivate the New Order legacy of community patrols, known as siskamling, in a bid to help prevent terrorism by curbing the development of terrorist cells in neighborhoods.

Jakarta Deputy Governor Djarot Saiful Hidayat said the siskamling -- a security system created in 1981 -- would be stipulated in regulations along with bolstered obligations to report any temporary visitors staying in a neighborhood more than two days.

"The siskamling system must be reactivated to prevent any attempts of terrorism, because it may happen anywhere. The terrorist may be in your neighborhood," he said in Jakarta on Friday.

If necessary, he added, he would issue an official letter to reactivate the volunteer neighborhood watch.

Siskamling are organized at the level of neighborhood units (RT) and community units (RW). Each family must send a representative to join the patrol in a group consisting of three or more persons, based on a collectively agreed schedule.

Freedom of Religion

Concern in Yogya about disappearances

Kompas, 13-01-2016

The disappearance of a number of people thought to be related to the civil society organisation Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (Indonesian Dawn Movement, Gafatar) continues to raise concern. After doctor Rica Tri Handayani and her child disappeared in Yogyakarta, also other victims are reported to have a relation with Gafatar. One of them is Diah Ayu (28), a housewife from Sleman (north of Yogya). She has been reported missing with her two-year old daughter since 11 December 2015. Relatives said she was in a state of depression after the death of her husband and found some consolation in Gafatar. They have urged support in the search by the (Muslim) organisation Muhammadiyah.

Another women who has been a member of Gafatar and disappeared is Silvi Nur Fitriani (20), student at Universitas Sebelas Maret, Solo. Her sister said she disappeared on 6 December.

According to the authorities Gafatar is an offspring organisation of Al Qidayah al Islamiyah, led by Ahmad Mussadeq. In 2006 the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) declared that Gafatar was a deviate sect.

One day earlier the Yogya police, supported by the counterterror unit Detasemen Khusus 88 (Densus 88) succeeded in finding Rica and her son, Zafran Alif Wicaksono, who disappeared from Sleman on 30 Januari 2015. Rica was found in Bandara Iskandar, Pangkalan Bun, Kotawaringin Barat, Central Kalimantan. In relation to this case the authorities reported that two men had been arrested.

Kompas 14-01-2016 reports that the Minister of Home Affairs, Tjahjo Kumolo, has ordered regional Gafatar offices to be closed. The organisation has 17 regional offices and about 800 members. In West Kalimantan some 16 families have bought a plot of land where they have built barracks or rented housing. They work on the land in daytime and have religious activities in the evening.

In 2012 The Ministry for Home Affairs issued a decision that no permits should be handed out to regional offices of Gafatar under the law on Civil Society Organisations (UU 17/2013, Ormas-law). Still, at the moment, the movement shows some activities which Tjahjo said he could not forbid, based on a decision by the Constitutional Court relating to the Ormas-law, which says that the government cannot disband civil society organisations as long as they do not disturb law and order or violate the law. But he did order a close scrutiny of the activities.

Since 2011 Gafatar has requested three times to be acknowledged as a civil society organisation (surat keterangan terdaftar – letter of being enlisted) – required under the Ormas-law – but each time their request was rejected.

Kompas gives some background information on the “deviation²” of Gafatar: they do not have to pray 5 times a day, do not have to follow the fasting month and do not regard the Gafatar as a deviant organisation. The Attorney General’s Office is analysing the movement’s activities with regard to possible evidence of religiously deviant³ activities. Activities have been monitored in Jambi, Sulawesi Tengah (Palu), Kalimantan Tengah, and Riau.

More disappearances have been reported: a family from Kabupaten Jeneponto, Sulawesi Selatan, a family from Palembang, Sumatera Selatan (4 persons); Lampung Tengah (7 persons); Banyumas and Purbalingga, Jawa Tengah (10

² The term used is “sesat”: lost his/their way.

³ Here the term is “penyimpangan”: having a different opinion, going a different way.

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persons); and from Jawa Barat, Yogyakarta, and Lamongan, Jawa Timur, the number is unknown.

See for more background:

<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/01/15/15000031/Antisipasi.Gafatar.dan.Kultus?page=all>

Ahmadiyah followers on Bangka need more protection: HRW

The Jakarta Post, 18-01-2016

Rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) is calling on the government to immediately intervene to protect members of the Ahmadiyah religious community from intimidation and threats of expulsion by local authorities on Bangka Island.

HRW made the statement after it obtained a copy of a letter issued on Jan. 5 by the local administration of Bangka regency, located off the east coast of Sumatra in Bangka-Belitung Islands province, which demanded Ahmadiyah followers on the island either convert to Sunni Islam or face expulsion from Bangka.

“Bangka officials are conspiring with Muslim groups to unlawfully expel Ahmadiyah community members from their homes,” HRW’s Asia deputy director Phelim Kine said in a statement on Monday.

“President Joko ‘Jokowi’ Widodo needs to immediately intervene to uphold the Ahmadiyah’s rights and to punish officials who advocate religious discrimination.”

The letter was signed by Bangka administration secretary Fery Insani. It stated: “If the board of the Ahmadiyah community does not return to Islam, we have agreed that the board should leave Bangka and go back to where they belong.”

The letter stated that the directive was written on behalf of Bangka Regent Tarmizi Saat.

HRW said members of Bangka's Ahmadiyah community, which consists of only 14 families, told the group that the expulsion order followed months of harassment and intimidation by government officials, police officers and representatives of Muslim groups. Some Muslims perceive the Ahmadiyah as heretics because followers identify themselves as Muslims, but differ from other Muslims who believe that Muhammad was the “final” monotheist prophet.

Articles 28 and 29 of the Constitution guarantee freedom of religion. Prohibitions on the Ahmadiyah practicing their religion also violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Indonesia in 2006. Article 18 of the covenant protects the right to freedom of religion and to engage in religious practice “either individually or in community with others and in public or private”. Article 27 also protects the rights of minorities “to profess and practice their own religion”.

When he took office in October 2014, President Jokowi pledged to protect religious minorities and fight against religious intolerance.

“President Jokowi should demonstrate his opposition to religious discrimination by standing on the side of Bangka Island’s Ahmadiyah community and acting against those officials trying to deprive them of their rights,” Kine said.

“Jokowi has an opportunity to prove that the [former president Susilo Bambang] Yudhoyono era of turning a blind eye to attacks on religious minorities is finally over.”