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Countering violent extremism in Indonesia: priorities, practice and the role of civil society.

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Abstract

Indonesia has experimented with initiatives aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE) since the wave of arrests following the first Bali bombing attack in 2002. Initial efforts involved police attempting to develop relationships of trust with terrorists in custody. Today, a broader range of strategies are employed, from promoting peace among youth and thwarting the allure of extremist narratives, to managing prisoners and assisting former terrorists reintegrate with society. The lead government body since 2010 has been the national counterterrorism agency, *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT), which is tasked with coordinating stakeholders in Indonesia's struggle with domestic terrorism. But managing the divergent and sometimes competing interests of Indonesia's large state institutions has not been straightforward, and effective collaboration between relevant state agencies remains an obstacle to the success of CVE initiatives. Where government has fallen short, civil society organisations (CSOs) often fill the gaps, and a number of dedicated practitioners now have invaluable experience, local contacts, and the specific knowledge required for countering extremism in the Indonesian context. CSOs also possess greater levels of trust among the communities they engage than security-centric state agencies could possibly hope to achieve. Yet instead of exploiting these civil society resources, the BNPT has largely preferred an independent (and top-down) approach to CVE initiatives, collaborating if and when assistance is required. The Indonesian government should make better use of the unique legitimacy and expertise of civil society organisations.

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Introduction

The concept countering violent extremism (CVE) essentially incorporates initiatives that attempt to prevent people from becoming involved in terrorism and to limit reoffending

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among those who have already committed crimes. Given the broad gamut of conceivable programmes associated with these goals, CVE has been criticised for being unhelpfully ambiguous, involving anything from promoting critical thought in schools to helping former convicts find stable employment. Yet the violent extremism many nations now face poses a complex set of problems which requires creative, multi-stakeholder, contextualised responses. An effective strategy should be wide-ranging enough to address any contributing ingredient of a given individual's trajectory toward violence.

Researchers and practitioners have recently provided a degree of clarity through a *prevention model* framework, which was initially developed as a public health instrument (Caplan 1964) but has since been adopted by national counterterrorism strategies in different countries (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle & Zammit 2016; Williams, Horgan & Evans 2016; Korn 2016; Selim 2016; Hemmingsen 2015). CVE is thereby divided into three levels of emphasis: Primary preventions aim to dissuade the general population from becoming attracted to extremist narratives, and particularly those who may be susceptible to influence. Secondary interventions more specifically target those identified as having concerning views and may be treading a pathway to violence. And tertiary interventions manage individuals who have been involved in violence and are now either in prison or reintegrating with society.

Basing a model for addressing political violence on a framework originally designed for disease control is contentious, however, as it appears to imply that violent extremism is an illness which may be treated with the correct medication (Koehler 2017: 114). In recent years there have been cases of assailants with mental health issues, but arguments that psychological disorders lie at the heart of terrorist motivation have been well and truly put to rest (see Lord Alderdice 2007; Silke 2008). Whether or not the model is appropriate or sufficient for formulating a national CVE plan is up for debate, but for now it remains a useful lens through which to view projects that are already underway. This report employs the prevention model to examine CVE efforts in Indonesia.

Various initiatives have been established by Indonesian state agencies and civil society organisations in recent years, but projects largely operate on an ad hoc basis and receive little

cohesive direction. While there are signs that stakeholders are willing to collaborate and share best practices, the national counterterrorism agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*, BNPT) may be more effective if it assumed the coordinating role it was originally mandated to occupy. Instead the BNPT has initiated its own CVE programmes, which many observers perceive to be top-down, fragmented and lacking consistent commitment. Civil society organisations, meanwhile, have strong grass-roots networks, hands-on experience, and the legitimacy required to engage individuals with subversive convictions.

Methodology

Findings are based on 18 semi-structured interviews with civil society organisation representatives working on CVE in Indonesia, relevant government officials, and independent researchers in Jakarta in late 2016. Interviews ran roughly one hour in length and were held at the offices of project participants or in public places deemed more suitable. Conversations were recorded and transcribed by the author and material deemed relevant to the present study was taken from this data. Some of those involved wished to remain anonymous, citing the sensitive nature of the subject and the dynamic between state and non-state actors. The research was granted ethics approval by the International Review Board (IRB) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore and received permission to conduct interviews from the Indonesian Ministry of Research and Technology (RISTEK).

An important caveat to note is this report does not attempt to evaluate the efficacy of a given CVE project in Indonesia. Programme assessments are vital, and while it may be difficult to prove that an act did not occur because of a particular course of intervention, area experts have made valuable contributions outlining how evaluations may be conducted effectively (See Williams & Kleinman 2014; Williams, Horgan & Evans 2016; Horgan & Braddock 2010). However, systematic assessments of specific programmes were beyond the scope of this project, which instead sought to identify the respective approaches to CVE taken by the state and non-governmental organisations in Indonesia, and the extent to which

stakeholders collaborate to prevent violent extremism and curb recidivism among terrorism offenders.

Exiting Extremism

The literature on how and why people leave terrorist networks and what may be done to promote this process is relatively young, but in recent years a number of important studies have built on the body of knowledge. Initially, debate focused on whether prison-based rehabilitation initiatives should aim for the ‘de-radicalisation’ of subjects or whether their ‘disengagement’ from violence might be a sufficient goal (see Horgan 2008; Silke 2011; Della Porta & LaFree 2012). Proponents of the former consider the root of an imprisoned militant’s motivation for subversive violence to be essentially ideological and argue that interventions must involve the dismantling of his or her worldview and the reconstruction of a mindset more conducive to loyal citizenship (Rabasa *et al* 2010; Gunaratna 2011; Al-Hadlaq 2011). For others, attempting to argue away political or religious convictions is an overly ambitious approach to rehabilitation, while a more realistic pursuit is to focus on practical goals such as disengaging individuals from their militant networks and their support for political violence (Bjørge and Horgan 2009; Horgan & Braddock 2010; Silke 2011).

Employing a persuasive intervention strategy intent on ideological change may even prove counterproductive. In a review of studies investigating individual exit from violent extremist groups, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen drew upon social psychology research to highlight the resistance often faced by persuasive approaches to de-radicalisation (2013: 107). When an individual has internalised a conviction that helps to shape his or her self-perceived identity, attempts to challenge or disprove the underlying ideas will generate a defensive posture which may break down the intended engagement. Both Dalgaard-Nielsen and Kurt Braddock (2014) evoke the theory of psychological reactance developed by Jack Brehm in the 1960s to illustrate unintended potential outcomes of de-radicalisation efforts. Brehm’s prominent claim is that arguments which threaten an individual’s freedom of thought can result in a heightened devotion to the beliefs in question and an increased desire to act out the relevant behaviour

(Brehm 1966: 16). Attempted persuasion may further entrench the very ideas interventions seek to discredit.

With consensus forming among scholars that rehabilitation strategies need not be driven by ideological counterargument, research has attempted to identify the specific reasons people have disengaged from violent extremist groups. A study by Altier *et al* (2017) analysed the autobiographical accounts of 87 individuals, focusing on their trajectory of involvement with a broad range of organisations that have employed terrorism as a tactic. The research found push rather than pull factors were more commonly attributed to initial exit decisions; particularly disillusionment with the group's strategy, tactics, or leadership, and the day-to-day obligations of membership (Altier *et al* 2017: 330). Kate Barrelle (2015) produced similar findings in a series of in-depth interviews with 22 former extremists (both violent and non-violent). Disillusionment with leaders and fellow group members was indicated as the most prominent reason for leaving, followed by physical and/or psychological burnout (Barrelle 2015: 132). In a voluminous literature review on the subject, Daniel Koehler also found "wide agreement" that disillusionment and burnout were among the most determinant factors in decisions to leave terrorist organisations (2017: 51).

Another project by Harris *et al* (2017) investigated personal reasons for disengagement through interviews with 27 participants who had left a diverse range of ideological groups. The study showed that negative intra-group dynamics can prompt individuals to weigh their expectations of joining against the reality of membership, which may then erode their sense of belonging and lead to a process of disidentification from the group (Harris *et al* 2017: 17). The authors argue that CVE interventions should address ideology only once a psychological process of disengagement from the group is well under way, and that a more effective approach may be for programmes to focus on relationship dynamics and the reforming of personal identities (Harris *et al* 2017: 17-18).

While recent studies stress the primacy of push factors in early stages of disengagement, opportunities to pursue constructive goals may improve the chance an individual will leave militancy behind. Barrelle asserts that "disengagement is actually about

engagement somewhere else” and key to social reintegration is for people exiting ideological groups to find something else to identify with and a new place to belong (2015: 133). Starting or returning to a family may provide the requisite incentive to prioritise practical concerns in life such as securing comfortable accommodation and ensuring a good education for one’s children (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2013: 105). Studying, retraining or undertaking a business venture can assist in refocusing energy on individual pursuits rather than obligations to a group or movement, while the forming of new social relationships away from former associations is considered crucial for a sustained process of personal disengagement (Koehler 2016: 51; Barrelle 2015: 134-135).

Indonesia

A study by Julie Chernov Hwang (2017) on the disengagement of militant jihadis in Indonesia came to similar conclusions as the research outlined above. From a series of 50 interviews with current and former members of Islamist extremist groups, Chernov Hwang identified four prominent themes among those who had decided to quit: Disillusionment with leadership; an awareness that costs of action outweigh personal or movement-wide benefits; developing new friendships away from militant groups; and changes to personal ambitions such as furthering education, having children and providing for a family (2017: 278, 285-286). An interesting and common caveat to the participants’ disengagement was its conditionality on the current status quo, which highlights the importance of macro considerations for decisions both to engage and disengage in political violence. Jihadis in Java said they would take up arms if Indonesia was invaded by a foreign power, while others stated a willingness to fight if sectarian conflict re-emerged in Central Sulawesi or Maluku province (Chernov Hwang 2017: 290). An earlier report on the same issue from Chernov Hwang *et al* stated that “Government programs, ad hoc and inconsistent as they are, play only a minor role” in individual decisions to disengage (2013: 755).

Indonesian experiments with CVE-type endeavours date back to the early 2000s, when police officers sought to gain cooperation from detained militants through the development of

personal relationships (Martin 2007). While the principal aim was to gather intelligence, police developed what was termed a “cultural interrogation” approach, whereby officers displayed their own faith in Islam, treated detainees with respect and attempted to build trust (Rabasa *et al* 2010: 107-108). Engagements were incentivised through practical assistance for family members and rewards such as better meals in custody, VIP medical treatment, and even quiet words with judges and prosecutors to “negotiate” more forgiving sentences (International Crisis Group 2007: 13). Some of the cooperative prisoners became valuable interlocutors for police interventions, and began disseminating pragmatic arguments that the jihadi movement had made cost-benefit miscalculations in staging operations, and that indiscriminate bombings in Indonesia were unjustified in the present climate (Osman 2014: 223).

A problem for these police-led initiatives, however, was losing pre-trial detainees to the chaotically overcrowded prison system once they were sentenced. Deeply ingrained corruption in correctional institutions and soft enforcement of rules has made it easy for imprisoned terrorists to receive jihadi material from the outside, to interact with fellow militants, and more recently to communicate with the world via smartphones (Osman 2014: 218; IPAC 2015a: 13). The ubiquity of bribery in prisons, from securing better services to simply moving around the compound, has strengthened the perception among jihadis that government officials are corrupt and *thagout* (violators of Shari’ah) (International Crisis Group 2007: i; Istiqomah 2011: 32; Osman 2014: 219).

Suboptimal coordination between prison administration and security services has also posed problems. The underfunded correctional system has never been considered an intrinsic part of the criminal justice system, while law enforcement agencies have often deemed it expedient to focus on their own immediate concerns (Sulhin 2010: 4; Sudaryono 2013). Regarding counterterrorism, this has meant holding suspects in police cells for as long as possible and taking a selective approach to the sharing of information.

In 2010, the national counterterrorism agency *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT) was established following the 2009 hotel bombings in Jakarta and

subsequent threats on the life of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Authorised under Presidential Decree 46/2010, the BNPT is an executive agency divided into three units or ‘deputies’: (1) Prevention, Protection and De-radicalisation; (2) Operations and Enforcement; and (3) International Cooperation. The BNPT has seen four leaders since its inception and by the end of 2016, the agency comprised a staff of roughly 300 people, with an annual operating budget of Rp.700 billion (\$US54 million) (Tempo 14/08/16).

In addition to forming a coordinating function, the establishment of the BNPT was seen as a way of providing a counterterrorism role for the Indonesian Military (TNI). The National Police (Polri) had been highly effective in thwarting attacks and dismantling terrorist networks, particularly through the work of its elite counterterrorism unit known as Densus 88 (Special Detachment 88), which was set up in the years following the first Bali bombing in 2002. This success ensured law enforcement would maintain an operational lead by directing deputy two. Diplomats were tasked with the international cooperation portfolio of deputy three, which left the CVE mandate of deputy one for the TNI (IPAC 2015b: 8).

With the military in charge of prevention and de-radicalisation it is somewhat unsurprising that Indonesia’s founding state ideology of Pancasila (belief in one God, nationalism, humanitarianism, social justice, and democracy) features prominently in BNPT-led CVE initiatives (Idris & Taufiqurrohman 2015: 71). In late 2016, Coordinating Minister for Political, Security and Legal Affairs, General Wiranto, stated at a press conference that Indonesians who supported the Islamic State would be re-educated so they possessed a strong sense of nationalism: “They will be made aware of their role as citizens responsible for maintaining the country’s security”, he said (Tempo 19/11/16). The BNPT approach also embraces the assertion that ideology lies at the heart of an individual’s decision to become involved in terrorism. The moderation of religious conviction is now considered central to state-led tertiary CVE interventions (See BNPT 2013).

A small number of civil society organisations have taken a more personalised approach to CVE than the state, adopting pragmatic goals such as disengaging prisoners from violence and gradually disconnecting them from extremist networks (See Osman 2014).

Practical and social assistance is offered to facilitate the reintegration of former prisoners back into society, and civil society organisations conduct prevention work in schools and universities, where youth are engaged through activities and discussions to promote tolerance, diversity, and outlets for positive activism (Maarif Institute 2012; Search for Common Ground 2016).

These organisations have largely been working in parallel to the state and receive little government direction or support. One promising initiative emerged in 2016, which is attempting to bring together key players from civil society working on CVE in Indonesia. Civil Society against Violent Extremism (C-SAVE) was established to pool the resources and experiences of 23 organisations onto a platform which hopes eventually to contribute to a national CVE strategy for Indonesia. C-SAVE's mission is to "build and develop a national network of civil society organisations to promote synergy and effective performance in combating radicalism and violence" (C-SAVE 2016).

Civil society practitioners in Indonesia generally deem labels such as CVE and (especially) 'de-radicalisation' to be unhelpful, as they are seen to securitise programmes more concerned with promoting constructive personal development than reminding people of their obligations to the state. The thinking goes that if audiences or individuals identified as being vulnerable to adopting extremist convictions believe interventions are premised on a perceived security threat, they will be less likely to participate actively. It is the ability to gain legitimacy and trust among the people they seek to engage which make civil society organisations potentially more suited to conducting CVE initiatives than security-mandated state agencies.

Primary Preventions

Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme

The BNPT's central initiative to prevent radicalisation has been the creation of terrorism prevention forums in 32 of Indonesia's 34 provinces from 2012.² The *Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme* (FKPT) was the brainchild of the first deputy one Head, Agus Surya Bakti, who sought to create the architecture for permanent regional forums first and work out how to fill in the substance once they were established. The forums broadly became talk-shops on terrorism, involving presentations and dialogue sessions between local government officials, academics, former police officers, and clerics from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) (See IPAC 2014). The BNPT and Police have also encouraged 'de-radicalised' prisoners – such as repentant former Jemaah Islamiyah operatives, Ali Imron and Nasir Abbas – to speak at forums and public events.

The majority of non-governmental stakeholders interviewed for the present study considered the FKPT to be disappointing and misdirected. A common criticism is that forums are too high level; largely involving regional elites in discussions intended to raise awareness of violent extremism rather than reaching people who may be prone to radicalisation, particularly the youth. FKPT ceremonies are often followed by press conferences with a certain degree of grandstanding and promises which observers believe fall short of addressing the pertinent issues.

Taufik Andrie from the NGO, *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (YPP), said instead of focusing on the regional level, the BNPT should conduct research to identify specific areas that are more prone to radicalism and then engage relevant people in local administrative associations, such as the *desa* (village) or *rukun tetangga* (neighbourhood group) levels of government. "In terms of terrorism mitigation and prevention", Taufik explained, "You have to go to the small and deeper unit – family, mosques – simpler and smaller society. There's no need to be provincial". Rumadi Ahmad, former senior researcher at the Wahid Institute (a

² Papua and West Papua provinces are thought not to require CVE-type initiatives

Nahdlatul Ulama³ organisation), had concerns over the FKPT's budget priorities and financial management. Regional forums mostly take place in expensive hotels, officials require high-end motorcades, and there is a view among civil society stakeholders and researchers that money could be spent more effectively.

Schools and Universities

As mentioned above, the majority of prevention work directed at youth is conducted by non-governmental and civil society organisations. The Wahid Foundation, which is headed by Yenny Wahid (the daughter of former President Abdurrahman Wahid), began engaging students in 2008, initially focusing on schools in South Sulawesi, Kalimantan, East Java and West Java. In 2013, the foundation introduced a pilot project based on findings from a broad survey to identify the most appropriate schools to target, which involved topics such as discrimination towards minority groups and acceptance of cultural difference. Ten high schools were subsequently chosen and representatives visit each institution to discuss issues such as peace, tolerance, multiculturalism and pluralism. Student engagement and constructive discussions are facilitated through a specially designed board game, sets of which are left at each school for ongoing use in civic education classes. Wahid Foundation research has indicated that support for jihadi organisations among Indonesian youth is low, but levels of intolerance and instances of hate speech have been increasing.

The University of Indonesia's Research Centre for Police Studies (PRIK), headed by Professor of Psychology, Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono, also engages young people and has held seminars in ten universities across the country. Prof. Sarlito's team works with a network of former extremists/terrorists – some in prison and others who are reintegrating with society. An appropriate individual is selected to visit each university and discuss their life choices in order to sway young audiences away from similar pathways. A comparable approach is adopted by Aliansi Indonesia Damai (AIDA), an organisation established to support victims

³ Established in 1926, Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia and has a membership base of roughly 50-60 million people.

of violence and work towards countering violent extremism. However, AIDA involves both reformed extremists and victims of terrorist attacks in their school seminars and activities.

At the time of writing, AIDA had reached out to well over 3000 youths in schools across Indonesia. A day's activities generally begin with a ceremony and ice-breaking games. Students are then divided into roughly five groups and asked to discuss conceptual questions aimed at eliciting what they value in life. After group feedback with facilitators, the former militants and victims present their stories and take questions. According to AIDA programme officer, Laode Arham, students are initially fascinated by the former militants, who receive much of the early focus and questioning. Attention then shifts to the victims; students ask how they can forgive people who have caused them such pain and destruction. Finally the seminars are concluded with messages aimed at promoting peace and the importance of responding to injustice through more constructive means than violence. Over the past three years 29 victims and four former terrorists have been involved in seminars. AIDA revisits schools to evaluate their programme's impact and largely receives positive feedback. The project has so far been single-session but plans are in place to follow up with more regular interactions among the young people initially engaged.

The Indonesian chapter of the United States based peace organisation Search for Common Ground (SFCG) also conducts CVE initiatives in schools and universities. SFCG currently visits 14 universities and 13 public high schools in ten cities across Java and Sulawesi, with programmes focusing on promoting dialogue, leadership training, and conflict management skills. A key feature of SFCG's approach is empowering students to make short films or documentaries about their lives with regard to tolerance and pluralism. The organisation provides video production equipment and training, students post their films on YouTube, and SFCG runs competitions to select the best submissions. A recent winner told the story of a campus-based initiative to unite different Islamic organisations through sports. SFCG also encourages students to come up with their own projects that foster unity and discussion. At *Universitas General Sudirman* in the Central Java city of Purwokerto, the organisation provided resources for a student-led plan to set up a university radio station. The

resulting *Paduka FM* has since proven a local success story, with presenters discussing issues such as how to square identity with personal passions and pursuits. The presenters attempt to bridge differences and rectify misperceptions; for example, young women in Java who wear the *niqab* may well have an active social life and attend music festivals, which is considered contrary to common perception.

A Muhammadiyah⁴ based organisation called the Maarif Institute undertakes similar projects. Following research designed to map out the landscape of schools affected by radicalism/extremism, Maarif identified relevant institutions in Cianjur and Banten in West Java, and Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo) in Central Java. According to Maarif practitioners, engagement can be difficult as some of the schools are run by administrations with extremist leanings and allow radical groups to access their students through extra curricula activities. One school in Cianjur rejected the Maarif Institute's efforts to engage its staff and students, and attempted to convince other schools in the area to follow suit.

The mainstay of Maarif's activities is an annual youth camp which has been running for the past four years. Select students from the schools above are invited to attend a week-long outdoor camp, featuring Maarif textbooks on 'character building', with twelve thematic chapters: faith, curiosity, honesty, justice, positive thinking, empathy, mutual assistance, friendship, tolerance, democracy, patriotism, and *amar ma'ruf nahi mugkar* (roughly: doing good and avoiding bad) (Maarif 2014). The camp also involves outdoor activities, and meetings with people from the nation's six official religions.⁵ Maarif representatives described the initiative as "experiential learning" which aims to promote empathy among its participants.

During camp activities, appropriate candidates are identified and invited to join the Maarif Institute's Peace Journalism Workshop, which runs annually for three days in Jakarta. The goal is to strengthen the media literacy of participants, particularly with regard to social media, how material is spread on Facebook, and how youth can be more critical of what they

⁴ Muhammadiyah is one of the two major Islamic organisations in Indonesia. It was established in 1912 and has a membership base of almost 30 million people.

⁵ Indonesia's six official religions are Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism.

see and read online. Participants are also encouraged to produce creative content for counter-messaging campaigns. Maarif representatives said the Islamic State has thousands of Twitter accounts, so it was important to create as many accounts as possible to spread messages denouncing their extremist ideology. Maarif's Peace Journalism Workshop has a number of corporate sponsors, including major media outlets such as Metro TV, Kompas and Antara. Participants contribute to the production of Maarif video productions, such as the feature length film *Mata Tertutup* (The Blindfold), which tells three interwoven stories of young Indonesians dealing with extremist recruitment and radicalisation.

Given the rise in sophistication and size of the Islamic State's propaganda output, the BNPT's deputy one has also now established a media wing known as *Pusat Media Damai* (Centre for Media Peace). According to a senior BNPT official, each FKPT chapter was tasked with producing a short film about an issue related to countering extremism or intolerance. A panel from deputy one reviewed the submissions in early 2017 and selected the best ten to be distributed nationally, both online and in cinemas. The initiative is remarkably similar to those already undertaken by SFCG and the Maarif Institute which illustrates the unfortunate disconnection between state and non-state CVE efforts. Imitation may be sincere flattery but cooperation would seem a more constructive approach.

Secondary Interventions

In recent years a number of nations have introduced mechanisms for identifying individuals that may be on a pathway of radicalisation to violence, and channelling them into programmes involving social workers, mentors, psychologists, and/or religious figures. Indonesia does not have this type of system. It has been considered unlikely that the Indonesian Government would introduce a similar approach because of the expected public outcry against pre-crime interventions perceived as stigmatising Islam. This also prevents the closure of problematic schools, an official system of registration for imams in mosques, and for the government to scrutinise public sermons (IPAC 2014: 4).

Yet calls for such interventions among government officials have begun to emerge. In November 2016, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs General Wiranto stated that Indonesian authorities required the power to intervene at the pre-crime stage: "In Indonesia, [radicalised individuals yet to commit a crime] cannot be caught. We have to wait for him to act before we can act. We can catch him only after he has already claimed a life. To prevent such a situation and to ensure that security authorities can catch the person before he pulls off such nefarious act, the law must be immediately revised" (Tempo 19/11/16).

Despite the absence of legislation permitting this type of intervention, occasional ad hoc efforts take place when young people are identified as possessing problematic convictions. A BNPT official described the case of a young teen-aged girl whose mother became concerned and called the authorities. Representatives from the BNPT then arranged weekly meetings with the girl in attempts to soften her views and promote more positive life choices. However, it was difficult to ascertain exactly what took place in these meetings or whether they would be ongoing.

A recent initiative from the BNPT, which civil society observers perceive to be generally constructive, is engaging the families of individuals convicted of terrorism charges. Not only do families often have to survive while their major breadwinner is behind bars, but they also face stigmatisation in their communities for links to terrorism. The BNPT offers a degree of support in the hope that financial assistance may prevent families turning to extremist groups for help, and to ensure that children or younger brothers and sisters do not follow in the footsteps of their imprisoned kin. Befriending families is seen as a good way of engaging prisoners as it incentivises dialogue with the authorities; family visits and support are used as leverage when attempting to persuade inmates to cooperate.

The Maarif Institute has worked more specifically with individuals identified as having particularly hard-line views. During the institute's 2016 youth camp, ten students (eight boys and two girls of 16-17 years old) refused to participate in activities aimed at promoting empathy towards members of other faith communities. The group of ten had

declined a church visit so Maarif camp facilitators took them aside to discuss their reasons for rejecting the dialogue. When the students said they were unwilling to enter a different religion's place of worship, the facilitators pointed out that the iconic 9th-century Borobudur complex in central Java (which many of the group had visited) was a Buddhist temple, so why should they not also visit a Christian church. Through this type of discussion, Maarif representatives said they felt progress had been made in terms of opening the teenagers' minds, but conceded it was difficult to determine the extent to which such efforts bring about positive changes.

Tertiary Interventions

Prisons and Inmate Management

As of late 2016, there were roughly 230 inmates convicted of terrorism charges spread out among some 70 prisons throughout the archipelago, but predominantly in Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi. According to representatives from the Directorate General of Corrections (DGC), this dispersal system was a "situational strategy". The priority was to keep prisoners close to their families as regular visits created better conditions for potential rehabilitation. However, a recent report from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) offers an additional reason: while cooperative prisoners may be held near their families, others are spread out to facilitate monitoring and to restrict problematic visitations (IPAC 2016: 1). Inmates assisting with ongoing investigations are housed in prisons within proximity to the relevant security agency.

Terrorist prisoners in Indonesia can largely be put into one of two groups: those who have declared allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and refuse to cooperate, and those who consider IS too brutal and quick to apply takfir to other Muslims, who are more pragmatic about how they choose to engage with the authorities. Each side can be broken down into three more levels: Ideologues hold the most hard line views; militants may be less

ideologically sophisticated but are intent on violence; and followers, who may be more peripherally involved in the movement and convicted for supporting roles.

De-radicalisation

Despite ad hoc efforts from various government and non-government stakeholders over the past several years, there is still no coherent, coordinated multi-stakeholder prison-based programme to rehabilitate inmates convicted of terrorism charges in Indonesia. The DGC runs regular programmes which are mostly the same as for the general prison population, only with occasional extra classes promoting tolerance. NGOs have experimented with personal approaches to disengaging violent extremist prisoners from violence, and have worked towards building the capacity of prison staff to manage problematic inmates. The BNPT has for the past few years run various ‘de-radicalisation’ initiatives in prisons, though observers criticise their efforts for being overly ambitious in their focus on ideology, and for lacking commitment and consistency in particular.

The BNPT’s current approach can be traced back to its 2013 internal publication, the *Blueprint Deradikalisasi* (De-radicalisation Blueprint), which was “expected to serve as a guide for all agencies involved in the prevention and control of radical understanding” in Indonesia, but was far too general to offer any actual direction (BNPT 2013: 119). The Blueprint defines de-radicalisation as “any effort to transform radical beliefs or ideology to non-radical ones, with multi and interdisciplinary approaches”, through four stages: “Identification, rehabilitation, re-education and re-socialisation” (BNPT 2013: 8). Identification involves interviewing prisoners to determine their level of involvement, ideological understanding, and affiliations. This initial stage highlights how little is often known about some of the convicted terrorism offenders, which is not helped by the general reluctance to share information between relevant state agencies.

The rehabilitation and re-education stages comprise “ideological moderation ... carried out through dialogue and a persuasive approach”, yet the language used in the Blueprint is vague with few details given as to how dialogue sessions are conducted, or

whether they are applied personally or to groups (BNPT 2013: 69). The blueprint's descriptions of the rehabilitation and re-education stages are actually the same – the first two paragraphs of the latter are paraphrased versions of the former, while the final three paragraphs of each stage are carbon copies. The only apparent difference is that in the re-education stage, prisoners are isolated from those who may negatively influence them. This has not always been possible given Indonesia's overcrowded prison system. However, in February 2017 a new secure facility in Sentul, south of Jakarta, was opened, which has enabled the BNPT to separate a small number of cooperative prisoners nearing the end of their sentences, and proceed with a more focused course of "re-education" interventions.

The BNPT discovered early on that attempting to argue away ideology was difficult. An official from the de-radicalisation division explained that the approach was subsequently altered to initially focus on developing relationships with prisoners through informal conversations and family visits. A common criticism among observers, however, is that BNPT visits tend to be infrequent and inconsistent, impeding the state agency's ability to build relationships of trust. Prison officers who wished to remain anonymous revealed that the BNPT used to bring gifts to entice prisoners to participate, but jealousy among other inmates forced them to give prisoners cash as it was easier to hide from cell mates. Another observer said the BNPT sometimes made false promises regarding post-release job opportunities and financial support, which has bred resentment and mistrust. It was also claimed that some current and recently released prisoners "see the BNPT as an ATM" and play along with programmes merely to reap the benefits.

In 2013, the BNPT invited three clerics from the Middle East to visit Cipinang Prison in Jakarta and Pasir Putih Prison on Nusakambangan Island to hold discussions with terrorist inmates. The sessions reportedly lasted three hours in each prison, and according to IPAC, the conversations were "lively" but senior prisoners in Cipinang said the conversations had had no effect on their views (IPAC 2014: 8). Similar to the FKPT meetings, the visiting clerics represent an inconsistent, top-down approach to counter radicalisation. If programmes are to have any chance of success, they need to be structured, persistent, and highly personalised,

based on the needs of a given individual. A few lectures – no matter how inspiring – are unlikely to ever have any lasting impact.

Radical Skateboarders

An interesting project that developed organically within Indonesia's largest prison, Cipinang, involved the construction of a modest skateboard park in the wing designated for terrorism offenders. In 2015, a founding member of the Indonesian skateboard federation was sentenced to five years in prison for drug trafficking and later that year he decided that skateboarding might prove a positive pastime for the uncooperative terrorist inmates. After receiving permission from the guards and donations from skateboarding friends on the outside, he set about building a ramp and grind box with help from fellow inmates. Once completed, the activity became a hit with both terrorist offenders and general inmates. Prison officers described the emergence of an encouraging dynamic; skateboarding facilitated interaction and provided an outlet for positive self-expression. Eventually the leader of the pro-IS group became incensed that his followers were associating with a drug dealer and an infidel pastime and declared a fatwa against the sport, forcing his men to stop. The anti-IS terrorism offenders are still involved, however, and Cipinang skateboard sessions appear to provide a constructive sense of belonging that does not rely on a common enemy or adversarial narrative

NGO prison-based efforts

Non-governmental organisations also conduct programmes in prisons throughout the country, aimed at both disengaging prisoners from violence and training officers to deal more effectively with terrorist inmates. From 2010, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) conducted short programmes in roughly 20 prisons across Indonesia aimed at promoting conflict management. SFCG makes a point not to address ideology or religion, but instead focuses on empathy, tolerance and cooperation, while mixing terrorist inmates with other high-risk prisoners to avoid stigmatisation. One activity described by an SFCG representative is a role-play game in which two groups must negotiate over ten oranges at a market; both need the fruit but for different reasons, and if they conduct constructive dialogue they may reach a solution in which both parties are satisfied. SFCG has also trained prison guards, as well as a series of workshops on human rights delivered to the police counterterrorism unit, Densus 88.

Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian (YPP) is another small dedicated Indonesian NGO doing similar work and has four programmes conducted in cooperation with the DGC. The first is working to empower the capacity of prison officers to manage the psychological and ideological features of their relationships with extremist inmates, and the capacity of parole officers to assist former prisoners' transitions back into society. YPP's second programme attempts to address a difficult issue: how to engage hard line supporters of IS who are self-contained and antagonistic towards group outsiders. The idea is to get cooperative terrorist inmates to work with the more hardened ideologues and militants in order to slowly soften their positions, so they may be open to further dialogue. Cooperative prisoners are trained in effective strategies to engage their cell mates, and YPP is experimenting with this initiative in two prisons: Pasir Putih on Nusakambangan Island, and Porong Prison near the East Java city of Surabaya.

YPP also works directly with current and former prisoners to promote positive pathways away from old networks. Participants are taught how to develop business plans for small start-ups such as catfish farms or electronic repair businesses, and receive assistance with applying for further education while in prison. YPP practitioners believe that attempts to change prisoners' religious and political convictions (or indeed to replace them with the state ideology) are overly ambitious and can even be counterproductive as subjects may become further entrenched when their positions are threatened (see Brehm 1966; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2013; Braddock 2014). De-radicalisation is rather seen as a long-term, personal process, and the small organisation considers their most effective role to be providing seeds and opportunities for disengagement from the violent social networks to which the inmates belong. YPP also works closely with the families of inmates, offering support and encouraging engagement with their communities.

A recent promising rehabilitation initiative comes from *Aliansi Indonesia Damai* (AIDA) which has started to expand its victims' voices programme to carefully planned dialogues within prisons. AIDA considers meetings between victims and terrorist prisoners to be an effective way of humanising the violence which inmates may continue to support.

However, the organisation is acutely aware of the potential for damaging dynamics and takes care to select appropriate candidates for discussions, as well as psychologically preparing victims for the encounters.

As of April 2017, AIDA had conducted one-on-one meetings in five different prisons which were viewed as productive. In Cipinang, a prisoner was curious about the aftermath of a particular attack, to which the victim replied with detailed descriptions of his pain and the ongoing emotional strain on his family. Eventually the victim gained more confidence and began to show documents such as photos and hospital records. It was described as highly emotional with both participants in tears by the end of the meeting. AIDA hope to expand this initiative but emphasise the importance of properly negotiating the sensitivities involved in setting up such meetings. For this reason, the organisation's management also stress the need for dialogues to remain a civil society endeavour.

The University of Indonesia's Research Centre for Police Studies (PRIK) is another organisation which has run prison-based programmes. Since 2009, PRIK has been working with prisoners and individuals on parole, in what the centre initially considered to be de-radicalisation, as the goal was to change individual mind sets. Professor Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono explained that in the early days, PRIK invited religious scholars to converse with prisoners but soon realised that the clerics' arguments were swiftly rejected. The team then built up relationships slowly, beginning with daily problems, families, and life in prison. They then moved onto broader issues such as social welfare, governance and corruption, and finally began to address politics and religion, often by highlighting peaceful channels for activism and the ineffectiveness of violence to achieve their desired goals. As of September 2016, PRIK was working with roughly 150 individuals, some of whom were still in prison while most were reintegrating with society.

Remissions and Assessments

In mid-November 2016, a man linked to the Islamic State attempted to detonate a homemade bomb during a congregation at a church in Samarinda, East Kalimantan (The

Jakarta Post 14/11/16). After arriving at the scene on his motorbike he accidentally dropped the device, which rolled away and exploded, killing one two-year-old girl and badly injuring three other young children (IPAC 2016: 8). The man was identified as Juhanda, alias Jo bin Muhammad Aceng Kurnia, who had been released from prison in 2014, four months before the end of a three-and-a-half-year sentence for his role in mail bomb attacks in 2011 (IPAC 2016: 6). Juhanda was the third recidivist to commit an attack in 2016. Sunakim, alias Afif, a gunman in the January 2016 Thamrin attack in Jakarta, had been released from prison five months before the assault, in August 2015, for good behaviour. His original sentence would have kept him behind bars until 2017. Another assailant in the same operation, Muhammad Ali, had also reportedly served time in prison for robbing a bank to fund terrorism in 2010 (Tempo 31/1/16).

Despite successfully prosecuting over a thousand individuals on terrorism charges since the first Bali bomb and having them pass through the prison system, the Indonesian government has not developed a workable pre-release risk assessment instrument for terrorism offenders. In fact, it has allegedly been the case that prison authorities sometimes know very little about the terrorist prisoners they hold, as information is not readily shared between agencies. President Joko Widodo has stressed the importance of stronger international counterterrorism cooperation (Parlina 2015; Benar News 22/5/17), but it appears that a more immediate priority should be to build trust between (and even within) Indonesian state institutions and agencies working on counterterrorism.

In the surprising absence of a robust system for assessing the risk posed by prisoners prior to release, or even the availability of detailed biographical information that might inform their effective management in prison, the DGC has been working with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), which has a small team based in Jakarta. The DGC had in place a general parole assessment tool known as *Penelitian Kemasyarakatan* (LITMAS), and UNICRI's leading project officer decided the best approach was to maintain the prison service's branding while creating new content that would be

relevant for terrorist prisoners. This proved to be an effective approach and the initiative was making positive progress by early 2017.

The assessment tool is part of a broader Grand Design and Road Map for the Handling of High Risk prisoners in Indonesia, which involves updated general rehabilitation strategies, counselling, and increased community participation in the penitentiary system (DGC-UNICRI 2017). At the time of writing the document was under review by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. The LITMAS tool for prisoners convicted of terrorism offences includes two parts, which will be used both for pre-release assessment and the profiling of inmates for more effective management throughout their sentences. The first concentrates on emotional issues such as anger, frustration and the potential for violent behaviour upon release (this will also be employed to assess other high-risk prisoners). The second attempts to determine an individual's knowledge and support for extremist ideologies, including views on key concepts in militant jihadism, such as *takfir* and *thagout*.

Prison officers will be trained to implement the test as budget constraints limit the possibility of employing qualified psychologists. The UNICRI officer remarked that the DGC employs 35,000 prison officers and that 10-20 of the most suitable would be selected and given intensive training. Several officers have extensive experience with terrorist inmates and in many cases have taken it upon themselves to learn more about the relevant issues so they can manage relationships more effectively. Training from NGOs such as YPP and SFCG has also helped to increase capacity in this regard. While prison officers may not fully grasp the psychological theories involved in more complex risk assessment tools, their personal experience in dealing with Indonesian extremists inside prisons on a daily basis could prove a more valuable qualification.

Post-Release Monitoring and Reintegration

The three recidivists who staged deadly attacks in 2016 (and one more in early 2017) shone a spotlight on prison programme and risk assessment shortcomings. They have also underscored the difficulty of monitoring the movements of recently released prisoners and

their effective reintegration back into society. Juhanda had become involved with pro-ISIS inmates in Tangerang Prison because he received no visits and his extremist cell mates became his de-facto family. Once released, the only people he could turn to for support were pro-ISIS groups, and after a short stay in South Sulawesi, Juhanda moved to Samarinda where he stayed at the ISIS-linked Mujahidin Mosque (IPAC 2016: 6). This experience further radicalised the former prisoner and led to the eventual attack on the Oikumene Church (Tempo 14/11/16). The DGC is responsible for the surveillance of released high-risk prisoners, but for those convicted of terrorism it relies on assistance from the BNPT.

An essential feature of a prisoner's post-release pathway is ensuring that it leads away from former networks and towards constructive goals which enable them to reintegrate with their communities. As there have been hundreds of released extremist prisoners re-entering society in Indonesia over the past decade or so, reintegration has become a priority and several of the stakeholders mentioned above are involved. For the BNPT's deputy one, reintegration or "resocialisation" is the fourth phase of a prisoner's "de-radicalisation". There does not appear to be a systematic approach to assisting former prisoners, and after talking to those either working on these initiatives or observing them, the BNPT's reintegration work appears to be ad hoc and insufficient.

According to one interviewee who wished to remain anonymous, "the BNPT lacks commitment in implementing their programmes ... [they say] if you join our so-called de-radicalisation programme you can have many benefits – you can have a bakso (noodle soup) or murtabak (omelette) cart – we will support you. So the radicals join the programme, but again, execution is the problem – there is no BNPT to find!" Another participant argued that "ex-offenders don't trust the BNPT" because they "promise money, promise jobs and this sort of thing, but then it never happens. It can be dangerous".

Given that most employers are likely to view a candidate's history of violent extremism with suspicion, many former terrorist prisoners seek opportunities to start their own small business after being released. YPP is one organisation that places emphasis on this approach and tutors prisoners in constructing and writing business plans in order to secure

funding for small start-ups. Proposed businesses include fish farms or other domestic animal breeding set ups, electrical repair shops, and traditional medicine dealerships. AIDA's Laode Arham said he had been in contact that day with a former prisoner who was looking for Rp.15 million (US\$1100) to start up a catfish breeding business. Laode explained that funding had come from a range of sources but securing financial assistance continued to be difficult.

Another popular avenue for released prisoners is to become motorbike taxi drivers. Such industries are under-regulated in Indonesia, but the one essential requisite is a valid Indonesian driver's license, which most former terrorist prisoners do not have and have struggled to obtain. Siti Aliah from YPP said this had changed after a group of formerly convicted extremists filed a complaint with the police counterterrorism unit, Densus 88, and officers eventually helped them navigate the bureaucracy. A disruptive mobile application (similar to Uber) known as *Gojek* has revolutionised the motorbike taxi industry in Indonesia, and now offers a range of other options, from food and massage delivery to cleaning and repair services. A number of former extremists are apparently now working for this company, though it is unclear whether Gojek are aware that former extremists are among their squadron of drivers.

One obstacle faced by former extremist prisoners attempting to reintegrate back into Indonesian society is the broad stigmatisation they receive from community members. The BNPT's Blueprint states that "the most important thing" is that resocialisation efforts "remove suspicion and fear on one hand and develop empathy and mutual respect on the other" (BNPT 2013: 84). While these are objectively constructive goals, it is not clear how much work goes into preparing communities to receive returning prisoners. In March 2017, the BNPT admitted that over 400 former terrorist offenders had played no part in its post-release de-radicalisation programmes (The Jakarta Post 2/3/17). Participation is entirely voluntary but this startling lack of attendance suggests a different approach or incentive structure will be required to have more former inmates involved in government-led reintegration efforts.

Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono and his team have had experience with the issue of stigmatisation in different parts of the country and said the only thing organisations like his

could do was to try and show the families of returning extremist prisoners how to modify their lifestyles and actions so they could mingle with mainstream society. “Otherwise”, he said, “The children are not accepted in local schools, because they are the children of terrorists”. Prof. Sarlito added that often stigmatisation was a product of clumsy surveillance and arguably unnecessary warnings given to neighbours about potential threats. Laode Arham described a recent case in which a former extremist was struggling to reintegrate with a community in Ambon, Maluku Province, because he was held with suspicion. AIDA sent people to intervene, and because the local government, police and communities knew the NGO as a peace organisation, people agreed to give the individual in question a chance to prove himself. This is a lucid example of a grass-roots organisation possessing the required legitimacy on the ground to mediate these kinds of problems effectively.

Conclusion

The 2013 De-radicalisation Blueprint was intended to be a guide for all stakeholders but the document was far too general to offer any actionable instruction. For any coordinated rehabilitation strategy to meet success it will be essential to create detailed profiles of the prisoners concerned, which outline their backgrounds and affiliations, while attempting to ascertain their degree of ideological conviction and support for violence. Prisoner progress could be assessed throughout their sentences and the collected data would then inform levels of post-release monitoring and the type of reintegration assistance required in each case. There are different parties currently working on such a system, including the BNPT as part of the Blueprint’s “identification” phase, but these efforts are not coordinated and information is apparently not readily shared between the relevant stakeholders.

Some prisoners convicted of terrorism in Indonesia are relatively educated and from urban middle-class families; others have a rural background, a primary education, and limited life skills. Some are in their 50s, others in their 20s, and there are at least two teenagers in prison on terrorism charges. If interventions do not address these differences they will be

unlikely to succeed. Tailoring individual interventions may be resource intensive, but if all relevant and interested parties – both state and non-state – were brought together and directed effectively, it may be possible to provide more compatible programmes. Prisoners are more likely to engage if they believe their specific issues are being addressed.

State-led primary interventions to counter violent extremism in Indonesia have similar drawbacks to prison-based efforts. The FKPT forums may cover much of the country, but meetings are insufficiently targeted and largely top-down exercises which make inefficient use of resources. As with tertiary interventions, the BNPT could take a directing role where they conduct in-depth research to identify which areas of the country are particularly vulnerable and then determine the specific assistance needed in order to counter the respective problem. Various government institutions would then play a role depending on the issue, as would non-governmental and civil society organisations, which have the requisite legitimacy to engage individuals and communities drifting astray from society.

Organised secondary interventions are currently not possible in Indonesia due to the likely backlash from religious organisations if individuals were seen to be sanctioned solely for their views. Recent comments such as those of General Wiranto in November 2016 suggest this may change, however, and it is therefore a possibility that provisions for pre-crime interventions are included in the new counterterrorism bill currently making its way through parliament. The form and substance of the updated legislation will be pivotal for the approach to CVE that Indonesia takes over the next several years.

The BNPT has stated that coordinating initiatives to counter or prevent violent extremism is problematic and difficult. Among state institutions this is understandable as there will inevitably be overlapping and competing interests. On the other hand, coordinating non-governmental and civil society organisations already working on CVE is more straightforward, and the BNPT should make better use of these resources. The BNPT's 2013 Blueprint states:

In the context of implementing the de-radicalization program and fostering democratic elements, the government cannot ignore the active participation of non-

governmental organisations (NGOs). NGOs are vital assets that are entrusted to strengthen democracy ... In the field of de-radicalization, NGOs can serve as strategic partners to government to actively conduct research, training, advocacy, mentoring, promotion of human rights, civic education, promotion of tolerance and pluralism, strengthening of civil society, facilitating of dialogue and so forth with the purpose of building and strengthening democracy by instilling religious and nationalistic understanding, which is tolerant, peaceful, and open. (BNPT 2013: 113)

There has since been intermittent engagement between the state counterterrorism agency and non-governmental stakeholders, particularly with Nahdlatul Ulama organisations such as the Wahid Foundation. But for the most part, and despite its promising statement in the 2013 Blueprint, the BNPT has actually appeared to “ignore the active participation” of NGOs. It would certainly be a stretch to suggest the BNPT considers the small committed organisations described above to be “strategic partners”.

It is unclear exactly what is preventing more constructive collaboration but potential cooperation is not helped by differing perspectives regarding CVE. The government appears to favour a more ideological persuasive approach, attempting to replace an individual’s desire to live under a caliphate with an acceptance of the Indonesian state philosophy, Pancasila, and a promise to become a good citizen. Civil society groups prefer to challenge justifications for indiscriminate violence, encourage personal development among prisoners, and to promote peace, tolerance and pluralism among young people.

If an organisation can be regarded as an extreme extension of a governing authority’s ideology then the state is well-placed to promote moderation and the cessation of violence to achieve political goals. But when an extremist has internalised convictions of fundamentally changing the status quo and overthrowing a government through a campaign of terrorist violence, agents of the state are not in the best position to seek middle ground.

People in prison for subversive violence or those thought to be treading a path toward a similar end will harbour fundamentally anti-establishment attitudes, and any persuasive attempt by the state to transform them back into proud citizens is likely to be met with resistance. Unaligned with government, civil society organisations are not hindered by such accusations nor rebuked for grievances stemming from state policies at home and/or abroad. NGOs often have deep community roots which provide a degree of legitimacy that can be leveraged to engage individuals who are mistrustful of institutional power. The challenge for the Indonesian government is to figure out how to make use of these valuable resources without discrediting their work through association.

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