

# Preventing Violent Radicalization and Terrorism

The Case of Indonesia

Magnus Ranstorp

**CATS**

Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies



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## Preface

This document – written by Dr. Magnus Ranstorp, Research Director at CATS – addresses the effects and relevance of measures to counteract radicalization and terrorism. The document presents the conclusions from a previous project that our Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies undertook and submitted to Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) in 2009 involving an in-depth case study of Indonesia which was carried out in the southeast Asian region.

The underlying idea of this study was, from an overall point of view, to describe and analyze the various efforts undertaken to marginalize extremist elements within Indonesia with relevant differences and similarities from European experiences as a reference point. Indonesia was chosen since the country has frequently been described as a major success story. As one of the largest Muslim countries in the world, Indonesia has successfully stemmed widespread development of violent radicalization as well as marginalized Jemmah Islamiyyah, an indigenous terrorist movement with regional and transnational tentacles. However, very little has been written on the relatively systematic efforts on the part of the Indonesian government and various societal actors towards these ends. Issues that the study attempts to elucidate include: How did they successfully marginalize these extremist forces? Which means and methods have been used? Are there any lessons that can be applied to other countries where Sida is active?

This document only addresses the conclusions of the abovementioned project. It presents a spectrum of ideas for different methods that can be used to prevent radicalization with regards to religious extremism and generic countermeasures. On the whole, these may be applicable to several operational and programme areas of development cooperation aimed at preventing this type of development.

Lars Nicander

Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies, CATS  
Stockholm, October 2009



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Generic understanding of conditions conducive for terrorism and various means and methods that can be used to prevent these conditions are of great importance in terms of developing policy aimed at promoting peace and security. The OECD-DAC's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee) guidelines *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*<sup>1</sup> and *A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action*<sup>2</sup> offer points of departure for using development cooperation as an instrument to counteract terrorism. Analytical and method support are important in terms of investigating, potentially developing and determining to what extent, within the framework of aid targets, development cooperation can serve as an instrument to reinforce a country's indigenous ability to counteract terrorism.

For a number of years, the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish National Defence College has performed advanced analytical work and government-funded research on countering various forms of terrorism. The research is primarily focused on ascertaining functioning tools and the best practices for settings where ideological (in the form of 'violent radicalization'), religious and cultural factors exist individually or together.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, "Helping Prevent Violent Conflict", The DAC Guidelines, International Development, 2001. Accessible via: <<<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/54/1886146.pdf>>> (13 October 2009).

<sup>2</sup> OECD, "A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action", DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2003. Accessible via: <<<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/4/16085708.pdf>>> (13 October 2009).



## 1.2 Original Assignment and Present Document

This document covers the effects and relevance of measures aimed at countering radicalization<sup>3</sup> and terrorism related to Sida's work. The document presents the conclusions from a previous project involving a case study of Indonesia that CATS carried out for Sida during the period 2008-2009.

The underlying idea of this study was, from an overall point of view, to describe and analyze the various efforts undertaken to marginalize extremist elements within Indonesia with relevant differences and similarities from European experiences as a reference point. Indonesia was chosen since the country has frequently been described as a major success story. As one of the largest Muslim countries in the world, Indonesia has successfully stemmed widespread development of violent radicalization as well as marginalized Jemmah Islamiyyah, an indigenous terrorist movement with regional and transnational tentacles. However, very little has been written on the relatively systematic efforts on the part of the Indonesian government and various societal actors towards these ends. Issues that the study attempts to elucidate include: How did they successfully marginalize these extremist forces? Which means and methods have been used? Are there any lessons that can be applied to other countries where Sida is active?

The original assignment was aimed at more specifically presenting various potential pathways that, within an Indonesian context, approached religious extremism. This included simultaneously collating efforts done at a nationally comprehensive (strategic) level and initiatives on an individual (tactical) level. The assignment also aimed to propose more general countermeasures intended to prevent the development towards radicalization, and which were applicable to several of Sida's operational and programme areas.

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<sup>3</sup> There is no one uniform definition of what the term radicalization includes. The EU defines violent radicalization as 'the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to those acts of terrorism as they are defined in Article 1 of the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism.' (European Commission, Justice and Home Affairs, "Preventing violent radicalisation", 2006. Accessible via: <<[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/terrorism/prevention/fsj\\_terrorism\\_prevention\\_prevent\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/terrorism/prevention/fsj_terrorism_prevention_prevent_en.htm)>>, 7 October 2009. See also: Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism, *Official Journal L 164, 22/06/2002 P. 0003 – 0007*.) Jonathan Githens-Mazer clearly defines radicalization as: 'collectively defined, individually felt radical moral obligation to participate in direct action.' (Speech by Jonathan Githens-Mazer to ITI (International Terrorism and Intelligence) 2009, Washington DC, June 2009.) Radicalization can be both: 'a process that leads to ideological or religious activism to introduce radical change to society' and a "process that leads to an individual or group using, promoting or advocating violence for political aims.' (Swedish Security Service, "Radikalisering och avradikalisering", 2009. Accessible via: <<<http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/omsakerhetspolisen/radikaliseringochavradikalisering.4.5bf42a901201f330faf80002008.html>>> 14 October 2009).

### 1.3 Issues and Demarcations

The underlying issues that formed the basis for the original project report consisted, for example, of a series of interrelated questions:

- How can CATS's research on identifying the best practices for counteracting violent radicalization be applied to the Indonesian case? Which strategies, means and methods have successfully been used, for example, to marginalize the violent radicalization movement Jemmah Islamiyyah, both politically and socially? How are integration, social, religious and school policy measures weighed in?
- Which initiatives and aid policy means and methods work from a general point of view and which are specific to a certain country? Is it possible to compare the best practices in an Asian regional policy context on a comprehensive level and with a more general knowledge-oriented and comparative approach? Australia's perspective should be considered since the country has relevant experience and overview as a result of its involvement in measures to promote security in Southeast Asia (East Timor, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines).
- To what extent should experiences related to these two areas be analyzed and implemented in terms of Sida's future operations and programmes?

The project (case study) was primarily focused on the period between 2002 and 2009. Due to limited time and practical reasons, the study was also limited to what is primarily a helicopter perspective where the interview programme focused on two main groups: the religious organisations and civil society actors, primarily on relevant central levels, and the relevant government actors (the police) on a national and international level.<sup>4</sup> Interviews were also conducted with individuals who had previously been active within the Jemmah Islamiyyah terrorist movement.

A presentation of a number of concrete measures that emerged from the case study of Indonesia follows. The measures were identified with the aim of being applied outside the country as well as more generally to Sida's current and future programme countries and operational areas with similar conditions.

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<sup>4</sup> Leading representatives for religious popular movements (Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama), politicians, government agencies, NGO's and staff from Swedish and foreign embassies in Indonesia, as well as government agencies and officials in Australia and the U.S. were among the individuals included in the interview programme.



## 2. Conclusions and Relevance for Development Cooperation and Recommendations for Sida's Work

### 2.1 Analysis of Methods to Combat Radicalization

The various measures in Indonesia that aim to preserve the basic system *panca-sila*, that is promotion of a tolerant and moderate interpretation of Islam and marginalization of extremist forces, are often carried out in an unorganized manner and on different strategic and tactical levels. Not only is there often no comprehensive idea of how various initiatives are connected, there is no unified national, regional or local strategy for how the various tools are designed in relation to the desired message or which target groups should be reached. This need not necessarily entail a problem since the various initiatives work well on different levels and for different target groups. However, it is more difficult to evaluate whether the individual initiatives are truly effective from long and short term perspectives.

A central element of the Indonesian model involves working through networks of individuals who have religious credibility, are well established and greatly respected within the various groups that have far-reaching impact on the society. The largest religious organizations in Indonesia have a popular character and thus constitute important channels for actors promoting counter-

measures. The LibForAll Foundation<sup>5</sup> (LibForAll) is a particularly interesting non-governmental actor that is able to create networks and promote effective messages and initiatives in various constellations.

A relatively original way of reaching young people involves identifying popular artists who then communicate crafted messages aimed at counteracting radical currents. Music productions with lyrics about tolerance as a countermeasure to radicalism, violence and terrorism have quickly become popular all over Southeast Asia (with best-selling albums topping the charts on MTV Asia).

Other more long-term channels in efforts to counteract radicalization involve focusing on schools and universities, especially religious schools since they serve as potential sources of radical currents. Amongst other things, cooperation with these schools has resulted in courses being offered at Muhammadiyah<sup>6</sup> schools and universities becoming more pluralistic while starting in these courses to include subjects such as world religion where all religions are studied. The result is more candid and open discussions with young people on current world events (Palestine, Iraq, Gaza, etc.), which might otherwise create feelings of conflict in young Muslims. A new forum for interpretation of emotional world events and conflicts is created that also serves as a vital outlet for frustration. Teachers are decisive cooperation partners in these efforts in terms of designing balanced education programmes.

Cooperation has also resulted in multicultural youth and student camps where different Muslim perspectives on religion are discussed. Other important channels include cooperation with imams and religious institutions. They use, for example, forums to create dialog with a focus on interpreting Islam as a lifestyle characterized by tolerance and pluralism, both within Indonesia and outside the country's borders.

In addition to creating networks and collaboration, another central aspect involves producing different types of printed products, books, articles and news-

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<sup>5</sup> LibForAll Foundation is a non-governmental organization (foundation). It was founded in 2003 by entrepreneur Charles Holland Taylor and Indonesia's first democratically elected president Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammadiyah is the oldest Islamist welfare organization in the world with a membership of 28 million. The organization aims to improve the civilian community, help the poor and promote tolerance and pluralism. Muhammadiyah owns clinics, hospitals, orphanages, schools and universities all over Indonesia. The organization is recognized by the Indonesian government and international organizations. Muhammadiyah was founded in the 1920s by Kyai Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta. The organization is recognized as being a Muslim organization that is open to change and that focuses on modernizing Islam via education and social welfare.

letters. The Wahid Institute<sup>7</sup>, for example, actively and critically examines the message conveyed by radical representatives, and uses articles and information campaigns to encourage debate on strategically important issues.

The information campaigns are primarily designed to be distributed via TV and the Internet and are focused on urban populations. Many of the Indonesian actors that counteract radicalization emphasize the importance of reaching society at the grass roots level. Radio stations are a more effective channel for reaching densely populated rural areas.

The Maarif Institute<sup>8</sup> works to consolidate democracy in Indonesia by organizing open debates and discussions as a means of encouraging citizen involvement. A special distance-education programme has been initiated, which aims to reinforce capacity for increased usage of computers in schools. This has made it easier for the Maarif Institute to distribute its articles and texts to schools where pluralism, tolerance and women's rights in society are discussed.

As regards efforts to counteract the tough radical core, the prevalent perspective involves solely focusing on the individuals who want to (or can) change away from extremism. Allocating resources elsewhere is considered fruitless.

It is perhaps somewhat surprising that none of the actors have focused their activities on mosques. The International Center for Islamic Pluralism (ICIP)<sup>9</sup> considers mosques to be one of the most inaccessible settings in terms of counteracting radical interpretations of Islam. However, the ICIP has the ambition of including mosques in the future. Prisons constitute another setting that has been identified as a potential source of radical currents and recruitment. However, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) do not currently include prisons in their work in Indonesia. However, there is a special programme in

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<sup>7</sup> Wahid Institute was founded in 2004 with the aim of propagating President Abdurrahman Wahid, Gus Dur's view upon a tolerant and pluralistic version of Islam in Indonesia and in the world. The Institute especially aims to establish a dialog between spiritual and political leaders in the West and in the Muslim world.

<sup>8</sup> Maarif Institute was founded in 2002 by Professor Ahmad Syafii Maarif, former chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Board and former president of the World Conference on Religion for Peace (WCRP). The Institute's objective is to reform Islam's perspective by promoting dialog between various faiths, religions and cultures with the aim of creating peace, tolerance and cooperation for a peaceful society. The Institute's activities also aim to consolidate democracy in Indonesia by reinforcing and developing citizen participation through open debates and discussions.

<sup>9</sup> International Centre for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP) was established in 2003 with the aim of supporting development of harmonious conditions between different religious and cultural groups on all levels – on the basis of pluralism and tolerance. The Centre primarily works to establish networks of Muslim intellectuals all over Indonesia. This includes non-governmental organizations, universities and schools, as well as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Indonesian Muslim organizations. The network also includes actors in other parts of Southeast Asia, contacts within the UN, EU and actors from the West.

place to de-radicalize specific inmates in prisons. The programme is being developed by the current management of the anti-terrorist force Detachment 88<sup>10</sup>.

On an individual level, social context and close relationships are considered to be the most effective areas to influence in the de-radicalization process rather than theoretical/philosophical/religious discussions on Islam. Family ties are an important factor for terrorist organizations in terms of keeping the group unified and preventing infiltration. In de-radicalization terms, there is often a close relative that can be used to form social relationships with the radical individual and establish a network for an 'open society'. Focus is on basic human needs being satisfied – medical care, social relationships, education, financial situation and a meaningful occupation (e.g. farming). A foundation on which the individual can stand is formed through employment, marriage and new social contexts. The de-radicalization process entails the entire family being seen as a unit, and efforts are focused on helping and supporting that unit. Examples of this might include supporting the children's education and the family's financial situation (by giving microloans for businesses, for example).

## 2.2 Strategic Level

The key to success on a strategic level – according to LibForAll's founder Charles Holland Taylor – involves mobilizing Muslim public opinion on all social levels to unite behind the message that extremists are ideological 'emperors without clothes'<sup>11</sup> Calling attention to the fact that extremist interpretations of Islam lack a theological basis is a prerequisite in terms of mobilizing the quiet majority of Muslims to reject extremism and to marginalize extremists.

This is not a matter of merely taking the position of watchman over moderate forces where subversive political agendas, infiltration attempts into moderate Muslim organizations/institutions or external financing to extremists are exposed. Success is primarily based on actual organizational capacity in terms of forming horizontal and vertical networks of moderate forces. This is also combined with the ability to find new and innovative ways of communicating the 'countermesssage'. A combination of a credible and effective message on the one hand and the 'right' messenger on the other makes this happen.

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<sup>10</sup> The Indonesian National Police have created an anti-terrorist force called Detachment 88 (D88). The force was initiated after the bombings on Bali in 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Holland Taylor, "An American journey through Islam", 6 February 2007, Accessible via: <<<http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=20332&lan=en&sid=1&sp=0>>> (14 September 2009).

### 2.2.1 *Interfaith Dialog as a Tool*

*Interfaith* dialog plays a central role, both internationally and within the framework of Indonesia's efforts to influence Islam's development. It also serves as a tool to increase collaboration and respect between cultural and religious groups. This dialog helps counteract terrorism and radicalization from a long-term perspective. Indonesia has received support for this type of dialog from several sources such as New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain.

The first regional Asia Pacific *interfaith* dialog was held in Yogyakarta in December 2004. It was sponsored by Australia and organized by the Muhammadiyah religious organization, which took on a leading role during the two-day long dialog. It was opened by Indonesia's president Susilo Yudhoyono. He opened by saying that the solution to the problem is not to ignore the differences between people but rather to admit that difference exist and to create deeper and greater understanding between them. The president expressed that the dialog's intention was to offer the moderate forces within religious groups greater power and influence. New Zealand hosted the third meeting in May 2007 in Waitangi.

Another meeting in Phnom Penh in April 2009 called attention to the progress that various countries have made thus far. New Zealand continues to involve itself in Indonesia's *interfaith* dialogs in different ways and with various exchange programmes.<sup>12</sup> An international conference was held in Canberra in February 2004 in cooperation with NU and Australia. The aim was to give Islamic perspectives on various political areas in Southeast Asia.<sup>13</sup>

In Indonesia, politicians have been aware of the importance of *interfaith* dialogs for a long time. The dialogs are important in terms of manoeuvring among the many different ethnic and religious groups in the country and suppressing conflicts between them. Unfortunately, the debate on which ideology Indonesia should be based (Islam or *Pancasila*) has led to tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus on a political level, efforts have been made over the years to formally acknowledge the existing religions.

Inter-religious forums have also been created and dialogs between different religious groupings have been sponsored. However, this work was primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia up until five years ago. The issues were incorporated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when their importance became clear. This has led to cooperation with

<sup>12</sup> "Indonesia Interfaith and Inter-cultural Initiatives"; accessible via: <<<http://www.asean.fta.govt.nz/indonesia-interfaith-and-intercultural>>> (11 September 2009).

<sup>13</sup> "Australia-Indonesia Joint Media Statement: International Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation: Yogyakarta", The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia, Alexander Downer and The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, Dr N. Hassan Wirajuda, Joint Media Release, 6-7 December 2004. Accessible via: <<[http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2004/joint\\_yogyakarta\\_061204.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2004/joint_yogyakarta_061204.html)>> (11 September 2009).



corresponding bodies in other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Holland, the Vatican, Canada and Italy.

A number of different organizations are involved in *interfaith* dialogs such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama<sup>14</sup>, the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI), the Indonesian Council of Bishops (KWI), the Indonesia Confucianism High Assembly (Matakin), the Indonesian Buddhist Association (Walubi), etc. A prominent example is Interfidei (Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia), which has existed since December 1991. The organization was created by a Christian individual, Sumartana, with the aim of serving as ‘a forum, wherein religious thinking and faith concepts which evolve from the dynamics of discourses on pluralism, as well as real life encounters, were shared and discussed.’<sup>15</sup>

The hope is that conflicts can be avoided as a result of dialog between different religious groups. There are, however, a number of issues that must be resolved or addressed at the meetings such as religious freedom, human rights, cooperation, respect, globalization, etc. It often seems impossible to get at the truly difficult issues that can lead to conflict. These issues are often more of a practical nature rather than of a theological or philosophical nature. Some examples of subjects that may lead to conflict include building churches or mosques, funerals and donations.

Muslim scholars have also taught Christians about Islam, especially issues that pertain to *jihad* and the Muslim attitude to terrorism. These dialogues are held on both national and local levels. An example of this is how Christians on Java have visited and lived with Muslims at the *pesantren* Muslim schools. Christian and Muslim youth have also worked together on welfare projects in rural areas. Cooperation between liberal Muslim groups and Nahdlatul Ulama has considerably improved since 1990.

Interest in *interfaith* dialogs is increasing. However, continuity must be improved since different people attend the different meetings as it stands right now.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded in 1926 in Surabaya by K. H. Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari (1871–1947). The organization is one of the largest socio-religious organizations in Indonesia; there are said to be 35 million members. NU is traditional. The organization aims to propagate for improved relations among *ulama* (trained in religion) in the four schools within Sunni Islam, as well as propagate for Islam on the basis of these four schools. (Oxford Islamic studies, accessible via: <<<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1694>>>, 2009-09-11) NU's activities focus on ideology, education, welfare and politics.

<sup>15</sup> Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia; accessible via <<<http://www.interfidei.or.id/profile.php>>> (11 September 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Bahtiar Effendy, “INSIGHT: Interfaith dialogue: The need to tackle some thorny issues”, *Jakarta Post*, 14 March 2009; accessible via: <<<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/03/14/insight-interfaith-dialogue-the-need-tackle-some-thorny-issues.html?l>>>> (14 September 2009).

### 2.2.2 Popular Culture as an Effective Tool

LibForAll has been exceptional in a regional context for issues involving innovative forms and communicating the message of anti-extremism. One guiding star in these efforts has been selecting methods with maximum impact and that reach the largest possible audience. Thus, it was natural to promote the Indonesian pop star Ahmed Dani and the song *Lashkar Cinta* ('love soldiers'). Doing so created chasms within and a reaction from extremist forces, which could then subsequently be marginalized after they had been enticed to react and reveal themselves. LibForAll says that 6-7 million copies of the album were sold, and that the concerts were covered by the national media. Over 90 concerts were held, and over 10,000 people attended each one. Furthermore, three songs with anti-extremist messages reached the top of the radio charts and were aired on MTV Asia, which generated months of publicity for the anti-extremist message.<sup>17</sup>

Using popular culture, especially pop artists and songs that convey a moderate message, has had a major impact, especially in Asia. There are other similar examples outside Indonesia such as the Pakistani *Yeh Hum Naheen Foundation* (YHNF), which was founded in October 2007 with a similar aim:

- 1) "to reinforce the point that Islam is a peaceful faith that promotes tolerance and harmony;
- 2) to develop an awareness among people on the issues related to growing radicalization of Pakistani youth;
- 3) to promote better understanding and co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims across the globe;
- 4) to convey that the majority of Muslims do not support the rise in terrorism and to deny Muslims the opportunity to involve themselves in terrorist activities;
- 5) to show the positive impact of Pakistan and Muslims around the world, and remove the distance between the East and West through media education."<sup>18</sup>

This campaign was created by Waseem Mahmood. It began as an independent anti-extremist song by the Pakistani super star and guitarist Ali Zafar. However, it grew into a national movement where over 60 million Pakistanis signed a protest list with a pledge to prevent close family members, relatives and friends from getting involved in terrorism. Armed with strategists, celebrities and over 6,000 volunteers, YHNF created a very large counterbalance to extremism in Pakistani society. Eight out of the ten most prominent Pakistani artists were

<sup>17</sup> LibForAll PowerPoint presentation, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> The points have been taken from Yeh Hum Naheen's website and are accessible via: <<<http://www.yehhumnaheen.org/>>> (11 September 2009).

involved in the song called “Yeh Hum Naheen”.<sup>19</sup> Advertising posters that encouraged the general public to contact one of the 6,000 volunteers via SMS text message or by signing the proclamation on the Internet resulted in a network of activists against terrorism being formed.

The creator says that the idea is to use the 60 million signatures as a tool to create an ‘international anti-terrorism day’ that aims to bridge the gap between Islam and the Western world. Other ideas include creating a broad debate forum that emphasizes the issues and ascertains relevant solutions. YHNF is funded by various official and private sources. The Indonesian Sabhili Foundation, a consortium of Muslim businessmen from Indonesia, provides considerable financial support.<sup>20</sup>

The Sabhili Foundation organized a large meeting in Jakarta in November 2008 as one step towards rallying support in different Muslim contexts. The Muslim leaders of the Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Al Irsyad Al Islamiyah, Persatuan Islam, Al Wasliyah, Al Itihadiyah, Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia and Majalah Sabili religious movements expressed their unanimous support of YHNF’s principles and activities in a jointly expressed declaration. The organizations represent over 160 million Muslims in Indonesia collectively.

Both the LibForAll and Yeh Hum Naheen projects, which aim to independently disseminate and internationalize their Muslim and cultural movements across language and cultural barriers, are worth supporting *indirectly*. The credibility of these projects is largely based on the initiative of entrepreneurs on local levels; these should be stimulated and supported in different ways.

Even if the ambition is to create a global Muslim cultural movement that propagates religious tolerance and that is the direct opposite of extremism, the projects’ generic basic principles and focus can be applied and inspired on a more local level in other contexts that struggle with the same problems. One prioritized aspect might be to examine which cultural forms are the most effective in local contexts such as Bangladesh, Somalia or Kenya. Are there any positive cultural forces in these countries that can help build a broad and credible network and that can reinforce a nation as well as mobilize positive counterbalances to extremism? A survey of potential ‘gap bridgers’ and cultural personalities and a careful analysis of effective forms and means would constitute the first step towards a more sustained and massive initiative.

LibForAll has also achieved success through *Lautan Wahu* “Ocean of Revelation” – a widespread TV campaign that consists of 26 video episodes that

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<sup>19</sup> J. Michael Waller, “Muslim pop artists lead youthful resistance to Islamic extremism”, *Serviam Magazine*, January-February 2008.

<sup>20</sup> See Yeh Hum Naheen’s website, which is accessible via: <<<http://www.yehhumnaheen.org/>>> (11 September 2009).

discredit extremist arguments. References are made to scholarly and respected imams who have preferential right of interpretation within Islam.

The first six episodes are primarily based on the Indonesian perspective but contain the appearance of the Grand Mufti<sup>21</sup> from the Egyptian Al-Azhar Mosque and University which is opposed to extremism and terrorism in the name of *jihad*. Even if focus is on an Indonesian audience, LibForAll aims to produce an additional 20 episodes based on other legitimate voices from across the globe that stand united against extremism. The planned episodes will be filmed in Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany with the aim of creating positive voices on the topic of Islam and Muslims.

One important aspect of the LibForAll video project is how the balance between active Indonesian religious figures and credible voices in the Arab world can be reinforced; this will help bridge the gap between Indonesia and the rest of the Muslim world. How can the most influential imams in the Arab world be persuaded to stand behind the project? Creating a video series that is perceived as relevant outside Indonesia as well requires a great deal more work. One aspect that can be called into question is why the LibForAll video production is not primarily focused on Southeast Asia where it can be possibly most effective.

This type of TV campaign is far from new in the battle against extremism. Even if it has primarily dealt with the repressive aspects related to combating terrorism where TV confessions outline the mistakes terrorists have made and how they have been manipulated to commit acts of violence (as exemplified by the classic Egyptan approach), LibForAll's campaign has a decidedly positive focus. There is scope for examining how the message can be communicated most effectively in terms of reaching young people via innovative pop culture. Besides pop artists, comics have been used to reach out to young people with anti-extremist messages.

For example, *The Ninety-Nine* (The 99) comic – which is published by the Kuwaiti-based Teshkeel Comics every month in the Arab world and Indonesia – has proven to be a successful way of reaching young people with positive messages about Islam.<sup>22</sup> The concept is based on action heroes that reflect the prophet Muhammed's 99 different character traits. Even if it is not possible to prove that they counteract terrorism, Islam is presented in a positive light to young people.

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<sup>21</sup> Grand Mufti is a title of a person within Islam who has been appointed by the government to serve as the premier advisor for issues related to Islam practice and who can issue statements such as *fatwa*.

<sup>22</sup> See the official website; accessible via: <<<http://www.the99.org>>> (11 September 2009).

### 2.2.3 Exposing the Extent of Extremism and Its 'True Colours'

LibForAll's publication of *The Illusion of an Islamic State: The Expansion of Transnational Islamist Movements to Indonesia* had a considerable impact on domestic policy. It primarily contributed to neutralizing one candidate's bid for vice president in the 2009 national election campaign, who had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. It also helped drive a wedge between President Susilo Yudhoyono, who was running for re-election, and the PKS<sup>23</sup> party's candidate, which had been his coalition partner for the previous five years. PKS has played a double role – it has supported the government the past five years on the one hand and continued to promote radicalization on the other. Yudhoyono nominated a strong nationalist candidate as vice president instead.

According to Charles Holland Taylor, LibForAll's founder, the PKS party was put on a defensive and reactive path for the first time in ten years. PKS often negotiates on various minister portfolios, with a particular focus on the Department of Education as it can spread its influence on the local levels most effectively. PKS was apparently so surprised by and unprepared for the anti-extremist campaign that it only defended itself by stating that the controversial book was funded by George W. Bush as one of his final political decisions.<sup>24</sup>

Publication of the controversial book was a calculated risk that managed to marginalize extremist political forces. Translation of the book received support from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Not only did it create breathing space, it also created the necessary prerequisites for follow-up initiatives such as debates and other networks to further counterbalance extremism.

On 16 May 2009, for example, the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ('*Oneness in Diversity*') movement was created by Wahid (the former president), Syafii Maarif (the former chairman of Muhammadiyah), Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri (a leading Nahdlatul Ulama leader) and Charles Holland Taylor. The aim of the initiative was to organize leading members of the Indonesian elite and society as a whole to actively prevent the spread of radical Islam on all levels and with all available means.

There were also reports of an extensive SMS text message campaign before the national elections being sent to the general public that claimed that the former PKS president Hidayat Nur Wahid was a Wahabi follower; it also discred-

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<sup>23</sup> PKS is a deeply ideological political party with roots in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. It is an Islamist party that recommends Islamist values for everyday life. Even if the party describes itself as standing between radical and moderate Muslims, party leaders have expressed support for Jemmah Islamiyya, a terrorist movement. It is believed that the party promotes radicalization.

<sup>24</sup> "PKS: The Book's Authors are Bush Agents"; translated from Indonesian; article from inilah.com, 8 April 2009. (<<<http://indie.inilah.com/berita/politik/2009/04/08/97126/pks-penu-lis-buku-antek-antek-bush/>>>; no longer accessible.)

dated a government coalition with PKS.<sup>25</sup> This led *de facto* to political distrust and PKS being prevented from influencing the minister portfolio.

Despite LibForAll's success, the organisation has been criticized for its polarized rhetoric on Islam since it uses provocation strategies to divide Muslims (and Muslim countries) into 'good' and 'ill-intentioned' Muslims instead of offering a modulated view on the different trends within Islam. However, the most recent political successes indicate that provocation is effective in terms of marginalizing PKS.

Indonesia is certainly unique with its coalitions of various strategic players that simultaneously act individually and collectively on different levels against extremism. However, the model of exposing and attempting to marginalize extremist forces additionally through widespread publication initiatives is an interesting tool to study and possibly support for other types of social tensions. In general, the model is based on forcing reactions that are then actively addressed on many different fronts in a structured, controlled and pre-determined manner.

#### 2.2.4 Creating 'Positive' Counterbalances to Extremism

LibForAll has also utilized Rahmatan lil Alamin's network that allows the scope of the programme to extend beyond Indonesia's borders. For example, LibForAll organized a religious summit on Bali. Participants condemned the forces that deny the existence of the Jewish holocaust and emphasized 'religious tolerance as a blessing for all beings' in conjunction with Iranian President Ahmadinejad's holocaust conference in Teheran in February 2007. The conference was organized together with the Simon Wiesenthal Center as a means of emphasizing tolerance between religions.

LibforAll's demonstration of strength involves creating a cross-sector network that is based on a five-level integration of the following: religious leaders (*ulama*) who have garnered widespread public support and who can address radical backlash; religious scholars and teachers who can garner the requisite intellectual and theological support for a pluralistic and tolerant interpretation of Islam; pop idols who have massive support from young people; government leaders who are able to address social factors as an underlying factor of extremism; as well as business leadership that can offer requisite financial support.

One expression of 'positive counterbalance' is the wealth of books and articles that aim to influence Muslim ideological circles. The guiding star of this work is large-scale distribution with the aim of reaching as many people as

<sup>25</sup> "Accused of Being a Wahhabi Agent" and "Hidayat: The PKS and I are not Wahhabis"; translated from Indonesian; articles from *detikNews*, 29 April 2009. (<<<http://pemilu.detiknews.com/read/2009/04/29/132930/1123240/700/hidayat-saya-dan-pks-bukan-wahabi>>>; no longer accessible.)

possible as exemplified by the Wahid Institute which distributes 500,000 newsletters on a grass roots level. The aim of the publications is to reinforce the theological interpretations that oppose violence motivated by faith and to reinforce arguments for separation of religion and state since mixing them undermines Islam and its fundamental values.

Initiatives aim to create a cultural, intellectual and theological mustering of strength that supports a pluralistic and tolerant interpretation of Islam. Identification, mobilization and support of the appropriate public opinion leaders in the Muslim society are decisive to these efforts.

### 2.2.5 Promoting Democracy

Extensive research indicates that blocking political participation, political corruption, a dominant political elite and a lack of hope for the future promotes frustration that can be manipulated by extremism. Channelling extremism towards political processes can promote moderation.

In Indonesia's case, it is clear that PKS has prioritized building and reinforcing its own influence within two of the largest Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.<sup>26</sup> Even if PKS has managed to infiltrate grass root levels of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, these internal subversion attacks have been handled. This is true even though PKS has prioritized top positions and minister portfolios that offer maximum effect and mobilization potential – such as the Ministry of Agriculture with thousands of field offices throughout all of Indonesia's districts.

One decisive initiative was Muhammadiyah's decision to issue a ban on outside influence or activities that were in conflict with the organization's principles according to its charter and against the spirit of democracy. Nahdlatul Ulama has also issued an official decree stating that Muslims are not theologically required to establish a khalifa or oppose democracy. Warnings pertaining to imported ideology and activities that are contrary to the government ideology of *pancasila* have also been issued.

### 2.2.6 Promoting 'Mainstream' Religious Education

The current focus is on reforming religious teaching at schools in rural areas, what are known as *madrassas* or *peasantren*; this focus seems to be exaggerated and has less effect than focusing on government-subsidized schools and reforming curriculums. In many cases, *peasantren* are better at reaching the poorest individuals in society, especially girls, and should be considered a complement

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<sup>26</sup> Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid and Charles Holland Taylor, "A Tradition of Tolerance in Indonesia Offers Hope", *Foreign Service Journal*, April 2008, p.37.

to government-subsidized activities. Focus should be on producing authorized textbooks that are sanctioned by faculties at the leading Islam state universities and by other credible religiously moderate leaders.

A balanced curriculum is of crucial importance. Focus should be on instruction that teaches tolerance and respect for the individual and for other belief systems and opinions. This also includes education that is not solely focused on religion, but which is balanced so that students learn to function in a modern world and feel strong enough to resist the message of extremism outside school. Focus should also be on offering education subsidies to the most vulnerable groups in society who are the most susceptible to the message of extremism.

LibForAll has also established the Institute of Qur'anic Studies, which has its seat in Leiden. The aim is to create a renaissance within Islam with impetus towards pluralism, tolerance and critical thinking and to develop democracy and safeguard universal human rights.

#### *2.2.7 Capacity-Building Initiatives for Muslim Movements and Activists on a Grass Roots Level*

Even if LibForAll's strategy involves working from a top-down perspective, other institutes also contribute by focusing on the grass roots level. The different focuses complement one another. The work is in part focused on denying extremists opportunity, and in part on reinforcing local communities on a social level by combating poverty.

Even if Juwono Sudarsono, the Indonesian Minister of Defence, emphasized in our interviews that combating poverty for 34 million Indonesians is a central component in combating terrorism, all research indicates that there is no proven connection between poverty and extremism. However, that extremists take advantage of a social vacuum to increase their scope of influence is a fact. Unemployment aggravates and can propel social tension in different parts of the country. It is for this reason that the Wahid Institute gives microloans to farmers in the Jakarta surrounding areas and has offered extensive humanitarian aid during natural disasters to homes, schools, and through practical training programmes, etc. Social work has naturally reinforced local influence, and the primary aim is to increase resistance on a grass roots level and within local Muslim associations and organizations.

One aggravating factor in terms of combating poverty and corruption in Indonesia is the fact that the Indonesian military only receives 30 percent of its funding from the government; remaining funding are to be raised from other sources. Thus, corruption is an explicable fact and a major societal problem. Top priorities should include promoting and transferring the practice of positive governance and increasing capacity within the Indonesian administration



to ensure law and order further, in addition to resolving law enforcement and military authorities from the risk of continued corrupt influences.

### *2.2.8 Initiatives should Primarily be Focused on Cities*

Indonesia experienced quick urbanization growth in the 1980s. Extremist forces are the strongest in cities and primarily organized at universities. Many Indonesian students are the first in their families to study at university or live in an urban environment, which has contributed to *Tarbiyah* offering a moral framework to handle individual objectives and define right and wrong.<sup>27</sup>

Extremist groupings have primarily flourished and mobilized against corruption in cities. It is also there that they serve as defenders against real and fabricated injustices that they say befall Muslims and Islam in Indonesia as well as in other areas of conflict such as Palestine and Iraq. The Indonesian security authorities have managed to heavily decimate Jemmah Islamiyyah (JI) and gain a good level of control over the security situation in Jakarta and on Bali.

## 2.3 Tactical Level

### *2.3.1 De-Radicalization Programme*

On tactical levels – that is, on individual levels – it seems as though the Indonesian model with its de-radicalization initiatives within prisons has a great deal to offer other contexts as well. It is clear that primarily focusing on families and social ties is effective in terms of breaking down group loyalty and radicalization patterns on an individual level. Focusing on social initiatives rather than on initiatives against religious indoctrination gives more lasting and effective results that prevent individuals from regressing to previous patterns of violence.

The Indonesian model is very similar to programmes found in Singapore and Malaysia. A basic philosophy is that the government has overall responsibility in terms of preventing families of radical inmates from developing into an alienated and bitter subculture that aggravates feelings of hatred towards the government and that increases the number of potential sympathizers.<sup>28</sup> Working on two fronts simultaneously maximizes chances that the extent of radicalization can be contained. The conclusions here are as follows:

- It is crucial, from a more long-term perspective, to support law enforcement institutions that demonstrate successful programmes for de-radicalization.

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<sup>27</sup> Sadanand Dhume, “Indonesian Democracy’s Enemy Within”, *YaleGlobal Online Magazine*, 1 December 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Greg Sheridan, “Jakarta’s Terrorist Rehab”, *The Australian*, 31 May 2008.

- More initiatives should be promoted to create idea catalogues for various successful tools, de-radicalization strategies, rehabilitation and correctional treatment for radical individuals. At the same time, more research should be initiated to establish the factors of success that underlie various social strategies that aim to involve families, friends and employers in the actual rehabilitation process.
- One prerequisite of socially based initiatives is that the inmates themselves are ideologically open to carrying on a discussion with imams.
- A great deal of the social rehabilitation process is dependent upon financial remuneration to reverse feelings of hatred towards 'the system' – this includes everything from paying for family members' travel when visiting the inmate, paying children's school fees, giving small business loans, paying relevant fees for getting married in prison to medical care, etc. However, the de-radicalization programmes have been criticized because it is uncertain whether the inmates who accept payment are the truly hardened individuals and because focus has solely been on JI even though there are other violent groups that are every bit as dangerous. A lack of success criteria has also been criticized.
- Both Detachment 88 and Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) have major initiatives in place aimed at fortifying security at prisons to prevent terror cells from being formed or other inmates from becoming radical. Primarily Australia, Great Britain, France and the U.S. have offered capacity-building initiatives within correctional treatment in Indonesia and the region.

Detachment 88's comprehensive initiatives to de-radicalize and combat terrorism have been very successful; a great deal of its success is based on positive forces and visionary leadership. Success can also be attributed to the fact that its leadership is non-corrupt.

### *2.3.2 Regional Law Enforcement Cooperation Bodies*

Creating regional and multi-national law enforcement bodies can be of decisive importance, both in terms of prevention and repression when addressing radicalization problems; this can be demonstrated, for example, by the Jakarta-based Multinational Operation Support Team (MNST).

Regional centres of this kind not only create the conditions necessary for better exchange of intelligence information within the region, they also enable capacity-building measures that can improve correctional treatment in different countries, management of radical sub-cultures and information exchange for initiatives that work against radicalization. In addition to operative activities,

good opportunities for creating broader human rights education within the framework of more repressive measures arise. Improved quality of police training within and between countries located in close proximity also results.

## 2.4 Supplementary Tools – Connection to European Experiences

Even if Indonesia is unique in many different ways with its pluralistic and tolerant interpretation of Islam, there are naturally limitations to what extent the different models can be directly exported to other context-specific operational areas. Even though Indonesia has made enormous efforts to export its model to other countries as a means of bridging religious gaps, the country's efforts often encounter difficulty as a result of ethnic differences and cultural norms among Muslims in the Middle East. There are not only geographic barriers, strong cultural differences exist as well. *Pancasila's* influence including a strong separation of Islam and state is unique to Indonesia, but the dividing line ends there. A great deal of inspiration for innovative measures can be found in the earlier analysis of measures. Many of the measures, tools and messages are probably adaptable.

Extensive guidelines for radicalization problems from an aid perspective have been developed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in *Countering Radicalisation Through Development Assistance – A Country Assessment Tool*<sup>29</sup> and the British DFID's (Department for International Development) *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Evidence*<sup>30</sup>. These recommendations are directly useful from a generic perspective.

Experiences garnered from European scholarship and initiatives related to radicalization problems greatly reflect how the issues are tackled by the different actors in Indonesia. However, there is a great deal more to be learned and applied in both Indonesia and other operational areas with similar cultural and religious dimensions.

The following measures have been successfully applied within a European context, and they can possibly be adapted and supplement other measures in Sida's current and future operations and programmes:

- Development of tools/measures to better enable teachers and public authorities to address radical and, from the perspective of aid objectives, negative opinions.

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<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2007) "Countering Radicalisation Through Development Assistance – A Country Assessment Tool", March. Accessible via: <<<http://www.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2E032131-AC5A-43A6-B238-3F8328DF3859/0/CountryAssessmentTool.pdf>>> (13 October 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Department for International Development (2008) "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Evidence"; internal document, June.

- Establishment of a national idea catalogue of counter measures including preventative measures (jointly produced by different actors).
- Establishment of a helpdesk to which public authorities and public actors can turn for information on radicalization and effective methods.
- Increased level of focus on educational initiatives including learning scenarios and workshops aimed at aid workers.
- Special youth initiatives aimed at increasing political, social and financial affiliation to the community.
- Creation of a mentoring system for young people to establish face-to-face dialog and the existence of resource individuals and role models.
- Counteract distribution of radical material via TV, CD-ROM, books and the Internet.
- Dialog forums with militant extremists to reinforce discussion and establish improved trust between individuals, society and public authorities.
- Dialog forums aimed at disseminating information on foreign policy in the Muslim world.
- Courses for citizens on rights and duties of citizenship and democratic principles.
- Support sports as a tool for social change and as a counterbalance to extremism.
- Educational programmes on extremism for correctional treatment staff.
- Development of *table-top* exercises to reinforce the connection between law enforcement agencies and Muslim leaders and associations.
- Development of *integrated awareness training* for individuals who work with young people to enable easier identification of radicalization indicators.

On the whole, the Indonesian measures in combination with the proposals above offer improved conditions for initiatives on both strategic and tactical levels in other contexts.



### 3. Concluding Comments

Violent radicalization is a complex societal phenomenon. Broad approaches are needed both to prevent and counteract anti-democratic forces that propel extremism and violence forward. Addressing these forces from a strategic perspective often demands the presence of forceful leadership and enthusiasts within the various public authorities. At the same time, strong individuals within civic communities are needed who carry on creative and constructive dialogs via non-profit associations and who also, from time to time, coordinate various initiatives and measures on national and local levels.

The development of extremism in Indonesia has been successfully stemmed by cultural factors (*pancasila*) and a strategically coordinated initiative, primarily promoted by LibForAll, including goal-oriented activities on tactical and strategic levels. The main achievement has involved mobilizing counterforces to extremism by creating a robust defence of the principle of separation of state and religion in Indonesia. The *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Oneness Amid Diversity)* movement has also been established; this movement actively works to defend the *pancasila* government ideology and the 1945 constitution. One of the most distinguishing conclusions from this study involves the decisive importance of popular movements, which can serve as a counterforce to extremism by coordinating various initiatives on national, regional and local levels. Even if the possibilities for exporting the Indonesian model are limited and linked to context, our study shows that it is possible to identify different useful and generic tools and approaches to prevent and address different kinds of extremism.

Indonesia stands out as a global leader in the ideological struggle against violent radicalization and extremism. Unfortunately, many Indonesian attempts to link its own successful experiences to the Middle East have been overshadowed and received a relatively chilly reception in the region. LibForAll

constitutes, however, an interesting phenomenon in terms of bridging the gap against extremism both within and between regions. The organization has also, in an experimental manner, used various means and forums to reach out to as large a segment of society as possible by using credible messengers and new technological platforms. The study primarily shows that LibForAll's coordinated media strategy has had a decisive political effect in terms of curbing political parties with an extremist agenda. Exposing the true nature of the parties has enabled marginalization of corrosive, subversive forces.

Finally, different Indonesian tools and lessons can probably be applied to areas of Southeast Asia where extremism appears to be on the rise: primarily in Malaysia and the Philippines, as well as outside the region in areas such as Bangladesh. The Indonesian approach of preventing and addressing extremism can potentially be used in other regions as well. One example might be parts of Africa where Islam does not have the same historical roots as in other regions and where extremism is often an exogenous phenomenon.

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