

THE IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN INDONESIA



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACT	: Aksi Cepat Tanggap / Fast Action Response
ARSA	: Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Perhimpunan Bangsa-bangsa Asia Tenggara)
ASG	: Abu Syyaf Group
BHRN	: Burma Human Right Network
BIFF	: Bangsa Moro Freedom Fighter
BIN	: <i>Badan Intelijen Negara</i> / State Intelligence Agency
BNPT	: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme
BPIP	: <i>Badan Pembinaan Ideologi Pancasila</i> / Agency for Implementation of Pancasila State Ideology
DDII	: <i>Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia</i> / Indonesia Islamic Dakwa Council
FIDH	: Federation for Human Rights
FPI	: <i>Front Pembela Islam</i> / Islamic Defenders Front
FUI	: <i>Forum Umat Islam</i> / Muslim Community Forum
HAM	: <i>Hak Asasi Manusia</i> / Human Rights
HTI	: Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia
IHA	: Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance
IPAC	: Institute of Policy Analyst of Conflict
IS	: Islamic State (Negara Islam)
ISIS	: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JAD	: Jamaah Ansharut Daulah
JAK	: Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah
JAT	: Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid
JI	: Jamaah Islamiyah
JT	: Jamaah Tabligh
LAZIS	: <i>Lembaga Amil Zakat Infaq dan Shadaqoh</i> / Alms and Charitable Collection House
MILF	: Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MIT	: <i>Mujahidin Indonesia Timur</i> / East Indonesia Mujahideen
MNLF	: Moro National Liberation Front
MSU	: Mindanao State University (Universitas Negeri Mindanao)
NLD	: National League for Democracy
NU	: Nahdlatul Ulama
PBB	: Perserikatan Bangsa-bangsa
Persis	: <i>Persatuan Islam</i> / Islamic Union
PKPU	: <i>Pos Keadilan Peduli Umat</i> / Humanitarian Organisation
RNA	: Tentara Nasional Rohingya
UN	: United Nations

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Religious radicalism in the form of violent extremism runs contrary to the principles of human rights and democracy. It also resists the establishment of a modern state in Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P), a UN-initiated global political commitment, warned that several Southeast Asian countries, such as the Philippines and Myanmar, are at great risk of atrocity crimes. Civilians in Marawi, the Philippines, were the victims of the brutality of the Maute militant group backed by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Meanwhile, the Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim community in Myanmar, are under the threat of genocide perpetrated by the Myanmar military regime, prompting retaliatory attacks from the Rohingya National Army (RNA) and the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army.

In 2017, over the course of five months in trying to restore order and stability in Marawi by the Philippine security forces, the number of civilian casualties was significant. At least 165 Philippine military and law enforcement personnel were estimated to have died. As for the Maute rebel group, some 908 militants were reportedly killed. Furthermore, over 10,000 civilians sought refuge in emergency shelters. With assistance from its allies, the Philippine government in the end managed to regain control of Marawi from the ISIS-backed Maute militants.

The turmoil in Marawi and the tragic fate that has befallen the Rohingya have commanded the attention of member states of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations),

especially Indonesia and Malaysia that are both Muslim-majority countries. The citizens of both countries are known to be involved in militant groups in the Philippines. As such, the two countries have turned their attention to the Marawi conflict and the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State, particularly as the atrocities perpetrated against the Rohingya people have led to wave after wave of mass exodus. Thousands of Rohingya refugees have not only crossed the border into Bangladesh, but have also fled to Malaysia and Indonesia. Human rights violations against the Rohingya Muslims have also evoked sympathy and solidarity from Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia.

Research Problem and Question

This research highlights on the significance of the Marawi and Rohingya crises on public policy, peace, and security in Indonesia in particular, and the Southeast Asian region in general. Regarding the conflict in Marawi, the Philippines, the ISIS-affiliated Maute rebel group was backed by other like-minded militant groups from several other Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Marawi siege shows how religious radicalism and violent extremist movements have grown into a political and military force capable of taking over a region and city. Meanwhile, Myanmar's Rakhine State is wrecked by sectarian violence perpetrated by the Buddhist community against the Rohingya Muslims. The situation made worse with the emergence of the Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA). Ongoing violence against the Rohingya also has the potential of dragging in other actors from countries across Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The Rohingya crisis reflects how religious radicalism and violent extremism can spark acts of retaliation against Buddhists in Myanmar and spill over to neighbouring countries.

A key aspect of the Marawi and Rohingya crises is the presence of a stimulus in the form of religious militant groups (often referred to as jihadis) from various countries, including, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar. According to numerous expert analyses and studies, a network appeared to have been built among the jihadis. Other factors contributing to the formation of the network: (a) presence of terrorist organisations in various countries that have begun active operations; (b) availability of funding and logistics; (c) networks and information networks between actors; (d) cross-border mobility of actors, including alleged trafficking of arms and persons in the Philippines.

This research questions how the Marawi and Rohingya crises have roused solidarity within the Muslim community in Indonesia in responding to these conflicts? How has the situation contributed to the rise of violent extremist groups in Indonesia?

Research Aim

- a. To map out, identify, and analyse the narrative structures on the call to action, motives, goals and backgrounds of the actors involved in the Marawi and Rohingya crises.
- b. To identify the impact of the Marawi conflict and Rohingya crisis on the Muslim community in Indonesia.
- c. To draw lessons from the Marawi and Rohingya issues in order to develop an early detection system and its countermeasures.

Research Theoretical Framework

In principle, there is no single factor that drives violent religious extremism. This research therefore focuses on the analysis of narratives that brings these factors together into a multidimensional narrative, and therefore commands greater influence. This multidimensionality covers important aspects that need to be considered: 1) narratives of marginalisation (which contain the social, economic, political, cultural and religious dimensions as the glue); 2) narratives calling to action (based on the first narrative, and then formulated into a call to action); 3) narratives of symbolic violence (narratives for inciting identity-based resistance); 4) narratives of violent extremism (justified under the pretext of religion). The spectrum of narrative structures provides a basis on which to construct an imagined solidarity between groups to build a sense of kinship for fighting against the causes, which they connect to the modern state.

A study of these narratives is important yet often overlooked as an early symptom. For example, the combatants in the battlefields of Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, in a study by Schmid (2014), have built solidarity from a single narrative on the oppression against Muslims. In 2004, the simple message that al-Qaeda conveyed regarding the British government was that the West is waging war against Islam. Gupta (2005) stated that narratives need to be articulated by charismatic individuals in order to be effective. Figures such as Osama bin Laden, al-Jawahiri, and al-Baghdadi were considered enigmatic leaders, and therefore their narratives carry the truth. The narratives that they constructed were meant to portray the West as an enemy of Islam, and is behind the oppression or conflict raging in Muslim lands. As the narratives are all about war, their solution is to fight against the West in defence of Islam, and to destroy the oppressor (Schmid, 2014). The narrative also becomes the basis upon which solidarity emerges within the Muslim community not only on a national level, but also the rest of the world. This forms a worldview on the notion of brotherhood that they come to embrace as one unified religious community.

This worldview is primarily built on the narrative pertaining to the ideology crafted by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri and their Islamist circles in Afghanistan where they lived in exile in the late 1990s (Gerges, 2009). Their narrative went global, and helped weave ties of solidarity

to fight against all that they regard to be represent the West. For example, in the Bali bombings (2002), the jihadis observed the presence of western tourists in Bali, and felt the need to fight against them even though they have nothing to do with the war that the jihadis are waging. A study by Kruglanski, Chen, and Dechesne et al. (2009) revealed that the narratives provided justification for use of violence against others, while at the same time showed trust to group members.

Research by Briggs and Feve (2013), and Schmid (2014) pointed out that a thesis on narratives becomes increasingly crucial to combat violent extremism, and counter the narratives peddled by al-Qaeda and like-minded groups. According to the researchers, a narrative can be a story, or oral account of the worldview held by Islamist groups on the West. The narrative then crystallises and become deeply etched in the minds of jihadis, spurring resistance by waging war against the West and all that it represents, the country, democracy and also the people.

The aforementioned narratives were also conceived in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, South Thailand, and South Philippines. The population in these regions are predominantly Muslim. In the context of global communication through different mediums, they have participated in discussions on oppression, global injustice and the marginalisation of Muslims, and contributed to the creation of groups through intensified identity politics in responding to the same issues in the Middle East. Narratives were also constructed to penetrate the human psyche, providing violent extremist groups with justification to take up arms.

Jasminder Singh (2017) highlighted on how social media has been used to spread the discourse that populations in the southern end of Southeast Asia will live under the rule of ISIS leader Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, and are expected to pay *jizyah* or tax to the Islamic State (ISIS). Social media functions as a means to establish state boundaries, and to foster solidarity on a much wider scale.

The attacks on Marawi in 2017 under the command of Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute was thought to have been conceived through social media. They claimed to have succeeded in seizing the city. This demonstrates their ability to mobilise jihadis to further the *khilafah* (Islamic caliphate) agenda in the sub-regions of countries by involving nationalities from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar, and even probably the Chinese Uighurs, Arabs and Africans (Singh, 2017). Also according to Singh, the Islamic State network in Southeast Asia's sub-regions has not only built a presence in these regions, but also carries the potential of reawakening old networks such as the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) cells. Singh mentioned the extreme vulnerability to the *pro-khilafah* military movement in the tri-border region of southern Philippines, East Malaysia and eastern Indonesia.¹The situation above reflects how social media plays a vital role in the creation of commanderless groups capable of independently taking action against those they deemed to be the enemy. This means that an actual network in the form of an army is no longer important unless a full-fledged war has occurred. Now as sleeping cells, they are

https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/icpvtr/co17120-the-2017-marawi-attacks-implications-for-regional-security/#.XL6UVEtS8_U

mere disseminators of violent extremist narratives, which can then reproduced by anyone, both intellectuals and illiterates.

Violent extremism refers to an act of violence committed as a manifestation of their beliefs to express an ideological, religious or political standpoint as reason for their struggle to establish a governance system based on their ideas and principles. This arises as the result of a competing system of values between theirs and the state's. Violent extremist groups that envision to create an Islamic State (IS) have evolved as they enter a new phase in the wake of their defeat in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Those who have fought in these countries eventually arrived at the decision to operate through what is known as the Daulah Katibah Wilayah Nusantara, the Southeast Asia IS regional military wing.

They consists of two jihadist units (combatants) for the purpose of establishing IS in Indonesia. *Firstly*, the military unit or military jihad that engages in asymmetrical warfare against the state and people. They include suicide bombers. *Secondly*, the education unit of the jihadist movement to inculcate their religious ideological perspective into the minds of students, from kindergarten to university.

War against the modern state and democracy is not only waged through their military wing. *Pro-khilafah* groups, as governance institutions based on Islamic teachings, also propagate their ideology through education in the central and eastern parts of Indonesia where the majority are Muslims.

They take the intellectual approach through the education route. The purpose is to build solidarity and gain popular support from the grassroots. Through the education sector, they would place teachers who can organically penetrate deeper into society in order to foster an imagined solidarity. This creates a foundation upon which an Islamic government, or the caliphate political system will be established. Through the education approach, the jihadist movement were able to mobilise public support, especially in urban areas across Indonesia (Mundayat, 2018).

Asef Bayat (2005) opined that the strength of their network lies in the imagined solidarity that they have built. He also maintains that the Islamic caliphate political system models itself after Europe's modern fascist political system of the 20th century. In an era of democracy, the caliphate system becomes problematic as it runs counter with the concept of a modern state and democracy. In the context of Indonesia, the *khilafah* movement is attempting to prevail over a relatively young democracy as Indonesia has only just freed itself from an authoritarian regime. Under such circumstances, violent conflict can erupt at any time as the discourse on intolerance has spread far and wide. According to Bayat:

“An imagined solidarity is thus, one which is forged spontaneously among different actors who come to a consensus by imagining, subjectively constructing, common interests and shared values between themselves” (Bayat, 2005).

Drawing from Bayat’s theory, this research seeks to analyse how the Marawi conflict in the Philippines and the persecution against the Rohingya in Myanmar has fuelled imagined solidarity between followers, supporters and sympathisers in Indonesia.

In the education sector, they have implanted ‘symbolic violence’ into the minds of students by using the term *thoghut* (evil) as a means to *firstly*, delegitimise the modern state and democracy; and *secondly*, brand the followers of other faiths as *kafir* or unbelievers in a negative light. Many are unaware that they are in fact propagating symbolic violence based on certain religious values that they use as the basis for legitimation. To understand the concept of symbolic violence, Pierre Bourdieu explains that it refers to more than a form of violence that operates symbolically. He defines symbolic violence as “the violence exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002: 167).

Bourdieu contends that symbolic violence occurs through habituation on social agents. In the case of the habitual use of the term *thoghut* among students, the social agents, male and female teachers, play a role through “discourses of intolerance” against people of other faiths or beliefs. A study by the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) revealed rising intolerance in schools across Indonesia in the past ten years.

The routinisation of symbolic violence among students at all levels of education has unconsciously been ingrained and manifested through their behaviours. According to Bourdieu, the power of symbolic violence includes acts that have discriminatory or injurious meaning, including in the context of gender domination and racism. Its effect is sustained through actions within power relations in the social domain. Symbolic power requires a dominator and the dominated in the exchange of social value relating to violence in their day-to-day social relations. Bourdieu (2013) defines symbolic violence as follows:

“Symbolic violence more or less is the ability to be selfish to ensure that the arbitrariness of the social order is ignored or deemed reasonable, thus justifying the legitimacy of the existing social structure” (Bourdieu, 2013: 16-18)

The three perspectives applied in this study are to analyse the narratives, solidarity, and symbolic violence as the underpinnings of violent extremism, which are limited in the economic sense. The study examines the process on how imagined solidarities are manifested into the tangible actions of social networks, which provide them with the resource to build support.

Research Method

This research adopts both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative method helps understand how solidarity is fostered among the followers of violent extremist groups through narratives in order to support or engage in violent acts in Marawi, and the use of violence to show solidarity with the Rohingya people.

The qualitative approach also helps identify the mechanism that the actors use for recruiting and training members including the financing mechanisms. This is necessary to observe the social milieu of violent extremist groups, such as (1) an enabling environment for the recruitment and regeneration of jihadis in universities; (2) narratives and ideologies used for recruitment; (3) organic cells; (4) places of worship as their base; and (5) women’s role in the organisation.

The quantitative approach involves data collected from an online opinion poll on (1) solidarity (N=126), and an assessment of a paper-and-pencil survey; (2) political extremism (N=580), using several valid and reliable instruments in the form of questionnaires.

The researcher gathers data from the following Islamic organisations/institutions:

Name of Organisation/Institution	Location
NU; Muhammadiyah; now-defunct HTI; FPI, ACT; LAZIS NU; LAZIS MU; Dompot Dhuafa; Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia; Nahdlatul Wathan; Persis; BIN; Densus 88; Ministry of Political, Legal and Security Affairs; Ministry of Defence; ASEAN Sec.; AIPR; PAKAR; IPAC; P2P LIPI; HRW; Amnesty; Garis; MMDC;	Jakarta
FUI (Muslim Community Forum)	Jakarta/Yogya
Pesantren Ngruki, JI members	Solo/Yogya
BNPT (National Counterterrorism Agency)	Bogor
RSIS	Singapore
<i>Rohingya Women’s Development Network; Coalition of Rohingya Organization in Malaysia; United Rohingya Organization for Development; The European Rohingya Council</i>	Malaysia
<i>Burma Human Rights Network</i>	London
RSO	Bangkok
<i>Ranau Rescue Team; Sultan Marawi; Marawi people; United Youth Group on Peace and Development; Consultant MSU; Pilumbayan Marawi;</i>	Marawi



CHAPTER II

Narratives of Marginalisation and the Call to Jihad: The Basis of Solidarity

Introduction:

Narrative Construction of Solidarity with Jihad

Using narratives to mobilise sympathisers through social media has become an effective strategy for violent religious extremist groups. Narratives calling to jihad for the Rohingya and Marawi conflict involve power structures to attract targeted individuals who have been exposed to similar religious ideologies, and build sympathy from those who have only started to know such beliefs. The narratives therefore contain aspects on humanity and faith, followed by narratives on the need for an Islamic caliphate to provide justification for answering the call to jihad. The final narrative concerns the *amaliyah* (righteous deeds) in regard to the body and soul, and in material form, as a way to furthering the struggle.

The narratives built by violent extremist groups are not single but multiple narratives in order to better fulfil the different aspirations and interests of those accessing their websites. Through multiple narratives, the social, economic and political dimensions, as well as justice, welfare and caliphatism will converge into aligned thoughts and awareness on the need to participate in jihad against the authority by resorting to violence.

Those who have been swayed into joining the jihadist group find no reason to question the validity and truthfulness of the narratives as they are framed as religious teachings. Sample narratives on the Marawi conflict are as follows:

“To my fellow brethren across the Nusantara (Archipelago), Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines. It now time to join IS. This is the time to unite against the *thoghut* governments in your countries. Come join your fellow brethren in the Philippines under the command of Abu Abdullah Filipina who has been mandated by the *daulah* (empire) to lead.”

“To all fellow brethren who have pledged allegiance, kill their soldiers wherever you are. With your vehicles, hit them. With your knives, stab them. Never be afraid. We will return to attack you, or by our comrades there. God willing, we will cut your head off.”

“If you cannot come here (Syria), join us in the Philippines. If you cannot do so because of old age, send your children here. If it is still not possible, do it in your own country. Never let God’s enemies trample all over you. And if this is still beyond your ability, give what you have for the cause of jihad.”

“To the *thoghut* states in Nusantara, Malaysia and the Philippines, you are not fighting against the *mujahideen* or jihadis, but against God.”

“The condition of the Muslim community is one that is weak, degraded, and awash in sufferings. The Islamic law has lost its power.”

“Muslims who are large in number are being ambushed by others.”

“The Muslim community is being held back by the idolaters in the form of the state, which has caused the demise of Islamic leadership that unifies the people under a single command.”

“IS the answer to ensuring that the Islamic caliphate is established in all its glory as God’s promise to His believers.

“The earth will be inherited by God’s righteous servants, including the jihadis in Nusantara, Malaysia and the Philippines. To pledge allegiance to the caliphate’s *amirul mukminin* (commander of the faithful), and stand united with the caliphate that will unite Muslims around the world.”

“To the jihadist groups in the Philippines, a leader from the Mujahideen Consultative Council has been accepted and recognized by the caliphate, to be heard and obeyed, and to stand united.”

“The unbelievers have unite to destroy the caliphate. Defend through actions in their countries. The war against the caliphate is a war against Muslims. A single drop of Muslim blood spilled will be retaliated by a bloodbath for infidel governments.”

On the acts of violence against the Rohingya, the narrative structure is built as follows:

“...As a minority, the Rohingya Muslims for centuries have been subjected to persecution and atrocities carried out by the Buddhist majority ...”

“Now thousands of Rohingya refugees have landed in Aceh, fleeing from religious persecution where their lives are at risk from the intimidation of Myanmar’s radical Buddhist terrorists. They live in dire conditions, needing the help of fellow Muslims in order to survive.”

“Children are being separated from their parents, some even burnt alive. It is heart-breaking.”

Based on the abovementioned narratives relating to the Marawi and Rohingya issues, the narratives on Marawi are more aggressively framed than those on the Rohingya. The narrative structure has been adopted since 2012 until 2019. The narratives were circulated through social media, allowing for unrestrainable cross-border dissemination. They can therefore be easily accessed and shared by supporters and sympathisers. The development of these narratives indicates that the process of constructing caliphatism in Indonesia is still in the early phase. They are testing the waters, on whether the narratives are solid enough to create the desired impact of provoking war in Marawi.

The government of Indonesia is relatively unresponsive to developments in these narratives. This research did not find any counternarrative. The Nahdlatul Ulama Muslim community also did not find the Marawi narratives relevant to the daily lives of the people. This is because in the real world jihad of the sword is considered a lesser jihad, and the most important form of jihad is the struggle against one’s own base impulses. Meanwhile the narrative on the sufferings of the Rohingya is more about humanitarian solidarity through the provision of relief aid in cooperation with the government.

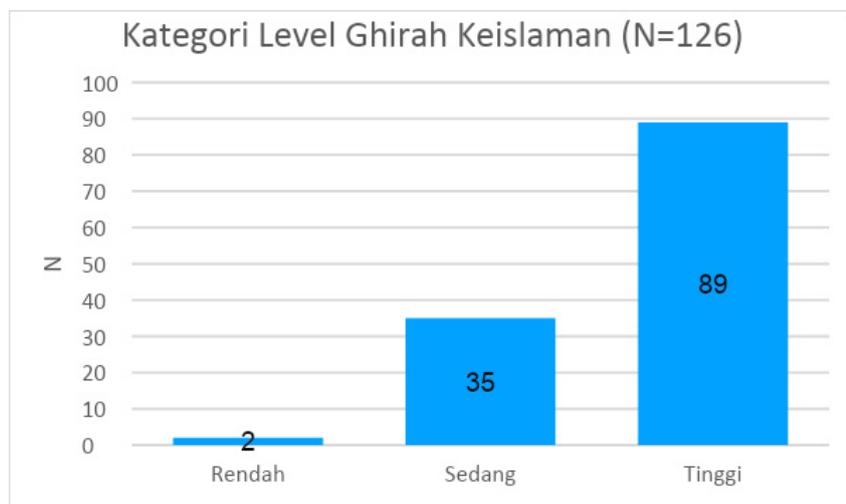
The government’s lack of response on the Marawi situation seems to indicate the government actually not knowing what to do. It only went as far as blocking access to Islamist websites provoking jihad war. However, VPN technology has rendered the government censorship futile. With VPN, ISIS supporters can easily visit sites containing violent religious extremist narratives. It is hard to curtail narratives on social media, and there are no counternarratives. Such narratives have now become a powerful force behind social activism groups politically emboldened to declare their ambition to establish the Islamic caliphate in Indonesia.

Global Muslim Solidarity: *Ghirah* and the Rise in Identity Politics

The conflicts unfolding in many countries, involving Muslims, are often narrated as acts of injustices perpetrated by non-Muslims against the Muslim minority. These narratives are also adopted by the leaders of Islamist organisations to rouse awareness on a global Islamic identity. Islamist groups who are galvanized into supporting actions for Muslim solidarity are those with a strong perceptions of injustice. They believe that Muslims are unjustly treated by non-Muslims, marginalized in politics, and subjected to socio-economic discrimination when they are in fact the majority, such as in Indonesia, or when they are the minority like in the Philippines (Marawi) and in Myanmar (Rohingya).

The researcher's survey on *ghirah* or the religious passion or zeal of the population in general (N=126) showed a strong passion for Islam (Graph 1). Religious zeal tend to be at a high level (N=89 or 70.63 percent of respondents). Only 1.59 percent (N=2) indicated low-level *ghirah*, and 27.28 percent (N=35) fell under the moderate category.

Graph 1. Level of *Ghirah* or Religious Passion

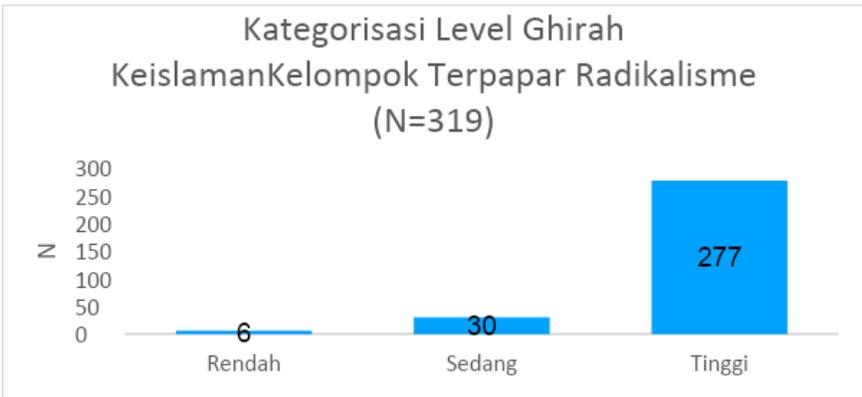


The same results were also obtained from a survey of the university student population (N=580). Based on the survey, 456 (78.62 percent) students demonstrated high-level religious fervour (Graph 2). This is indicative that Muslims who are not exposed to radical ideologies also tend to be strongly passionate about Islam.

Graph 2. Level of Ghirah among University Students



Graph 3. Level of Ghirah among Individuals Exposed to Radicalism



In Muslim communities exposed to radicalism in the province of South Sulawesi (BPS 2019 on Radicalism Index by Province), the level of *ghirah* also tend to be high (N=319) where 277 (88.71 percent) showed strong religious zeal. It can therefore be concluded that high-level religious conviction is likely to be equally evident among groups who are exposed and not exposed to radicalism (Graph 3).

The level of religious passion can help understand the support towards solidarity-based collective actions and violent extremism. Through the survey on the general population, it was found (based on bivariate correlation in Table 3) that perceptions of injustice are positively correlated with religious solidarity and violent extremism, support towards the sharia law, Islamic zeal, politicisation of identity, and intra-religious empathy. This means that stronger perceptions of injustice, higher religious zeal, and the politicisation of identity are aspects that can help explain collective solidarity actions.

Table 3. Bivariate Correlation between Predictor Variables of Islamic Solidarity

** significance $p < 0.01$

No	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Perceptions of injustice	1						
2	Humanitarian solidarity	.411**	1					
3	Violent extremism	.571**	.479**	1				
4	Support for sharia law	.794**	.360**	.562**	1			
5	Religious passion	.561**	.377**	.401**	.672**	1		
6	Politicisation of identity	.462**	.462**	.371**	.515**	.466**	1	
7	Intra-religious empathy	.571**	.399**	.429**	.539**	.574**	.487**	1

Table 3 shows that an increase in Islamic passion is correlated with the perceptions of injustice ($r=.561$), and intra-religious empathy ($r=.571$). A correlation can therefore be established between stronger Islamic fervour and perceived injustice. Individuals with strong religious zeal tend to believe there is unfair treatment of ingroups by outgroups, and are more likely to have high-level intra-religious empathy. This means that individuals with strong Islamic conviction will tend to show greater empathy towards the hardships endured by fellow believers.

All three variables also correlate with the politicisation of identity and collective action (humanitarian solidarity and jihad mobilisation). It can be said that those with high-level Islamic passion, perceptions of injustice and intra-religious empathy also experience the politicisation of identity and tend to have a positive attitude towards collective actions, both non-violent (humanitarian solidarity) and violent (jihad mobilisation in the physical sense of taking up arms or known as *qital*).

The data above show that high-level Islamic solidarity can occur in a Muslim community with strong Islamic zeal and strong perceptions of injustice and intra-religious empathy, and who have experienced the politicisation of identity through narratives. The link between solidarity and support for violence does not always have direct impact, and often there are mediator variables to bridge the relationship between the two variables (Hayes, 2017). This means that a special condition must exist where solidarity may lead to support for violence. This research found that the variable bridging this link is the politicisation of identity. The process of politicisation in qualitative terms is identified in this research as a key aspect for solidarity to be created through a shared passion for Islam. This is manifested in a sense of solidarity that may impel an individual to support violent religious extremism if their religious identity is politicised or mobilised in a deliberate and strategic manner through narratives. This type of social identity is an important

predictor of every action of the movement (van Zomeren, 2013; van Zomeren, Postmes, et al., 2008). Individuals whose identity have been politicised are those who have been moved to take action in the name of the group or organisation (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Members of the movement will launch actions in solidarity with fellow Muslims who they see as victims of the Marawi conflict.

Solidarity Contestation:

Humanitarian Solidarity and Jihad Solidarity

Islamic solidarity, as explained earlier, is driven by heightened Islamic zeal and strengthened Islamic identity through its politicisation. The following sub-chapter will explain the process of the politicisation of identity. Two key variables to help explain the phenomenon are the perceptions of injustice (Yustisia, Shadiqi, Milla, & Muluk, 2019) and Islamic passion (Belanger, Schumpe, Nociti, Moyano, Dandeneau, Chamberland, & Vallerand, 2019). Identity can be politicised when an individual has strong Islamic zeal in the sense that he or she has a strong tendency towards self-identification within an Islamic group, and has fulfilled a sense of self-identification through group values. Individuals with high-level religious passion and perceptions of injustice shall likely be ready for any identity-based mobilisation effort, such as an identity-based collective action (Yustisia, et al., 2019).

When Islamic solidarity is roused by a conflict situation where a Muslim minority is involved such as the Rohingya and Marawi crises, two types of collective action will emerge. First, humanitarian solidarity (non-violence); and second, jihad mobilisation (violent extremism). Individuals motivated to join a collective action, whether humanitarian solidarity or jihad mobilisation, have a distinct psychological condition in the sense that they have strong Islamic zeal and perceptions of injustice experienced by the Muslim community. Both variables make an individual vulnerable to the politicisation of their religious identity. Politicised identity is a strong predictor, where an individual is prepared to support collective action. The role of politicised identity in predicting collective action is stronger for collective action to violent extremism than to humanitarian solidarity. This means that an individual whose identity has been politicised will tend to be much more ready in supporting collective violent actions.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis on the Predictors of the Politicisation of Identity

Model	R	Rsq	Adjusted RSq	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.526 ^a	.276	.264	5,93064

Predictors: (Constant), Islamic Passion, Perceptions of Injustice

Table 3 shows that Islamic zeal and perceptions of injustice are the predictors (an instrument to predict) of the politicisation of identity (adjusted $R^2 = .264$, $N=126$), and the overall analysis shows that the two variables combined significantly predict the politicisation of identity ($F= 23.467$, $p= 0.001$). Each of the two variables, Islamic passion ($t= 3.161$, $p= 0.001$) and perceptions of injustice ($t= 3.261$, $p= 0.002$) also can significantly predict the politicisation of identity.

In the politicisation of identity, leaders play a pivotal role in building the narrative. Leaders are aware of the importance of strengthening identity to incite collective action. This also applies to conflicts in many countries where the Muslim minority is involved. Leaders propagate narratives that highlight on injustices and group-based threats to inflame emotions of anger and fear. These burning emotions will drive an individual to compensate them with group power. In this case, the process in which an individual identifies himself with an Islamist group strengthens for a collective shift (Milla, Putra, & Umam, 2019). This process is a collaborative effort to boost collective self-esteem, previously at a nadir as a result of oppression and injustice. Leaders produce narratives that can stimulate this process of strengthening group identification, among others through the formation of narratives of injustice and threat. Under such circumstances, religious fervour may further intensify particularly as ideological narratives are imposed to give significance to being Muslim. This is where leaders play a prominent role in producing narratives of making meaning. Among the narratives promoted by leaders in this process include the importance of practising Islam in its totality or known as *kaffah*, born-again *hijrah* (return to Islam), the threat of sin if a certain divine command is not fulfilled, the threat of hell (significance lost) or the privilege of struggling in the path of God, from gaining eternal glory to occupying the most elevated rank in heaven when they defend God's religion and die as the result (significance gain).

It can therefore be concluded that the politicisation of identity can explain the support for violent religious extremism where the identity is moulded by strengthening group identity embodied in strong perceptions of injustice and Islamic zeal. In this process, leaders play a crucial role in producing narratives that can push an individual to collective action, whether for humanitarian solidarity or jihad mobilisation.

Collective action arising from identity politics is shown to be also linked to support for the Islamic sharia law (see Table 3). Muslims have taken a positive stance in supporting the formalisation of the sharia law in Indonesia. To probe further into the matter, we held a focus group discussion (FGD) among university students. In terms of demography, participants represent the age group that extremist groups would normally target, from diverse backgrounds, including students who are involved or not involved in student organisations and campus *dakwa* institutes, as well as the alumni of a private university in Jakarta. Based on public opinion, support towards ideological violence is generally attributable to three aspects. *Firstly*, economic dissatisfaction. *Secondly*, perceived injustice. *Thirdly*, deep trust in religious authority figures who persistently promote the struggle towards enforcing the sharia law in Indonesia. The public is fully aware of

the influential role that religious leaders play, and how they have commanding authority over many Muslims in Indonesia (result of FGD with members of the public, 12 July 2019).

The dominant perspective held by members of the public concerns the disappointment or discontent towards the incumbent administration in terms of the economic and socio-political dimensions. Frustration with government among others was expressed by a FGD participants, Kikio, a university student active in campus organisations. She stated, *"...because the Islamic system is not being applied, and they feel that this (democratic system) cannot work, there is no trust in the system, hence the desire to change the governance system because they don't believe in the system, which they consider to be incapable of solving problems."* The public's discontent and disillusionment, and their perceived injustices as part of the Muslim community have made the people vulnerable to rejection against the existing system. Identifying with an Islamic group and stronger religious commitment are the driving factors behind an individual's support for an alternative system.

Support for the sharia law as an alternative system driven by a sense of disappointment is more intuitive by nature as it is not grounded in any proven success stories. This is where religious ideology once again comes in to fill the space created by a sense of uncertainty reinforced by emotions of fear and anger. Islamic fundamentalist groups reinvent narratives of the glory of Islam by revisiting the religious practices during the time of Prophet Muhammad (Halverson, Colman & Goodall, 2011). Trust in the Islamic idealism that is based on the Islamic practices in the days of the Prophet can be categorised as a literal interpretation of Islam that supports the implementation of the sharia as formal law and as the basis for regulating how the country is run (Milla, Istiqomah & Shadiqi, 2019).

Growing support for the sharia law in the political narratives of Indonesia can be explained by the survey conducted by the Centre for Islamic and Social Studies (PPIM) of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) in Jakarta (Muthohhari, 2017). This can be examined from the role of narratives on religion, leadership and support. Narratives on the sharia law as advocated by the leaders of Islamist organisations to Muslims who tend to look up to religious authority figures, will more easily gain support. In times of uncertainty and injustice, the adoption of the sharia law is the dominant narrative touted as the solution to an existing system thought to have failed in bringing prosperity and justice. This was also mentioned by a FGD participant:

"More so as from an early age it has been our culture to obey an elder. So whatever an Ustadz (Muslim cleric) tells you, everything, we will readily accept..."

"...as the teachings are believed to be the one and only truth, so with the system of law that they adhere to, all problems will be solved..." (Kikio)

Based on this perspective, it can therefore be said that support for the sharia law as a consequence of adopting a literal interpretation of Islam denotes a shift in political stance from moderation to fundamentalism or radicalism, which is only one step closer to engaging in acts of violent extremism as they think that what they believe in needs to be actualised as the law is considered justified before God.

This form of political extremism is reflected in a more fervent desire to implement the sharia law in Indonesia. This has arisen from heightened Islamic zeal and aspirations for an Islamic political ideology. Based on a study, the different versions of Islamic political ideologies are the result of different interpretations of Islamic teachings (Milla et al., 2019). In Indonesia, Islam itself can be divided into two camps: literal Islam and cultural Islam, both of which interpret Islamic ideals differently.

The Islamic political ideology essentially refers to the political ideal of Islam. Islam is not only about religious doctrines, but also the foundational values of governance. Islamic ideals that are based on the interpretation of Islamic teachings can be distinguished into two categories (Effendy, 1998; 2009). The first is literal Islam, where Islam must be the basis upon which to formally govern the country. The second is cultural Islam in which Islamic doctrines need not be formalised into law, but should be adaptive where religious values underpinning the ethical standards in governance are deemed to be sufficient.

Relating to the resurgence of religious fervour in the Muslim community in Indonesia, the literal interpretation of Islam can predict political conservatism and extreme political leanings (extreme right). Individuals who tend to literally interpret Islamic ideals are more inclined towards having an extreme mindset in terms of their political views, including in supporting the sharia law. If the individuals are high in religious zeal, their extreme attitudes will only be reinforced.

Meanwhile, individuals who interpret Islam from a cultural lens tend to be more socially liberal (left) and moderate in their political views. Nevertheless, if they exhibit high levels of religious conviction, whether through a literal or cultural interpretation of Islam, both groups will be strongly inclined toward adopting extreme political beliefs in the social and religious sense. This can be explained through a regression analysis and the interaction effects of both variables as provided in Diagram 1 and 2 below:

Diagram 1. Interaction of Islamic Ideals (Cultural) and Islamic Passion on Extreme Political Ideology

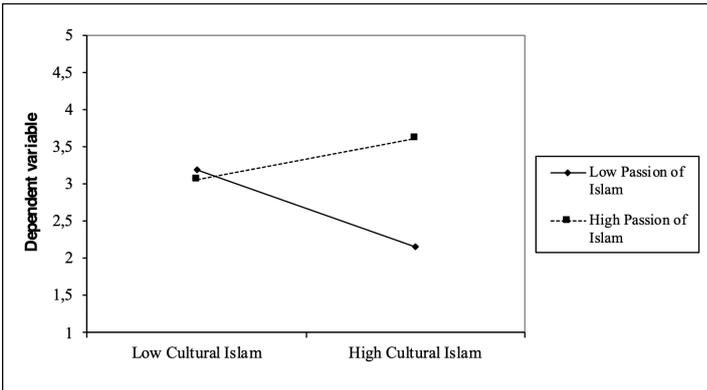
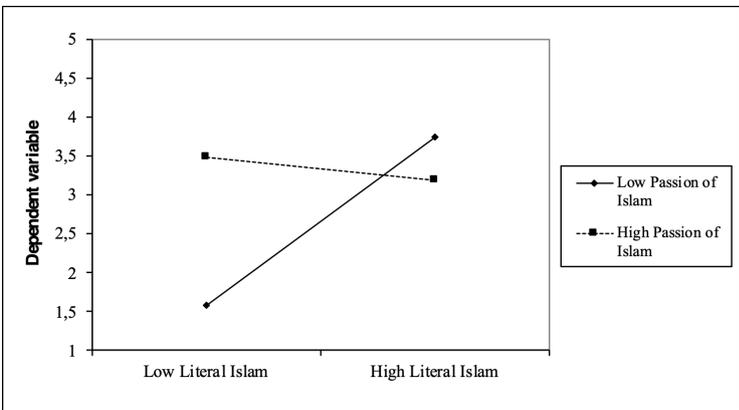


Diagram 2. Interaction of Islamic Ideals (Literal) and Islamic Passion on Extreme Political Ideology



Both diagrams show that individuals with extreme political views are highly passionate about Islam, whether Islam is interpreted literally or culturally. Meanwhile, those who use a cultural interpretation of Islam tend to be far from having an extreme political view when their Islamic zeal is low. This again explains that a strong religious conviction is a contributing factor to supporting extreme political views, which refer to Islamic fundamentalism (formalisation of the sharia law), including being in favour of local regulations that dictate individual conduct and behaviour according to religious teachings, such as an alcohol ban (Mean = 5.67, Min = 1.00 Max = 7.00) and prohibition of *zina* or unlawful sexual intercourse (Mean = 5.24, Min = 1.00, Max = 7.00).

Narratives of Jihad to Marawi More Dominant than for the Rohingya

When the government of the Philippines launched a military offensive against the Maute militants for occupying Marawi City, the rebel group found it necessary to bring in more personnel. They disseminated narratives to garner support through social media. Calls to join the war in Marawi to fight against the infidel government of the Philippines have spread widely on social media. Jihadis from Southeast Asia and other parts of the world showed their support, either financially or direct involvement as combatants in Marawi.

Narratives calling to jihad in the Philippines were directed at the Muslim community in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. The Indonesian version of the narratives were targeted at the Malay-speaking audience. The narrative structure is the same regardless the language. They manipulate the human emotion of sympathetic affection by narrating how only a few jihadis are willing to join the jihad in the Philippines when the Maute group is in dire need of help, desperate for additional combatants to be able to win the war. This call to jihad shows how the ISIS-Philippines group requires assistance from jihadis in neighbouring regions, which in this case is Southeast Asia.

According to an observer who is a former leader of Jamaah Islamiyah, Nassir Abbas, narratives on “foreign pressure and intimidation against Islam” are used by ISIS to open people’s minds. The purpose is to build sympathy, empathy, the desire to defend, solidarity, a sense of sharing, and the need to join the struggle. This is an effective approach to attract people particularly when presented through photos, videos and testimonies. It is also one of the methods used by Nassir Abbas himself to recruit and turn youths into radicals.

The method was not only employed during the era of Jamaah Islamiyah. It is the same approach applied by ISIS, HTI, and other radical Islamist groups in Indonesia. According to Nassir, to set a jihadist movement in motion, these groups need not wait for a momentum to occur abroad like the situation in the Philippines. There are still groups or individuals itching to take action in Indonesia. They feel a sense of obligation to do so in order to achieve what they believe as true.¹

According to former terrorist Abu Tholut, a Muslim answers the call to jihad for two reasons. *Firstly*, due to the human psyche where in the presence of similarities, communities will form and this is human nature. *Secondly*, due to the religious factor, or fellowship of faith among Muslims. Fellow believers are like one body. If one limb is hurting, the other limbs would feel the same. Therefore, if a Muslim is attacked or hurt, other Muslims would also feel the pain.

Abu Tholut mentioned how this is widely understood, especially among the *ikhwan* (brothers in Islam) who frequently attend religious study circles. This is also not exclusive, as many Muslim preachers have often delivered this particular Hadith (record of the sayings and traditions of

1 Interview with Nassir Abbas in Jakarta in August 2019.

the Prophet Muhammad) in religious study gatherings. Those who regularly follow Islamic study sessions and hear the Hadith will gradually build a sense of compassion for their fellow Muslims. And therefore, Abu Tholut pointed out, when a certain situation befalls Muslims in some part of the world, responding to the call for jihad would be a humane gesture. Moreover, if this were to happen to Muslims in need of help, according to Abu Tholut, it would be only be reasonable for other Muslims to answer the call or offer assistance, and this cannot be contained.

In this case, Abu Tholut also considered whether the situation will spill over to Indonesia. Will the conflict experienced by the Rohingya or the one in Marawi or other regions incite retaliatory attacks in Indonesia? According to Tholut, retaliation is not that easy. There are driving factors to an act of revenge.² The first Bali bombings in 2002 were actually not an incident attributable to a single root cause, nor were they simply an ideological issue. The attacks were in response to the decision made by the United States and NATO in deploying troops and invading Afghanistan in a bid to dethrone the Taliban regime. This was the impetus that roused sympathy from other Muslims, prompting them to attack any US citizen wherever they may be.

The attack on the people of Afghanistan by the U.S. and its allies had sparked sympathy from the Muslim community in Indonesia. In Afghanistan, 99 percent of the population are Muslims. Religious narratives were a powerful means to lure Indonesians to join the jihad in Afghanistan. Their primary purpose was to help Afghanistan counter the Russian invasion, and to undergo military training in Afghanistan, which will then give them the opportunity to put their training into practice on actual battlegrounds in the country. These religious narratives, according to Badhawi, Abu Tholut's junior in JI, also appealed to Indonesian Muslims who would go on to provide assistance to fellow believers under oppression.

According to Badhawi, *firstly*, religious narratives would more quickly elicit a reaction from other Muslims who will readily offer assistance because they were more easily acceptable. *Secondly*, it was easier to devise an all-out strategy while at the location.

Meanwhile, the Marawi conflict was already a battle zone of competing interests. It was therefore difficult for Neo-JI to enter the fray. Even if they decided to do so, it would mean bringing in strategists, weapons experts and other specialists. This is because the militants in Marawi are in a league of its own, and therefore the Neo-JI would have to send people who can match their abilities.

Ustadz Shobarin from the Indonesia Mujahideen Council (MMI) explained that the fighter's pledge includes an institutional pledge to help fellow Muslims in other parts of the world who need assistance, but in the context of upholding the sharia law. In the Ambon situation for example, MMI was part of the network of Muslim solidarity and kinship. MMI was duty bound to help because the Quran enjoins the obligation to provide assistance to those in need. The threat factor to Muslims is an incitement for Muslims to take action. But if it is sporadic, due to regional issues and not systematic, it will be handled diplomatically by MMI. If MMI is present at

2 Interview with Abu Tholut, August 2019.

the conflict zone, it will only be temporary. If systematic however, such as in Afghanistan, Syria and Palestine, MMI will maintain a continuous presence.

According to Shobarin, the behaviour of the Muslim community will shift accordingly when they obtain distressing information, in the sense that the information is widely covered, and not from a single source. This makes it easier to mobilise Muslims to help out fellow believers. The movement is made possible if the *ulamas* (religious scholars or authority figures) are the driving force. The *ijtima ulama* (consensus of Islamic scholars on a point of Islamic law) for example provides the impetus for taking action or not. As such, according to Shobarin, taking action or showing solidarity will not bring significant impact without some sort of strong support from the mass media.³

For the Marawi conflict, as it was not widely covered by the media, it was harder to mobilise Muslims to join the struggle. Only certain people with special connections such as ISIS and JAD, according to Shobarin, were able to make their way to Marawi. Shobarin added that not all cases require sending people off to fight as certain situations can now also be solved through diplomacy.

According to Shobarin, the Muslim community has now become more coordinated when carrying out an activity that is linked to the outside world. If the issue has gone public, only then would they make a move. For the Marawi situation, Shobarin stated that MMI was practically unresponsive, because it was not widely publicised in the media and there was no instruction from the *ulamas* to travel there. How the Muslim community reacts to an event occurring inside or outside of the country is therefore contingent on several factors:

1. Call of conscience: When a government fails to step in and undertake the necessary procedure, they will take matters into their own hands. However, this requires courage considering the risks, and not everyone is willing to take bold risks.
2. Affordability: Not everyone has the wherewithal. If they have financial backup, they can make their wish come true and dispatch their members for the mission.
3. Government's political interest: The government at times turns a blind eye when citizens are moving to another country, such as Afghanistan or the Philippines (Marawi). Given the government's political interests, the government appears to be allowing or legalising the movement.
4. Extensive media coverage: Widespread media attention can spur the Muslim community into action.
5. *Ulama's* instruction: The Muslim community is now more coordinated, and will act at the *ulama's* behest.

3 Interview with Ustadz Shobarin from MMI, August 2019.

Several reasons why JI and MMI did not respond to the narratives calling for jihad to Marawi are as follows:

First, ISIS, JI, and MMI adhere to different ideologies. JI and MMI did not feel the need to answer the call to jihad. For the Marawi case in particular, ISIS had declared full responsibility for the incident. As such, all non-ISIS Islamist organisations found it unnecessary to offer assistance, of any kind, to the Maute group.

Second, they choose to no longer be reckless, as they have time and again walked into the trap laid by the *ikhwan* groups. Therefore, during the Marawi conflict, JI assigned several members to Marawi to take stock of the situation first hand. Several considerations were taken into account before deciding on whether to send their people to Marawi. JI saw no need to send personnel there as it was not considered an obligation to assist the Maute group, even though they are one in faith.

Third, Abu Tholut observed that when making a move, ISIS has no political policy, unstrategic, and brutal—which have become the group’s characteristics. According to Tholut, in the Philippines the group has been “decimated”. Their actions were simply for serving the organisation’s interests, with no regard to the people. They understood that Marawi is a Muslim-majority city. The Maute group does not operate in Davao or Manila. When Maute militants laid siege to Marawi, government military forces swooped down on the city, and it was the Muslim community who became the victims. Marawi was destroyed and the people’s lives were disrupted.

Tholut pointed out that the Philippine government’s decision to launch a military offensive in Marawi was well-grounded. Marawi is a business hub for traders with a considerable number of wealthy businessmen who financially support MILF. How can this financial flow be stopped? The rebel group’s presence there gave reason for the Philippine government to put an end to the stream of funds by taking action and then wait for the Maute group to react, which in due course escalated into a full-fledged conflict. This provided grounds for the government to bombard the city. This was proven two years after the conflict as the government still has not rebuilt the war-torn city. It appears as if the government chooses not to restore Marawi to its normal state. If the city were to return back to normal, donors would resume their financing of separatist groups who will then act out their resistance against the government.

The same sentiments were expressed by Sidney Jones, Southeast Asia terrorism expert, and Marine Colonel Muhammad Reza Suud, the Indonesian Defense Attaché in Manila, who stated that the government of Indonesia has channelled funds for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi. Yet to date, nothing has been done to rebuild the ruined city. Sidney Jones also mentioned that considerable funds from international agencies such as the World Bank, and countries such as Australia and Japan, have been allocated for Marawi. Not to mention funding for women and children’s programmes, and other projects. The city still has not been

rehabilitated. There is no clue as to why the Philippine government has delayed reconstruction, while the people are left to languish in evacuation camps to this day.⁴

Fourth, Abu Tholut was not convinced that the Katibah Nusantara or the Southeast Asian combat unit of ISIS could be established there. He contended that Katibah Nusantara is mere discourse that cannot be realized. To bring this into fruition, a large brigade would be required. *Katibah* means battalion, and Tholut doubted that a battalion of thousands of fully-armed combatants actually exists.

According to Abu Tholut, Katibah Nusantara is not about all three countries combined, but relates to the presence of a formidable, heavily-armed brigade. And this is proven to be non-existent in the Philippines. Therefore, the Katibah Nusantara in Abu Tholut's opinion is mere talk and propaganda to strike fear into the enemy.

Fifth, a war is not merely physical confrontation, but also psychological warfare. Katibah Nusantara, which refers to the triangular region between Indonesia (Sangita), Malaysia (Sabah) and the Philippines (Zulu), according to Tholut may simply serve as a route for them to cross over and join these groups. However, it cannot be considered to be Southeast Asia's *khilafah* territory. This scepticism is based on the fact that the movement's headquarters is often moved around. MILF was previously based in the province of Maguindanao before moving to Rajamuda. This is also the case for Abu Sayyaf. The seat of power was formerly in Sulu, but has now relocated from one place to another.

Sixth, Abu Tholut, Shobarin, and Badhawi did not agree with the ideology propagated by ISIS. The Maute group is an ISIS supporter, whereas JI embraces a different ideology altogether. As such, they did not respond to the Maute group's appeal to Southeast Asian jihadis to join the struggle. JI supporters, especially those trained in Afghanistan, have obtained a deeper understanding of jihad and the requirements to engage in jihad. This understanding is then passed on to their underlings who did not receive training in Afghanistan. As a result, although JI and Neo-JI are of different generations, they share the same platform when it comes to jihad.

JI disagrees with ISIS-style jihad that indulges in brutal tactics and easily labels fellow Muslims as infidels. ISIS's vicious and violent ways include butchering humans like animals, and killing people for no reason. ISIS even declared certain lawful foods in Islam as unlawful. These extreme ways are the reason why JI and its splinter groups do not see eye to eye with ISIS. And therefore do not sympathise with Maute and other ISIS-inspired groups in the Philippines, even when they desperately pleaded for Indonesian jihadis to assist and join them.

Seventh, the changing situation in the Philippines. Separatist groups such as MILF who previously rebelled against the government have now agreed to make peace with the government. They will form an autonomous body where MILF members will work and receive remuneration from the government. MILF no longer wants to confront the Philippine government. A group known

4 Interview with Sidney Jones in August 2019, and Marine Colonel Reza in September 2019.

for its military strength and strategy is no longer the government's enemy, but an ally and partner. It has even joined forces with the government to crush ISIS in Marawi. ISIS-Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf group and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) are relatively small groups of Islamic militants. If an Indonesian however still decides to head to the Philippines to assist these groups, it would just be a few and only from the ISIS group.

This is unlike the earlier JI group where up to hundreds of members travelled to the Philippines. But they were there not to engage in war, but to undergo military training held by JI Indonesia at the Hudaibiyah camp, which they established in Mindanao. JI was only making use of the available land, and not to support MILF in the fight against the government. Several JI members however embraced the ideology and went on to support ISIS-Philippines. JI's primary interest however was to train its members as it would have been impossible to do so in Indonesia.

Upon completing training at the camp, JI members would return to Indonesia. The pull factor that attracts Indonesian militant groups to the Philippines therefore is not the war, such as in Marawi. Without a war taking place, they can enter and leave the Philippines for training purposes. Their departure to the Philippines resembles military service training for university students. Military training for militant groups could never take place in Indonesia, but in the Philippines this was made possible. They travel to the Philippines for this specific purpose.

Eight, if a conflict were to recur in Marawi and religious narratives once again employed to spur jihadis into action, there may actually be people willing to go there. However, Tholut mentioned a list of factors that jihadis take into account before making the decision to leave. Not only feeling sympathy to the plight of the Muslim community in the Philippines, but also real factors that need to be thoroughly considered, such as bravery. Courage here does not only mean the bravery to go to war, but also to take risks by having to leave behind their wives and children, and even losing their jobs. Although jihad entails the reward of paradise, Tholut believed that not all have the courage to take such risks. Despite being fellow ISIS supporters, members of ISIS-Indonesia will not necessarily answer the call to jihad. It may still be heavy for them to leave behind loved ones, even with the wherewithal.

Apart from the family as a point of consideration, there is also the issue of facilities. Are there supporting facilities for Indonesian jihadis willing to leave for the Philippines, such as funding for those who are financially unsound? In addition, the strong backup is needed from organisations making the necessary arrangements such as accommodation and others. According to Tholut, if there are members who decide to head for the Philippines, and because Maute is affiliated to ISIS, the ones leaving would only be ISIS personnel with links to Maute and other ISIS-affiliated terror outfits in the Philippines. Tholut mentioned how each group has their own networks.

Nine, the death of the Maute brothers may spark vengeful anger from within the group that could push them to regroup. They are however a small and exclusive band of militants. If the

group were to resurrect itself, it will be playing against the MILF, which has struck a common chord with the government. It would therefore be difficult for Maute supporters as not only will they be facing the government, but also the MILF, a seasoned player in the jihadist war and strategy.

Marawi for Indonesian Jihadis

Janin, a Marawi resident who was a victim of the armed conflict, has his own take of the involvement of foreign fighters, including from Indonesia, alongside the Maute rebels. They have joined the war to fight for the same beliefs, the ISIS ideology. The sense of solidarity in the network of ISIS-inspired groups arose from their shared ideology, which provides reason for Malaysians and Indonesians to join the Maute group. They are not blood brothers, and neither are they school friends, in fact strangers to one another, yet bound by the ISIS ideology.

Janin believed that one of the reasons for their arrival in the Philippines was because they consider the Philippines as the Daulah Islamiyah or the Islamic State for the Southeast Asian region. They saw the Maute group as a powerful force capable of establishing an Islamic State in the region. However, the unifying element of these like-minded groups is the shared goal of raising funds for a victorious war. Then came along a group with the financial clout, and the willingness to finance these groups.

The Maute brothers were originally also MILF members, and were tied to the MILF through family connections. Their father served in the MILF organisational structure. But the group later fell apart. When MILF decided to cooperate with the government, many young individuals were disappointed with the group. Their dreams of securing independence were shattered after the MILF was co-opted by the government. This led to their joining the Maute group, where they have hung their hopes on to making their dreams real. This was the narrative used by the young population in the Philippines, where they were driven to join the Maute group because the MILF has established partnership with the government, and therefore losing all hope with MILF.

However, when Marawi was under siege, the group changed the narrative, stating that their involvement in the war was to establish an Islamic caliphate. This narrative shift however did not change how the people see the Maute group. They continued to support the group because it is has become an integral part of society in the fight against the government. In the cultural sense, the spirit of jihadism is embedded in society as a result of the Mindanao people's protracted struggle against the government, who all the while feel discriminated against. The Maute group also constructed the following narrative: "If you are not with us, then you are part of them, the infidels." This narrative has inspired people to join the group, lest they be labelled an infidel.

Given the narratives used by the Maute group, Badrus Sholeh presumed that emerging narratives would no longer raise the issue of discrimination or the persecution of Muslims, but would stress on the fight against a *thoghut* or tyrannical government. This narrative can be used in all places or countries where the government does not apply the sharia or God's law. In Southeast Asia, narratives like these are easy to sell. They believe that a *thoghut* government exists in every Muslim-majority country in Southeast Asia. They may frame their struggles through a narrative shift from an ideological standpoint to bringing attention on the fight against a despotic government. Another possible narrative for mobilising solidarity is the humanitarian issue. In the Rohingya case for example, they were willing to lend a hand for humanitarian reasons.

In responding to or engaging in acts of violence, jihadist groups hold different viewpoints. According to Nassir, Indonesian jihadis fall into several categories:

1. Individuals who do not see Indonesia as the right place for performing *amaliyah* or righteous deeds, and therefore look beyond the country. Upon returning to Indonesia, they would stay quiet and lead normal lives. But once an opportunity for jihad emerges overseas, they would leave. However, if they feel that a certain action in Indonesia is a worthy cause, they would get involved. People like these, who went to Syria only to find out that life there is not as they expected with nowhere to go, would eventually choose to return to Indonesia. According to Nassir, they would tend to go to the Philippines. They will not hold back because psychologically, they were trained in Syria to not restrain themselves.

For those who went to Afghanistan, they were trained into understanding that the primary concern is not the weapon but self-control. They were taught how to strategize, while Syria-trained operatives receive more tactical training. Those who think tactically tend to have the desire to once again engage in *amaliyah*. They would be inclined to head to the Philippines where conflict has brewed. Prior to the Syrian conflict, individuals under this category went to the Philippines, but once Syria spiralled into war, they headed to Syria. And now when the situation in Syria has somewhat subsided, according to Nassir, they would definitely make their way to the Philippines, even though they would take into consideration on whether local residents would be supporting their presence, particularly as the locals play a critical role.

2. Becoming a jihadi does not always mean being directly involved in the battlefield. According to Nassir, many businessmen who have been brainwashed are willing financiers of jihadism. They indirectly become jihadis who are inspired by the narrative on "the need to uphold Islam, to fight for Islam". In addition, the group would typically quote a particular Hadith to win over wealthy individuals. The Hadith reads, "Allah shall admit three kinds of people into paradise for an arrow: firstly, the person who makes the arrow; secondly, the person who finances the making of the arrow; and thirdly, the person who shoots the arrow." Donors fall into the second category of people funding the making of the arrow. This Hadith is often

cited to inspire well-heeled individuals who wish to engage in jihad, but indirectly. Nassir informed that in Indonesia, there are many bankrollers for jihadist-inspired acts.

The Marawi conflict is reported to be an ISIS jihadist movement to test the scale of the jihadist mobilisation in neighbouring countries at the regional level, and the wider Asian region. Marawi also served as training ground on urban warfare to fight against the Philippine government who they perceived as the enemy of Islam. Upon completing warfare training in Marawi, they are ready for deployment to Syria or other countries targeted by ISIS. As explained in the earlier section, jihadis are recruited through the construction of narratives specifically designed for social media.

The Marawi conflict took place within the context of discord between Khatibah Masyarik and the Bahrumisyah group, an ISIS-affiliated Indonesian terror outfit in Syria. This subsequently impacted on the dynamics of ISIS groups in Indonesia. The Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) in Indonesia under the command of Aman Abdurrahman was affiliated with Khatibah Masyarik led by Abu Jandal. It can be said that the driving force behind the call to jihad in Marawi was the Bahrumisyah network. Therefore, it was not surprising when only a few ISIS supporters in Indonesia went to Marawi due to opposition from the large Indonesian-based group (IPAC, 2017).

Aman managed to bring together the different pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia. He recruited many former terrorist prisoners from Nusakambangan, such as Abu Musa, Zaenal Anshori (Lamongan chapter of FPI), Muhammad Fachri as administrator of the ISIS internet network, and Khearul Anwar, leader of Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) in West Java. Many of those who went to Marawi for jihad were from pro-ISIS groups affiliated with Katibah Nusantara under the leadership of Bahrumisyah. Others were from Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), the Sumatra network of Khatibul Iman now known as Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah led by Abu Husna, and the network formed by Syaiful Anam alias Brekele who recruited from prison.

Meanwhile, Abu Nusaibah's al-Hawariyun network recruited jihadis to join the jihadist movement in Marawi. Syaiful Anam has built a strong network given his affiliation with MIT under the command of Santoso in Poso. He is a veteran player in Jamaah Islamiyah (IPAC, 2017).

Pro-*khilafah* groups essentially benefited from Indonesia's process of democratisation with a relatively non-repressive government. The Muslim community was also not under colonial rule or foreign occupation. A relatively stable situation politically, with no social unrest or conflict. Muslims in Indonesia are not a minority group oppressed by the government. It is therefore not surprising if only a small number went to Syria as jihadis. This means that despite the many narratives calling for jihad to Marawi, their interpretation are always associated with the Syrian conflict. This is because the narrative on oppressed Muslims in Syria has become the master narrative that they have come to believe in.

Countries with the highest number of fighters joining ISIS in Syria and Iraq, in absolute terms or per capita, tend to be politically repressive (Saudi Arabia: 2,500 combatants), politically unstable (Tunisia: 6,000 combatants), discriminatory toward the Muslim minority (Russia: 2,400 combatants), or a combination of the three characteristics.

Furthermore, freedom of expression in Indonesia has created space that allows radicalised groups to advocate the Islamic law and Islamic state without the need to resort to violence in the pursuit of their goals. As a result, “violent” extremists have moved to “manageable” levels.

On 24 October 2017, the Indonesian parliament passed a law that allows the government to ban organisations who oppose the Pancasila state ideology. President Joko Widodo on many occasions have repeatedly stressed on the importance of national diversity and unity. The President also formed a special committee to advise on the most effective ways to promote Pancasila, known as BPIP (Agency for Implementation of the Pancasila Ideology), formerly the UKP-PIP (Presidential Task Force on the Implementation of Pancasila Ideology).⁵

Suhardi, head of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), also spoke on the importance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the standardisation and monitoring of preachers. The reason for this, according to Suhardi, is that the spread of anti-Pancasila and intolerance issues are difficult to monitor. He then pointed out on the vital role that the Ministry of Education plays in countering ideologies that are contrary to Pancasila in schools. Even though Suhardi has formed a team for creating synergies across government ministries and agencies to combat terrorism, more work still needs to be done at the implementation level. There are still obstacles to inter-agency coordination to make sure that the respective functions are implemented.⁶

The government however continues to face difficulty in curbing the further spread of the caliphate agenda. Pro-*khilafah* groups have broken up into various organisations, some of which have penetrated into the educational setting as the base for reproducing values promoting the caliphate agenda. Furthermore, narratives on caliphatism have been disseminated through different social media platforms. For example, despite a formal ban against Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the organisation has split up numerous times undetected. They actively promote the *khilafah* agenda, encouraging actions aimed at the establishment of the caliphate by making Indonesia as a pilot project on a much larger scale than in Marawi. As was the case in Marawi, physical warfare could be crushed by the Philippine government. However, the education approach and dissemination of religious narratives to build support for the *khilafah* agenda could not be contained. Instead, they are interrelated in their responses to issues such as the Rohingya crisis.

5 <https://www.matamatapolitik.com/in-depth-napak-tilas-konflik-islam-di-indonesia-sejak-1998-hingga-pilpres-2019/>

6 <https://jatim.idntimes.com/news/jatim/vanny-rahman/narasi-akhir-zaman-dan-eksistensi-terorisme-di-jatim>

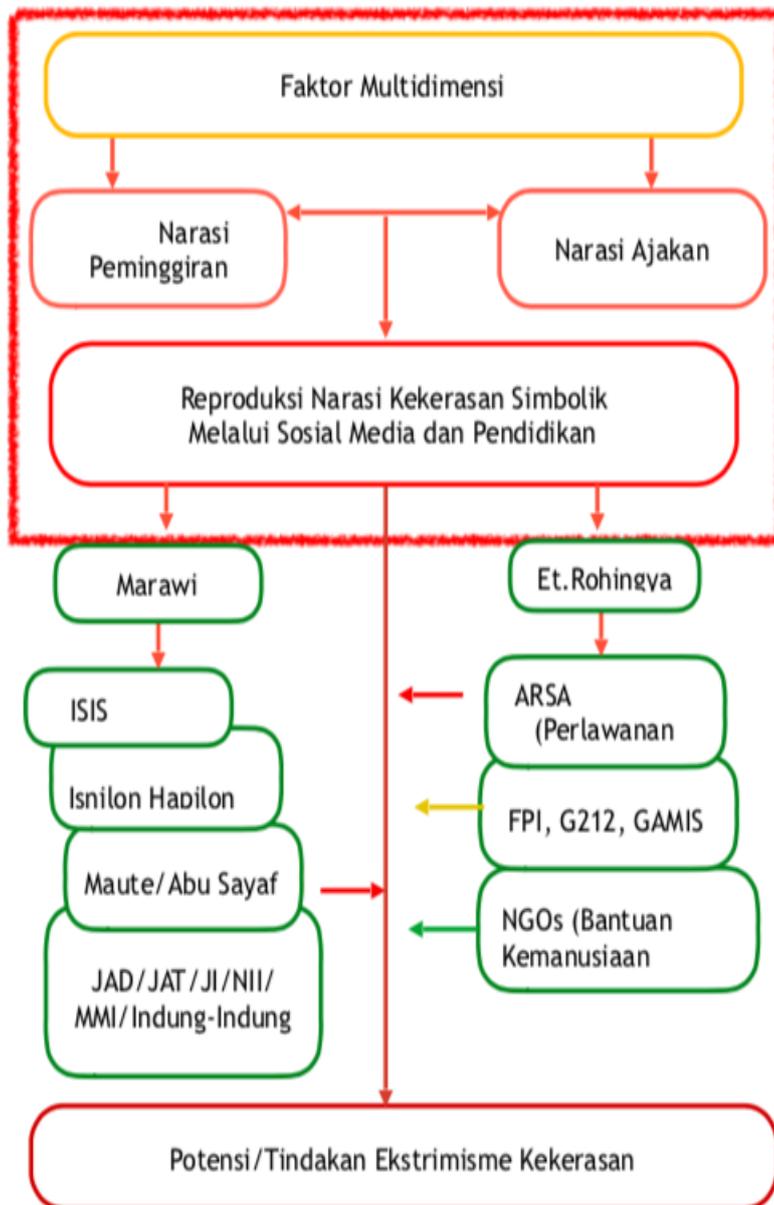
Summary

The widespread propagation of narratives online calling to violent extremism in solidarity with the Rohingya Muslims, in qualitative terms, has not had too much impact on the Muslim community in Indonesia. The narratives instead tend to spur acts of humanitarian solidarity. In line with this, several Islamic NGOs (non-governmental organisations) in Indonesia have channelled aid to Myanmar in an effort to ease the burden of the Rohingya.

Meanwhile, narratives geared at fostering solidarity with jihad in Marawi, in qualitative terms, were more impactful on groups under ISIS, such as Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), as well as Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT). Islamic communities such as Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) and Neo-JI were more cautious in responding to the Marawi conflict by first assessing the situation. Based on this survey, they arrived at the decision to not assist the ISIS combatants in Marawi. The reason is that JI in principle differs from ISIS—except for those who were initially JI members before joining ISIS.

In quantitative terms, this research found that individuals who follow a cultural interpretation of Islam were likely to be more liberal socially, and more moderate in their religio-political views. It is different however for individuals with strong Islamic zeal. Those who interpret Islam literally or culturally showed a strong inclination to adopt extreme religio-political beliefs, both in the social and religious sense. Narratives disseminated on social media have more influencing potential on both groups.

These findings showed how a strong conviction in the Islamic faith plays a significant role in explaining support for extreme political views, including the support for jihad according to the narratives propagated on social media.



Keterangan:

- Tindak Ekstrimisme Kekerasan
- Berpotensi ke arah Ekstrimisme Kekerasan
- Bantuan Kemanusiaan



CHAPTER III

Violent Extremism in Marawi and its Impact on the Muslim Community in Indonesia

Introduction

ISIS' presence in Indonesia in 2012–2014 elicited enthusiastic response from jihadis. The spread of narratives on the *khilafah* as a political concept in particular had revived the dreams of a return to glorious Islam among Indonesian jihadis. Mass rallies and marches were staged nearly every week by ISIS supporters in Indonesia. These events were openly held along main thoroughfares. They even declared a pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi who they considered as the leader of the caliphate. Al Fatta Mosque in Menteng, Central Jakarta, was one of the locations for the recruitment and oath-taking ceremony of ISIS supporters. Fauzan al-Anshari—an ISIS recruiter who has since deceased—at the time presided over the oath-taking ceremony, along with Syamsudin Uba and other ISIS figures.

Young recruits took part in the oath-taking ceremony, swearing allegiance to Sheikh Ibrahim bin Awad bin Ibrahim al-Husseini al-Quraisy, Baghdadi's real name.¹ Not only that, Syamsudin Uba, an ISIS commander, also led jihadis stage rallies around Jakarta with the ISIS flag hoisted. Budi Waluyo, an ISIS supporter, stated that in 2014 some 300 people were ready with complete documentation to depart for Syria. According

¹ Siadari, Eben E., "Media Australia Sebut Masjid di Kawasan Menteng Jakarta Sarang ISIS, 10 August 2015, Satu Harapan, retrieved from <http://www.satuharapan.com/read-detail/read/media-australia-sebut-masjid-di-kawasan-menteng-jakarta-sarang-isis>, on 22 June 2019.

ome!



to Budi, the departees were not just regular people, but were civil servants, military and police officers who were captivated by ISIS and their vision of a new caliphate.²

According to Nassir Abbas, a former JI member who was an al-Qaeda training instructor in Afghanistan and Mindanao in the Philippines, many Indonesians had left for Syria in 2012. He stated that BIN (State Intelligence Agency), the police, and the Densus 88 anti-terror squad were aware of this, but allowed them to travel to Syria as at that time it was not considered a threat to national security. At the time, there was no law explicitly prohibiting a person from assisting groups like ISIS, and also there was no ISIS then.³ This shows that way before ISIS was founded as an institution, the ideology has emerged in advance, further spreading across Indonesia.

BNPT's then Deputy for Prevention, Protection and Deradicalisation, Major General Agus Surya Bhakti, as published in *Tempo.co* on 4 August 2014⁴, informed that the ISIS ideology was exported to Indonesia before ISIS was formally declared an institution. Through the internet, the ideology has spread around the world, including in Indonesia. And also through the internet, they communicated with ISIS members in the Middle East.

Along the course of its development, the people in Southeast Asian countries were not only drawn to join ISIS in Syria. They also gradually established the Southeast Asian unit of ISIS with the Philippines as the focal point. The question then is why choose the Philippines as ISIS' regional centre in Southeast Asia? Why not Indonesia that clearly has a significant pool of jihadis? Why not Malaysia that has numerous instructors to support the jihadist movement? According to Nassir Abbas, the Philippines was chosen by the group for its enabling environment. Conditions that make the Philippines a safe haven for the group include the following:

1. Certain areas are under the control of separatist groups such as MILF, MNLF, Abu Sayyaf, and BIFF.
2. Support from the local people protecting the groups. If the authorities were to visit the region, the local people would not cooperate, staying silent, not saying a word.
3. Donors who determine the mobilisation of ISIS groups. In the early stage of JI's formation, JI leaders such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Abdullah Sungkar, and Ajengan Masduki did not send members to the Philippines, which is geographically closer to Indonesia with cultural affinities. JI eventually dispatched 6 people to the Philippines in 1989. The purpose was not for training and taking up arms, but to learn how the MILF could survive despite being isolated by the government.

2 Idem.

3 Interview with Nassir Abbas, former JI member and training instructor in Afghanistan camps. Interview took place in Jakarta on 22 April 2019.

4 "Bagaimana ISIS Masuk ke Indonesia", 4 August 2014, *Tempo.co*, accessed at <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/596975/bagaimana-isis-masuk-indonesia>, on 22 June 2019.

In any country where separatist groups are in existence, weapons would be in circulation. The Philippines has the largest number of separatists compared to other countries. There are political and historical factors that enabled separatist groups, such as MNLF, MILF, BIFF, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), ISIS, and New People's Army (NPA), a communist organisation in the Philippines, to grow and thrive. The presence of a large number of separatist groups means easy access to more affordable weapons. The Philippines is the preferred location for its vast opportunities. Not only is it close to Indonesia geographically, but there are many similarities such as in terms of race, skin colour, food, and the local Philippine language is easy to learn. Furthermore, separatist groups hold power over several regions, therefore making it easy for members to move from one place to another or to remain within the group and be protected.

Prior to the MILF signing a peace deal with the Philippine government, the group was protecting foreign fighters. But now, only ASG, BIFF, and ISIS are providing such protection. MILF has now struck a peace agreement with the government. As such, partnering with the MILF carries risks as many within MILF have close ties with the government.

Foreign fighters from Indonesia for example still feel safe with ASG because they have jointly organised an exchange program. JI members visited ASG camps to learn their tactics, how they move from one place to another, and leave no trace. ASG operatives employ better tactics than the MILF. Although not well-structured as an organisation, ASG is more adept in their manoeuvres, with more effective operations. In terms of equipment and supplies, MILF is more well-stocked than ASG. JI members can therefore learn from ASG's strategies and tactics. As an instructor, Nassir combines the knowledge from ASG and MILF, implements the strategy and trains the three groups (MILF, ASG, dan BIFF). Nassir does this separately in three different locations. The combined training method developed by Nassir was not only implemented by Nassir himself, but also by his subordinate, Donnie Operassio alias Zulkifli from Indonesia. Knowledge acquired from training was put to use for the successful operations against the Philippine army.

The separatists groups in the Philippines feel indebted to militants from Indonesia as their leaders were once trained by JI senior personnel, Nassir Abbas' disciples and other JI members. Indonesians went to the Philippines not only as followers, but also for the purpose of exchanging knowledge with the separatist groups. Local residents such as those involved in Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, and others are still antagonistic toward the government due to their dissatisfaction with those in power. MILF's cooperation with the government led to their disappointment with the organisation. And as such, resistance against the government is still in the top of their minds. A conflict would attract jihadis abroad to join the separatist groups. Foreign jihadis are not concerned over the conflict in the country. They give priority to how they can get their hands on weapons and explosives.

Brief History of the Marawi Conflict

Marawi City's historical background can be traced to the battle between the Spanish troops and the indigenous Maranao tribe in the 17th century. Marawi was an early settlement area established under the name Dansalan by the Spanish conquistadors in October 1639. The conquest of Lake Lanao by the Spaniards led by Francisco Atienza from Iligan provided the pretext for invading surrounding regions. The Maranao warriors however managed to drive the Spaniards out to eventually return to Iligan.

Dansalan in Maranao, near Marawi, was an important city in the southern region with strategic seaports, establishing itself as a trading port in the Sulu Seas from the 17th to 20th century. Marawi's occupation by the Spaniards would be detrimental to the trading port, which was an important commercial hub at the time. The Spaniards attempted to conquer the territory by overthrowing the Sultan of Maguindanao in the late 19th century. The arrival of the Americans in 1900 however caused the Spanish colonisers to retreat. Marawi later became the capital city of the Province of Lanao from 1907 to 1940.

The change from Maranao to Marawi occurred in 1956 by virtue of a 1940 agreement. The charter was granted to the old Dansalan municipality through the joint initiative of the Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon and assemblyman, later Senator Tomas L. Cabili. The official name change from Dansalan to Marawi was made through the congressional amendment of the Charter in 1956 sponsored by Senator Domocao Alonto. This was enshrined in Act No. 1552 of 16 June 1956. In later developments, Marawi City was renamed "Islamic City of Marawi" to reflect its Islamic identity as proposed by parliamentary Bill No. 261 in the Batasang Pambansa.

The city's Islamic identity is gained by the fact that the population is predominantly Muslim. The people of Mindanao are mostly Muslims. In the context of Spanish colonialism and following the independence of the Philippines, the inhabitants of Mindanao, including the people of Marawi, felt socially, economically and politically marginalised, stoking the desire for establishing an independent state. By the Philippine government, this was considered unconstitutional, leading to a long-drawn-out conflict that continues even to this day. Some rebel groups have also sought independence, such as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Bangsamoro Freedom Fighter (BIFF), Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Isnilon Hapilon and his network, and the Maute group.

Peace-making efforts to reconcile the Philippine government and rebel groups were continuously made by neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The final solution was achieved through a referendum, which resulted in full autonomy that was later approved by President

Duterte for implementation. This took place in the wake of the Marawi conflict. The Philippine armed forces stormed the city in an attempt to capture Isnilon Hapilon. The Abu Sayyaf Group and the Maute rebel group who have sworn fealty to ISIS were involved in the occupation of Marawi. The situation that unfolded later made it necessary for the groups to form a coalition, proclaiming the city as a new province under the ISIS caliphate. They went on to set ablaze a Catholic church, the city jail and public schools. Church congregants and local residents were taken hostage, and a police officer beheaded. They also occupied the city's major roads and bridges. Marawi's siege by the coalition of ASG, the Maute group and Isnilon Hapilon's network, later on also involved certain BIFF units. Top commanders, Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute brothers, Abdullah and Omar, were members of local armed groups, Abu Sayyaf and the Maute group. Both groups were previously accused of involvement in bombings, attacks against government troops, and abductions in the Philippines.

In light of the situation, President Duterte placed southern Philippines under martial rule. War was unavoidable. Initially Duterte predicted that the battle would be over within two weeks, but instead carried on for five months. Support for the ISIS group in Marawi was built through social media by propagating jihadist narratives to join the Marawi battlefield. Such support was indeed secured from many foreign combatants from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Yemen, and Chechnya. Children groomed as fighters were also involved in the battle. They included students from local schools in Marawi. It appears that ISIS key leaders, the Mautes and Isnilon Hapilon, have taken root in schools where the majority are young militants. Marawi was left in ruins, and evacuees have no homes to return to. Local residents endured hardships that may lead to a whole new set of problems.

The conflict somewhat subsided after the Philippine troops on 16 October 2017 raided the hideout where Hapilon and Maute were holed up. The attack ended with the death of both militiamen. Duterte then declared the city "liberated", even as sporadic fighting continued. On 23 October, or five months into the siege that started in May 2017, the Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana announced that there were no more "militants" in Marawi after troops defeated the remaining rebel fighters. The bodies of 40 suspected armed men and two of their wives were found as the last remaining group. The Philippine military forces however were still looking for the three sons of Isnilon Hapilon, who were believed to be next in line for leadership to continue the fight. The five month-long battle resulted in the deaths of 920 Marawi ISIS combatants, 165 government soldiers, and at least 45 civilians. To date, martial law remains in force in Marawi, Mindanao and surrounding areas to prevent the possibility of continued sporadic fighting.

The Maute group, known earlier as Daulah Islamiyah, was founded in 2012 by Omar Maute, brother of Abdullah Mate, and sister Jorge Abu Najem. The group propagated a brand of Islam that permits violence against others they considered kafir or infidel, which include the Philippine government. The Mautes are known as wealthy business owners with political connections in Butig, Lanao del Sur. The Maute family's financial clout has made them into financiers, and their

Islamic proselytising activities provided the foundation for a religious ideology that is used to fight the government. The Mautes are even regarded as the manifestation of family terrorism for their religious beliefs that allow the use of violent extremism.

The Maute group set up headquarters in Butig, which is also a stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The Mautes and MILF are tied by marriage. Abdullah and Omar Maute are first cousins with Azisa Romato, wife of the late MILF Vice Chairman for Military Affairs, Alim Abdul Aziz Mimbantas, who is buried in Butig. Furthermore, the Mautes were once MILF members.

Prior to the battle of Marawi, the Maute group clashed with the Philippine army in February 2016, resulting in the takeover of their headquarters in Butig, Lanao del Sur. In November 2016, the group went on to seize the town of Butig but was forced out by Philippine security forces after one week of fighting. Two officers of the Philippine National Police were found to have defected to join the group. Maute group members could often be seen in rallies waving the black flag bearing the ISIS insignia. Butig Mayor, Ibrahim Macadato, however asserted that the group is not affiliated with ISIS, even though it is an armed group. Intensive surveillance by the Philippine military forces came across training manuals and other documents indicating a link to attempts at establishing an Islamic state. On account of this, it was considered that the Maute group may have connections with ISIS.

The Maute group was also highly sophisticated in their social media use. They were adept at attracting the interest of students and faculty members of the Mindanao State University in Marawi. Through narratives, the potential recruits were impelled to join the jihadist movement. The young recruits were physically trained to toughen them up should they go into combat. With the setbacks suffered by ISIS in Syria and Iraq, experts have warned that Syrian and Iraqi combatants may flex their muscles in Southeast Asia, especially in southern Philippines, with support from affiliates in Indonesia and Malaysia. In this context, the Maute group may have already pledged allegiance to ISIS. Since 2016, reports on jihadist activities in the Philippines and ISIS-linked Filipino combatants showed increased coordination, cooperation, and cohesion between Southeast Asian jihadis and ISIS.⁵

The Maute group relentlessly launched attack after attack. On 4 October 2016 three Maute militants were arrested for the bomb attack on Davao City in 2016. The three group members were TJ Tagadaya Macabalang, Wendel Apostol Facturan, and Musali Mustapha, who were linked to Abu Sayyaf and aligned themselves with ISIS.⁶ Based on a body of evidence, the Philippine government officially acknowledged the Maute group's affiliation with ISIS as announced by President Rodrigo Duterte, and was even linked to narco-terrorism.

5 <https://warontherocks.com/2016/05/signs-of-a-nascent-islamic-state-province-in-the-philippines/>. "Signs of a Nascent Islamic State Province in the Philippines". War on the Rocks. May 25, 2016. Retrieved 12 June 2019.

6 <http://k2.abs-cbnnews.com/news/10/07/16/maute-group-men-arrested-over-davao-city-blast>. Tan, Kimberly Jane. "'Maute Group' men arrested over Davao City blast". ABS-CBN News. Retrieved pada 17 July 2019.

ISIS' Defeat in Syria and the Rise of ISIS Nusantara

ISIS' declaration of Katibah Daulah Wilayah Nusantara or the Southeast Asian combat unit to support al-Baghdadi was an expression of deep disappointment over the quiescence and weakness of jihadist group leaders in the region. The jihadis are believed to be in the pocket of the government, either because they were in prison, or they see things differently. This sense of frustration reverberated among students at the Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi through deliberate exposure in order to provoke them into carrying on the fight and joining ISIS.

After two armed clashes in Butig, two weeks before the government launched an attack in Marawi, fighting ensued in Piagapo, near the MSU campus. From reports following the clash in Piagapo—as well as the photos and videos enclosed—three Indonesian nationals were found dead at the scene. The government recovered a mobile phone on one of the bodies. The phone contained communication in the Indonesian language, and their faces were foreign-looking. MILF members informed that Indonesians were involved in the Marawi battle, and have fought alongside the Bangsamoro militants against the Philippine government way before terrorist groups existed in the Philippines. They have formed close ties with MILF, Abu Sayyaf and even other groups. Within these groups, Indonesians were even nicknamed “*indung-indung*”. The assistance Indonesians provided to the groups was more on teaching group members through technology and training. The Filipinos on the other hand are experts in making their own weapons, whereas in regard to technological know-how they would learn from the Indonesians.

Mindanao became one of ISIS' newest outposts following the loss of territorial control in Syria. The second largest island in the Philippines, Mindanao is said to be the regional centre for extremist groups to build a strong territorial foothold, which they name Daulah Katibah Wilayah Nusantara.

The conflict between the government with support from the Catholic majority as many assumed, and the Malay Muslims who felt persecuted, was the main premise behind narratives for building solidarity. As a consequence, the southern regions of the Philippines have become a contested territory between both religiously-linked forces to foster solidarity. Even to this day, they continue to fight with the Philippine central government for control over the region.

The Marawi conflict, in certain respects, illustrates how violent extremist groups in Southeast Asia function. The connection between jihadis from Malaysia, Indonesia and South Philippines has made mobilisation possible through textual narratives on social media as well as visual narratives by disseminating videos on YouTube and other social media platforms. These extremist networks have even showed consistency in performing jihad in a bid to establish an Islamic caliphate.

The Marawi conflict was essentially a local crisis. It was the solidarity fostered through narratives that has made region-wide jihadist networks show sympathy and solidarity by joining the fight in Marawi. ISIS members from several countries in Southeast Asia who were arrested and thrown in jail have united to build an imagined solidarity for creating the Islamic caliphate in the region, even though they have yet to succeed. Textual or visual narratives have become part of ISIS propaganda in Southeast Asia to rally support on the notion that a war is underway. The propaganda film was in wide circulation, even though it was not about the battle in Marawi but in Cotabato. Students were helping to spread the message to build sympathy on how they were being attacked and persecuted.

Women play a vital role in the spread of propaganda messages. This in itself is a propaganda strategy to encourage men to not think twice in performing jihad as women themselves have joined the fight. Women are being used to kindle fighting spirit among men in confrontations with government military forces. In addition, Marawi was also the training ground on urban warfare for those who may at any time be needed to go into battle in Syria or other regions.

An imagined solidarity among Muslims to join the battle in Marawi has been built. However, it is still not strong enough to make the Khilafah Islamiyah Nusantara a reality. The territorial nation-states of Southeast Asia are far more forceful. Even if Katibah Nusantara exists in the region, the people of Southeast Asia remain unconvinced to join ISIS. Only a proportion of them have become part of the movement by reason of familial ties or were fellow prison mates.

The battle that they fought in Marawi has made them strong, all set for urban warfare. However, they were disheartened when ISIS Central gave lower priority to Katibah Nusantara. ISIS Central recognises Africa and the Middle East more as its regional representation, even though in both regions there were never any acts of *amaliyah* as was the case in Marawi. As a result, a united region-wide caliphate in Southeast Asia has not been formed because ISIS followers are firmly bound by the social unity of nation-states and their lingua franca. Arabic as the lingua franca of the caliphate will not be able to unite them. Nevertheless, their sense of solidarity has been tangibly manifested in their resistance against modern states through their slogan: "And never will we obey those in authority, the tyranny, or the infidels". Such resistance is now still latent, and will once in while surface to show they exist in the region.

Once the Philippine government succeeded in neutralising the militant groups, Marawi was liberated from their influence. The Muslim ethnic groups in Mindanao could then return to their normal lives before the Marawi siege. Due to the sheer scale of destruction in Marawi, the city to this day remains inhabitable. ISIS liaisons and the Maute militants have met their deaths, and virtually no linkage left between the Islamist groups in Mindanao and the IS international network. As the Philippine government ended the siege in Marawi, the battle-scarred city serves as a monument to the devastation wrought by ISIS. This image counters the narratives that ISIS in Marawi has thus far constructed. The public now sees ISIS in a bad light. Allowing Marawi

to remain a ghost town has become a gnawing issue that stands between conflict survivors and the government. The affected communities expect the Philippine government to rebuild Marawi, yet the city is still left in shambles as a stark reminder of the havoc that ISIS could bring to a city.

Impact of the Marawi Conflict on the Muslim Community in Indonesia

Research has shown that not many Indonesian nationals were directly involved in the Marawi conflict. Nevertheless, post-conflict solidarity among them has sustained. An issue often raised during the conflict is the involvement of the Jamaah Tabligh (Tablighi Jamaat) movement, not as the perpetrator but the victim caught in the conflict that erupted in Marawi. Intelligence reports showed that due to the open nature of the Jamaah Tabligh, the movement was used by IS as an entry point into Marawi.

This research has not detected significant flow of funds raised from Islamic organisations for Marawi, not even for non-political humanitarian purposes. Given the situation there, foreigners could not as easily go in and out of the area. From various Islamic organisations surveyed (NU, DDII, NW, Persis), none gave much attention to the Marawi conflict. Nearly all of the said Islamic organisations saw the Marawi conflict as local political contestation.

Concern over Marawi's growing influence was expressed by Ali Imron (life sentence prisoner for the Bali bomb attacks, Jamaah Islamiyah member). He suspected the possibility of Marawi and Mindanao serving as jihadist training ground. The scale of destruction in Marawi caused by airstrikes, and jihadis evading capture by boring holes from one house to another showed how jihadis effectively strategize to survive. It also demonstrates their mastery of urban warfare tactics. Information from interviewed respondents and statements from researchers based on first-hand observation indicated that it would be difficult for foreigners to enter Marawi where residents have evacuated as it is a geographically challenging territory. Therefore, as speculated by Ali Imron, it is most likely that jihadis have been trained on urban warfare in preparation for the next attack in Southeast Asia.

Summary

Islamist extremist groups primarily use propaganda narratives on oppression, injustice and threats to build solidarity within the Muslim community. These narratives are punctuated with references to religious texts embodying sacred values to provide justification for violence (Milla, Faturachman, & Ancok, 2013; Milla, Putra & Umam, 2019). Narratives countering radical extremist propaganda are therefore important. This has proven effective in presenting an alternative explanation for convicted terrorists serving time at the Lapas Sentul correctional facility (FGD terrorist prisoners at Lapas Sentul) regarding ongoing conflicts. The main narratives would hence no longer be monopolised by radical groups. Nevertheless, counternarratives are not enough as there are practices, either symbolic or actual, that violent extremist groups engage in. This means that disengagement from their groups is critical. This is proven by the fact the when in prison, they instead would have the opportunity to build much wider regional networks as they come from different countries.

In addition to the narratives propagated on social media, other pull factors for those involved in the Marawi conflict are the drugs and arms trade and inter-group rivalry. However, the master narrative pertains to religion. For Indonesian Muslims, the Marawi conflict itself, in terms of narrative, at the moment is not as popular as the struggle in Palestine and Syria. Nevertheless, aggressive propagandising by radical extremist groups such as IS has proven effective in influencing a small slice of the Muslim community in Indonesia, especially among ISIS supporters.

In light of this, it is crucial to anticipate the group's movements. Collective mobilisation of the Muslim community is highly possible, not only to conflict areas, but may also inspire domestic radical extremist groups. This reflects the vulnerability of issues on conflicts where Muslims are involved, and the trend towards strengthened Islamic identity among Muslims in Indonesia. Ideologists and key religious figures also play a defining role in strengthening solidarity among religious groups. Amidst intensified religious fervour among Muslims, it is only a matter of time for violent extremism to manifest itself.

Apart from counternarratives, the role of the family, educational institutions and the neighbourhood environment can be made into a buffer against violent extremism through more positive inter-group relations that can prevent the politicisation of identity. Another important aspect to consider regarding regional conflicts where Muslim minorities in Southeast Asia are involved in concerns the government's role in fostering cross-border security cooperation.

The Sulu Sea and Mindanao Island form a vast area that makes it hard for the Philippine military forces to monitor, therefore separatism becomes an imminent threat particularly given the long-standing conflicts within the region, as was the case in Marawi. It is equally important to push for diplomatic efforts at peace-making by the government of the Philippines, as part of the ASEAN

community. Diplomatic efforts at the initiative of ASEAN countries can significantly contribute to the process considering the asymmetric nature of the conflict between the Philippine government and Mindanao’s Muslim minority. The cooperation of international agencies is also necessary to prevent the conflict zone from spilling over, and pay attention to the human rights violations in the Marawi conflict.

Impact of the Marawi Conflict	
Muslim Community	Type of Solidarity
JI	Rejected joining after sending an investigative team to Marawi before deciding whether to join or not.
Neo-JI	Based in Java, splinter of JI, did not send fighters to Marawi, but became more militant than ISIS.
JAD	Joined
JAT	Joined
NU	Rejected to stand in solidarity with jihad, did not sympathise with circulating narratives, far from the day-to-day lives of the NU community, humanitarian aid, peace efforts
NW	No sympathy, remains true to NKRI, khilafah applies to daily life, not the state, humanitarian aid, peace efforts
DDII	Humanitarian aid, does not reprove members involved in the cause
JT	Neutral, was used for entry into Marawi through General Santos by ISIS Indonesia
Muhammadiyah	Humanitarian aid, peace efforts
Persis	Humanitarian aid

Notes: JI: Jamaah Islamiyah; JAD: Jamaah Ansharut Daullah, JAT: Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid; Neo-JI (Jamaah Islamiyah Baru, JI splinter); NW: Nahdlatul Wathan, DDII: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia; Persis: Persatuan Islam; JT: Jamaah Tabligh.



CHAPTER IV

Violent Extremism against the Rohingya and its Impact on the Muslim Community in Indonesia



Introduction

This section discusses the responses of the Muslim community in Indonesia on narratives relating to acts of extremism against the Rohingya people. The responses were varied. Some reacted by sending humanitarian aid. Others responded by propagating narratives calling to armed jihad. In certain areas, there were even acts of intimidation and violence against the Buddhist community in Tanjung Balai, Medan among others.

Historical Background of the Rohingya in the Rakhine State

The Rakhine State or also known as Arakan is where communal tensions have flared for decades between the Buddhists and Muslims, and is inextricably linked to the political hegemony of Myanmar's armed forces.¹ Tragic conflicts that end with death, destruction, loss of belongings, and displacement have become an integral part of life in the Rakhine State as a result of the government's racist policies that pander to the interests of the majority at the expense of the persecution, discrimination and rejection of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities.²

Myanmar's federalism under military control makes no mention of federal rights and practices in their true sense, such as those concerning the autonomous rights of minority groups and devolution of central state power. The central government's power grip creates discriminatory ideas against Myanmar citizens and indigenous tribes by excluding certain minority groups such as the Kachin, Shanm Karen and Rohingya. Minorities without reasonable security guarantee and denied all forms of access to government services have become a political practice considered appropriate for the Rakhine State.³ The ethnic Rakhine make up the majority in the region (67 percent) and are predominantly Theravada Buddhists, earning their livelihood as fishermen and farmers, and are dispersed in cities across the Rakhine State, especially in Sittwe, Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, Mrauk Oo, Kyauk Phyu, Man Aung, Taunggup, and Thandwe. They co-exist with other minority groups, including the Rohingya. Friction and violence are common occurrence in the region, involving the ethnic Rakhine with government "backing", who see the Rohingya as illegal immigrants.

Geographically, Rakhine State is a region isolated by mountains and hills. It has no direct access to major cities such as Naypyidaw and Yangon, and located close to the Bangladesh border in the Bay of Bengal. Stretching along the northern coastline of Myanmar, the disaster-prone Rakhine State has poor infrastructure, and therefore its agricultural and fishing industries are slow to develop, with no decent income. The young population prefers to migrate in search of

1 The population in Myanmar and Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, therefore the possibility of religious alignments that exert influence on political-military affairs, yet do not necessarily take the same form in both countries. Thailand in general rejects the legitimising of extreme violence as is the case in Myanmar, because it is contrary to religious teachings. It is believed that politicians (military) deliberately manipulate religious issues, meeting with nationalists of a certain religion. Opinions that regard the Rohingya as migrants from Bangladesh unwilling to assimilate or wanting to form their own state have repeatedly surfaced. Delivered by Monk Dhirapunno in Focus Group Discussion in Medan, 22 May 2019.

2 Interview with Htike, woman activist advocating for imprisoned Rohingya Muslims in Thailand and campaigning to end violence against the Rohingya, 28 May 2019.

3 According to Carlos Sardina Galache, a freelance journalist who has actively covered Southeast Asian issues, including the Rohingya conflict, politics, ethnicity and nationalism in Myanmar are intricately interwoven issues. The Rohingya issue is about ethnicity and nationalism and religiously charged – for example by establishing that to be Burmese is to be Buddhist. At a narrower level, religion is the marker of identity and ethnicity of the Bamar majority in Myanmar and the Rakhine majority in the Rakhine State. Religion is a strong marker of ethnic identity and nationalism. In Myanmar, the Rohingya are perceived as foreigners. The fact that their religion is different from the majority contributes to the perception held by those in power (politics). Galache gave the example of the Maramagyi ethnic group in Rakhine who ethnically resemble the Rohingya. They claim to come from a region now known as Bangladesh; speak in the same language as the Rohingya, but are Buddhists. There is no demonstration or prejudice against them. The Rohingya on the other hand are perceived illegal immigrants from Bangladesh or East Pakistan, and therefore are called the Bengalis. Then there is the ethnic Kaman in Rakhine, Muslims, reside in Ramree Island, in the cities of Kyaukpyu and Sitwee, and 'accepted' as one of Myanmar's national races. But they are also persecuted and attacked because the public believes that many of them are not genuine Kaman, but Bengalis who pretend to be Kaman. In the 2015 elections, they were allowed to leave the camps where they were 'confined' with the Rohingya for Sitwee, the capital city of Rakhine State. The fundamental issue lies in the perception that the Rohingya are foreign citizens, and in the power of religious issues. Interview with Carlos Sardina Galache, 25 May 2019.

better employment. This however does not apply to the Rohingya minority. They are prohibited from leaving the state or even their own hometown without permission, face difficulty in having their marriage formally registered, have no formal identity of citizenship such as an identity card or passport.

The latest report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar formed by the UN Human Rights Council stated that the Rakhine State has a poverty rate nearly twice the national average. All ethnic groups in Rakhine are suffering due to lack of social services and scarce income-generating opportunities. The two largest social groups are the Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims. The former is the majority; the latter is the majority in the northern region. There are several other ethnic minorities, including the Kaman Muslims who are recognized as one of Myanmar's ethnic groups. The situation in Rakhine is primarily seen as the result of the uneasy relationship between the ethnic Rohingya and Rakhine, which reflects grievances and deeply rooted prejudice. However, most respondents from the ethnic Rohingya and Rakhine who were interviewed by the fact-finding mission mentioned how inter-communal relationships were amiable before 2012, especially in regard to business transactions and friendship.⁴

Myanmar (Republic of the Union of Myanmar) also known as Birma/Burma is a country in Southeast Asia that shares borders with India and Bangladesh to its west, Thailand and Laos to its east and China to its north and northeast. The country came under the rule of a military junta following a coup d'état in 1962. Naypyidaw took over as the capital city since 2005 from Yangon that served as the capital city since early independence in 1948. Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997. It has an abundance of natural resources, including precious stones and gems, natural oil and gas. Alas, economic inequalities have become more pronounced as the wheels of the economy are under the control of the military-backed business elite.

The report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar stressed that the succession of the military regime in 1962 and the constitutional amendment in 2008 have opened a new chapter on the active political role of the military in the government, which leads to a worsening situation in the Rakhine State.⁵ The constitutional amendment allows for the institutionalization of the governance system with majority influence held by the military rather than civilians. Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) can appoint 25 percent of legislative seats, field candidates for three key ministerial positions (Defence, Border Affairs, and Home Affairs), and may at least serve as one of the two vice presidents. These provisions are enough to command control of the National Defence and Security Council and all security forces, and block possible constitutional amendments. Tatmadaw reserves the right to administer and adjudicate its affairs independently, without civilian oversight. Current or former military officers occupy positions of authority in all government branches, in civil service and judiciary, and in many

4 Human Rights Council, 39th Session 10–28 September 2018, Agenda Item 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention, Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, p. 5.

5 Ibid, p. 4.

state-owned companies. In 2010, the government under the leadership of Thein Sein launched sweeping reform measures toward political and economic liberalisation without changing the constitution. The National League for Democracy (NLD) emerged victorious in elections held November 2015. In addition, an NLD-led government was formed on 31 March 2016, without managing to reduce the role of the military, not even a little bit.

Apart from the Bamar ethnic majority, Myanmar is also home to other ethnic groups who represent 32 percent of the national population estimates. Ethnic armed conflict since early independence has been used by Tatmadaw to justify its presence as the guarantor of national unity. Several minority groups harbour deeply rooted discrimination-related grievances, advocating for greater autonomy, and more equitable distribution of natural resources. The ongoing violence and conflict however reflects the military's failure to fulfil its role as the national unifier. On the other hand, this has ignited sentiments against the Bamar-Buddhist ethnic hegemony. The military regime has identified eight major ethnic groups who are then broken down into 135 national races. The list defines who qualifies as belonging to Myanmar; apart from the ones established by the government, regardless how many generations have settled in Myanmar, the rest shall be considered illegal immigrants, including the ethnic Rohingya. According to Tatmadaw, "despite living among peacocks, crows cannot become peacocks."⁶

Based on the 2014 census, 87.9 percent of Myanmar's population are Buddhist, 6.2 percent Christian, and 4.3 percent Muslim. Meanwhile, the Bamar people are mostly Buddhists, and many other ethnic groups have large numbers of non-Buddhists. Adopted in 2008, the Constitution recognises the "special position" of Buddhism, while also recognising other religions. Since reforms started in 2011, Myanmar has seen a rise in Buddhist nationalism, vicious anti-Muslim rhetoric, and violence between Buddhists and Muslims. The largest Buddhist nationalist organisation is the Ma Ba Tha (Association for the Protection of Race and Religion) who self-proclaimed itself as the protector of Buddhism. Ma Ba Tha was officially dissolved, and its followers still exist. Tatmadaw now enjoys greater popularity among the Bamar Buddhist majority. The military has used the Rohingya issue to reassert itself as the protector of the state, and therefore strengthens its political role.

For 30 years, the UN has showed concern over Myanmar. Since 1991, the UN has announced numerous resolutions condemning human rights abuses in Myanmar. For three decades, the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar came to the conclusion that the pattern of human rights violations is widespread and systematic, linked to state and military policies.⁷

Persecution and discrimination against the Rohingya began way before 2012. The underlying factor that has allowed this to happen is the Rohingya's weak legal status. Existing laws and policies governing citizenship and political rights have become increasingly exclusionary in their

6 Ibid, p. 4-5.

7 Ibid, p. 5.

formulation, and arbitrary and discriminatory in their implementation.⁸ Most Rohingya Muslims had their citizenship revoked arbitrarily. Traveling between villages and cities, and beyond the Rakhine State has long been restricted for the Rohingya through a discriminatory travel authorisation system, leading to serious consequences on their economic, political and cultural rights, including the right to food, healthcare and education. Other discriminatory restrictions relate to the marriage authorisation procedure, number and spacing of births, and access to the birth registration of Rohingya children. For decades, the security forces have subjected the Rohingya to theft and extortion, which has become widespread. Arbitrary arrests, forced labour, ill-treatment, and sexual violence by security forces have become prevalent.⁹

Chronology of Violence against the Rohingya

- **1948:** Myanmar (formerly Burma) gained independence from British rule.
- **1962:** Ne Win seized power through a military coup de 'tat. Ethnic minorities across the country suffered more discrimination and human rights abuses.
- **1977–1978:** Nearly 200,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh following acts of violence against “illegal immigrants”. Most returned to Myanmar in the following year.
- **1982:** Myanmar imposed its Citizenship Law that is discriminatory on the grounds of race and ethnic group. In Rakhine State, the law allows the authorities to revoke the citizenship of Rohingya on a massive scale.
- **1990:** The National League for Democracy (NLD) won the elections, but the military government refused to hand over power. Many NLD members were imprisoned. Members of Rohingya’s political organisation can nominate among themselves and several were elected members of parliament.
- **1991–1992:** 250,000 Rohingya Muslims sought refuge in Bangladesh as a result of rampant forced labour, summary executions, torture, including rape and arbitrary arrests by the Myanmar security forces.

8 Andrea Giorgetta, Asia Desk Director for the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in an interview on 24 May 2019 stated that the main issue in the rising levels of discrimination against the Rohingya relates to the revocation of their citizenship through Law No. 1982 on Citizenship. The law grants full citizenship to registered national races and this in principle is extremely arbitrary, not found in most modern laws on citizenship. The common criteria are consanguinity (descent) and born within the territory of the state. UN agencies and UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar through the resolution of the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have called for the amendment of the 1982 nationality law to conform to international standards. Then again, it all depends on whether the Myanmar government and parliament would adopt the international standards in their law. This (law) is like a ticking time bomb.

9 Ibid, p. 6.

- **1992:** The Myanmar government formed the NaSaKa border security force in northern Rakhine State.
- **1995:** The authorities issued some form of identity document called the Temporary Registration Card.
- **1997:** Rakhine State's Immigration Office issued an order requiring the "Bengalis and foreigners" to apply for travel authorisation.
- **2001:** Anti-Muslim riots that erupted across Myanmar also affected the Rakhine State, causing the displacement of the Rohingya people.
- **November 2010:** The first elections since 1990. The ethnic Rohingya were allowed to vote and a Rohingya candidate was elected member of parliament. Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest not long after.
- **2011:** Power was officially handed over to a semi-civilian government under the leadership of President Thein Sein, a former military general. The new administration introduced wide-ranging social, political and economic reforms.
- **April 2012:** Parliamentary by-elections were held in Myanmar. Aung San Suu Kyi was elected member of parliament.
- **2012:** Renewed clashes between the Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists backed by the government's security forces, resulting in deaths, destruction of property and mass evacuation. The Myanmar authorities relocated the Rohingya and other Muslim communities to refugee camps where their movements were restricted. Night-time curfew imposed in several cities, but in September 2014 it was lifted in all areas except the cities of Maungdaw and Buthidaung where the majority are Rohingya Muslims.
- **March—April 2014:** The first national census since 1983. The Rohingya were not allowed to identify themselves as Rohingya, which meant that the majority were not unaccounted for.
- **July 2014:** President Thein Sein piloted the "citizenship verification" process in Rakhine State. The process was met with resistance from the local population, and was eventually cancelled following relentless protest from the Rakhine and Rohingya communities.
- **February 2015:** President Thein Sein announced the withdrawal of all Temporary Registration Cards (TRC), leaving most Rohingya Muslims without legal documentation and effectively preventing them from voting in the 2016 national elections.

- **November 2015:** The elections were won by the NLD led by Aung San Suu Kyi. The ethnic Rohingya were denied the right to vote or run for office.
- **March-April 2016:** Transfer of power to the NLD-led administration. Aung San Suu Kyi appointed State Counsellor.
- **April 2016:** The NLD-led government resumed the “citizenship verification” process in Rakhine State.
- **August 2016:** Aung San Suu Kyi established the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.
- **October 2016:** ARSA attacked three police outposts in the cities of Maungdaw and Rathedaung, killing nine police officers. Government military responded with a large-scale security operation that led to unchecked human rights abuses. Over 87,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh within 10 months.
- **March 2017:** The UN Human Rights Council formed an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to establish the facts and circumstances of human rights violations in Myanmar, especially in Rakhine State.
- **24 August 2017:** The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presented a final report to the government, who agreed to implement the recommendations put forward.
- **25 August 2017:** ARSA launched a coordinated attack in 30 security force outposts in the northern cities of Rakhine. The military responded with brutal reprisals against the Rohingya, amounting to crimes against humanity. Over 600,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh within two months.
- **17 October 2017:** The President’s Office set up a committee for humanitarian assistance, resettlement and development in Rakhine State. Chaired by Aung San Suu Kyi, the committee will effectively deliver relief aid; coordinate resettlement and rehabilitation efforts; and undertake regional development; and work towards durable peace.

Impact of Violence against the Rohingya on the Muslim Community

Acts of violent extremism against the ethnic Rohingya constitute acts of crime that amount to gross human rights violations perpetrated by the military. Behind these human rights abuses are economic motives with ethno-religious and historical backgrounds to the Rohingya crisis in Rakhine. The violence suffered by ethnic Rohingya was politicised in Indonesia in a bid to stoke religious sentiments and rouse solidarity among the Muslim community.

Islamic political parties in Indonesia launched fundraising campaigns in solidarity with the Rohingya in late August to September 2017. They channelled donations to the Indonesia Islamic Dakwa Council (DDII) and the PKPU humanitarian initiative. The Rohingya solidarity action also managed to mobilise the public to contribute to the cause. Rally “169” succeeded in raising substantial amounts of funds distributed through the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance (IHA), consisting of Dompot Dhuafa, PKPU, and the Dakwa Council (LAZIS).

Several hardline organisations arranged their own humanitarian missions not under IHA coordination. FPI (Islamic Defenders Front) humanitarian wing, Hilal Merah Indonesia (Hilmi), claims to be involved in humanitarian work in Cox’s Bazar. FPI also admitted to sending its members to the Bangladesh-Myanmar border to assess and distribute relief packages to refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar.

The politicisation of the Rohingya issue as sectarian conflict was based on a lack of comprehensive understanding, leading many to see the issue only through the lens of oppression against the Muslim community. The problem in fact concerns more about the crimes against humanity inflicted by the Myanmar military forces for economic and political interests. The unending Rohingya crisis has made it difficult for the government of Indonesia to contain groups who take advantage of the situation to justify attacks against the government. It is hard to denunciate expressions of religious solidarity from an individual or Islamic organisation in Indonesia. However the government has made consistent efforts to prevent inter-faith friction and persecution of certain minority groups. Groups in support of violent extremism have been persistent in urging hardline Islamist groups to engage in jihad. Meanwhile, the government has been somewhat hesitant to call the situation facing the Rohingya as a human rights violation that renders it tantamount to a crime against humanity, and to press the international community to push for fair prosecution.

Political resolution and gross negligence can serve as premise for extremist groups to legitimise the mobilisation of anti-government opinions, and use of violent extremism, in Myanmar and other countries. A diplomatic solution will not resolve underlying issues that allow violence to take place, such as discrimination, rights restrictions and citizenship revocation of the Rohingya people. Apart from the diplomatic approach, the government of Indonesia needs to build the

capacity of counterterrorism units by taking into account the use of narratives on the Rohingya or Marawi issue.

Narratives on solidarity with the Rohingya are also consumed by individuals with new-found interest in Islam, especially learning through the internet by following the social media accounts of popular Muslim preachers. To learn about religion and to become an *ulama* or religious scholar used to mean spending years studying religion in *pesantrens* or Islamic boarding schools. Pupils would first learn the basics of language and grammar (*nahwu-sharaf-balaghah*) and gradually moving on to core religious texts such as *Ulumul Quran*, *Ulumul Hadits*, *Ushul Fiqh*, and *Ushuluddin*, *Mantiq*. In addition, they will need to learn under the tutelage of many religious scholars.

But now, one only needs to be a born-again Muslim and learn from a certain “*ulama*” to be considered religiously qualified and hailed as an *ulama* himself. Those without the basis and tools to study religion are instead “attacking” scholars from traditional *pesantrens* who are not the product of instant learning. One of the misconceptions, which then materialized, is the belief that the staging of protests and showing of political support are part of jihad, and therefore defending Islam becomes a life and death situation. Then what about those who seek knowledge through a toilsome path only to be told that they have no religious authority, whereas others who partake in actions defending religion right away become the new figure of authority licensed to issue religious rulings, including on the Rohingya issue.

On 10 August 2012, several FPI members threw stones at a Buddhist temple in Makassar during a protest in solidarity with the Rohingya. On 2 May 2013, a planned bomb attack was thwarted by police when three terrorists were on route to the Myanmar Embassy to plant pipe bombs, most of which owned by the Darul Islam faction. On 19 June 2013, two members of the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation travelled to Jakarta and met mostly with Islamic hardliners (non-terrorist network), requesting for bomb-making instructors to be sent to Myanmar. On 5 August 2013, two cherry bombs exploded at the Ekayana Buddhist Temple in Jakarta, which were assembled by cells linked to the East Java Mujahideen, a Darul Islam splinter group.

On 12 August 2015, Ibadur Rahman, member of a militant group, was arrested for plotting to bomb a police outpost, church and temple at the behest of Bahrum Naim, deceased Indonesian ISIS commander in Syria, who was also the financier. On 27 November 2016, two pro-ISIS terrorists were caught trying to plant a bomb at the parliament building and Myanmar Embassy. Several Indonesians were apprehended in Malaysia for seeking contacts that would help them join the jihad in Myanmar or for plotting an attack there but have no direct contact. The enticing thought among extremists in Indonesia of helping out fellow Muslims is indeed a worrying situation that is nearly impossible to detect. With access for Indonesians to visit the camps in Cox’s Bazar, there is the possibility of several Indonesian extremists to eventually make contact with ARSA militants.¹⁰

10 Institute of Policy Analyst of Conflict (IPAC), Indonesia and the Rohingya Crisis, 29 June 2018, IPAC Report No.46, p. 12-13.

Apart from the issues above, the politicisation of the Rohingya crisis in Indonesia is inseparably linked to the role of social media. The public's mindset and views are now profoundly shaped by information obtained from the media (including social media). The younger generation, even ulamas and lecturers, also acquire information from the media, some obtaining it from the right sources. The public tends to use the internet to access information of which its truthfulness has not been validated.¹¹ This route makes it easier for the politicised Rohingya issue to spread quickly. Conflict and violence against the Rohingya has become a media commodity, even by mainstream media, by highlighting news on Muslims as the victims, whilst pushing other elements aside.

Indonesian Lawyers Club (ILC), a programme aired by a private TV station, in one of its broadcasts raised the issue of the Chinese government's persecution of the Uighur Muslims because it was an appealing topic to "sell" to the Indonesian public who are predominantly Muslim. As an educational tool, the media should have explained that discrimination takes place against nearly every religion and belief in China. Churches also could not simply display the cross, and should they organise a public event for a large crowd, they would be accused of Christianisation. The question is why was the problem only partially raised? Who is "selling" the issue, why choose the issue, and who are the targeted "buyers"?¹²

The politicisation of the Rohingya issue in the interest of the sectarian politics of political Islamist groups was intended to delegitimise the government and unseat President Joko Widodo or more popularly known as Jokowi. As the government took the diplomatic route, Jokowi's political rivals organised a protest. The "212 Movement" is a political Islamic coalition, which succeeded in mobilising the masses in late 2016 through the "Action to Defend Islam" to bring down then DKI Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama alias Ahok, who is a Christian. They also reacted to violence unfolding in Myanmar by staging a series of solidarity rallies all over the country. They named the rally "Action to Defend Rohingya", which purposefully recharged the anti-Ahok campaign. The first protest was held in front of the Myanmar Embassy in Jakarta on 6 September 2017 with 5,000 demonstrators. They burnt the Myanmar flag and an effigy of a militant Buddhist monk (U Wirathu), while others clashed with the police when trying to push through the barbed wire fencing. They demanded that the Myanmar Ambassador be expelled from Indonesia, and the government sever diplomatic ties with Myanmar.

Hardline activists then announced plans to stage a solidarity rally on 8 September in Borobudur Temple, a vast Buddhist temple complex in Central Java. Fearing that it could turn into an anti-Buddhist protest and put the local ethnic Chinese at risk, the police forced the organiser who claimed to represent 230 Islamic groups in Central Java to relocate the demonstration to a mosque 1.5 kilometres away from the city. On 16 September, several people from the 212 group organised a large-scale demonstration in Jakarta at the time when opposition politicians were once again active players.

11 Bhikkhu Dhirapunno in a Focus Group Discussion in Medan, 22 May 2019.

12 Fernando Sihotang, Indonesia Lutheran National Committee, activist in inter-faith dialogue in Medan, statement delivered in Focus Group Discussion in Medan, 22 May 2019.

Several local FPI chapters, including in Jakarta, Klaten, Banda Aceh, and Pasuruan, have opened registration centres for aspiring jihadis to join the cause in Rakhine. However, FPI did not have the capacity to send anyone. FPI Secretary General, Ustadz Sobri Lubis, pointed out that if the Indonesian military chooses not to intervene in Rakhine, the very least that FPI can do is to provide military training and weapons to its members so that they can go. FPI had done the same after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 2006, but none actually went.¹³

Summary

The situation befalling the Rohingya has carried on for a considerable time, when the military government started instilling the spirit of religious nationalism. The ethnic Rohingya were historically brought in by the British colonial administration from Bangladesh, only to be pushed out of Myanmar and face discrimination. As a consequence, they are subjected to violence not only perpetrated by the military but also civilians indoctrinated with fascist religious nationalism. Pressures unrelentingly exerted on the Rohingya resulted in humanitarian, social and economic crises that have deprived them of a sense of safety, are stripped of their dignity as human beings, and went through afflictions arising from never-ending human rights abuses.

The Rohingya crisis then became an international issue through the spread of narratives emphasising on the human rights violations against the Rohingya Muslims committed by Myanmar's military government that also involves civilians. These narratives are disseminated through social media, spreading to Indonesia. Violent Islamic extremist groups responded to the narratives by calling for physical jihad against the oppressive Myanmar military.

The government of Indonesia however took the diplomacy route, and saw the Rohingya crisis as a humanitarian issue that requires the involvement of ASEAN and the UN as a world body. In certain respects, this strategy has been successful, but needs to be deepened and maintained as violent extremist groups are also feeding the Rohingya issue to wage war. If this issue is left unresolved, and the solidarity that they imagined can rouse the people to arms were to actualize, it will destabilise the region with the possibility of sparking the emergence of homegrown terrorism in Southeast Asia.

Humanitarian efforts then become an important strategy, and they are being undertaken by faith-based NGOs in Indonesia by dispatching relief aid to the Rohingya people. Under the circumstances, it would be difficult to keep a close watch on whether the stream of assistance has indeed reached the Rohingya refugees, or has instead flowed into violent extremist groups, as was the case in conflict situations around the world, such as in Syria, Iraq, Maluku and Kalimantan.

13 Ibid, p. 8.

This crisis requires serious attention from the government of Indonesia to strategically leverage the humanitarian mission by bringing the human rights issue into ASEAN. It is an important strategy considering that narratives on the tragic fate of the Rohingya still have the potential of being used in the process of radicalisation to further spread violent extremist ideologies.

Impact of Violence against the Rohingya	
Islamic Organisation/ Community	Type of Solidarity
NU	Fundraising for refugees
Muhammadiyah	Fundraising for refugees; demanding the revocation of Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize
PKS	Distribution of donations through DDII and PKPU, and Bangladesh NGO
IHA	Distribution of donations
Dompot Dhuafa	Distribution of donations
FPI	Humanitarian workers in Cox's Bazar; sending members to Bangladesh-Myanmar borders, call to jihad, open up registration to jihad, but no follow-up report
Hilmi	<i>Distribution of humanitarian aid to Cox's Bazar</i>
ACT	Assistance through humanitarian ship
Salafy Media Company in Jogja	Financial support for Quran recitation tutors
212 Movement	Organising solidarity events
North Sumatra Muslim Community	Demonstration at Buddhist temples and the Chinese community
Tanjung Balai Muslim Community (Gamis)	Buddhist migrants are considered more dominant economically
212 Movement	Set fire to Myanmar flag
Mer-C and PMI	Built hospitals

Notes: NW: Nahdlatul Wathon, NU: Nahdlatul Ulama, FPI: Islamic Defenders Front, DDII: Indonesia Islamic *Dakwa* Council, PKS: Prosperity Justice Party, Hilmi: Hilal Merah Indonesia, IHA: Indonesian Humanitarian Action, ACT: Fast Action Response, Gamis: Muslim Community Movement



CHAPTER V

Recommendations

General Recommendations:

1. To break the chain of “marginalisation” and “call to jihad” narratives by minimising multidimensional factors, social, economic and political problems, structurally and democratically through deliberative processes.
2. To counter narratives constructed by violent extremist groups through social media to neutralise their activism.

Recommendations in Response to Violent Extremism against the Rohingya:

The crisis suffered by the ethnic Rohingya constitutes a gross human rights violation perpetrated by the state. As such, it should be addressed as follows:

1. To mainstream the human rights perspective at the regional level through diplomacy in a view to put an end to the violence committed by Myanmar’s security forces and to enforce the law;
2. To foster diplomatic cooperation through meetings with NGOs, academics, and other stakeholders in Southeast Asia to refrain from stoking sectarian sentiments that can awaken religious solidarity to violent extremism;
3. To counter sectarian narratives, and replace them with human rights narratives;



4. To mainstream at the ASEAN level with different tracks to help ensure that repatriation mechanisms are in place and implemented in step with the withdrawal of the Rohingya's status as stateless persons. Maintaining the status of statelessness constitutes a violation of international laws;
5. To mainstream a solution of justice and prosperity for the Rohingya community through stakeholders;
6. To deliver humanitarian assistance with stakeholders and make sure it actually reaches the Rohingya refugees who are concentrated in Cox's Bazar and surrounding areas. There is a pressing need for humanitarian assistance.

Recommendations in Response to Violent Extremism in Marawi:

The Marawi conflict is an investment for violent extremist groups to strengthen their urban warfare capability. The following strategies are therefore necessary:

1. To revitalise community safety nets at the neighbourhood level to counter the propaganda narratives relating to Marawi, especially in border areas with Malaysia in Kalimantan, and the Philippines in North Sulawesi;
2. To engage with moderate Islamic organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and others in order to contain the Marawi effect, i.e., homegrown terrorism;
3. To channel the violent energy of former convicted terrorists in programs for preventing violent extremism inclusively with moderate faith-based organisations, and becoming the agent of peace alongside their victims to prevent an urban warfare scenario like in Marawi from happening;
4. To build a network of counternarratives and media literacy with multistakeholders from grassroots to civil society organisations on a wide scale to counter calls to violent extremism in the name of religion; *hijrah* through inclusive education, as the Marawi conflict had first taken root in educational settings.
5. The tri-border area between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are patrolled by a trilateral partnership, but is still an ancillary maritime operation, instead of a military collaboration under the auspices of ASEAN to combat the growing strength of IS supporters in the region. This security force collaboration requires deepened trilateral cooperation (Indomalphi) that needs to be more holistic and scaled up to reach a common command level of the three countries in taking turns patrolling and leading the security operation.

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