

GENDER APPROACH TO PREVENTING WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN TERRORISM IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increase in women's involvement in terrorism in Indonesia. The evolution of women involved in terrorism is not only limited to followers, but has increased and become more dangerous. Extremist groups use women in their acts of terror because they see an opportunity for women to become suicide perpetrators. Gender gaps and inequality are factors for women to be involved in the action. How patriarchal views and masculinity constructs affect radicalization and acts of violent extremism, so a gender-based approach is needed to be able to promote gender equality and mitigate discrimination, and can be actualized in terrorism prevention strategies in Indonesia.

Keyword: Gender Approach, Preventing Women's Involvement, Terrorism

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, a number of events related to acts of terrorism include the Bali bomb blast in 2002 and the bomb blast at JW Marriott in 2003, the bomb blast at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004 and followed by the bomb blast in 2004 in the Kuningan and Jakarta areas. Although history says that the bomb terror act was dominated by men, behind the scenes of the terrorist act there were women who helped launch the terrorist attack carried out by their husbands or brothers. The women involved and sentenced to criminal penalties for the terrorism incident are Ruqayah (wife of Umar Patek), Putri Munawaroh and Munfiatun the first and second wives of Nurdin M. Top), Deni Carmelita (wife of Pepi Fernando). Most of the involvement of women in terror acts at that time was only as an intermediary and only as a protector for the perpetrators of terrorism (Qori'ah, 2019).

In the 1960s, Darul Islam (DI) was crushed because it was considered an insurgency movement, and re-emerged in 1973 as a violent-based extremist group that wanted to overthrow the Suharto regime and establish an Islamic State. Then DI, actively and systematically recruited women to take part in the movement it founded in the early 1980s. Initially, the group only recruited men but it was the influence of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 that convinced the movement to involve women. This women's movement is known as 'Usroh', which is a women's group based in the Sudirman Mosque, Yogyakarta. The DI indoctrination program for women is increasingly intensified with two major agendas, namely Hijabization or persuading more women to wear jilab and establishing a special da'wah group for women (IPAC, 2017).

Darul Islam in 1992 began to be divided, this was due to the ideology of the dreamers who began to differ. While living in exile in Malaysia, the DI led by Salafi Abdullah Sungkar began accusing the head of a rival faction of irregularities. So, in 1993, Sungkar and his followers founded an organization known as Jemaah Islamiyah.

The emergence of ISIS in 2014 became a new phenomenon in Indonesia, this is referred to as the first phase of ISIS in Indonesia. The networks that have emerged are mostly from pre-existing jihadist organizations such as the Indonesian Militant Network that is pro-ISIS such as Jama'ah Anshorul Daulah (JAD), a well-known militant in Indonesia, Aman Abdurahman, admitted that he was willing to pledge allegiance to his leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi (Temby, 2020). In addition, JAD is also divided into several groups in Indonesia, such as Jamaah Ansharul Tauhid (JAT), Mujahidin East Indonesia (MIT), Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah (JAK), and Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (MIB), as well as a splinter group of Hizb ut-Tahrir, namely Al-Muhajirun.

2. Teoretical Background

2.1 Women's Involvement in Terrorism

All elements of society experience anxiety over the involvement of women as the main perpetrators in acts of terrorism. Therefore, this is called a new history for Indonesia, especially this act of terrorism is getting bigger because of the influence of technological sophistication and mass media. Mass media, especially television, is considered a powerful medium in spreading information on terror acts. According to Komnas Perempuan, so far women have been described as creatures who have affection, love and gentleness. However, the role of motherhood that is usually played by women has been transmitted as a role that indoctrinates radical ideologies and prepares their children to become martyrs (Kompas, 2018).

The increasing role of women in violent extremism is supported by the increasing sophistication of social media and technology. Through this method, women can take part in radical discussion forums, can read ISIS propaganda, can express aspirations, meet colleagues who have one frequency and everything is stored in a relatively safe message room. Meanwhile, IPAC divides four groups of women who have the potential to be exposed to acts of terrorism. The first group is Indonesian migrant workers abroad both in East Asia and the Middle East. This group is considered to be a group that has international insight and has good Arabic and English language skills, and better computer skills than their counterparts in Indonesia. On the one hand, this group is used as a special target that can provide greater donation funds to terrorist groups (IPAC, 2017).

The second group is Indonesian women who joined ISIS in Syria because they are part of a family. In some cases, women who invited their families to go to Syria were interested in ISIS propaganda videos. The third group that has the potential to become followers of violent extremism groups is deported women, women who try to cross the Turkish border to join their husbands or other family members but are arrested and deported by Turkish authorities. The last group is the combatant women from MIT in Poso, from its emergence in 2013 until the death of its leader in July 2016, MIT is the closest organization to the Islamic rebellion in recent years. The three wives of the MIT leader were trained in the use of firearms and explosives, but the use of these weapons was more of a survival strategy to avoid Indonesian security forces (IPAC, 2017).

This terrorist group clearly expands the role of women in Indonesia's growing violent extremism. In 2016, a woman named Dian Yuli Novi admitted that she wanted to carry out a single suicide bomb attempt before government officials intercepted her in carrying out the action (Temby, 2020). She is a former immigrant worker who is married to a man from Solo who invited her to join ISIS. She became phenomenal because she became the

first woman to take part in a single bombing plan that wanted to attack the State palace (BBC, 2017).

Meanwhile, Ika Puspitasari, a former migrant worker from Hong Kong who had plans to carry a bomb and blow himself up in Bali during the 2016 New Year celebrations. However, Densus 88 quickly stopped this activity and succeeded in thwarting the action. In a different place, the authorities were able to arrest Umi Delima, who is the wife of Santoso, the former leader of the East Indonesia Mujahidin (MIT) terrorist group, who was arrested in a mountain range in Poso, Central Sulawesi. The use of women in family units that function as suicide bombers first occurred in Surabaya in 2018. This act of terror occurred separately in three churches in Surabaya, East Java. These churches are the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) on Jalan Diponegoro, the Church of Santa Maria Immaculate on Jalan Ngagel Madya, the Central Pentecostal Church on Jalan Arjuna. Where the father blew himself up in the Pentecostal Church, where he had previously escorted his wife and two daughters to the Indonesian Christian Church and while his son blew himself up in the Church of Santa Maria Immaculate (IdTimes, 2021).

In March 2019, a JAD-affiliated mother and daughter carried out a suicide bomb attack during a dispute with police at their home in North Sumatra. He chose to blow himself up using a bomb even though he had been surrounded by Densus 88 for 16 hours (IdTimes, 2021). The rise of JAD and the growing role of JAD women in combat in Indonesia have triggered a significant increase in terror threats in Indonesia, which previously only focused on male militancy (Khalil, 2019). According to terrorism observer, Harits Abu Ulya of The Community Ideologica Islamic Analyst stated that the JAD network uses women and children as a message to remove terrorist acts committed by men and regardless of police observation. This also emphasizes that women and children are also able to take the risk of becoming martyrs or suicide bombers (Nathaniel, 2018).

There are several reasons for the emergence of female terrorists in Indonesia; The first is the decreasing number of combatants from male jihadists who are arrested and prosecuted by law enforcement. Therefore, the choice of involving women as martyrs is a necessary choice because of the urgent situation. Second, because the figure of women is related to her role in the social order and its nature that it is impossible to commit acts of terrorism or violence. Third, the more sophisticated technology and information that is more accessible to women. So that through information networks and the media can stimulate women to commit acts of terrorism (Hartana, 2017).

According to Azyumardi Azra, in the scope of women's involvement in the issue of terrorism, there is no indication of disappearing in Indonesia. This is based on the reality of Indonesia's religious sociology which is different from other countries. Then, Indonesian women in terrorist groups can be more resilient and independent without being directly involved in global terrorism movements. Indonesian women who live in a social, cultural, and economic environment that is much freer than other women such as Asia and the Middle East (Republic, 2020).

Extremist groups rely on women to gain strategic advantage by recruiting them as facilitators and executors. However, many policymakers ignore the role that women play and rarely involve their participation in efforts to combat violent extremism. As a result, the number of women involved in acts of terrorism continues to increase. Extremist groups take advantage of the situation by promoting extremist ideologies and classifying women as second-class citizens and offering strategic and financial benefits through the conquest of women. For example, the Islamic State/IS group uses sexual violence to

terrorize women into becoming compliant, displaces civilians from strategic areas, enforces unit cohesion among fighters, and even generates income through human trafficking. Suppressing women's rights also allows extremists to control reproduction and exploit women's labor (Bigio and Vogelstein, 2019).

Unequal gender power structures fuel and shape violent extremism across the region. It pays particular attention to how the construction of masculinity affects radicalization and acts of violent extremism, offering much-needed insight into how men and boys are involved in this process. Much greater efforts are needed to ensure policies address the dangerous constructions of masculinity and femininity promoted by violent extremist groups. Programs must work with local communities to respond to the unequal gender power dynamics that shape and fuel extremist violence, including through the empowerment of women and girls to become agents of peace (UNDP and UN Women, 2020).

2.2 Gender Approach in Terrorism

Gender is a social construction of masculinity and femininity as well as the values inherent in these constructions (Cohn, 2013). The gender-based approach is intended to integrate gender perspectives into policy and regulatory frameworks as a way to ensure the needs of men and women are met, promote gender equality and mitigate discrimination, in the hope of producing better outcomes (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2019).

As stated in the conclusions agreed upon in ECOSOC 1997/2, gender mainstreaming as part of a gender-based approach is defined as: "... The process of assessing the impact on women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policy or programme, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy to make the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequalities do not persist. The main goal is to achieve gender equality." (Laura Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011).

Approaching terrorism through a gender lens has many benefits. Especially, it can help in understanding the relationship between women and men and the gaps in the relationship (Phelan, 2020). This perspective is important given that the life experiences, needs, and priorities of women and men are often different due to different social, cultural, and economic roles and expectations. Therefore, the benefits of a gender-based approach include its ability to improve our understanding of motivation, participation, and experiences among women and men in terrorism that often reflects a gender-unequal world and the complexity of personal and political choices for both men and women. The gender-based approach is intended to integrate gender perspectives into policies and regulatory frameworks as a way to ensure the needs of men and women are met, promote gender equality and mitigate discrimination, in the hope of achieving better outcomes (Phelan, 2020).

As a result of this realization, global policies encourage a gender-based approach to recognize the role of women in terrorism which stems from the concept of the women, peace, and security agenda (WPS). WPS is a policy framework aimed at promoting gender equality and improving women's rights, participation, and protection related to conflict situations. In October 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, an important resolution regarding the WPS. Resolution 1325 affirms the important role of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, peacebuilding in post-

conflict reconstruction. The resolution also calls for equal participation in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security.

3. Method

This article utilizes secondary data as material to obtain data. Secondary data consists of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of international, regional, and national policies and regulations that apply in Indonesia. While secondary sources are obtained from relevant literature.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Increasing the Role of Women in Terrorism

According to a report from Institute for Policy Analysis and Conflict (IPAC, 2020), there have been around 49 women involved in acts of terrorism since 2003-2020. The list of names continues to increase as the phenomenon of terrorism and women's involvement in terrorism in Indonesia continues. The activities they carry out are divided into three categories. First, helping terrorism activities because of family ties as wives or brotherhood with male terrorists. Second, because it plays an important role as a supporter in acts of terrorism. Third, playing the role of the main actor in carrying out suicide bombings or carrying weapons. In a study conducted by IPAC, it is also stated that there has been an increase in the number of Indonesian women related to terrorism since the emergence of ISIS in 2014.

There has been an evolution of the role of women in violent extremist movements in Indonesia. Women's involvement in terrorism activities encompasses more broadly ideologically, logistically and there is strong pressure that encourages terrorist organizations to recruit women and motivate them to be involved in terrorism activities. The evolution of women in Indonesian extremist movements starting from the Jemaah Islamiyah in the 1990s to pro-ISIS cells that are still active today.

1) The Role of Women in Darul Islam

The Usroh group is led by Fatimah al Zahra or known as Lina alias Um Jibrik who is the wife of Abu Jibril. The activities of this group infiltrated Islamic study groups in schools and universities. The main reference of this movement follows Jamaah Muslimat which is a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood group and follows the book Zainab Al Ghazali who was the leader of Jamaah Muslimah who was arrested by the Egyptian government. Such books increase women's militancy in DI not only in terms of da'wah but also support their husbands in their involvement in violent extremist activities (IPAC, 2017).

2) The Role of Women in Jamaah Islamiyah

The doctrine of Jamaah Islamiyah externally prohibits women from being actively involved in the realm of struggle. Women have limited roles that only cover household and private roles such as wife, children, or mothers. The division of women's roles in this group can be seen from two books, the first is the Women's Handbook made at the Al Mukmin Islamic Boarding School in Solo, Indonesia. This book outlines the role of women to always be submissive to men in the household. This reflects the nature of the organization which is confidential and closed. The second guidebook is titled Essential Guide to Preparation by Sayyed Imam al Sharif, who is a prominent Al Qaeda ideologue. In this book, it is discussed that women must take up arms and fight if they are attacked or when the enemy enters their home causing physical damage. On the other hand, the desire of women to fight is not

approved by male members. Women are only allowed to take on the role of helping to take care of wounded male fighters, as facilitators, couriers who carry messages and record recorded speeches or written documents as needed (Nasir, 2019)

3) The Role of Women in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

In the second phase of ISIS in Indonesia, occurring from around 2018 to the present, membership appears to have evolved from the recruitment of individuals online either who did not have or had access to jihadist organizations before. The ISIS recruitment process has become increasingly easy and open to recruit and radicalize online, an accelerated process that includes taking the oath of allegiance through encrypted chat messages (Tempo, 2019). According to Irfan Idris from the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, the ideology spread by ISIS is an ideology that has been developing in Indonesia for a long time. It's just that this is a new name for violent extremist organizations that are developing around the world, including in Indonesia. The spread of its ideology is not only limited to the Middle Eastern world, but has controlled almost some countries in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and Malaysia. ISIS claims to be the Islamic caliphate, which has authority in the religious, political, and military fields for Muslims around the world by inviting all Muslims to join and support the existence of the Islamic caliphate it has declared (Rijal, 2017). Terrorism expert Sidney Jones said that as many as 40 women and 100 children under the age of 15 have been involved and joined ISIS, and they are studying directly in Syria. In the situation in Indonesia, women are interested in joining ISIS or other terrorist groups because of the patriarchy that shapes women to be weak and not as strong as men who can commit acts of terrorism. In addition, religious factors also play a role for women in changing their mindset, consciously and wanting to form a state based on Islamic laws and the caliphate (Marcoes, 2015). According to LP3ES researcher, Milda Istiqomah said that the emergence of women in terrorism indicates a shift in terrorism perpetrators in Indonesia. According to her, since 2018 women have played an active role as combatants, for example as bomb assemblers or suicide bombers. The number of female combatants arrested in terrorism cases also jumped in 2016-2020 to 32 from only four in 2011-2015 (katadata.co.id, 2023).

4.2 Gender Approach to Prevent Women's Involvement in Terrorism

The gender-based approaches that can be applied in preventing terrorism are, First, by realizing and encouraging gender equality in the context of social problems that are often experienced by women and their communities. Seek to empower women's roles by strengthening their rights and protecting them from gender-motivated discrimination. Gender equality is important to include in terrorism prevention policies because gender social construction, changes in gender relations, and the empowerment of women in terrorist groups are global phenomena that have an impact on the security sector (Bloom & Lokmanoglu, 2020).

Second in collaboration with International Organizations that have a focus on gender equality. Taking good practices from what they have done in various countries to be applied in Indonesia. So that a gender-based approach can be conceptualized into a domestic framework. Third, establishing cooperation with civil society organizations / Non-Governmental Organization in legalizing gender equality to the grassroots. The role of NGOs is very important in bridging and facilitating between the government and the community. Ensure a gender perspective in preventive policies and regulations against violent extremism and terrorism because of their ability to connect between communities

and the central government. Especially strengthening efforts to empower women in the context of family and socio-economy (USAID, 2012).

5. Conclusion

Based on the study from the above article, the increase in the role of women in violent extremism is caused by gender gaps and inequality in women. So extremist groups take advantage of this moment to continue to strengthen their influence on women so that they can join terror activities. The solution is to prevent women's involvement in terrorism by conceptualizing gender into policies and through legally binding instruments. Efforts that must be made in this prevention are; First, adopting gender equality into cross-sectoral issues, especially in terrorism prevention and eradication policies. Second, a gender approach based on women's empowerment and building women's capacity to be able to act as peace agents and increase women's participation in decision-making. Third, establishing cooperation between the government and international institutions and civil society organizations in implementing gender-based prevention programs.

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