

Mother as Weapon and the Involvement of Women in the 2018 Family Bombing in Indonesia: A Reflection

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ABSTRACT

The 2018 family suicide bomb attack in Surabaya stunned Indonesia and the rest of Southeast Asia, and this article investigates the role women had in the incident. Today The world is horrified by the Muslims' willingness to sacrifice their lives in a pragmatic pursuit of the paradise God has promised them. However, the lessons and explanations left by the woman's role in a family suicide bombing helped the international society comprehend what had transpired. Since most suicide bombings in Indonesia have been committed by lone males or small groups, the rise of the family suicide bombing phenomena represents a sea change in the nature of extreme violence in the country. Women are also believed to be skilled at manipulating events to avoid raising suspicion among communities. Terrorism that targets women and children appears to be on the rise in Indonesia and the rest of Southeast Asia in recent years. This includes both solo female assaults and those carried out by married couples.

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Introduction

Since the year 2000, Indonesia has been plagued by vicious terrorist assaults. The 2002 bombing in Bali, the 2003 bombing of the JW Marriot hotel in Jakarta, the 2004 bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, and the 2005 bombing of a hotel on the island of Bali were the four worst terror acts Indonesia had ever faced. About 240 people lost their lives as a result of the four bombings. According to the findings of the Indonesian Police, the terrorist group Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) was responsible for nearly all terrorist incidents in Indonesia between 2000 and 2005.

After Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi stated in April 2013 that his organization will henceforth be known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Middle East, ISIS also came into Indonesian territory in the years that followed.

Jabhat al-Nusra, often known as the Nusra Front, is a group comprised of former members of al-Qaeda in Syria. Several bombings and other terrorist attacks have place in several locations around Indonesia, demonstrating the pervasiveness of ISIS's influence there. There have been numerous lone wolf attacks, acts of individual terrorism, and terrorist acts committed by mothers and their children that are linked to the Islamic State. Muslim extremists in Indonesia, however, worry that Western culture is becoming secularized and morally corrupt while facing a leadership vacuum. Islamism, according to these Muslim groups, is the only way out of this predicament since it empowers women to take an active role.

Ramon Spaaij coined the term "lone wolf terrorism," and he outlines the defining features of this type of terrorism as follows (Spaaij, 2012: 16): (1) the act is carried out by an individual; (2) it is not part of a terrorist group or network; and (3) the modus operandi is understood and regulated by individuals acting independently. While the very act of carrying out nuclear family suicide bombs constitutes "familial terrorism," the phrase itself is a terrorist act. The nuclear family (*keluarga batih*) is the smallest human social organization with its own ideology, politics, society, culture, economy, and military. The effects of a suicide bombing on a family unit are severe. People everywhere are flabbergasted by the blood of those who fight pragmatically for God's paradise on earth. But a family suicide bombing left behind crucial lessons and explanations so that the international community realized what had happened and why. Humans are superior because they have developed a sophisticated language that sheds light on the mysteries of life.

Terrorism in general, which is managed by groups with numerous members, a wide network, and the capacity to back up what they do, is fundamentally different from these three aspects. These features suggest that the emergence of Lone Wolf Terrorism and family suicide terrorism in Indonesia is both unexpected and horrifying. Alterations in terror targets happened between 2010 and 2015, in addition to the rise of lone wolf and family terrorism. Terrorists no longer aim their attacks at Western icons but rather against civilians, public servants, and security forces. The change originated from the proliferation of *takfiri*, or interpretations that delivered pagan judgements or left Islam officially due to cannibalistic crimes.

There are two types of *takfiri*: *takfir 'am* (generic infidel) and *takfir mu'ayyan* (particular infidel). When someone is judged to have committed *takfir 'am*, it is because their words or actions have led them to believe that Islam is false. In contrast, *takfir mu'ayyan* involves enforcing a shamanistic verdict on a Muslim who has been shown, through research, to have legally spoken or done something considered to undermine Islam (arrahmah.com, 2012). The Islamic movement in Indonesia has been fractured since 2013 due to disagreements over the definition of *takfiri* and the presence of ISIS.

Radical Muslim women in Indonesia learn from the internet and social media that hundreds of

Southeast Asian women have joined ISIS in Syria for reasons other than religious extremism, such as seeking liberation. This is especially evident on social media, where women are taking the reins and leading the charge in terms of recruitment, distribution, and fundraising, all without the oversight or approval of men. They take charge of their lives and support one another in the "spirit of sisterhood." All of this has bolstered women's self-confidence and empowered them to pursue their own goals. (for a full breakdown, see Table 1). From 1980 through 2003, several women participated in terrorist suicides to show their support for their husbands, families, and communities who were fighting for freedom or equality. as shown in Table 2. As in Chechnya, Ireland, Spain, Europe, and Palestine, among other places, women are increasingly taking part in terrorist and violent attacks as shown in Table. 3.

Table 1 Foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq

Countries	Official Count	Non-Official	Returnees
Cambodia	1		
Indonesia	700	500	162
Malaysia	100		5+
Philippines	100		
Singapore	2		

Source: The Soufan Group (2015, pp. 7-10).

Table 2 Cross-group Suicide Attacks by Women (1980-2003)

Countries	Suicide attacks by Women	Presentation of Female Actors
Kurdish	10	71%
Chechen	14	60%
Tamil Elam (LTTE)	23	20%
Lebanon	6	16%
Palestine	6	5%
Al Qaeda	0	0%

Source: Robert Pape, A Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, American Political Science Review 97. 3 (August 2003).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics Results (11pt, after spacing 6pt)

Group	Sympathisers	Spies	Warriors	Warrior Leaders	Dominant Forces	Suicide Bombers	Participati on Grown?
European Left-wing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
LTTE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Domestic Latin Am.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
IRA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
American right-wing	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
ETA	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Palestina n	✓	✓				✓	✓

Chechen	✓					✓	✓
International Latin Am.	✓						

Source: Paul Taylor, "Female Terrorism: A Review", *Terrorism and Political Violence Journal*, July 2009, 21(3):499-515

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the phenomenon of women's involvement in family-based terrorism in Indonesia, specifically the 2018 Surabaya bombings. The researcher served as the primary instrument for in-depth analysis of narratives of women's involvement through critical reflection on available data. The primary focus of the research was to understand the shift in women's roles from mere supporters to active perpetrators in family-based acts of extreme violence.

The research data were sourced from secondary documents, global and regional terrorism statistical reports, and legal case studies of twelve female subjects involved in terrorism in Indonesia through 2018. Data exploration techniques were conducted through document analysis and literature review, including statistics from The Soufan Group and data on cross-group suicide attacks. The researcher also engaged informants through a review of expert reports on terrorism and sociology to strengthen the patriarchal context and indoctrination underlying the subjects' involvement.

The research instruments used were a textual analysis guide and a categorization of political, economic, social, and cultural variables that drive women's radicalization. The data analysis phase included data reduction, presentation of data in comparative tables on the involvement of foreign fighters and female suicide attacks, and drawing conclusions through theoretical reflection. To ensure the validity and legitimacy of the findings, researchers triangulated the data by comparing police data, media reports, and relevant previous studies to ensure the reliability of the interpretation of this family terrorism phenomenon.

Discussion

Women and Terrorism

Women's participation in radical movements in modern-day Indonesia is an important but often overlooked factor. There has been a recent uptick in the involvement of women in terrorist acts, while the number is still low. In this context, political, economic, social, and cultural variables all become reasons and problems that push women into involvement in terrorist attacks, rather than just ideology.

In 2018, at least 12 women in Indonesia have been subject to court proceedings due to

incidences of extreme assault. How many more women will knowingly subject themselves to such terrible violence is anyone's guess. The problems facing the government and society at large today motivate them to play a significant role in the extreme violence movement. Is there a way to stop this belief without resorting to violence or imprisonment? Or, should the government explore other options for putting an end to this excessive violence? Although ideology plays a significant role in motivating those who resort to extreme violence, it is not the only factor at play. The answer to radicalism and terrorism must touch on intellectual difficulties, but it must also analyze and correct political, social, economic, and cultural elements; these are all reasons.

According to the findings of Moh. Adhe Bhakti's study reports (2019), the following describe women who have run afoul of the law for their roles in terrorist events or as terrorist perpetrators: Before the 2009 suicide bombing at the JW Marriot and Ritz Carlton hotels volume II, Putri Munawaroh and her husband (Susilo) hid Noordin M Top (a perpetrator of the Bali Bom terror assault that murdered hundreds of people in 2002) for three months. Munawaroh wedded a terrorist who is serving time in an East Java prison after the death of her first spouse.

Second, Noordin M. Top's second wife, Muniatun, is someone he didn't know before (he's a scholar and works in a government office), and since their marriage was arranged by his parents, he is seen as shielding the terrorist's identity and allowing Noordin M. Top to resume his criminal activities. The third is Arina Rahma from Cilacap, Central Java; she is the third wife of Noordin M. Top. Arina's father, Baridin, was more than happy to accommodate Noordin M. Top and even marry his only daughter off to the man from Malaysia when Top requested for Baridin's protection during his travel. Arina was a university student in Jogjakarta at the time of his wedding. Baridin proposed to Arina that she return to Cilacap so that he may marry his father's friend, Noordin M. Top.

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Fourth, Ruqayah binti Husen Luceno, helped conceal evidence linking her husband, terrorist Umar Patek, to the crime. Deni Carmelita, a secretary at the National Narcotics Agency, had her husband, Pepi Fernando, convicted of impeding police investigations into the book bombing and the Serpong bombings. The report provides insight into the values and worldview of criminal terrorist organizations. For women like Muniatun and Arina, who were forced to marry men they had never met because of the machinations of extreme Islamic groups, the situation is not ideal. Wives must do as their husbands command, but there is much room for radical jihad indoctrination once they are wed.

Sixth, in Purworejo in 2016, Ika Puspita Sari is the protagonist, the suicide bomber she married into and whose husband consciously "brainwashed" her into joining a violent group. This suggests that they wed with the intention of indoctrinating each other into radical ideology. Their weddings went off without a hitch, but not everyone can say that they tied the knot behind bars. Others who eventually embraced this radical theology got married after the fact. They are heavily

indoctrinated by other women who have been active in the network or by friends of their husbands. "(Adhe Bhakti, 2019)"

Women continue to be stereotyped as helpless victims of society's pervasive patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is a social order in which men naturally dominate and subjugate females. This is consistent with the definition of patriarchy, which holds that the male gender is institutionally and culturally set up to be the oppressor and exploiter of women. In every society throughout human history, males have held positions of power. This is especially true in the most hierarchically structured societies. In this type of culture, men are viewed as superior to women in both the private and public spheres. Cultural, religious, and legal norms that support male superiority over females are passed down from generation to generation through socialization (Darwin, 2001).

Women who have run afoul of the law because they were witnesses to or participants in terrorist acts sometimes face strong patriarchal hegemony as a contributing factor. However, they may also face legal trouble from more militant groups or individuals.

Family Suicide Bombing

Women's participation in radical movements in modern-day Indonesia is an important but often overlooked factor. There has been a recent uptick in the involvement of women in terrorist acts, while the number is still low. In this context, political, economic, social, and cultural variables all become reasons and problems that push women into involvement in terrorist attacks, rather than just ideology.

As we have noted above, in 2018, at least 12 women in Indonesia have been subject to court proceedings due to incidences of extreme assault. How many more women will knowingly subject themselves to such terrible violence is anyone's guess. The problems facing the government and society at large today motivate them to play a significant role in the extreme violence movement. Is there a way to stop this belief without resorting to violence or imprisonment? Or, should the government explore other options for putting an end to this excessive violence? Although ideology plays a significant role in motivating those who resort to extreme violence, it is not the only factor at play. The answer to radicalism and terrorism must touch on intellectual difficulties, but it must also analyze and correct political, social, economic, and cultural elements; these are all reasons.

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Conclusion

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