

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON COUNTER-TERRORISM IN INDONESIA ^{©Σ}

MACHYA ASTUTI DEWI * AND IVA RACHMAWATI †

ABSTRACT

There is an assumption that the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce the number of acts of terrorism. However, that opinion has yet to be proven in Indonesia. Acts of terrorism continue to grow despite the COVID-19 pandemic limiting human activities. Various acts of terror, both physical and non-physical, through social media occur. Even the campaign of terrorism through cyberspace is increasingly massive and difficult to contain. This phenomenon is interesting to study, significantly how Indonesia's COVID-19 pandemic impacts counter-terrorism measures. To answer this question, data through internet searches on counter-terrorism programs from the National Agency for Counter-terrorism in Indonesia and related institutions are explored. Researchers also interviewed officials from the National Counter-terrorism Agency and former terrorism offenders. The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected Indonesia's counter-terrorism strategy. First, the campaign of terrorist groups that are rife in the mass media is addressed by counter-narrative through social media. Second, there has been a shift in counter-terrorism efforts from a hard approach to a soft approach. Third, there is increasing Pentahelix synergy in countering terrorism in Indonesia.

Keywords: terrorism, counter-terrorism, COVID-19

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KESAN PANDEMIK COVID-19 TERHADAP USAHA MEMERANGI KEGANASAN DI INDONESIA

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ABSTRAK

Terdapat anggapan bahawa pandemik COVID-19 akan mengurangkan jumlah tindakan keganasan. Walau bagaimanapun, pandangan tersebut belum terbukti di Indonesia. Tindakan keganasan terus berkembang walaupun pandemik COVID-19 membataskan aktiviti manusia. Pelbagai tindakan keganasan, baik fizikal mahupun bukan fizikal melalui media sosial, berlaku. Malah, kempen keganasan melalui siber semakin berkembang dan sukar untuk dibendung. Fenomena ini menarik untuk dikaji, terutamanya bagaimana impak pandemik COVID-19 di Indonesia terhadap usaha memerangi keganasan. Untuk menjawab soalan ini, data melalui pencarian internet mengenai program memerangi keganasan dari Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme di Indonesia dan institusi berkaitan diteroka. Penyelidik juga telah mengadakan temu bual dengan pegawai dari Badan Nasional Menentang Keganasan dan bekas pelaku keganasan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pandemik COVID-19 telah mempengaruhi strategi memerangi keganasan di Indonesia. Pertama, kempen kumpulan pengganas yang bermaharajalela dalam media massa ditangani dengan naratif kontra melalui media sosial. Kedua, terdapat peralihan usaha memerangi keganasan dari pendekatan keras ke pendekatan lembut. Ketiga, terdapat peningkatan sinergi Pentahelix dalam menangani keganasan di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: keganasan, memerangi keganasan, COVID-19

Introduction

There is an interesting phenomenon that the COVID-19 pandemic has not reduced acts of terrorism in Indonesia. Amid the Indonesian government's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an attack on the South Daha Sector Police Headquarters, South Kalimantan, on June 1, 2020. In this case, the police arrested two terrorists from the terrorist network *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah*, or JAD, affiliated with ISIS (Martiar & Saputra 2020). Five months later, on November 27, 2020, the Special Detachment (Densus) 88 Anti-terror of the Indonesian National Police Headquarters arrested terrorism perpetrators in Sigi, Central Sulawesi. They killed four residents and set fire to a house of worship (Rezkisari, 2020). On March 28, 2021, there was a suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral carried out by a married couple (Azanella, 2021). A few weeks later, on April 2, 2021, police shot dead terrorism perpetrators at the Indonesian National Police Headquarters (Guritno 2021).

Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5 of 2018 affirms that "terrorism is an act that uses violence or threats that create an atmosphere of widespread terror or fear, which can cause mass casualties, and or cause damage or destruction to strategic vital objects, the environment, public facilities or international facilities with ideological, political security intrusion." Terrorism is an extraordinary crime, so it is necessary to handle it through extraordinary means (Muladi 2004). This is because terrorism is the greatest danger to human rights, such as the human right to life and freedom from fear. The targets of terrorism are random and indiscriminate, which tends to victimise innocent people. Terrorism also makes use of weapons of mass destruction by utilising modern technology. In addition, there is cooperation between terrorist organisations of a national and international nature. Terrorism also endangers international peace and security.

According to the Institute for Economics & Peace (2022), terrorism will become even deadlier in 2021. Indonesia recorded the second-highest damage in the Asia-Pacific region. Attacks decreased by 24 percent, but death rates increased by 85 percent. In 2021, there were an average of 1.5 deaths per attack, compared to 0.6 deaths per attack in 2020. Indonesia ranks fourth among countries in the Asia-Pacific region affected by terrorism. Globally, Indonesia is in 24th position out of 163 countries. In 2021 16 terrorism incidents killed 24 people. While referring to Gayatri (2021), the Indonesian National Police numbered 228 suspected terrorists in 2020. This is in line with the claim of the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT) that terrorist movements during the COVID-19 pandemic have not decreased. Attacks were carried out by the East Indonesia Mujahideen 4 times throughout 2020. Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Freedom Papua Organization) 9 times, one attack by *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah*, and three other attacks have not been identified.

The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict/IPAC (2020) declared that the government's deradicalisation efforts failed, as 11 percent of former prisoners returned to become terrorists. Even IPAC said that the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened terrorist networks. The National Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN) claims the same thing, saying that the pandemic has triggered four times more cybercrime than before (Kompas.com 2020). Similarly, according to the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT) study, 85 percent of the Millennial generation is sensitive to radicalism (Yani, 2022). The phenomenon of strengthening terrorism in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic is an exciting issue to study. Pandemic conditions provide challenges in counter-terrorism efforts. This paper will analyse how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with purposive interview techniques to explore views on post-pandemic counter-terrorism efforts. In-depth interviews were conducted with the Director of Deradicalization of the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) and the founder of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Serve Indonesia, which focuses on deradicalisation issues. The choice of these informants is based on the consideration that they know or have much information related to counter-terrorism. The National Counter Terrorism Agency conducts routine programs. It interacts with terrorists in order to identify the causes of people exposed to terrorism and then determine the appropriate steps to deradicalise terrorists and counter-terrorism. Serve Indonesia also has a deradicalisation program, thus providing a depth of understanding on counter-terrorism.

Furthermore, researchers conducted interviews with former jihadists who had been involved or exposed to radicalism in the terrorist movement. It was a challenge to find informants who had been exposed to terrorist ideology. Some were tired of being interviewed by various parties, journalists, and researchers, and they wanted to live a new life in peace, so they no longer wanted to be interviewed. The researcher tried to pave the way by asking one of Serve Indonesia's activists for information on who ex-convicts of terrorism could be interviewed. This organisation actively works with ex-convicts of terrorism. With the help of the founder of Serve Indonesia, the researcher contacted a former terrorism prisoner who lives in Purworejo and is willing to be interviewed. From this informant, the researcher asked who could be interviewed next. Two names were mentioned, but unfortunately, the informant had lost contact with both. One lives in Yogyakarta, is married, and has pledged allegiance to the Republic of Indonesia. But later lost contact after having a child. The other informant lives in Temanggung and is married but is still on the hardline path or has not pledged allegiance to the Republic of Indonesia. There is a term among ex-convicts of terrorism that those who have sworn allegiance to the Republic of Indonesia are called "green".

Meanwhile, those who still have a radical ideology are still called "red". They keep their distance from each other, because they think they are not one stream. After being traced, contact with a former terrorism prisoner who lived in Yogyakarta was finally found, but he had moved to Ciamis. The researcher tried to contact him and she was willing to be interviewed through a zoom meeting.

In addition to interviews, researchers also collected data from various documents. The document search method was conducted to obtain data on counter-terrorism programs conducted by the government and non-government institutions.

The data collected was analysed using descriptive-qualitative techniques. All data was organised into categories and given a narrative-qualitative analysis. The analysis was conducted by making interpretations of the data that had been collected and also juxtaposing it with findings from similar studies, as well as relevant theories.

Literature Review

The lack of reduced terrorism attacks provides challenges amid pandemic conditions full

of restrictions. The Habibie Center report (2021) found four critical observations about violent extremism in Indonesia. First, the Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the decline of democracy in Indonesia. Restrictions on every aspect by the government as an effort to overcome the pandemic resulted in a limited number of important decisions. The decision to securitise pandemic handling also places security actors and overlapping central and local government sectoral responses. Second, increasing symptoms of intolerance can be a driver of increased radicalisation. The pandemic is the right time for violent extremist groups to spread their ideas. Third is the emergence of negative narratives about the pandemic, a doom from God that encourages increasing extremist movements. Fourth, the expansion of the military's role in handling terrorism is due to the limitation of the movement of non-state actors.

Eradicating terrorism in Indonesia is considered not achievable due to several factors, namely geographical factors, terrorism networks that tend to be increasingly dynamic and ever-changing, lack of institutional professionalism and the deficit of laws as strategic instruments in dealing with terrorism. Meanwhile, various efforts and initiatives in combating terrorism in Indonesia, carried out by the government and civil society, have received a lot of criticism and attention. Many consider these programs and initiatives responsive, reactive, partial, temporary (Ansori et al. 2019), and serious evaluation. In Indonesia, Densus 88 or Special Detachment 88 Anti-terror of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia was formed to tackle terrorism. Densus 88 has two approaches, namely the hard and soft approach. Soft approaches include ideological, religious, socio-cultural, and political approaches (in coordination with BNPT). At the same time, the hard approach is the security and rights or juridical (Nova 2021, Ansori et al. 2019).

Sukabdi (2021) found discourse on 15 efforts that are considered necessary in handling terrorism in Indonesia. The 15 efforts include policy making, terrorism prevention, terrorism risk assessment, coordination, judiciary, rehabilitation of terrorism perpetrators and families, victim recovery, recovery management for former terrorists in foreign countries, officer capacity building, counter-narrative, use of artificial intelligence, terrorism networks, judicial process, CBRN (Chemical Biological Radioactive Nuclear)/terrorist weapons and terrorist financing.

From academic research, it can be seen that the state still holds a leading position in countering terrorism. This is also in line with the UK government's CONTEST strategy, which consists of four main mechanisms: "pursue, prevent, protect and prepare". Of these efforts, "prevent" has brought counter-terrorism talks to education, health, housing, and other social issues (Sukabdi 2021). Prevention has been primarily targeted at Muslim communities, as the threat from Islam-related terrorism has been seen by the UK government as the most prominent. The UK government's aim is for the community not to fund or work with extremist groups, where extremism is understood as active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual freedom, and mutual respect and tolerance (Spalek and El-Awa 2023).

Prevention is also a significant effort for the Canadian government to prevent terrorism through "prevent, detect, deny and respond." Prevention is an effort to prevent individuals from becoming involved in terrorist networks. Canada's Ministry of Public Safety aims to target and mitigate the factors contributing to terrorism by actively engaging individuals, communities, and international partners and through research to understand better these factors and how to address them. Meanwhile, Detection is an effort to detect all activities of individuals and organisations that may pose a terrorist threat. Countering the terrorist threat requires knowledge of the terrorists themselves,

their capabilities, and the nature of their plans. Detecting terrorists is an essential task for Interpol because the primary goal of this organisation is to detect and identify terrorism early. Deny is an effort to deny all means and opportunities for terrorists to develop their activities in Canada. These activities are carried out as intelligence and law enforcement activities, prosecutions, and domestic and foreign cooperation. Meanwhile, the response is an effort to respond to terrorist activities proportionally, quickly, and organised to reduce the widespread impact on society. These activities include building community resilience and handling crises when terrorist attacks occur.

Pakistan takes the presence of the state in a more extreme form in countering terrorism. Pakistan has used three countermeasures to curb violence: peace agreements, military operations, and a combination of military strikes (operation Zarb-e-Azb) and a National Action Plan (Rehman et al. 2017). The same was taken by Egypt after the Arab Spring in 2011. Counter-terrorism aims to normalise the neglect of human rights to overcome terrorism, establish legal and political legitimacy to fight terrorism, silence all criticism and corrective efforts, and prevent solutions that do not involve military intervention (Abozaid, 2020).

The military policy can be carried out not only within the state but also outside the state. The policy can be in the form of direct military intervention or aid/subsidies to allied countries (where terrorists are located) (Bandyopadhyay and Sandler, 2014). The allied countries will manage the financial support to fight terrorists in their countries. The military action is in line with Wu's importance over the importance of controlling areas that are sources of terrorist power. Thus, coalitions between countries to fight terrorism are important to narrow the space for the movement and development of terrorist networks. Nyoh called it a global counter-terrorism agency.

The military's presence in countering terrorism is not always supported. The use of military force in Campbell and Connolly (2003), fight against terrorism in the long term could be counter-productive, as could the British government's use of military force in the case of Northern Ireland. He also criticised claims that the British government's use of military force to confront the threat of terrorism in Northern Ireland was a model to be used for combating post-9/11 terrorism. Likewise, those who mention that military use also has negative aspects in addition to having positive aspects. Negative aspects generally include (1) fomenting hatred against the state that terrorists can exploit, (2) causing civilian casualties, and (3) potentially causing human rights violations such as torture of detainees (Hughes 2011).

The development of communication and information technology also influences the development of terrorist networks in recruitment, communication, and network management. In order to avoid the development of terrorist networks, mastery of information technology becomes lavish. The study by Nte et al. (2023) reviewed the prospects for applying information and communication technologies to counter terror in Nigeria. It showed that sustainable information technology can drive substantial capacity building to drive rapidly mutating counter-terrorism. Siqueira and Arce (2020) found that terrorist organisations tend to consider Internet training sufficient for any less complex and lethal tactic. The internet also provides convenience in providing motivation and training. In addition to communication facilities, information technology offers various innovations, such as modern cameras with AI integration, thermal cameras, sensors, and machine learning models for object detection and crowd behaviour, which are very helpful in countering terrorist attacks (Cascavilla et al., 2023).

The countermeasures of terrorism in Indonesia present challenges during pandemic

conditions full of restrictions). Ansari et al. (2019) found four critical points related to violent extremism in Indonesia. First, the Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the decline of democracy in Indonesia. Restrictions on every aspect by the government as an effort to overcome the pandemic resulted in a limited number of important decisions. The decision to securitise the handling of the pandemic also places security actors and overlapping sectoral responses of central and local governments. Second, increasing symptoms of intolerance can be a driver of increased radicalisation. The pandemic is the right time for violent extremist groups to spread their ideas. Third is the emergence of negative narratives about the pandemic, a doom from God that encourages increasing extremist movements. Fourth, the expansion of the military's role in handling terrorism is due to the limitation of the movement of non-state actors.

Counter-terrorism efforts, in general, still place the state as the central actor state in all efforts to counter terrorism, from prevention efforts to response to terrorist attacks and to the recovery of terror perpetrators. It has been noted that a soft approach is needed in terms of counter-terrorism, especially in prevention and recovery (Ansori et al. 2019; Nova 2021; Sukabdi 2021; Tondo 2022). The soft approach is through culture and ideology. Likewise, linguistics is a consideration for reducing violent discourse in public spaces. However, addressing community-based terrorism that relies on community engagement still lacks support because community engagement in the context of counter-terrorism is fraught with tensions, which makes it a challenging and sometimes conflict-ridden process (Cherney and Hartley 2017). Spalek and El-Awa (2023) show that community involvement in tackling terrorism can (i) overcome mistrust and generate trust, (ii) balance intelligence-gathering, community engagement, and confidence-building priorities, (iii) select partners and distinguish between friend and foe, and (iv) the level of community consultation and input. In practice, engaging the Muslim community to counter jihadist terrorism can have several significant benefits for countering jihadist-related terrorism and other terrorism. For example, the provision of information has been characterised by researchers as a significant result of community involvement in counter-terrorism.

Results and Discussion

History of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Indonesia

Terrorism in Indonesia can be traced to various violent incidents that result in public fear. Acts of terrorism have emerged since March 28, 1981, when five terrorists hijacked a Garuda Indonesia flight from Palembang to Medan. Since then, acts of terror have continued to emerge in various forms. For example, in 1985, another act of terrorism occurred, namely the Borobudur temple bombing tragedy. A massive act of terrorism occurred in Bali on October 12, 2002, known as the Bali bombings. This action killed 202 people and about 300 injured. Four people were named as suspects: Ali Imron, who received life sentences; Amrozi, Imam Samudra, and Ali Gufron, who were all sentenced to death (Mutiarasari 2022). The Bali bombing occurred again on October 1, 2005, and exploded in Kuta and Jimbaran Bali, killing 23 people, including three perpetrators (Armani 2019).

Table 1: Acts of Terrorism in Indonesia 2003-2022

No	Incident	Date
1.	Bombing of the Jakarta Police Headquarters complex	February 3, 2003
2.	Bomb at Sukarno Hatta Airport	April 27, 2003

3.	JW Marriott Surabaya Bombing	August 5, 2003
4.	Bomb in Palu	2003
5.	McDonald's restaurant bombing in Makassar	2003
6.	Palopo Bomb	January 10, 2004
7.	Australian Embassy bombing	September 9, 2004
8.	Bomb at Immanuel church in Palu	December 12, 2004
9.	Bombs in Ambon	March 21, 2005
10.	Tentena Bomb	May 28, 2005
11.	Pamulang Bombing Tangerang	June 8, 2005
12.	Bali Bombings 2	October 1, 2005
13.	Palu market bomb	December 31, 2005
14.	JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton bombs	July 17th, 2009
15.	Shootings in Aceh	January 2010
16.	Bom Solo	August 19, 2012
17.	Poso Police Station Bomb	June 9, 2013
18.	Jakarta bombings	January 14, 2016
19.	Bomb at Surakarta Police Headquarters	July 5, 2016
20.	Bomb at Medan Church	August 28, 2016
21.	Bombing at Samarinda Church	November 13, 2016
22.	Bombing at Singkawang Vihara	November 14, 2016
23.	Bandung bombings	February 27, 2017
24.	Kampung Melayu Jakarta bombing	May 24, 2017
25.	Mobile Brigade Command Headquarters Riot	May 8-10, 2018
26.	Surabaya bombing	May 13-14, 2018
27.	Attack on Riau Police Station	May 16, 2018
28.	House bombing in Pasuruan	July 5, 2018
29.	Sibolga Bomb	March 12-13, 2019
30.	Medan Bomb	November 13, 2019
31.	Attack on Sigi	November 27, 2020
32.	Attack on South Daha Police Station	July 1, 2020
33.	Makassar Cathedral Church Bombing	March 28, 2021
34.	Attack on Indonesian Police Headquarters	March 31, 2021
35.	Bandung Police Station Bomb	December 7, 2022

Source: Compiled and Created by Authors

The Indonesian government's efforts to deal with terrorism were carried out by issuing Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) Number 1/2002 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism. Article 2 states that eradicating criminal acts of terrorism is a policy and strategic step to strengthen public order and public safety while upholding law and human rights, not discriminatory, whether based on ethnicity, religion, race, or between groups.

But, the Bali 1 bombings in 2002 prompted the Indonesian government to take more concrete steps. The government established Special Detachment 88 (Densus 88) Anti-terror. Densus 88 is a particular unit in the Indonesian National Police tasked with tackling terrorism. The government also raised the status of Perppu Number 1/2002 to Law Number 15/2003. As mentioned in the General Explanation of Law Number

15/2003, bomb detonation is one of the modes of terrorism. The Indonesian government must create order and security, thus issuing laws to provide legal certainty in eradicating criminal acts of terrorism.

Efforts to overcome terrorism are strengthened by Law Number 9 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism Financing. This step is an effort to fight terrorism not only by criminalising acts of terror committed by terrorists but also by criminalising terrorism financing activities. This law authorises the blocking of assets allegedly related to terror attempts. In order to strengthen counter-terrorism funding efforts, Indonesia has also ratified the Joint Regulation on the Inclusion of Person and Corporate Identities in the List of Suspected Terrorists and Terrorist Organizations and the Joint Blocking of Merta on Person or Corporate Property Listed in the List of Suspected Terrorists and Terrorist Organizations (Mofa Indonesia April).

However, Law No. 15/2003 has weaknesses because it does not authorise law enforcement officials to prevent the actions of radical groups. As a result, the terrorists are still free to carry out their actions, as evidenced by bombings in various cities in Indonesia. One of the biggest tragedies occurred again in Bali in 2005 (Bali Bombing 2). After that, bombings and tragedies occurred one after another in various places (see Table 1).

The Bali bombing tragedy also prompted the Indonesian government to establish a specific institution to deal with terrorism. This institution is the Coordination Desk for Combating Terrorism, which later became the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT). The tasks of BNPT are: (i) formulating, coordinating, and implementing national counter-terrorism policies, strategies, and programs in the fields of national preparedness, counter-radicalisation, and deradicalisation; (ii) coordinate between law enforcement in counter-terrorism; (iii) formulate, coordinate, and implement national counter-terrorism policies, strategies, and programs in the field of international cooperation; (iv) Develop and establish national policies, strategies, and programs in the field of counter-terrorism; (v) organising coordination of national policies, strategies, and programs in the field of counter-terrorism; and (vi) implementing national preparedness, counter-radicalisation and deradicalisation (BNPT).

However, bombings continue to occur in various cities. Finally, after the Jakarta Thamrin Bombing in 2016, the government revised Law Number 15/2003. The Indonesian government issued Law Number 5/2018. In this law, prevention is the main focus to minimise terrorist crimes. Prevention efforts are carried out by involving relevant Ministries and Institutions through national preparedness, counter-radicalisation, and deradicalisation efforts coordinated by the National Counter-terrorism Agency. This law also provides more severe criminal sanctions to perpetrators of terrorism crimes, the expansion of criminal sanctions against corporations, and additional criminal penalties in the form of revocation of the right to have a passport within a certain period.

One of the most essential aspects of Law Number 5/2018 is the deradicalisation program for former terrorists. Deradicalisation is an effort to reduce or eliminate one's radical ideas. This program is carried out in prisons by identifying, rehabilitating, re-educating, and reintegrating. While outside prison, prevention efforts are carried out through identification, religious formation, national insight, and entrepreneurship (BNPT March 31, 2021). The deradicalisation program is a new soft approach to keep someone away from terrorism.

In 2019, the government issued Government Regulation Number 77/2019 concerning the Prevention of Criminal Acts of Terrorism and the Protection of Investigators, Public Prosecutors, Judges, and Correctional Officers). This regulation is intended so that the judicial process and criminal execution can be carried out without any threat that endangers self, life, family and/or property of investigators, public prosecutors, judges, and correctional officers.

The Indonesian government's serious commitment to countering terrorism is reinforced by Presidential Regulation Number 7/2021. This legal product contains the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (RAN PE) that leads to terrorism in 2020-2024. NAP aims to protect citizens' sense of security from violent extremism that leads to terrorism as part of the state's obligation to human rights to maintain security stability based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The implementation of NAP emphasises the synergy of government and community involvement. This approach combines a soft approach and a hard approach in countering terrorism. NAP PE includes three pillars, namely (1) Prevention pillar, which includes preparedness, counter-radicalisation, and deradicalisation; (2) Pillars of law enforcement, protection of witnesses and victims, and strengthening of the national legislative framework; and (3) Pillars of international partnership and cooperation.

In the international context, Indonesia plays an active role in cooperation with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), the Terrorism Prevention Branch-United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (TPB-UNODC), and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED). In 2010, Indonesia hosted the "Workshop on Regional Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Southeast Asia" in collaboration with the UN CTITF. The meeting results were reported at the ministerial meeting of the International Counter-Terrorism Focal Points Conference on the Addressing Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism and Promoting Regional Cooperation in Geneva in 2013. Indonesia also actively participated in the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), most notably as co-chair of the Southeast Asia Capacity Building Working Group (SEAWG) with Australia for the period 2011-2013, and continued its active role with Australia as co-chair of the Detention and Reintegration Working Group (DRWG). This cooperation aims to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders who address the management of violent extremist offenders in prisons and address the need to exchange information and related good practices. Indonesia also supports prevention efforts, including implementing UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1988 (2011), which align with Indonesia's national law related to counter-terrorism financing. As a result, Indonesia already has a List of Suspected Terrorists and Terrorist Organizations of Al-Qaeda and Taliban for the asset freezing process (Mofa Indonesia April).

Terrorism in the Covid-19 Period

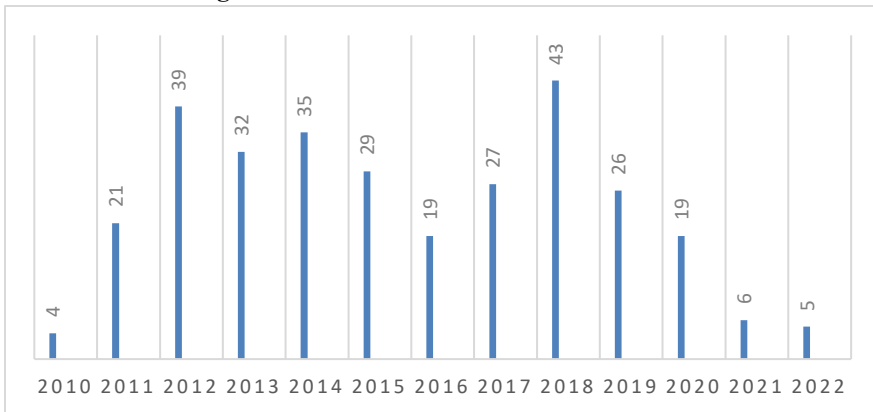
The COVID-19 outbreak entered Indonesia in early 2020. To prevent an increase in deaths due to COVID-19, the Indonesian government has adopted a social distancing policy as a solution. In May 2020, the government implemented a large-scale social restriction (PSBB) policy. The government urges all citizens to work from home, study from home, and worship at home. In July 2021, the government announced an Emergency Community Activity Restriction (PPKM) policy for areas in Java and Bali. This policy was extended again to suppress the transmission of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) because Java and Bali are areas with the most significant increase in COVID-19

cases in Indonesia since the beginning of the pandemic and a high death rate in Indonesia (Asriansyah 2022).

Restrictions on mobility and social community activities due to the implementation of the PSBB have affected the limited flexibility of the community in carrying out terrorist activities. Under normal conditions, there are groups of people who actively protect against terrorism fictionally, whether for recruitment, distribution, or movement. This situation has changed due to the pandemic. Terrorist groups are constrained in developing their actions physically (Silke 2020). The report of the Executive Directorate of the UN Counter-terrorism Committee (2020) states that the short-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on terrorist actors is the constraints of operational activities, resources, and popularity of the movement (Risman 2020)

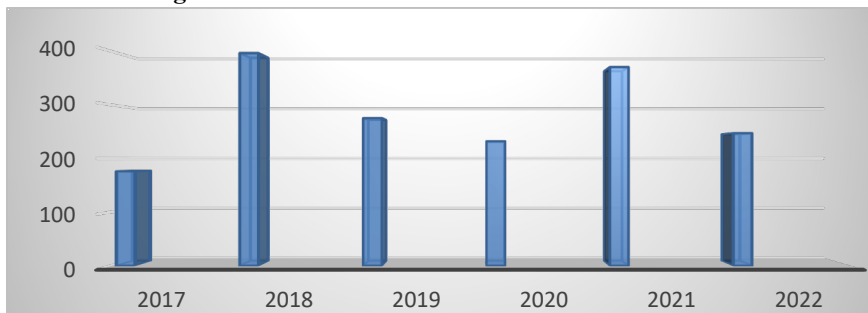
However, according to BNPT, during the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism in Indonesia did not disappear because it developed new ways through cyber activities. Terrorist activities through the internet are more accessible to carry out and more effective in indoctrinating the younger generation to support their ideology and commit acts of terror (BNPT July 1, 2021). The following figure shows that terrorist activities in Indonesia continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, for example, there were 232 terrorists arrested. The number increased to 370 people in 2021. This figure shows that terrorism activities during the pandemic period have not subsided.

Figure 1: Number of Terror Acts 2010-2022



Source: Compiled and Created by Authors

Figure 2: Number of Terrorists Arrested 2017-2022



Source: Compiled and Created by Authors

The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) reported that the pandemic prompted ISIS to call on its followers to take advantage of the situation and launch *amaliyah*. However, the IPAC report also said that some ISIS followers stayed home and reduced activities during the pandemic. Meanwhile, Mujahid Indonesia Timur (MIT) took advantage of the Tatum moment by attacking police members and actively recruiting members. MIT used the COVID-19 pandemic to carry out propaganda and recruitment through cyberspace. Since the COVID-19 outbreak hit, there has been an increase in extremist material on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms related to the idea of doomsday, crusaders, and Imam Mahdi appearing before the day of vengeance to cleanse the world of evil. Terrorist groups use government instructions to practice “social distancing” by changing their strategies. As a result of this policy, people stay at home more and spend time on social media. Terrorists use this situation to change their strategies and adapt to new societal habits.

Terrorist groups use propaganda strategies directly through their official accounts or indirectly through the social media accounts of supporters of terrorist movements. The dissemination of propaganda through the internet uses five online media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, and the World Wide Web (Putri 2019). Twitter is used to attract a larger audience and as a medium to promote terrorist groups, subtly using Twitter bombs/hashtags and creating memes by adding jihadist components to attract attention. Tumblr media is used to tell the personal lives of fighters of terrorist groups, martyrdom, jihad, and Jannah. The World Wide Web contains extremist content and the latest information on terrorist groups. YouTube contains propaganda to spread campaign videos and expose the atrocities of terrorist groups to the public. At the same time, Facebook is used as a propaganda medium for recruiting and discussing attack plans.

Propaganda is the first step of the recruitment process. The following process is more personalised recruitment, the most influential part of the hiring process, and the most difficult to control because it is personal. The propaganda that many terrorists carry out during the pandemic is by building a narrative that the COVID-19 pandemic is a doom from God that is a retribution for the government’s tyranny, domestically and globally. Terrorist groups also build a narrative that the pandemic is the right time to carry out attacks because the government is mobilising almost all resources to respond to the pandemic (The Habibie Center, 2021).

The main targets of terrorist groups in cyberspace are young people, especially those who spend time online due to social restrictions. BNPT reported that based on a 2020 survey, as many as 12.2% of Indonesians who fall into the category of the radicalism potential index are dominated by the younger generation, which is 85%—consisting of millennials aged 20-39 years and Generation Z aged 14-19 years (Antaranews April 14, 2022).

There are three reasons why radicalism thrives among young people during the pandemic. The first is the global and national economic downturn caused by the pandemic, which caused many companies to close their businesses and workers to lose their jobs. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the COVID-19 pandemic caused the unemployment rate in Indonesia to 2.56 million people from 29.12 million people (Tempo 2021). Terrorist groups are taking advantage of the poor economic situation by targeting young families and individuals who cannot work due to

the pandemic to become their supporters. Terrorist support groups are active in building humanitarian aid centres, alternative and low-cost education for communities, and providing alternative jobs for individuals who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. ISIS Brothers, for example, stated that it would hire ISIS members and sympathisers who were fired from their jobs due to COVID-19. Not only that, they also accept people who have been fired from their jobs despite being outside the ISIS group (Habibie Center, 2021).

Second, the closure of the house of worship and restrictions on religious activities. This policy encourages radical groups to reject government policies that prohibit religious activities and use them as a tool to radicalise people. They campaigned on an anti-government narrative and linked the COVID pandemic with the ban on worship and infidel government. Terrorist groups quickly gain supporters among those who believe restricting activities in places of worship is unfair. Violent extremist groups have seized on the momentum of the COVID-19 pandemic to increase internal consolidation, particularly by strengthening narratives and recruitment techniques. ISIS, for example, is using social media to spread conspiracy theories about the origins of COVID-19 to erode public trust in the government while strengthening the legitimacy of the group's violent extremist ideology." (Habibie Center, 2021)

Third is the lack of digital literacy, which makes young people more vulnerable to digital radicalism. This is reinforced by statistics from Indonesia's digital literacy research (Kata Data, 2020), which shows that Indonesian internet users have low critical thinking capacity, with 30 percent to 60% of respondents claiming to have been exposed to hoaxes, especially young online media users. According to the same survey, 11% of respondents spread hoaxes because they do not consider it essential to check the accuracy of the information they get. This study shows that Indonesians cannot recognise hoaxes and are vulnerable to spreading false material (Yani, 2022). This fact explains why young people are prone to exposure to radicalism through online channels.

Terrorist groups also use the internet for funding. The terrorists changed their online funding strategies according to the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Sianturi & Nachrawi, 2022). They use digital financial transactions such as cryptocurrency, virtual currency, and crowdfunding. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the amount of terrorism financing has increased. According to PPAK Suspicious Financial Transaction (LTKM) data, terrorist groups conduct funding transactions through the abuse of non-profit organisations, crowdfunding, and fintech. Another way is to raise funds through social media for victims of natural disasters, conflicts in Palestine, Syria, or the handling of COVID-19. BNPT also noted that during the pandemic, there was a 101% increase in suspicious financial transactions (BNPT July 1, 2021).

Post-Pandemic Counter-Terrorism Efforts

The leading actor in countering terrorism in Indonesia is the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT). In fighting terrorism, BNPT develops cooperation with various parties, namely the government, religious leaders, youth leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, civil society organisations, academics, media, and business actors. Thus, counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia use the Pentahelix principle, which involves the cooperation of 5 stakeholders: academics, entrepreneurs, the community, the government, and the mass media. In collaboration with government institutions, BNPT has made a Memorandum of Understanding and implemented cooperation with 46 Ministries and Non-Ministerial Government Institutions spread across five provinces,

namely West Java, Central Java, East Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and Central Sulawesi (Antaranews July 15, 2023).

Before the pandemic, BNPT already had a counter-propaganda program handled by the Peace Media Center (PMD). This institution has the task of monitoring and analysing radical media propaganda, conducting counter-propaganda with a multi-media approach, and forming a community of volunteers from the younger generation through Cyber Peace Ambassadors as partners to campaign for peace through the language of young people. BNPT also collaborates with mainstream media, both print, online, and broadcasting, as propaganda media partners, provides training to young people to be digitally literate, and publishes books on national values and unity.

To counter the propaganda developed by terrorist networks, BNPT conducted counter-propaganda in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) and the State Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN). The aim is to educate the public, not to be provoked by radical content, by providing content that contains the values of unity, national values, and the values of love for the nation and country. BNPT also carries out cooperation in identifying various threats and potential threats of radical groups online, and BSSN has the primary task and function to carry out information monitoring as a form of effort to detect and prevent the spread of radicalism in cyberspace (Sadarusalam et al., 2018). This effort was further developed during the COVID-19 pandemic by involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a counter-narrative agent. The target of the counter-narrative is the general audience, especially Generation Z. The communication media used are social media platforms. However, the content submitted varies, as shown in the following table:

Table 2: Government Agencies’ Counter-Narrative Agents of Radicalism in Indonesian Institutions

Institution	Goal	Nature of the Message	Communication Channel
National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT)	Comprehensive and specific to generation Z	Special informative and educational radicalisation	Social media
Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo)	To follow BNPT’s directions	General informative and educational	Social media
Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag)	Thorough and specific to generation Z	Informative and religious education	Social media
Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN)	To follow BNPT’s directions	General informative and educational	Social media

Source: Adopted from Aththaariq Rizki. 2022. "Radikalisasi Melalui Media Sosial Selama Pandemi Coronavirus Disease of 2019". *Jurnal Peperangan Asimetris* Vol. 8, No. 1: 14-15.

Counter-narrative efforts also involve the community, especially the younger generation. One of them is BNPT training for Moslem Boarding School (pesantren) students to create positive content and narratives to increase the sense of national unity (BNPT February 24, 2023). Cooperation with pesantren was developed before the COVID-19 pandemic through the Duta Damai program in coordination with scholars from Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Sadarusalam et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, at the regional level, BNPT makes counter-narrative efforts in collaboration with local governments. One of them is to build a discussion forum on unity and nationality called Warung NKRI (Wadah Akur Rukun Usaha Nurani Gelorakan NKRI). Warung NKRI is a counter-narrative center developing national and nationalism narratives through active dialogues. The hope is that it can be a deterrent and antidote to the ideology of terrorism. Until February 2023, BNPT, in collaboration with local governments, has established 21 Warung NKRI spread across various regions in Indonesia (BNPT February 26, 2023).

In addition to counter-narratives, the Indonesian government develops anti-radicalism through art. In the pandemic, radicalism thrives among youth. They are the main targets of terrorist movements in order to sympathise with and support their movements. Therefore, BNPT develops activities to increase the love of the homeland for the youth. For example, in Central Sulawesi, BNPT, in collaboration with the Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forum (FKPT), conducted education on deradicalisation through the nation's children's music action festival (Asik Bang). Music is believed to prevent radicalism and bring peace (Antara Sulteng, July 7, 2022).

Along with efforts to prevent youth from being provoked by radical movements, deradicalisation programs for former terrorism convicts continue. However, due to the pandemic, the deradicalisation process changed format. BNPT changed the deradicalisation program from offline to online through video calls. Various efforts were made amid vigilance of possible acts of terror. One is conducting National and Religious Insight Development to Deradicalization Partners in Probolinggo City, East Java, in 2023. This activity was initiated by the Sub-Directorate of Community Development, Directorate of Deradicalization BNPT in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, namely Special Detachment 88, Probolinggo Regional Government, Probolinggo Police, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. A total of 16 deradicalisation partners or former terrorism convicts (prisoners) and their families living in the areas of Probolinggo City, Probolinggo Regency, Malang Regency, and Mojokerto Regency participated in this event (Sunda 2023). A former terrorism convict (Napiter) testified that a former prisoner's economic independence influenced the deradicalisation program's success after leaving prison. Economic strengthening programs are important to keep prisoners from returning to radical groups (personal interview June 26, 2023).

Various counter-terrorism efforts carried out by Indonesia after the COVID-19 pandemic show an emphasis on the direction of soft approaches in handling terrorism. Pradnyana (2022) states that counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia are carried out by two methods: hard and soft. The hard approach is one that emphasises the use of armed force or the army to counter-terrorism. At the same time, the soft approach method focuses on activities to overcome radicalism from the root of the problem. The hard approach method tended to be used during the New Order period, but until now, it is still used by Special Detachment (Densus) 88. At the same time, the soft approach

method has been used since the establishment of BNPT in 2010 until now. BNPT's increasingly varied programs prove that the soft approach method is the leading choice for post-pandemic counter-terrorism efforts.

At the international level, counter-terrorism efforts are carried out through cooperation between countries. Regional cooperation, which is implemented as a counter-terrorism strategy, is implemented through the ASEAN Chiefs of National Police forum. The Indonesian Police also established regional and international cooperation in various ASEAN forums, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting (ACAMM), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Bilateral cooperation, which is implemented as a counter-terrorism strategy, is realised by establishing the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) between Indonesia and Australia. Indonesia is a member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering, and; Indonesia has also signed MoUs with more than 46 Financial Intelligence Units, signed a Bilateral Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (especially with BNPT), also carried out Intelligence sharing, capacity building, technical cooperation.

Meanwhile, multilateral cooperation for counter-terrorism is implemented through the UNODC, UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Indonesia is one of the advisory boards of the UN Counter-Terrorism Center. Indonesia is also the Co-chair of the Detention and Reintegration Working Group of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (Mofa Indonesia October 6, 2022).

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a new pattern of terrorist movements. Before the pandemic, terrorist groups tended to use campaigns and propaganda directly to recruit members. The Indonesian government's social distancing policy has an impact on shifting the propaganda methods of terrorist groups. They use the internet for campaigning, propaganda, and recruiting members.

Following the shift in the pattern of terrorist movements during the pandemic, counter-terrorism efforts have shifted focus. The soft approach method by emphasising counter-narratives on social media, peaceful action activities through art, and economic strengthening of former terrorist convicts are options to overcome massive terrorism during the pandemic. This shows that the soft approach is the primary strategy to fight terrorism in Indonesia after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The application of soft approach methods to counter-terrorism requires synergistic cooperation between parties. Here, the Pentahelix approach shows its relevance in countering terrorism in Indonesia. BNPT conducts counter-terrorism programs with local governments, academics, entrepreneurs, communities, and mass media. This phenomenon opens the following research path to analyse the effectiveness of post-COVID Pentahelix cooperation in combating terrorism in Indonesia.

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