

# ENHANCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN INDONESIA TO COUNTER TERRORISM



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## Executive Summary

Counterterrorism practice in Indonesia is divided into two major formats: hard or soft approaches de-radicalization. The soft approach targets the individual perpetrator and involves the family and community members keen on changing the radical mindset. However, much of this approach does not consider the potential for women to significantly engaged in counterterrorism (CT) efforts. This despite the fact that women play vital roles within the family, particularly in forming the character of children, our next generation. Women also offer diverse perspectives for problem solving. Their often softer approach can complement or even complete men's actions. Thus, women should see increased roles in counterterrorism, especially in de-radicalization projects. This paper addresses how women's roles in CT are restricted in both quantity and quality due to a lack of inclusion as a part of Indonesia's larger strategy. It also discusses certain women's organizations and movements who have a vested interest in this issue. Despite the number of women in the Indonesian population, these organizations still face gaps in their ability to influence the CT mission.. Addressing these gaps by engaging and learning from other women's organizations rooted in the community offer new a means and methodology for including women in counterterrorism activities.

## Introduction

Terrorism eradication efforts have long been considered the exclusive purview of men. This comes from the assumption that terrorism, like war and violence, is primarily the purview of men. However, certain groups today involve women in terrorist activities, as seen with the group Boko Haram and the Pakistani Taliban. The latter of the two claims to have prepared 500 female suicide bombers for terrorist acts. In some cases, women's inclusion in the criminal act of terrorism has increased its effectiveness. Reasons for this include the idea that women are considered more loyal to their duty, and that they are viewed with less suspicion by security forces. This counters the assumption that terrorism is the exclusive domain of men.

Given this background, it follows that women's participation in various fields, including combat, counterterrorism, and conflict resolution can bring better results. For example, in Tamil Nadu, Nepal, and in the Kashmir region, when women have been involved as fighters, they have rapidly increased their movement's impacts. In Kurdistan, women are deployed to the Peshmorga, an elite unit of the Kurdish armed forces, to help face down the threat of terrorism in the region.

Women can also be valuable agents in the peace process. The Liberian Peace Movement led by Leymah Gbowee is one example. Under her direction, the movement mobilized thousands of women protesters against the Liberian civil war, employing acts of silence, advocating against violence and even denying men sexual relations. This movement contributed to the civil war's end in 2003. However, when women have returned to the traditional realm and left the peace process solely in the hands of their male fellows, results have not been as expected.

Discussion of counterterrorism efforts must start with an understanding of the definition and concept of terrorism. Graeme C.S. Steven, a research associate at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews, and Rohan Gunaratna, head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at Nanyang Technological University, have stated that terrorism is a unique form of political violence. It is a political campaign backed by threats and acts of violence. It must be systematic and deliberate, and seek to influence a wide audience by generating fear. It targets civilians to gain political control of the public.

Under Steven's and Gunaratna's definition, terrorism can be divided into two forms, the first of which is domestic terrorism. This refers to acts of terrorism committed within the a

country's territorial borders. The second is international, which refers to acts of terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, the Indonesian Government defines terrorism as follows:

“Any person who intentionally using violence or threats of violence create and/or intended to create an atmosphere of terror or fear against the widespread nature or cause casualties mass, by depriving of freedom or loss of life and property of others, or cause damage or destruction the vital objects strategic or environmental or public facility or facilities of international”<sup>2</sup>.

An intentional act of violence or threats of violence intended to create an atmosphere of terror or fear among target populations. The acts cause injury and loss of life, including mass casualties, as well as damage to property, including destruction of vital strategic, environmental, public and international facilities.

What leads people to commit acts of terrorism? Research shows certain factors that compel people to join terrorist groups. Among these are: 1) belief in the group's cause; 2) sympathy with group's aims, ideology, religion, or politics.; 3) a sense of injustice, combined with anger and a desire for revenge; 4) hopelessness, often for economic reasons, such as unemployment, lack of education, and denial of social recognition and acceptance; and 5) failure to achieve political goals by political means.<sup>3</sup>

Former Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono stated there are three main causes of terrorism, namely: 1) extremism and ideological radicalism; 2) misinterpretation of and digression from religion; 3) poverty and social inequality.<sup>4</sup>

Another concept comes from Sri Yunanto, who is on the staff of the Indonesia National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT). He has stated that the root of terrorism can be divided into three factors: 1) ideology, 2) non-ideology, and 3) history. In Yunanto's view, the ideological root emerges because people deny the moderate Ulama<sup>5</sup> interpretation of jihad . They tend to use “jihad” to as a war term. He sees the non-ideological factor as coming from those who are

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<sup>1</sup> Steven, G.C.S. and Gunaratna, R. (2004). Counterterrorism: A Reference Handbook. California: ABC-CLIO, page 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Indonesian Regulation of Eradication of Terrorism (*Undang-Undang* Nomor 15 tahun 2003 tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme).

<sup>3</sup> *Op.cit*, page 16-24.

<sup>4</sup> “Tiga Penyebab Munculnya Terorisme Menurut SBY”, [http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/79144-tiga\\_penyebab\\_munculnya\\_terorisme\\_menurut\\_sby](http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/79144-tiga_penyebab_munculnya_terorisme_menurut_sby), July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>5</sup> *Ulama* refers to the educated class of Muslim legal scholars who are polymaths engaged in several fields of Islamic studies. They are well versed in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and are considered the arbiters of *sharia* law, being Islamic lawyers and are considered the foundation of the law.

marginalized from national political power. The historical factor, in his analysis, comes from the idea of Indonesia's war of independence, fought for centuries against Western nations. It originated from the idea that radical action is needed to obtain independence, and that Western countries always have negative intentions toward Indonesia and Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

Further research conducted by Abu Rokhmad shows that the concept of radical Islam may have spread because of a lack of religious knowledge and provocative materials that have been distributed.<sup>7</sup>

In light of these various concepts and causes, there are a number of different measures available in the fight against terrorism. They include both defensive measures to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts and offensive measures to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. They include: 1) political actions, 2) punitive measures, 3) employing the legal system, 4) military operations, 5) using intelligence agencies, 6) enforce restricted movements, 7) police operations, and 8) counter propaganda activities.<sup>8</sup>

Considering these measures, women can be engaged in counterterrorism activities in a variety of ways. As mothers, and in their traditional status, women have important roles within the family, particularly in children's character formation. In the community, women have a great impact on and access to community information. Women also possess diverse perspectives that can be applied to problem solving and can complement the work of men. As seen in cases listed above and throughout this paper, women's deployment as main agents for conflict resolution promises enhanced results. These roles can be applied to their involvement in anti-terrorism task forces, law enforcement, and decision making processes. In this paper, I will focus on enhancing women's role in defensive measures, particularly in the de-radicalization process.

## 1. Role of Indonesian Women in Counterterrorism

The strategy of countering terrorism in Indonesia can be classified into hard and soft approaches towards deradicalization. The hard approach focuses on developing the security system and law enforcement. This method considers terrorism an illegal criminal act because it causes both physical (facility destruction, loss of life) and psychological damage (raises the fear of

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<sup>6</sup> National Dialogue "Mensosialisasikan Islam Damai, Toleran dan Berkebangsaan (Socializing the Peace, Tolerant, and Nationalist Islam)", presented by Nahdliyyin Center and BNPT, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2011, Hotel Baltika, Bandung, Indonesia.

<sup>7</sup> Rokhmad, Abu (2012). Radikalisme Islam dan Upaya Deradikalisasi Paham Radikal. Walisongo, Vol. 20, No. 1, May 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Couture, K.L. (2014). A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco. Centre for 21st Century Security and Intelligence. Policy Paper, July 2014, page 102-127.

the people, decreases investment, harms the economy, discourages tourism).<sup>9</sup> Its implementation involves the judicial branch, intelligence agencies, police forces such as Detachment 88, the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), immigration and military resources, etc.

The soft power approach involves all stakeholders: government, formal education, religious, and community. Interagency cooperation on the anti-terrorism campaign includes religious, regional, community, and ethnic leaders, and both convicts and former convicts.

The soft approach also places personal attention on convicts, as well as their families, offering to cover the costs of their children’s tuition, wives’ employment, and even their weddings in order to counter negative socioeconomic influences.<sup>10</sup>

Formal education also plays a significant role in counterterrorism. Therefore, national strategy focuses on revising curriculums that advocate extremism and violence. It seeks to intensify early education and religious education efforts to prevent the terrorism, violence, or extremism.<sup>11</sup> The religious community is involved in such campaigns by performing moderate lectures, seminars, workshops, and dialogues, particularly with hardline figures and at boarding schools. In addition to these strategies, counterterrorism is also performed by involving the community in early detection.

Table 1. Counterterrorism Strategy in Indonesia

<b>Hard Approach</b>	<b>Soft Approach</b>	
Police (especially Densus 88) Correctional institution Judicial	Formal Education	Revising curriculum that advocates violence/extremism, Intensify anti-extremism/anti-violence teaching.
Intelligence Agency BNPT	Religious / Community	Family / early education on moderate perspective
Immigration		NGO by doing seminars, workshops, campaign.
		Religious, ethnic, regional leaders by lectures/ preaching, dialogue, seminars.
	Government	Early detection system.
		Economy and educational aid for criminals’ families
		Preaching at jails

<sup>9</sup> National Dialogue “Mensosialisasikan Islam Damai, Toleran dan Berkebangsaan (Socializing the Peace, Tolerant, and Nationalist Islam)”, presented by Nahdliyyin Center and BNPT, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2011, Hotel Baltika, Bandung, Indonesia.

<sup>10</sup> Cetak biru deradikalisasi nasional, BBC Indonesia, 10 Oktober 2012

<sup>11</sup> “Tiga Penyebab Munculnya Terorisme Menurut SBY”, [http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/79144-tiga\\_penyebab\\_munculnya\\_terorisme\\_menurut\\_sby](http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/79144-tiga_penyebab_munculnya_terorisme_menurut_sby), July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009.

		Socialization, Seminars, Workshops, FGD – antiterrorism
		Advertisement, counter propaganda, movie, relationship with media.

*a. Women’s Counterterrorism Role in Indonesia*

In the field of counterterrorism, women participate primarily in preventing terrorism through anti-extremism and anti-violence campaigns. Non-governmental organizations and religious women’s organizations are the main actors. In Indonesia, there are two Muslim women’s groups – Fatayat NU and Aisyiyah -- that are wings of Indonesia’s two largest Muslim organizations.

Fatayat NU is a wing of Nahdlatul Ulama and focuses on empowering Muslim women. It has approximately 6 million cadres,<sup>12</sup> 10 percent from all Nahdlatul Ulama cadres, numbering approximately 60 million.<sup>13</sup> The mission of Fatayat NU is eradicating all forms of violence, injustice and poverty in communities by developing social discourse that is constructive, democratic, and gender equal. The mission is to develop a critical awareness of women’s equality and gender justice by strengthening human resources, human resource development, and community empowerment. The group’s agenda covers areas impacting women’s livelihoods, particularly economic advocacy, political engagement, socio-cultural building, security, and dakwah, which is the preaching of Islam

In the field of counterterrorism, Fatayat NU has cooperated with the government to hold national seminars, forums, and workshops. On the Fatayat NU website, there are up-to-date counterterrorism articles.<sup>14</sup> The group’s counterterrorism activities, however, are sporadic and largely dependent on current issues. And, they do not consider a broader, longer-term agenda or strategy on such issues as trafficking, gender equality, and migrant workers.<sup>15</sup>

Aisyiah is a wing of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia’s second largest Islamic organization. It focuses on the women’s movement, social development, and dakwah based on the Islamic way of

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.pkb.or.id/hadir-di-pucak-harlah-fatayat-nu-ke-62-ibu-negara-yakinkan-perempuan-miliki-peranan-sama-dengan-laki>

<sup>13</sup> Sobary, Mohammad. NU dan Keindonesiaan. 2010. Jakarta: Gramedia. page 107

<sup>14</sup> [www.fatayat.or.id](http://www.fatayat.or.id)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.fatayat.or.id/document/kongres-report-xiv.pdf>

life and rooted in the Quran and Sunnah. Aisyiyah's charitable efforts have been engaged in various fields, including education, health, social welfare, economic, and community development.

Aisyiyah's business education charity currently reached 4,560 in number. It consists of pre-school, child care, kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university.

In the health arena, Aisyiah maintains a hospital, maternity hospital, maternal and child health bureau, polyclinics, and IHC, which amounts to 280 various institutions spread throughout Indonesia. On social welfare, Aisyiyah has 459 charitable efforts such as a shelter home for street children, orphanages, etc.

In terms of women's empowerment, Aisyiyah has developed the Baitul Mal wa Tamwil, shops/kiosks, Economic Development under Family Aisyiyah (BUEKA), home industries, skills training, social gatherings, as well as such community-based activities, such as lectures, Qoryah Thayyibah, Haji Guidance Group (KBIH), zakat infaq, and shodaqoh buerau.<sup>16</sup> Aisyiyah concerns itself mostly with women's social empowerment. Its role in the de-radicalization campaign does not stand out; however, its teaching materials are moderate.

In addition to the two biggest organizations, there is another organization that may be connected with counterterrorism, namely Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE). SAVE is the world's first female counterterrorism platform launched in 2008, as a project of the Women without Borders organization. It currently operates in Indonesia, Yemen, India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, and Northern Ireland to bring together terrorist attack victims. The organization's goal is to bring these victims in contact with policy makers and security experts to increase dialogue and create mutual understanding among peoples within conflict areas.

By focusing on the role of mothers, who are strategically placed at the center of the family unit, SAVE's Mothers for Change! campaign encourages and empowers women to take a firm stand against violent extremism ideologies in their homes and communities.<sup>17</sup>

Counterterrorism initiatives also emerge in Aceh, where women's right advocate Umi Hanisah built a special pesantren (Islamic boarding school) for girls. This facility currently accommodates 115 santriwati (female students), 30 of them boarders consisting mostly of orphans. In her pesantren, Hanisah builds independent and disciplined character in her santriwati.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/content-199-det-aisyiyah.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2011/docs/women-wout-borders-save.pdf>

Teaching is held from 5 to 7 a.m. in the morning and 6 to 10 p.m. in the evening. Between morning and the evening instruction, members attend local public schools.

While the pesantren's curriculum and subject matter is varied, there is a focus on Islam. On Sunday, the santriwati attend computer classes and other practical courses and training. These include flower arrangement, sewing, composting, and gardening; skills that that can be used to earn extra money.

In terms of religious instruction, Hanisah always includes discussion of gender equality derived from Islamic principles and anti-violence activities. Hanisah helps victims of conflict in Aceh to overcome trauma, and she advocates against violence targeting women. Her activities in the community include holding majelis taklim (religious-oriented gatherings) for women, enabling them to discuss their similar sufferings from conflict.

#### *b. Family-based Communities*

Although not directly engaged in counterterrorism, Indonesia's Family Welfare Empowerment organization, or Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK), focuses on improving the welfare of the family and its role in communities. This organization has a large structure from the national level to the RT / RW neighborhood. It is chaired by the nation's minister of home affairs at the national level and by others at lower levels, namely province, city, district, and neighborhood.

This is a national movement that figures into societal development and enables community management. The main objective is to build families that are faithful and devoted to God and are noble, virtuous, healthy and prosperous, as well as advanced and independent. In doing so, it seeks to guarantee equality and gender justice, as well as legal and environmental awareness. To achieve its mission, the PKK has three primary aims: 1) education and socialization; 2) communication, information, and education; and 3) facilitation and mentoring.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.surabaya.go.id/eng/pdf/pkk/Seputar%20PKK.pdf>

Table 2. The Role of Indonesian Women in Counterterrorism

Organization	Characteristics	Role in Countering Terrorism
Fatayat	Wing organization of Nahdlatul Ulama Moderate Islam	Counterterrorism campaign Economic empowerment
Aisiyah	Wing organization of Muhammadiyah Moderate Islam	Women empowerment in all aspects (economic, social capacity, education) Moderate teaching
Community Teaching	Initiated personally, by community, organization, etc. Moderate Islam Based on <i>pengajian</i> <sup>19</sup> , certain madrasah/ pesantren	Moderate teaching
PKK - general	General women community Focuses on women/ family empowerment Has been rooted deeply in the community: national, province, city/town, districts, neighborhood.	N/A
Sisters Against Violent Extremism	International anti-terrorism organization	De-radicalization Campaign Terrorism victims help
Community ( <i>arisan</i> , etc) – general	General based community Uncoordinated / unorganized The communication/ relationship media for women, does not have any specific consent of women issues. Depends on the community itself.	Never heard Has the potential for the information.

## 2. The Role of Women in Counterterrorism: Cases of Bangladesh and Morocco

Women have been involved in counterterrorism effort in many countries, directly or indirectly; among these are Bangladesh, Morocco and Pakistan. In many cases, engaging women in counterterrorism strategies have yielded positive results. Involvement can grow in all sectors, to include economic empowerment, family education, religion, law enforcement, and community based information and early detection.

### *Economic Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh*

Based on an understanding that terrorism is rooted in poverty, Bangladesh emphasized economic development. Women are selected as empowering agents within several programs: 1)

<sup>19</sup> *Pengajian* means informal community-based teaching in Islam, to instill religious norms/doctrines. It can be held continuously or occasional, continuous/specific curriculum or sporadic (depend on the up to date situation).

micro-credit and micro-lending for women, 2) the inclusion of women in the garment industry, and 3) the improvement of education and learning opportunities equation for girls. Because women are considered better able to manage money in this culture, program benefits will return to their families.

These initiatives provide an opportunity for women to work and enhance their roles household decision-making processes. They creates greater opportunities for women to broaden their knowledge and increase their bargaining power towards their husbands. At the same time, women retain their unique power to determine the direction of their children's education..

Meanwhile, Bangladesh government's prioritization of female education has positively impacted women's bargaining position within society and economic resources. In part, this has been achieved through controlling their age of marriage and reduction of radical thinking. Such programs within Bangladesh have successfully reduced the number of terrorist incidents. For example, since 2005, Bangladesh has not experienced a significant terrorist attack.

#### *Creation of Moderate Teaching Programs in Morocco*

Counterterrorism strategies in Morocco focus on spreading moderate teaching that opposes the spread of radicalism. Women are actively involved as religious preachers.. To create religious preachers, the government has trained and educated women to facilitate a more moderate understanding of religion. These women are employed in the community, mosques, and prisons in Rabat and Casablanca.

In 2005, the government gave preaching certificates to 50 women; this number increased by 1,000 percent in 2014. Meanwhile, the Moroccan government has also increased the position and role of women in the household with a formal law that includes equal status for women, the ability to initiate divorce, and the right of equal inheritance. This has resulted in decreasing terrorist acts in Morocco, which currently ranks at less than 1 percent per year and has had no terrorist attacks since 2011.<sup>20</sup>

### **3. Applying Lessons Learned from Case Studies to Indonesia**

Bangladesh and Morocco represent successes of women engaged in counterterrorism. These cases possess similarities in increasing women's rights and opportunities to compete

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

equally by creating a new environment with high-level policy. The cases show that the higher women can rise, the more they open the system to new points of view. This not only provides women a better bargaining position and prosperity, but also the entire family.

However, the starting point of these cases is different from that found in Indonesia. Gender equality in Indonesia has been implemented for quite a while, in terms of economic opportunity, the educational system, bargaining power in the family, political participation, and even in the military and law enforcement. There are many organizations and communities addressing women's empowerment in Indonesia. Despite this, terrorist groups are still emerging and recruiting new cadres, mostly from young persons. There are even some women that are vocal in their support for terrorist groups.

In this context, it is imperative to reshape and foster the mindset of women to actively engage in counterterrorism. Women are the natural teachers for their family and children, so they play a vital role in influencing their families. To create moderate perspectives, women must be inculcated in a moderate education within a moderate environment.

A good example of this is Morocco, where women preachers are instrumental to its strategic policy. In Indonesia, there are a number of organizations and movements, especially Islamic women organizations, such as Aisyiyah and Fatayat NU, that engage in moderate preaching among women. The lectures, however, are primarily conducted among organization members, and they have not placed counterterrorism or deradicalization as part of the organization's main agenda. As a result, they only occasionally place an emphasis on such issues; when a case of terrorism emerges, for example.

On the other hand, there are some women's groups that are quite active in spreading radical materials. They usually create an exclusive environment and share similarities in radical thinking. Moderates may not easily penetrate this community, particularly if dialogue is the chosen method to influence them. But there is an opportunity to make contact with them in broader everyday life. In doing so, it is imperative to increase early detection within the "community" system to identify such exclusive and radicalized communities.

Counterterrorism campaigns can also be undertaken in other ways. Some women's movements are already engaged in such campaigns. However, the number of movements is inadequate in reaching an Indonesian population of 250 million people. As a result, we need to create a central locus of coordination among these organizations, so they can work on a grand strategy together.

To manage this imbalance between counterterrorism organizations and the population in Indonesia, we need a large community organization that has already reached the grass roots level. In Indonesia's case, there is the PKK, which already works from the national level through the smallest community level in the country. In this manner, we can use the PKK as part of a media campaign to reach out at the grass roots level. The campaign must include work to increase public awareness, particularly among women, of terrorism's negative aspects. This strategy can also be used as the "early warning / early detection system." Given that women are predisposed to gather and share information in their communities, they are well suited to a role of early detection and warning.

## 4. Recommendations

Using the aforementioned cases as models, strategies to engage women in counterterrorism should include the following: First, Indonesia should create a national strategy by consolidating the ideas and efforts of women's organizations and movements already engaged on counterterrorism issues. Second, Indonesia should engage community-based women, such as PKK, as agents of counterterrorism by creating a strategy for community programs. Third, Indonesia should create an early detection and warning system among various women's communities and groupings by increasing women's awareness via media and other campaigns.

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