

Receiving Ex-ISIS Returns to Indonesia; Agree or not?

written by Muhammad Najib

At the end of 2018, Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said there were 700 ISIS fighters from Indonesia. The ISIS charm is indeed charming, at least it has attracted hundreds of people. In the spirit of 'defending the religion of Allah and establishing the Khilafah, they are willing to leave the peace and beauty of Indonesia to join ISIS, fighting in Syria and Iraq.

At first glance, their steps look dashing and noble. Dashing because you dare to fight. Noble because you can participate in fighting with the '*mujahidin*' (fighters) throughout the world to defend and uphold the religion of Allah. I was so arrogant, some of them said that Indonesia was no longer suitable as a place to live and spend the remaining time (died).

Ideologically, the main reason for them to join ISIS is because they want to live within Daulah Islamiyah (Islamic State) who applies Islamic law in a *kaffah* (perfect) manner. They believe that Daulah Islamiyah or Islamic State (IS) is in accordance with the Prophet's prophecy with the following characteristics: *First*, IS is the Islamic State/Khilafah which applies Islamic law, as predicted in many hadiths. *Secondly*, Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi is of Quraisy descent. *Third*, IS was born in Sham. For this reason, they referred from several hadiths, including: *The children of Israel had taken care of their affairs by the Prophets. When a Prophet [Children of Israel] dies, it will be replaced by another Prophet. In fact, there was no prophet after me. There will be Caliphs, so there will be a lot of them.* (HR. Muslim).

Fourth, IS was born at the time when the signs of the end of time are clearly visible, among others: there was a big war, now it has entered the 5th phase of life, the Euphrates river dried up, etc., the Arabs are already rich, etc. referring on the signs described in many hadiths about the end times and the birth of the Islamic caliphate.

Other reasons are fragile because they are deceived by IS propaganda such as wanting to live in peace, all of their lives are guaranteed, free education, free health, easy to get a job, get a salary from the state, and other tempting

enticements.

Another reason they consider that Indonesia is infidel country, *thaghut*, full of tyranny and so on. From here, migrate becomes the main choice. Join them with ISIS, which they believe can realize their ideals, namely building a caliphate that is just, peaceful, prosperous and full of blessings. But in reality, people who left Indonesia because of the migrate project found that ISIS implemented a system that was completely different from what they imagined!

As if they swallowed their own saliva. How come. Now, the Indonesian caliph heroes who joined ISIS and chose 'apostates' from Indonesia thrashed, whining, hoping for mercy from the Indonesian government. This happened because the ISIS power base in Raqqa had been stormed, so it weakened, even ISIS had lost, the Caliphate was automatically finished!

Difficult and complicated circumstances hit ISIS sympathizers. Clear! Some survivors, which means they are still alive, then want to return to their homeland, including those who were born in Indonesia, which numbered in the hundreds.

At this point, a problem arises. Former ISIS sympathizers became like *simalakama* fruit for his native country. How come. If the government accepts the former ISIS return to their homeland, it will undoubtedly endanger the country. A country that receives the return of former ISIS is like digging its own grave because it can distribute and even resurrect terrorist cells in each country. But if they are left alone, it is very contrary to humanity. This is where a big dilemma really struck.

BEWARE!

The return of former ISIS conspirators should be watched out for, at least because they will bring three things. *First*, the ideology of terror. Ideology, in general can be interpreted as a collection of ideas, ideals, views, and ideas that shape a person's way of thinking and steps. In the language of the father of the modern philosopher, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), ideology is the core of all human thought. Then in practice, ideology has been 'promoted' into a belief.

So, one's ideology becomes very important because it can influence the mind and its movements. If someone joins ideology A, for example, then their thoughts and movements will be in accordance with the ideology adopted.

The former ISIS conspiracy, certainly has inherited the ISIS ideology itself, even their ideology is thicker and more militant. As has been clearly stated, that ISIS adheres to the ideology of violence. And the fact is that ISIS is oriented towards radical ideology.

Even though the territory which was controlled and became the command center of the ISIS movement was suspected to have been destroyed and militarily, this extremist group was defeated, but ISIS remained a threat. The threat arises, as said by the Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi, from the ideology they brought and spread.

So, when the Indonesian government accepts the return of the former ISIS, it will become a real threat to Indonesia because this ex-extremist group will spread its ideology, it can even awaken the ISIS Nusantara's sleep cells. Of course we do not want this to happen. Oh yeah, don't forget! So far, radical groups are well-known in concocting narratives in such a way that they can make their ideology seem enchanting, making the young generation's purses.

Second, paramilitary skills. In the history of radical-terrorist groups, especially like ISIS, it always has strategic activities, one of which is military training. Because the principle of their movement is violence and war. So, someone who has joined ISIS, at least he understands the world of war (military). No wonder the former ISIS return to Indonesia, they already have paramilitary skills. It is this knowledge and skill that worries them when ex-ISIS return to Indonesia.

Third, networking with global terrorism networks. Borrowing the theory initiated by Bruno Latour, a French sociologist and anthropologist, Actor Network Theory (ANT), that terrorist networks have strong roots because there are actors, translators, and intermediaries so that the terrorist network today is like a vicious circle that is difficult to break .

Since time immemorial, Indonesian terrorist groups have established relationships with world terrorist groups, mainly in the Taliban which until now have controlled a large part of Afghanistan. Poltak Partogi (Jakarta, 2018: 25), principal investigator on international relations issues at UI revealed that ISIS has very close ties with organizations in Indonesia lately, such as JI and JAD. This mission of establishing the caliphate in the world, especially in Southeast Asia by ISIS, apparently was made as a continuation of efforts to realize the realization of

the ideals of the failed *khilafah*.

Strictly said, the former ISIS conspiracy that brought ideology, paramilitary skills and networking to Indonesia, it is likely to become the main actor or inspiration for Indonesian terrorists and make the terrorism network in Indonesia stronger. In this perspective, many people reject former ISIS cadres/sympathizers.

Regarding former combatants who went abroad to join the world terrorist group, then he went home and became an actor/bomber in the country, there have been many examples. For example, as revealed by terrorist expert from UKI Sidratahta Mukhtar that in the 1980s to 1990s, there were 1000 Indonesian FTF (Foreign Terrorist Fighter) sent to Afghanistan to join the Taliban, around 200 people returned to Indonesia.

According to him, these people became terrorist leaders in Indonesia, such as Umar Patek, Imam Samudra, Ali Imron and Nasir Abbas (kbr.id, 5/7/2017). Mukhtar's statement is in line with Poltak Partogi as stipulated in his book entitled *Kekhalifahan ISIS di Asia Tenggara* (The Caliphate of ISIS in Southeast Asia) (Pustaka Obor, 2018).

Policies of Several Countries towards FTF

Each country has a different policy in treating its citizens involved in terrorist acts. The different policies are seen as follows:

Australia. The Australian Government repatriated 8 children of its citizens from Syria. However, Australia has implemented a policy to re-apply Australian citizenship status for citizens who wish to return to Australia (women and children), with mechanisms including verification and acceptance.

July 2019 Australia submits a law that will regulate the ban on ISIS followers in Iraq and Syria returning to Australia. This bill will give the Minister of the Interior special authority to issue special orders to prevent ISIS followers from returning to Australia.

English. Through a spokesman for the Prime Minister, the UK confirmed that ISIS members must be tried where they were arrested. However, the British government treats things differently when it comes to children. With regard to children, the British government is taking steps on how British children who are

in ISIS refugee camps can be repatriated. As for adult ISIS members, citizenship is revoked.

France. Reportedly, the French government treated the former ISIS very hard. They even flatly refused to repatriate former ISIS whose number is estimated at 150 people in Syria. Nevertheless, the UK applies the same steps as other countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, namely the handling of women and children will be prioritized.

Denmark. The Danish government tends to take a firm stand. This can be seen from the steps, which will revoke the citizenship of former ISIS. This decision is based on a draft law drafted by the government in March 2019. Children of ISIS fighters born abroad will not be granted Danish citizenship.

Rescue Step

It is true what was said by the former Head of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Ansyad Mbay as he said through one of the national media, that they supported ISIS, but actually cheated. After all, they could not be denied his return and threw them into the sea, let alone show remorse.

Refusing former ISIS to return to Indonesia is also not a wise move, let alone throw them into the sea. Accepting them as Indonesian citizens like the general public is also not quite right. The government should not need to be aggressive in handling them, before all the infrastructure, training programs, de-radicalization and re-socialization of former ISIS combatants are well available in Indonesia.

Even if Indonesia is forced to repatriate ex-ISIS back to Indonesia, then prioritize children and women. With strict terms and assessment in Syria. It must be strict and the right assessment because a number of children and women in Indonesia actually become terrorists, such as suicide bombings in Surabaya, Sobolga, and the Philippine Jolo Islands.[**Khalilullah**]