

Women and Radicalism in Indonesia

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Discussion and studies of terrorism and radicalism mostly focus on men. While women tend to be less attention. Some circles argue that the role of women in the radicalism and terrorism movement is very weak and limited because radicalism and terrorism are heavy and challenging domains so that women are assumed to be unable to carry out such a heavy task.

Other groups also stressed that women are only victims of radicalism. That is, they have not yet reached the radical actors or subjects themselves. As a result, the involvement of women in extremist groups is still underestimated. In fact, based on several factual events and recent studies mention that, the role and position of women in the radicalism and terrorism movement is very significant and strategic and can be a serious threat to this nation going forward.

As has been understood in the wider community, that women are educators for their children. Imagine if the educator was exposed to radical understanding, he would have been creating the same generation of radical young militants. In some cases of radicalism and terrorism, women, as mothers, will take on the role of protectors who hide, save and provide a safe place for terrorists.

At a certain level, women, in terms of their roles and contributions in radicalism and terrorism, are more dangerous and dangerous than men. This is confirmed by several studies which essentially state that women have a strategic role in the radicalism movement; as fundraisers, transaction facilitators, and bombers. These roles have been happening all this time.

In other words, the position of women in the radicalism and terrorism movement can play two roles at the same time; both subject and object. As subjects, women can act as educators, agents of change, propagandists, fund collectors, recruiters, logistical providers, brides or suicide bombers, couriers, radical agents, motivators, sympathizers, supporters, followers, and loyal companions.

The women, as expressed by Prof. Dr. Umi Sumbulah in her Scientific Oration, which was delivered at the inauguration of the Professor Position in the field of

Islamic Studies at UIN Malang in the past, can also play a role in providing financial and logistical support; bookkeeping; connecting extremist networks through marriage; the domestic role of giving birth, raising and educating children; propaganda and propaganda; run online media and social media; hiding terrorists in their homes; volunteering for bomb makers, suicide bombers, and becoming combatants.

Women as Subjects and Objects of the Radicalism Movement

The involvement of women in radicalism and terrorism movements is interesting to be studied in depth. Especially at this time there is a new trend, namely the recruitment of women as martyrs and perpetrators of “brides” suicide bombings. It is this evolution of women’s participation, once again, that must really be of mutual concern.

Responding to the phenomenon of women being exposed and becoming actors of the radicalism and terrorism movement, a fundamental question arises; what causes women to be involved in these actions and radicalism?

Before answering this question, it helps us to flash a little back to some of the past events, namely who are the women involved in acts of terrorism and radicalism in Indonesia. This is intended so that we can take a full picture of the phenomenon of women in the bondage of radical-terrorist understanding.

As data have been collected from various sources, both the internet, scientific studies and others, including among women exposed to radical ideology and carrying out acts of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia are: 1) Munfiatun (2006) Wife of Noordin M. Top who was involved the case of hiding the perpetrators of extreme violence committed by her husband; 2) Siti Rahmah (2008), Noordin M. Top’s second wife and involved in a case of hiding her husband; 3) Putri Munawaroh, Adib Susilo’s wife who hid the perpetrators of terrorism; 4) Nurul Azmi Tibyani, Cahya Fitriyanta’s wife who helped her husband in funding Poso military training in 2008;

5) Ummu Delima (2014), Santoso’s wife who supports her husband in the Poso terrorism movement; 6) Arinda Putri Maharani, Muhammad Nur Solihin’s first wife, the suspect of the brain of the pot bomber, who was prepared to be detonated by his second wife in the state palace; 7) Dian Yulia Novi (2016), Nur Solihin’s second wife as a pot bomber who failed to explode in the state palace;

and 8) Ika Puspita Sari (2016), suicide bombers and both former migrant workers; 9) Tutin Sugiarti, herbal medicine salesman and Islamic medicine therapist who facilitated Dian's introduction to ISIS cell leaders; 10) Praise Kiswati, the perpetrators of the suicide bombings in 3 churches in Surabaya with her husband and three children; 11) Tri Ernawati, the bombers at the Surabaya police station with her husband and children, and 12) Puspita Sari, the wife of the bomb maker who exploded in Wonocolo rusunawa (Sambulah, 2019)

The data above does not include the involvement of women in the vicious circle of international radical groups such as ISIS. Until 2017, at least 671 Indonesians consisting of 524 men and 147 women were involved in ISIS groups in Iraq and Syria.

From this data, the Police then detailed it as follows; 343 men and women who are still alive and have been involved with Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and 99 children. Meanwhile, FTF (foreign terrorist fighters) from Indonesia who were killed in Iraq and Syria as many as 97 people, 132 people have not been identified, including two of them children.

Another source, as stated by Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu, that until early 2018, at least 800 jihadists from Southeast Asia joined ISIS in Syria, 700 were Indonesian citizens.

Causative Factor

If examined more deeply and based on the results of scientific studies by several researchers, it can be found several factors why women can be involved in radicalism movements, such as joining ISIS and other radical groups.

First, personal factors; do not have good literacy skills. The woman often appears as a group that does not have good literacy and thus becomes a group that is very vulnerable to being exposed to radical-terrorist understandings. Poor literacy ability will make someone easily influenced by radical group propaganda neatly wrapped in content that is spread on social media.

Easy access to social media coupled with massive narratives and propaganda produced by radical groups in a systematic and comprehensive manner, makes women with low religious literacy abilities easily affected by radical content.

Second, the husband factor. In general, women have full loyalty to their husbands. It is almost certain that if her husband is exposed to radicalism, his wife will also be exposed. The paired suicide bombings as revealed in the previous description are hard to disprove evidence. This silly action is based on full loyalty to her husband.

Even better, Umi Sumbulah in *Women and Families: Radicalization and Counter-Radicalism in Indonesia* (2019) states that several factors are an attraction for women involved in radicalism. First, the religious factor is in the form of a strong doctrine that enforcing the Khilafah is an obligation for every Muslim.

Second, ideological factors in the form of the doctrine of hijrah, jihad, shaheed, kaffah Islam which are interpreted in the political dimension as an obligation to realize political tools and institutions. "Islam is a religion that kaffah and governs all life in this world. So, uphold the khilafah so that your Islam becomes kaffah. "People who have weak religious literacy are forced into arguments like this, surely this person will be shaken and assume that Pancasila is not Islamic.

Third, political factors in the form of the emergence of radicalism as a response to the narrative of injustice exhibited by the state. Fourth, personal factors such as provocation and propaganda through the internet can influence young women to leave their comfort zones to join radical groups. Related to this fourth point, there have been many examples or victims.

Women who enter the vicious cycle of radicalism and terrorism are serious problems because women, besides being able to become actors of the radicalization and terrorist acts, can also produce radical militants who are super militant.

Therefore, the increasing trend of involving women in the radicalism movement must be addressed seriously and in a planned and sustainable manner. Not to forget, all elements of society must also participate in removing women from this vicious circle of radicalism.

Women's organizations, Fatayat NU and Aisiyah, for example, must start aggressively campaigning against radicalism (counter-radicalism) to their cadres and surrounding communities.

The government, in this case which has full authority, also should not view the

phenomenon of women actively involved in this terrorism movement as trivial matters. The government must start touching women, and even involve women who have unique experiences in counter-radicalism policies.