

**THE SEARCH FOR AN ISLAMIC STATE  
IN INDONESIA:  
THE MANY GUISES OF DI/NII**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The organization known as Darul Islam or the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII) and frequently abbreviated DI/NII in the media has been a source of violent extremism in Indonesia since it was established in 1949. The suicide bomber involved in the attack on police in December 2022 in Bandung was only the latest example of an individual schooled in DI/NII ideology who left the organization for a more militant group. The challenge for the Indonesian government is how to handle a vast network now in its third or fourth generation, with tentacles reaching into communities across the country.

The attack in Bandung was the third incident involving DI/NII in 2022. On 25 October, a 24-year-old NII woman named Siti Elina was arrested after she tried to enter the grounds of the presidential palace carrying a homemade gun. She reportedly wanted to force her way in to meet President Jokowi to advise him to implement Islamic law. Police also arrested her husband and her religious teacher, both members of the Jakarta NII network.

Before this, police had made a series of arrests of DI/NII members in March and April 2022. On 22 March, Indonesian police announced that sixteen members of Darul Islam (DI) had been arrested in West Sumatra for trying to establish an Islamic State. None had previously been involved in violence. They were part of a much larger group of 1,125 people in West Sumatra alone, not counting thousands of others elsewhere in Indonesia, and police said that they were planning to use the 2024 elections as an opportunity to overthrow the government.<sup>1</sup> (This proved to be a misreading of their belief that 2024 would see an Islamic victory because of factors that had nothing to do with the elections.) Of the 1,125, 400 had been recruited for an “Islamic Army” (Tentara Islam Indonesia, TII).

Five men with structural links to the West Sumatra group were then arrested in South Tangerang, outside Jakarta, on 3 April. Then, on 27 April, in front of the head of Detachment 88, the counter-terrorism unit of the police, 391 NII members from Dhamasraya district in West Sumatra swore an oath of loyalty to the Indonesian state, renouncing their DI/NII affiliation.<sup>2</sup> Two days later, 518 DI members from Tanah Datar district took a similar oath.<sup>3</sup> Many, including the governor of West Sumatra, treated the news with scepticism – how could so many men have been members of NII without a hint of their activities reaching the local government, and if they were such a threat, why had so many agreed so easily to declare loyalty to the Indonesian republic?<sup>4</sup>

The West Sumatra group turned out to be the tip of the iceberg of a DI/NII faction that remains loyal to Tahmid Basuki Rahmat, one of the sons of DI/NII founder Sekarmadji Maridjan

<sup>1</sup> “Teroris di Sumbar, Mahyeldi: NII pusatnya bukan di Sumbar, <https://hariansinggalang.co.id>, 19 April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> “391 Anggota NII di Sumatera Barat Berikrar Setia kepada NKRI,” [tirto.co.id](https://tirto.co.id), 28 April 2022.

<sup>3</sup> “Baiat Masal, 518 mantan anggota NII bacakan ikrar setia kepada NKRI, kabupaten Tanah Datar, <https://tanahdatar.go.id>, 30 April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> The head of the provincial ulama council also questioned why the police had acted without consulting the local customary body, Majelis Tungku Tigo Sajarangan, “Ketum MUI Sumbar Buya Dr. Gusrizal Sentil Lepas Baiat Anggota NII Tidak Libatkan Tigo Tungku Sajarangan”, [minangkabaunews.com](https://minangkabaunews.com), 29 April 2022.

Kartosowirjo, that faction had “postponed” any involvement in jihad for most of the 1990s and early 2000s. The Taliban victory in Afghanistan in August 2021, however, appears to have acted as an inspiration to the core Tahmid group to step up preparations for jihad, with 2024 chosen as the target date in line with Islamic prophecies.

These incidents suggest the need for a review of how the Darul Islam movement has evolved, how it differs from other extremist organizations, where its strongholds are, how it recruits, whether it can be considered a gateway to terrorism, and what the government should do about it. It has certainly produced many violent extremist offshoots, most notably Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), but it also has a sizeable non-violent faction, determined to work for an Islamic state through religious outreach (*dakwah*) and education. This report tries to answer some frequently asked questions about DI/NII and suggest policy options for the Indonesian government.

## II. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### 1. What is the difference between DI/NII ideology and goals and those of other extremist Islamist organizations in Indonesia such as JI and JAD?

NII has its own ideology that differs from both JI’s Salafi jihadism and the more hardline *takfiri* teachings of ISIS.<sup>5</sup> One difference relates to the conditions for becoming a Muslim. Unlike JI and ISIS, whose members see recitation of the statement of faith (*syahadat*) as the cornerstone of Islam, DI/NII followers require in addition a group, an imam, and an oath of allegiance (*jamaah, imamah, bai’at*). They refer back to the words of Umar bin Khattab, the second caliph, who said there was no Islam without a group, no group without an imam, and no imam without a pledge of allegiance.

Another difference is over end goals. All three groups seek to establish an Islamic state, but DI/NII does not look beyond Indonesia’s borders, whereas the others seek to establish an Islamic caliphate with no territorial limits. While JI has also focused on an Islamic state in Indonesia, it is only as a steppingstone to a caliphate.

A third difference is over the role of women. JI never recruited women. DI/NII did, in the hopes both that women would recruit more women as well as that they would serve as teachers in NII educational institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> Salafy jihadism is a mixture of Muslim Brotherhood teachings and the puritanism of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah. Its best-known proponent was Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian scholar who became known as the father of 20<sup>th</sup> century jihad for his role in indoctrinating fighters in Afghanistan, including those who became al-Qaeda members. ISIS ideology, sometimes called “the oneness of God and jihad” (*tauhid wal jihad*) refers back to the first generation of followers of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab and the second generation, known as the ulama of Najd. The war in Iraq catapulted this ideology to prominence through the writings of Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi, a Jordanian scholar, and the mujahidin commander Abu Musa al-Zarqawi. Maqdisi later broke with Zarqawi.

## 2. What are the main factions of DI and how have they managed to survive without being shut down by the government?

DI/NII historically has had two broad divisions, the *fillah* faction, which pursues its goals by non-violent means, including *dakwah*, and the *fisabillah* faction, which believes that the only way to establish an Islamic state is through physical jihad.

The origins of the split go back to 1973 when the more militant group decided to work with Indonesian intelligence in the interests of getting financial support and eradicating Communism.<sup>6</sup> The group that became the *fillah* faction found any cooperation with the Soeharto government abhorrent. It has stayed relatively united over the years, although there have been disputes over leadership. One of its leaders, the late Sensen Komara, was removed as amir in 2018 after his teachings were deemed deviant.<sup>7</sup> At the time of his death in 2020, his followers in Garut, West Java numbered about 2,000. In 2021, however, a large group was discovered in Bali, apparently led by one of Sensen's followers. Seven men were arrested, and most of the rest swore an oath of loyalty to the Indonesian republic and were allowed to go free. The activities of the Bali group, including military training, raised questions about whether some parts of the *fillah* faction might be moving toward violence. (For more on this group, see below, Question 10.)

The *fisabillah* faction has experienced three major splits and many smaller ones. The largest faction, based in Malangbong, Garut, is led by Tahmid Basuki Rahmat, son of DI/NII founder Kartosoewirjo, who is now close to 80. It has some 35,000 members, making it about seven times larger than JI (and it was this faction that JI broke away from in 1993). It has a territorial structure, with a central management at the top, and officials at the provincial, district, sub-district, village, and neighborhood levels. These levels, however, do not always follow the government's administrative divisions because NII allows every subdivision to open its own recruiting areas. These areas are then subsumed in the branch of the area that started them. That is how the Damasraya area of West Sumatra came under the management of the DI/NII from South Tangerang. The DI branch in Padang, about three hours away from Damasraya, was opened by the city of Tangerang, a different division than South Tangerang.

A second group was led by the late Muhammad Yusuf Tahiri (MYT). It is not clear who succeeded him, but the group is still known as the MYT faction. It used to be led by the late Abdul Fatah Wiranagapati (AFW). The MYT faction while it was still under Wiranagapati, claimed that Tahmid's leadership was null and void because in 1962, he had surrendered to the government and made a statement dissolving DI/NII. Wiranagapati said that he was the legitimate successor of Kartosoewirjo because he was one of the most senior leaders left and had never surrendered. Former MYT members have repeatedly surfaced as terrorism suspects, arrested by Detachment

<sup>6</sup> Solahudin, *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia*, Singapore, 2013, pp.52-58 and Quinton Temby, "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah", *Indonesia*, No.89, April 2010, pp.6-13.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Sensen Komara changed the direction of prayer from west to east and began calling himself a prophet. He was arrested in 2011 on rebellion and blasphemy charges, but the court ruled that he could not be held accountable for his actions because he was mentally ill. He was sent to a psychiatric hospital in Bandung. Sensen died in August 2020 and was succeeded by his brother, Deden Setiana.

88 for violent activity in connection with other organizations. One cluster of MYT members in Pamulang, South Tangerang was poached by Forum Aktivistis Syariah Islam, (FAKSI), one of the first pro-ISIS organizations in Indonesia.<sup>8</sup> Sigit Indrajit, the leader of a group that was plotting to bomb the Myanmar embassy in Jakarta in 2013, was a former member of MYT.

The third group is often known as KW9 and is led by Panji Gumilang alias Abu Toto, founder of Az-Zaitun pesantren in Haurgeulis, Indramayu, West Java. KW was short for *komando wilayah*, the territorial divisions of the DI/NII movement under Kartosoewirjo. Originally there were seven KW.<sup>9</sup> In the mid-70s, two more were added, KW8 for Lampung and KW9 for the greater Jakarta area. Abu Toto's career in NII took off in the mid-1990s through his extraordinary fund-raising abilities and a talent for bureaucratic maneuvering. He and Az-Zaitun grew close to the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), but scandal pursued him. In 2011, he was linked to a bank fraud known as the Bank Century scandal, and a year later he was briefly imprisoned for falsification of documents. Nevertheless, his network remained vast, and many KW9 members left to join violent extremist organizations before and after the declaration of ISIS in 2014.

One former KW9 member was Roki Apris Dianto, best known for having escaped from Jakarta metropolitan police detention center in November 2012 wearing a burkha-like garment with a face veil that his wife had brought him. He had been arrested in 2011 for recruiting a group of high school students in Klaten, Central Java and then leading them to plant bombs at police posts and churches. All the bombs failed. Roki had been recruited into NII in 1997 by a classmate when they were both second-year junior high school students in Wonogiri, Central Java. In high school, he was promoted to being the chief recruiter for high school students, first in his subdistrict, then for the whole district. After graduation, he went to work in an NII bread factory owned by the NII "bupati" of Wonogiri. Later he moved to Sukoharjo, where the NII bupati there gave him a job in another NII bread factory. He decided to leave NII in 2008 after seeing the members' dues stolen and misused. (Nothing like corruption to instill disillusionment in the ranks.) He then joined a jihadist group in Solo.<sup>10</sup> After he was recaptured a month after his escape, he became a model prisoner and was released in 2021.

Other splinters have emerged as leaders compete to claim the mantle of Kartosoewirjo or as younger members find fault with their elders and decide to form their own groups. In 1999, for example, Ring Banten split off from the Tahmid faction because of disagreements over the Ambon conflict.

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<sup>8</sup> IPAC, "Extremists in Bandung: Darul Islam to ISIS – and Back Again?", Report No.42, 12 February 2018, pp.3-4. One of the FAKSI founders was BahrumSyah, who became the leader of Indonesian fighters with ISIS in Syria.

<sup>9</sup> The original divisions were KW1 (Priangan Timur, centered in Tasikmalaya and including Jakarta, Purwakarta and Cirebon); KW2 (Central Java); KW3 (East Java); KW4 (South Sulawesi, including what is now West Sulawesi); KW5 (Sumatra); KW6 (Kalimantan); and KW7 (Serang-Banten, Bogor, Garut, Sumedang and Bandung). See International Crisis Group, "Recycling Militants: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing", Asia Report No.92, 22 February 2005, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Trial dossier of Roki Apris Dianto, North Jakarta District Court, Case No.589/PID.SUS/2013/PN.JKT.UT, August 2013.

The Darul Islam faction in Sulawesi has a very different history than the groups in West Java. The DI movement there was started by a disgruntled soldier of Bugis ethnicity named Kahar Muzakar, who began an armed struggle against the Indonesian government when his forces were not incorporated in the new republican army set up after independence. There was little communication between West Java and Makassar in the early years and in 1962, Kahar explicitly rejected Kartosoewirjo's concept of a unitary Islamic state (NII). He wanted a federation instead, the United Islamic Republic of Indonesia (Republic Persatuan Islam Indonesia, RPPI), in which the movements in West Java, Aceh and South Sulawesi would have equal status.

In 1973 the three movements decided to join forces, and over time, there was more interaction, especially as a large Bugis community in Tanjung Priok, the port area of Jakarta, became increasingly active in Islamist activities. Training in Afghanistan and Mindanao, the conflict in Poso, the war in Syria, shared schooling, shared prison experiences, and often marriage brought members of the West Java and Makassar networks together, but the ethnic divisions were always present. No Bugis leader wanted to be under the command of a Javanese or Sundanese (the dominant ethnic group in West Java).

One man who transcended these differences was Muhammed Ikhwan alias Abu Umar, a Jakarta native, arrested in 2011 for trying to smuggle arms from Mindanao to Java. He joined NII in 1988, was formally inducted in 1990. In 1997, at the age of 27, he went to train in Mindanao and joined the militant splinter of the Tahmid faction known as the Abu Bakar Battalion in 1999, where he worked with KOMPAK.<sup>11</sup> From 2000 to 2005, he worked as a teacher on Sebatik Island, half of which belongs to Indonesia, half to Malaysia. He built up an impressive network of contacts in Sabah, which were useful for transit to Mindanao. Before his arrest, Abu Umar had worked closely with DI-Makassar in setting up military training in central and southeast Sulawesi in the early and mid-2000s for various DI members from West Java/Jakarta, Sulawesi and Sabah, Malaysia. In 2008, he became head of a Jakarta branch of Darul Islam. He told police that the leader of Darul Islam as far as he was concerned was a radical cleric named Ust. Basri, founder of Ar-Ridho pesantren in Makassar. Basri, who died of natural causes (but appalling healthcare) in prison was arrested in 2013 for his role in a plot to assassinate the then governor of South Sulawesi and for facilitating his followers to join ISIS, including his own son (who was killed there). Abu Umar was released from the Pasir Putih supermax prison in 2019 and was declared rehabilitated.

DI-Makassar was also an important partner of the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), the small group of pro-ISIS fighters in Poso that police claim to have all but eliminated by 2022. Some of its former members became leading lights in JAD-Makassar, with the Ar-Ridho pesantren as the center of JAD activities. Many of the remaining members of DI-Sulawesi Selatan are currently to be found in Mangkutana, their former stronghold and home to a charismatic DI leader named Haji Labbase – the father of Anton Labbase, first arrested in connection with the 2002 Makassar bombing. Another stronghold is Mambi in West Sulawesi, where some members moved when

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<sup>11</sup> Action Committee for Crisis Response (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis, KOMPAK) was a charity initially set up in 1998 by conservative Muslims linked to the Islamic Dakwah Council of Indonesia (Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia, DDII). Its aim was to dispense aid to the poor and to victims of disaster relief and conflict, but after the eruption of communal conflict in Ambon in 1999, it became a source of funds and training for Indonesian mujahidin.

the communal conflict in Mamasa erupted in 2005. The Mambi group was once led by Arip Uhrata alias Mangge, who trained in Kashmir and is now in prison as an MIT supporter. DI-Makassar remains an important network to watch.

Despite its frequent association with violent extremism, DI/NII has largely avoided the kind of crackdown that Jemaah Islamiyah and JAD have confronted as organizations. It may be because DI/NII has deliberately sought to avoid government repression through three strategies. First, it remains an underground organization (*tanzim siri*), with a system of isolated cells, so that the members of one cell do not know the members of another. They also do not know the leaders above them. Second, it follows a standard operating procedure for security called the 3Cs: Cover, Camouflage and Concealment. Among other things, it has schools and charities for fundraising that serve as covers for its activities. Az-Zaitun pesantren was built as a cover for KW9, while in Bandung, the Zakaria Islamic school served the same purpose. Finally, its leaders have periodically argued against armed jihad on the grounds that the organization was facing an emergency and needed to focus on recruitment. All of this has meant that the government in recent years has not treated the organization as dangerous, and it has never been banned or declared a terrorist organization.

### **3. What explains DI/NII's retreat from violence in the late 1990s and its decision to resume in 2020?**

NII began to counsel its members against using violence after Tahmid became the NII amir at the end of the 1990s, with leaders arguing that the organization was in an emergency situation. The focus should be rather on recruitment and strengthening NII's financial base. This policy was not well-received by all NII members. Some left and formed splinters that were more amenable to jihad.

NII always argued that it had not abandoned jihad, it had just postponed it. It would resume jihad after it had passed through a preparation stage (*i'dad*). This would involve building the Islamic Army of Indonesia (Tentara Islam Indonesia, TII), conducting military training, amassing (homemade) weapons, training cadres in first aid, and building up supplies of food, vehicles, and other necessities. Only after this phase was completed would the organization be ready to undertake armed jihad.

In 2020, however, Tahmid issued an order to all NII members to immediately start the *i'dad* phase. He said 2024 would be the year of victory for Islam, and they only had a short time to prepare. The order had nothing to do with the planned 2024 Indonesian elections. Rather, it was linked to Tahmid's belief in Islamic prophecies about the end of time.

NII ulama referred back to a *hadith* or tradition of the Prophet that said that every 100 years, a *mujtahid* (a scholar with the authority to interpret the Qur'an) would arise who would lead Muslims to victory. They then calculated 100 years from the fall of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 to come up with 2024. They also said that the *mujtahid* who would appear would be the Imam Mahdi and said that before he appeared there would be *dukhon* – a cloud of black smoke that would encircle the globe and only a selected vanguard would survive.



A flurry of activity began, including recruiting for the TII, requiring members to undergo military training (mostly physical fitness but some shooting instruction) and setting up a factory to produce sharp weapons. Those involved in the arms production were referred to by the code name of “blacksmith” (*pandai besi*). They wanted to amass sharp weapons because they believed that after the *dukhon*, all technology would be destroyed and war would be waged as in the past, using arrows and sharp weapons made of iron. NII offered training in the necessary technology at a vocational training center run by members in Tangerang. Given that the orders to move forward with this preparatory stage were only given in 2020 and that they were starting from very low capacity, the whole plan was rushed.

It was the military training of the West Sumatra and South Tangerang groups that attracted the attention of Detachment 88 and led to the March 2022 arrests. Though media reports at the time said that the NII members involved were planning to overthrow the government, and police found some documents indicating this as a goal, there was never any likelihood that they could do so.

#### **4. How does the Tahmid faction recruit new members?**

Recruitment as noted above takes place on a person-to-person approach through *dakwah*, but the leaders at each level are given quotas for the numbers they are expected to recruit. These quotas can be startlingly high and probably represent ideal goals rather than likely outcomes. For example, in one West Sumatran unit, according to one of those arrested in March 2022, a subdistrict-level unit (CV) oversaw six village-level units (UD), with each one asked to recruit at least seven new members per month and if possible, thirty. DI/NII uses the term OMOO (One Man One Object), for its recruitment strategy, meaning that each NII member is required to recruit at least one other person, much like multi-level marketing.

Induction is a relatively speedy four-stage process, with a high value placed on recruitment at each stage. In the first stage, known as Pencorakan 1, the recruits are asked to recite and explain several elements of the Islamic faith. They are also urged to recruit friends and family members. In Pencorakan 2, they take part in a religious weekly training sessions for a month and pledge loyalty to the group and its leaders (*ulil amri*), after which they shake hands with their religious teacher and formally become members of NII. In Pencorakan 3, the new members, in one case about ten, receive training in NII’s concept of nationhood and governance, lessons in the history of the Islamic struggle in Indonesia, and introduction to principles such as knowing friend from foe (*al wala wal baro*). In the final stage, new members are given more explanation about NII and asked to recite the two sentences of the Islamic statement of faith (*syahadat*). Then, they are asked to read the text of the proclamation of the Islamic State of Indonesia issued by Kartosoewirjo on 7 August 1949, together with the seven duties of Islamic soldiers (Sapta Subaya).

After the four stages are complete, there can be additional weekly study sessions in members’ houses, with separate sessions for different age groups. In one unit, members were divided by

age, with Group A consisting of men 17.5 to 30 years old; Group B, men 30 to 40); and a third group for men over 40 and all women. At the end, members would be asked to swear a new oath, showing that they were ready for struggle and sacrifice.

### **5. How much overlap is there between DI/NII members and other extremist organizations in Indonesia, and should it be considered a “gateway” for terrorism?**

There was once a significant overlap, especially at the time of the Ambon and Poso conflicts, when DI/NII and KOMPAK frequently joined forces. Individual DI/NII members are known to have joined Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) and Jamaah Anshorul Tauhid (JAT). But Tahmid later forbade his members to join other groups, because such interaction usually led to members leaving NII for the other organization, sometimes taking their networks with them. This happened in 2008 with members from Tasikmalaya and Ciamis who left NII for JAT. They not only took their followers, but they also even took one school, Pesantren Nurul Salam, its teachers and its donors, and made it a JAT school. Today any member who is known to be interacting with other organizations is given a warning and then expelled if the interaction persists. The Tahmid faction is not just afraid of desertions; it is also worried, as noted above, that if former NII members join a group that becomes involved in terrorism, NII itself will be seen as guilty by association. This was a lesson learned from observing the impact on Ring Banten of its collaboration with JI in the 2000 Christmas Eve bombings and the 2002 Bali bombing.

That said, many individuals with NII backgrounds were attracted to ISIS, despite the organization’s prohibition on joining. There were two aspects of NII doctrine that made members particularly susceptible to ISIS propaganda. One was the fiction they maintained that the Islamic state in Indonesia established by Kartosoewirjo still existed. This was one reason that NII maintained a territorial command structure and called its local leaders by the same terms used by the Indonesian state: governor at the province level, *bupati* at the district level, *camat* at the subdistrict level and so on. Its members were called NII “citizens”. All this proved its superiority, in its own view, to other extremist Islamist organizations. The second aspect was NII’s doctrine of *iman-hijrah-jihad*, where jihad was an obligation for all members. The problem was that in the pre-*i’dad* phase of lying low in an emergency situation, the concept of jihad through battle (*jihad qital*) changed to become jihad through goods and property (*jihad harta*) or trying to raise as much money as possible – and not all members were happy with the change.

When ISIS declared the Islamic State caliphate in 2014, many NII members believed that their vision of an Islamic state had now been realized – but in Syria, not Indonesia. They saw that ISIS filled the conditions of a state, with a territory, a civil service, a government that provided social services like healthcare and education, and an army that was prepared to wage jihad against its enemies. When they compared it with their own organization, they only had a government and citizens, but no area that was truly governed by Islamic law and no capacity to wage war. It was this realization that led many members of DI/NII’s various factions to leave and join ISIS.

## **6. What is DI's link to the global jihad? What was the Tahmid group's attitude toward ISIS? Why was Afghanistan a greater inspiration than Syria?**

DI has shown interest in establishing international links since the 1970s, mostly to seek arms and training rather than because of ideological affinities. It made an unsuccessful effort to seek arms from Libya in 1975. It was DI/NII that set up the military academy on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border that trained cadres from 1985 to 1993, when Jemaah Islamiyah, a splinter group, was formed. The DI members already there were asked to choose between DI and JI, and most chose the latter. DI/NII subsequently set up a training camp on the grounds of the MILF headquarters, Camp Abu Bakar, in Mindanao, before JI began building its own Philippines headquarters, Camp Hudaibiyah, in the same area.

At the time of the Ambon conflict in 1999-2000, an NII leader named Haris Fadillah (Abu Dzar) gave his daughter, Mira Agustina, in marriage to al-Qaeda operative Omar al-Faruq. Al-Faruq was captured by Indonesian security forces in Bogor in 2002, turned over to the Americans, sent to Baghram air force base in Afghanistan, escaped in 2005, and fled to Iraq where he was killed by British troops in 2006.

In 2011, Muhammad Ikhwan alias Abu Umar, the man who helped bridge the West Java and South Sulawesi factions, opened ties to the Abu Sayyaf Group and sent his stepson, Farhan, to Sulu for training. When Farhan returned, he was involved in an attack on police in Solo in August 2012 and was shot and killed on the spot.

Leaders of the Tahmid faction, however, did not support ISIS. In the conflict between the Taliban and IS-Khorasan, they clearly backed the former. They also forbade members to join Islamic State. When a subgroup in Bandung became attracted to ISIS, the Tahmid faction sent a team to persuade them to return to DI/NII. One member of this team was Sholeh Abdurrahman, who in early 2015 was sent to counsel fellow member Agus Suyatno, the suicide bomber at Astana Anyar in December 2022. Agus was not interested in returning to NII, and Sholeh himself decided to leave and join ISIS.

The Tahmid faction's support for the Taliban was linked to its belief in end of time prophecies. They saw the Taliban as the bearers of the black banners who would become the army of the Imam Mahdi at the end of time, a belief reinforced by the fact that these men defeated the Americans in 2021, at a time when the U.S. had the strongest military in the world. The Taliban victory was thus a sign that the end of the world was near. Tahmid and his followers say that once they have begun waging war (*ghoznah*), then they will open communications with terrorist groups abroad. They identified the need develop a presence in coastal areas of Indonesia to facilitate the entry of foreign mujahidin.

## 7. Does DI have a network of schools and mosques, and if so, are there ones that stand out?

Different factions of DI/NII have their own schools. The Tahmid faction has several educational institutes, such as Nawawi Al Bantani Islamic School in Bogor and the Zakaria Islamic School in South Bandung. KW9 has Az-Zaitun in Indramayu, which some say is the largest pesantren in Southeast Asia. In Bali, there is the Robbani kindergarten. DI/NII rarely sought to control mosques, unlike JI which has always seen large public meetings at mosques as the initial stage in its recruitment process. DI/NII prefers a personal approach, where an individual is invited to attend a study session that occasionally takes place in a mosque but more often at someone's house or in a location kept secret from other members.

## 8. How does DI/NII support itself financially?

DI/NII has three sources of funding: monthly dues from members, which can be anywhere from 2.5 to 5 per cent of their income; NII-owned businesses; and fund-raising from the public, through NII charities, often in the name of helping orphans and disaster relief. In one subdistrict unit, members' dues came to about Rp.200,000 per month in 2022. It also used charity collection boxes (*kotak amal*), ostensibly to raise funds for an Islamic kindergarten.

## 9. Why were the police apparently able to “turn” the DI members so easily? Was this simply a way of avoiding arrest?

After the March 2022 arrests, when Detachment 88 realised there was no way it could possibly arrest all the DI/NII members it had identified, it put together a “reconciliation” (*islah*) program in which NII members were asked to revoke their *bai'at*, swear allegiance to the Indonesian republic, and join a “guidance” program thereafter. A total of 1,185 people took part, 51 in West Java and the remainder in West Sumatra. Similar programs had been conducted for JI members in Lampung in 2021 and 2022, reflecting a belief by Detachment 88 that a “persuasive” approach was preferable to arrest, especially when so many people were involved.<sup>12</sup> It was akin to giving them a second chance, when under the 2018 Anti-Terrorism law, they could have been swept up as many were in a preventive strike.

Some members may have pretended to go along with revoking their *bai'at* in order to evade further punishment. But some were just recent recruits or sympathisers who had no position within the NII structure. Nevertheless, the regional Detachment 88 taskforce (*satgas wilayah*) kept them all under observation, on the understanding that if they returned to NII at any point, they would face legal consequences.

This was not the first attempt at *islah* with DI/NII members. On 25 May 2003, the late Sarjono Kartosuwiryo, the DI/NII founder's youngest son, helped found an organization called Forum

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<sup>12</sup> “120 Anggota Jamaah Islamiyah Lampung Ikrar Setia NKRI: Sebuah Contoh Collective Disengagement”, Ruangobrol.id, 21 October 2021.

Silaturahmi Anak Bangsa (FSAB). It aimed to bring about reconciliation between the children of former members of rebel groups, from DI/NII to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and the children of Indonesian army officers whose fathers had killed each other.<sup>13</sup> On 5 March 2004, FSASB members swore an oath to honor the equality of all citizens of Indonesia; to respect the human rights and differences among citizens and to live together as Indonesians; and to not bequeath conflict [to a new generation] or create new conflict.<sup>14</sup> On the tenth anniversary of FSAB's founding, another *islah* meeting took place, with a photo of Sarjono, whose father Kartosoewirjo was executed by the military in 1962; Ilham Aidit, the son of the PKI leader killed by the army in 1965, and Amelia Yani, daughter of one of the generals killed by a PKI-backed group in a murder that became the trigger for the purge of the left in Indonesia and the deaths of an estimated half a million people. Finally, another *islah* meeting with many of the same people took place on 13 August 2019, this time at the Coordinating Ministry of Politics, Security and Legal Affairs with Wiranto, the then minister, overseeing the commemoration. All those present swore an oath of loyalty to Pancasila. At the time, Sarjono claimed that DI/NII had two million members.<sup>15</sup> He died in January 2021.

## 10. How are these recent arrests connected to other DI/NII arrests in the last few years?

Many DI/NII arrests in recent years have been of senior members who believed in an Islamic State but committed no violence in their pursuit of it. Generally, these individuals are charged not with terrorism but with rebellion (*makar*), a political crime under the Criminal Code and more often used in Papua against independence supporters. Curiously, *makar* as a legal term carries the implication of the use of force, but in both DI/NII cases as well as in Papua, it is used to punish non-violent activities seen as being against the government or Pancasila.

In June 2019, a man from Garut named Hamdani bin Suhdi, the NII “Minister of Industry” in the group of Sensen Komara, the “deviant” leader who was found to be mentally ill, was arrested on suspicion of *makar* and blasphemy. He had circulated a letter in which he identified Sensen as the “president” of Indonesia and a prophet of Allah. He was eventually sentenced in October 2019 to three and a half years by the Garut District Court only on the blasphemy charges (Article 156a of the Criminal Code).

On 23 June 2022, three other followers of Sensen Komara were found guilty in the Garut District Court of *makar* because they called themselves NII “generals”. Sodikin, aged 48 and Jajang Koswara, aged 50, were sentenced to four and a half years in prison, while Ujer Januari, aged 70 was given one and a half years. A two-minute video of the three men was shown in court of them marching with a forbidden NII flag.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “Kilas Balik Forum Silaturahmi Anak Bangsa: Sejarah yang Menyentuh”, 25 May 2013, <https://fsab.or.id/kilas-balik-forum-silaturahmi-anak-bangsa-sejarah-yang-menyentuh/>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “Ikrar Setia Pancasila, Anak Kartosuwiryo Sadar Akibat Buruk dari Perpecahan”, news.detik.com, 13 August 2019.

<sup>16</sup> “5 Fakta Trio ‘Jenderal NII’ Garut yang Akhirnya Dibui, detik.com, 24 June 2022.

Between February and July 2021, seven NII members were arrested in Bali, leading to the uncovering of an NII structure that consisted of some 250 people April 2022. Of the seven, five were Javanese, one was Sundanese and one was a Muslim Balinese.<sup>17</sup> They ran several commercial operations as a cover for their activities, including a minimart and a cooperative as well as a charitable foundation, Yayasan Robbani and a martial arts/physical fitness center called Yayasan Bali Bina Umat Mandiri Sejahtera. In 2022, some 170 members pledged they loyalty to the Indonesian state and revoked their oath of allegiance to DI/NII. Hasan Idrus, its leader claimed that NII Bali was not descended from Kartosoewirjo (by which he may have meant that it was not part of the Tahmid faction). The group was in regular touch with Hamdani, the man arrested in June 2019.

### **11. What does the government need to do to prevent further recruitment of DI members into more violent organizations?**

It needs to start by going back and examining the cases of all former DI/NII members in Java and South Sulawesi who moved from DI/NII into more violent organizations, with a focus in particular on cases that have emerged since 2010. There may be a way of narrowing this group down to make a more feasible study, for example, by focusing on the cases where clusters of members joined violent groups together or on a geographic area with a long history of DI/NII activity. Such a study might produce some ideas of how and why NII members were attracted to armed jihad.

It should also examine the marriage patterns of DI/NII members recruited over the last five or ten years to understand how leaders arranged marriages of members with a view toward strengthening the group.

It should not resort to the easy solution of banning the organization. DI/NII is already a clandestine group and would likely continue its activities just the way other banned groups have, such as Hizbut Tahrir, banned in 2019 for promoting a caliphate instead of the Indonesian state. Moreover, a ban would make no distinction among violent and non-violent factions and perhaps push some of the latter into violence.

The government should tighten conditions for getting permits to place charity boxes (*kotak amal*) in mosques, markets and schools and improve auditing of the proceeds to ensure that the money is not simply being used as a cover to support military training or other organizational expenses.

It should find ways to encourage the non-violent groups that were providing social services like healthcare and education to continue doing so if it means that these constructive activities will substitute, for a substantial segment of the membership, for physical jihad. If there needs to be

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<sup>17</sup> They were Hasan Idrus alias Abu Atqo bin Marwan Farid, a Sundanese and leader of the group; Yuri Agus Prasetyo alias Yuri bin Heri Hermawan, Nanang Setiawan alias Nanang bin Slamet (Alm), Saiful Bahri alias Saiful bin Matasim, Ariefuddin alias Abu Azzam bin Husein Budi, Luqman Hakim alias Luqman bin Imam Tamami (Alm), Rudi Hartono alias Rudi Aalias Abu Agha bin Muthar (Alm).

a rationale for this substitution referenced to the Qur'an or hadith, then those references should be found and disseminated.

The government should encourage BRIN, the National Research, and Innovation Agency, to fund studies of released NII prisoners or of NII members who swore pledges to the NKRI avoid arrest, to see if the *islah* programs are sustainable or the renunciation of violence genuine. The impact of an individual's change of mind should be looked at in tandem with indicators of DI/NII's growth or decline in the areas to which these men and women returned.

### **INSTITUTE FOR POLICY ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT (IPAC)**

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In areas wracked by violence, accurate analysis of conflict is essential not only to peaceful settlement but also to formulating effective policies on everything from good governance to poverty alleviation. We look at six kinds of conflict: communal, land and resource, electoral, vigilante, extremist, and insurgent, understanding that one dispute can take several forms or progress from one form to another. We send experienced analysts with long-established contacts in the area to the site to meet with all parties, review primary written documentation where available, check secondary sources and produce in-depth reports, with policy recommendations or examples of best practices where appropriate.

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