

## ***Indonesia: Extremism & Counter-Extremism***

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On November 13, 2019, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a police station in Medan, Indonesia's third largest city. The attacker, identified as 24-year-old student Rabbial Muslim Nasution, reportedly detonated his explosives in a parking lot after being confronted by police officers. Nasution was apparently able to pass through a guard post before entering the station's yard. He managed to pass police twice checking his backpack and told officers that he was at the station to get a background check certificate for employment. Five days later, Indonesian anti-terrorism police conducted raids across the country, killing two alleged militants in one shootout and arresting 43 people believed to be linked to the Medan attack. Authorities later discovered that the Nasution and 22 other suspects had links to the ISIS-inspired Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and that 20 JAD members had attended a military-style jihadi training camp in North Sumatra. (Sources: [ABC News](#) [1], [Reuters](#) [2], [Associated Press](#) [3])

In May 2018, a series of ISIS-linked attacks in Indonesia killed dozens, shocking the region. On May 8, pro-ISIS inmates staged a riot at a high-security detention facility. The incident left five police officers and one detainee dead. On May 13, six members of the same family carried out near-simultaneous suicide bombings at three churches in Surabaya, East Java, killing at least 12 congregants. Later that day, a premature explosion occurred at a bomb maker's house, killing his wife and eldest son. He was then shot dead by police, who were responding to the scene. The very next day, a family of five, including an 8-year-old girl, attacked the police headquarters in Surabaya with explosives on motorbikes. The girl survived, but the four adult perpetrators died and over six people were injured. These were the first successful ISIS-inspired attacks since a January 2016 attack in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, as well as the first suicide bombings by a female perpetrator and whole families. (Sources: *New York Times*, [CTC Sentinel](#) [4], [Guardian](#) [5])

### **Overview**

Indonesia is home to the largest Muslim population in the world and has struggled with extremist activity since its independence from the Netherlands in 1949. Under the 32-year-long dictatorship of President Suharto, the Indonesian government suppressed extremist movements such as Darul Islam, a precursor to the Islamist terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). After Suharto's fall in 1998, Indonesian Muslims who had traveled to join the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s returned to Indonesia and formed various militant groups. (Sources: [Time](#) [6], [Brookings Institution](#) [7])

Indonesian extremist groups have launched multiple terrorist attacks in the country. JI has carried out the majority of terrorist acts in Indonesia. The jihadist group experienced a period of relative inactivity after an Indonesian government crackdown in the early-2000s. JI, a historically al-Qaeda-aligned group, fractured further when co-founder and former leader [Abu Bakar Bashir](#) [8], pledged allegiance to [ISIS](#) [9] in July 2014. ISIS has capitalized on Indonesia's existing Islamist networks to boost its recruitment efforts and carry out attacks in the country. Indonesia leads Asian countries in the number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria. Some Indonesian foreign fighters have sided with the [Nusra Front \(Jabhat Fateh al-Sham\)](#) [10], but the majority have joined [ISIS](#) [11]'s ranks. (Source: [USAID](#) [12])

The Indonesian government has passed a series of domestic counterterrorism laws and established regional alliances to address extremism. Since the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, Indonesia has sought to improve its legislative and law enforcement capabilities to dismantle major extremist networks operating in the country. Indonesia prosecuted more than 700 suspected terrorists between 2002 and 2015, with a nearly 100 percent conviction rate. Between 2015 and March 2020, the Indonesian government has arrested more than 1,100 suspected terrorists. According to a 2018 estimate from Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights, there were 432 terrorist detainees across 117 prisons with hundreds undergoing or awaiting trial. In addition, the government promotes social welfare, deradicalization, and rehabilitation programs for extremists. (Sources: [USAID](#) [12], [East Asia Forum](#) [13], [BenarNews](#) [14])

In a survey conducted by pollster Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting, 92.9 percent of Indonesian respondents said that ISIS sympathizers should not be allowed to live in Indonesia. According to a separate survey published in August 2017 by the Pew Research Center, the majority of Indonesians polled, 74 percent, considered ISIS to be the top threat to global security. (Sources: [Asian Correspondent](#) [15], [Pew Research Center](#) [16])

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### **Radicalization and Foreign Fighters**

#### *Recruitment and Radicalization in Indonesia*

As of July 2017, 2,691 persons linked to terror groups reportedly were under government surveillance. Extremists have used social media to disseminate extremist propaganda and target Indonesian Muslim youth for radicalization. According to a 2016 report by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, potential Indonesian ISIS recruits can become exposed to extremism via social media. Interested recruits then attend religious education courses or lectures where they are connected to in-person recruiters and facilitators in the country. In August 2016, Indonesian police uncovered a plot to launch a rocket attack on Singapore from the Indonesian island of Batam. The 31-year-old mastermind and his five accomplices were reportedly radicalized over social media. Over December 10-11, 2016, Indonesian authorities arrested a seven-member group allegedly plotting to bomb the presidential palace in Jakarta. In an interview with TVOne news channel, suspect Dian Yuli Novi said she had been initially exposed to radical Islam over Facebook, where she “opened profiles of jihadists, who had inspired me.” Novi, a 27-year-old Indonesian maid, also met her husband—Nur Solihin, another member of the group arrested for the plot—over Telegram. In July 2017, Indonesia’s Ministry of Communication blocked access to encrypted messaging service Telegram. The Ministry claimed that Telegram had been used to promote radicalism and convey instructions for terrorist attacks. (Sources: [New Strait Times](#) [17], [Institute for Policy and Analysis of Conflict](#) [18], [USAID](#) [12], [Reuters](#) [19], [Strait Times](#) [20], [Time](#) [21], [BBC News](#) [22])

ISIS propaganda online has singled out Indonesian Muslims for recruitment. In a video published in July 2014, titled “Join the Ranks,” a man identified as Abu Muhammad al-Indonesi spoke in Indonesian and called on Indonesian Muslim men to put “all your effort into using your physical and financial strength to migrate to the Islamic State.” Following the June 2016 Orlando attack, during which [Omar Mateen](#) [23] killed 49 people, ISIS released a video entitled “You Are Not Held Responsible Except for Yourself.” The video featured Abu Nusseyba al-Indunisy, who praised Mateen and called for more lone-wolf attacks against “crusaders” and America. According to security expert Professor Greg Barton of Australia’s Monash University, ISIS views Indonesia as fertile ground for recruitment because of the large number of Indonesian Muslims who have already gone to Syria and the potential to recruit more. (Sources: [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) [24], [Jihadology](#) [25])

Pesantren, or Islamic schools, have also purportedly served as sites of recruitment and radicalization. For example, pesantren established by JI leader Abu Bakar Bashir have produced jihadists who have gone to fight in either Syria or Iraq with ISIS or its rivals. According to Sydney Jones of the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, an estimated 40 pesantren have terrorist connections. USAID found that a small number of mosques have also become sites of radicalization, and are particularly pro-ISIS. (Sources: [USAID](#) [12], [New York Times](#) [26])

In November 2018, the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN) announced it had conducted a 4-month-long investigation into approximately 1,000 mosques in the country. BIN found that 41 of the mosques investigated permitted radicalizing propaganda, and that 17 clerics expressed support or sympathy for ISIS and encouraged followers to join the group abroad. The intelligence agency also found that government workers primarily attended the 41 mosques identified for spreading radicalism. (Source: [Agence France Presse](#) [27])

In recent years, Islamist extremist supporters have financed and established charities throughout Indonesia. According to the East Asia Forum, this is due in part to the fact that there have been more arrests of suspected terrorists between 2015 and 2019 than from 2002 to 2013. These incarcerated extremists leave behind families who may need financial and other support and who may turn to Islamist charities for that support. In 2016 and 2017, 15 pro-ISIS charities were operating and providing services, including education for children of extremists in the country. The charities continue to operate and are able to circumvent Indonesia’s current anti-terrorism financing laws because they provide social welfare services and assistance to families, but stop short of direct financing of terrorism-related expenses, such as purchasing arms. (Source: [East Asia Forum](#) [13])

In 2019, Anindia Afiyantari—an Indonesian domestic worker in Singapore—contributed a total of \$130 to ISIS and Indonesia-based Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). She also disseminated ISIS propaganda videos depicting bombings and killings via Facebook, creating multiple accounts using different e-mail addresses. Afiyantari befriended three other Indonesian domestic workers working in Singapore, identified as Yulistika, Nurhasanah, and Retno Hernayani. The group

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would occasionally meet to discuss ISIS, JAD, as well as establishing sharia in Indonesia. The four women decided to support a known extremist charity, pooling their money and remitting it to Hernayani's fiancé in Indonesia, who was a known supporter of terrorist entities. Yulistika and Nurhasanah left Singapore before the investigation began and have not returned. On February 12, 2020, Hernayani received one-and-a-half years in prison for her role in funding terrorism. That same day, another Indonesian domestic worker known only as Turmini was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison, though her connection to the other women is unclear. On March 5, 2020, a Singaporean court sentenced Afiyantari to two years in prison for providing financial support for terrorist activities. (Source: [Straits Times](#) [28], [Channel News Asia](#) [29])

### *Prisons*

Indonesia also suffers from radicalization problems within its prisons. Researchers from the Brookings Institution found that prison dynamics allowed for the spread of extremism, with guards failing to closely monitor terrorists in jail. According to Brookings' findings, terrorist convicts "answer to no one except themselves, deciding on their own routines and complying with prison regulations and participating in so-called deradicalization workshops only when it suits them." The researchers noted that prison staff were "untrained and unprepared" for handling terrorist convicts. Influential extremists have also reportedly issued publications and fatwas from prison. For example, Abu Bakar Bashir was allowed to convene a meeting of the JI-linked splinter cell Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) and its leaders and vocalize support for ISIS while in prison in July 2014. As of early December 2016, 241 terrorists were imprisoned in Indonesia and another 150 terrorist suspects were being held in pre-trial detention facilities, according to the U.S. Department of State. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#) [30], [International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence](#) [31], [Time](#) [32], [Brookings Institution](#) [33], [Brookings Institution](#) [34], [Brookings Institution](#) [35], [Jakarta Post](#) [36])

In addition, the country has reported cases in which prisoners, believed to harbor jihadist sentiments, returned to terrorist activities after their release. The Brookings Institution estimates the recidivism rate to be "at least 15 per cent" based on its analysis of 47 terror cases in Indonesia. For instance, Sunakim, a.k.a. Afif, was arrested in 2010 for his involvement in a jihadist training camp. Prior to Sunakim's 2015 release, he was reportedly further radicalized by fellow inmate [Aman Abdurrahman](#) [37], a U.S.-designated terrorist and influential-ISIS supporter. Authorities later identified Sunakim as one of the five gunman in the January 2016 Jakarta terrorist attack. Indonesian authorities are concerned about high rates of recidivism among released terrorist prisoners, according to the U.S. Department of State. A lack of effective risk assessment, classification, and management of terrorist prisoners are contributing factors. (Sources: [Sydney Morning Herald](#) [38], [BBC News](#) [39], [Wall Street Journal](#) [40], [Brookings Institution](#) [41], [U.S. Department of State](#) [30], [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) [42])

### *Jemaah Islamiyah*

[Jemaah Islamiyah](#) [43] (JI) is an Indonesian jihadist group that seeks to establish a regional caliphate in Southeast Asia. The group was co-founded by [Abu Bakar Bashir](#) [8], who pledged loyalty to ISIS in July 2014, and the now-deceased Abdullah Sungkar. JI is known for its links to the planners and perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1995 "Bojinka" plot, a failed attempt to bomb 12 U.S. commercial airlines in the span of two days. In October 2002, JI allegedly carried out Indonesia's deadliest terrorist attack to date, when a suicide bomber and a car bomb killed 202 people on the resort island of Bali. Following the attacks, the Indonesian government and police militarily cracked down on jihadist activity in general and JI specifically. (Sources: [National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States](#) [44], [Hudson Institute](#) [45])

Despite relative inactivity since the government crackdown, JI provides a significant source of resources and fighters for other terror networks, such as ISIS and the Nusra Front. The group also has links to the [Philippines](#) [46]-based [Abu Sayyaf Group](#) [47] terrorist organization. Though JI has caused much devastation in the country and region, the Indonesian government has never officially banned the group. The government is reportedly concerned about backlash from some Muslim Indonesians who are either sympathetic to JI or skeptical that the group still exists. (Source: [USAID](#) [12])

According to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, the conflict in Syria has allowed JI militants to develop their military capabilities similarly to how the group developed fighters between 1985 and 1993 during the conflict in Afghanistan. When JI's founders joined Afghanistan's mujahideen, they received military training and developed

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relationships with skilled fighters from around the world. JI founders Bashir and Sungkar brought skills and knowledge back to Indonesia and set up terrorist training camps in the country. Interviews conducted in February 2016 with active and former JI extremists revealed that the terror group has become more active since the start of the conflict in Syria and is actively recruiting. Indonesian police believe that JI poses a significant security threat because it maintains a sophisticated training and organizational in the country. (Sources: [Combating Terrorism Center](#) [48], [Kuwaiti Times](#) [49])

On June 29, 2019, Indonesian counterterrorism police arrested JI leader Para Wijayanto on the outskirts of Jakarta. He reportedly attended a jihadist training camp in the Philippines in 2000 and was involved in the 2002 Bali Bombings that killed more than 200 people. Wijayanto is believed to have become the leader of JI in 2007 and was known to have recruited and trained members to join extremist groups in Syria. During their investigation into Wijayanto, the Indonesian police discovered that JI was using two palm oil farms in Sumatra and Kalimantan to generate income, a new development in the group's terror financing efforts. Wijayanto's trial began on March 18, 2020, and he was facing a possible death penalty if convicted of terrorism charges. However, on July 20, 2020 he was sentenced to just seven years in prison on the charge of inciting others to commit an act of terrorism. (Sources: [Guardian](#) [50], [Jakarta Post](#) [51], [Vice News](#) [52], [Associated Press](#) [53], [Asia News Network](#) [54])

### ***ISIS***

According to USAID, [ISIS](#) [11]'s military successes during its prime in Syria and Iraq raised the group's profile in Indonesia. ISIS has reportedly recruited Indonesian jihadists who went into hiding following the Indonesian government's early-2000s crackdown on terrorist activity. ISIS has also inspired a new generation of young recruits in the country. According to a January 2016 USAID estimate, between 1,000 and 2,000 Indonesians have pledged allegiance to ISIS. However, the broader Muslim community in Indonesia has responded to ISIS with widespread condemnation. Nahdlatul Ulama, an Indonesian Islamic organization that boasts approximately 50 million members, continually denounces ISIS. Statistics database Statista collected research that shows only 4 percent of Indonesians viewed ISIS favorably in 2015. (Sources: [USAID](#) [12], [Sydney Morning Herald](#) [55], [Huffington](#) [56] Post, [Statista](#) [57])

On July 23, 2016, Indonesia's national police confirmed the death of the country's most-wanted fugitive and pro-ISIS jihadist, Abu Wardah, a.k.a. Santoso. Santoso was a former member of JI successor group and U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), and was a member of a small band of extremists known as Mujahadin Indonesia Timor (MIT) at the time of his death. Santoso ran militant training camps in Indonesia and posted propaganda videos online. In one of his videos, Santoso called for killing the members of the Indonesian police's antiterrorism unit, Detachment 88. (Sources: [New York Times](#) [58], [Tracking Terrorism](#) [59], [U.S. Department of State](#) [60], [Australian Broadcasting Company](#) [61])

In November 2015, the National Counterterrorism Agency requested that the Indonesian Communications and Informatics Ministry block a propaganda video featuring Santoso's voice communicating messages of jihad. Indonesian and Australian authorities feared that Santoso, who was popular in pro-ISIS circles, could serve as a galvanizing leader for returning foreign fighters. On March 22, 2016, the U.S. Department of State designated Santoso as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. On July 18, 2016, Santoso reportedly died in a gun battle with security forces on the island of Central Sulawesi in Indonesia. Days later, Indonesian police confirmed Santoso's death using DNA testing. (Sources: [Australian Broadcasting Company](#) [61], [Jakarta Post](#) [62], [CNN](#) [63], [New York Times](#) [58])

In early December 2019, five MIT gunmen ambushed Salubanga village in Central Sulawesi province, holding villagers and several police officers hostage. The hostages were able to escape during a gun battle between the militants and police, which left one officer dead. The MIT is a U.N.-designated terrorist group that has pledged allegiance to ISIS. Some of the group's members reportedly traveled to Syria to fight with the extremist group. (Source: [Voice of America](#) [64])

### ***Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD)***

Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) is an ISIS-linked group responsible for several terrorist attacks, including the January 2016 attack in which four civilians were killed by a suicide bomber and gunmen in central Jakarta. JAD is believed to have been formed in 2015, when several Indonesian groups reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and united under the leadership of Indonesian radical cleric Aman Abdurrahman. On January 7, 2017, the U.S. Department of

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State designated JAD as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist for its link to ISIS and its role in the January 2016 attack. (Sources: [CNN](#) [65], [U.S. Department of State](#) [66])

In May 2018, two families, including young children, launched terrorist attacks on three churches and a police headquarters in Surabaya, East Java over a period of two days. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks, which killed at least 18 people, including the suicide bombers. A third family—two parents and their 17-year-old daughter—were killed when a bomb prematurely exploded in their home. Indonesian police believe that all three families were members of JAD and met every Sunday for an Islamic study group, where they viewed extremist propaganda. On July 31, 2018, a Jakarta court ruled to outlaw JAD, stating that it was a terrorist organization with ties to ISIS. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the group is thought to have 1,000 members nationwide with several hundred in detention as of August 2018. (Sources: [Guardian](#) [67], [Wall Street Journal](#) [68])

On March 18, 2019, an Indonesian court sentenced JAD leader Abu Umar, a.k.a. Syamsul Arifin, to 10 years in prison for his involvement in the May 2018 Surabaya bombings. He hosted meetings with known Indonesian extremists and directly recruited a man who would go on to organize one of the attacks. Throughout 2017, Abu Umar delivered speeches in East Java, including Surabaya, during which he reportedly praised martyrdom, encouraging his followers to bomb churches and government offices. (Sources: [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) [69], [Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict](#) [70])

On October 10, 2019, a member of JAD and his wife attempted to assassinate Indonesia's Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Wiranto. The man, Syahrial Alamsyah, stabbed Wiranto twice in the abdomen, but the 73-year-old security minister survived. The woman, Fitria Diana, injured a member of Wiranto's entourage. Days before the attack, the pair had pledged allegiance to the late ISIS leader al-Baghdadi. During their trial, prosecutors revealed that the couple was radicalized after being exposed to extremist propaganda online. They allegedly watched videos of Muslims fighting in Syria and listened to speeches from convicted terrorists Abu Bakar Bashir and Aman Abdurrahman. On June 25, 2020, Alamsyah was sentenced to 12 years in prison and Diana received a nine-year sentence. (Sources: [Jakarta Post](#) [71], [Associated Press](#) [72], [Agence France-Presse](#) [73])

In mid-October 2019, Indonesian police discovered that a JAD cell had plotted biological weapon attacks that would target a police station and house of worship in Cirebon, West Java. The police seized 310 grams of rosary pea seeds used in the production of abrin, categorized along with ricin as potent biological toxins derived from plant sources, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (Source: [The Diplomat](#) [74])

Following a November 13, 2019 suicide bombing at a police station in Medan, Indonesian anti-terrorism forces conducted raids targeting suspected militants across the country. Authorities uncovered a JAD network with ties to the November 13 attack, arresting 43 people and killing two alleged bombmakers in a shootout. Among those arrested were 20 JAD members who had allegedly received military-style jihadist training at a camp in North Sumatra's Mount Sibayak. (Sources: [ABC News](#) [1], [Associated Press](#) [3])

### ***Hizb ut-Tahrir***

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), meaning "Party of Liberation," is an international Islamist movement seeking to unite Muslims under one Islamic caliphate. Founded by Palestinian Taqiuddin al-Nabhani al-Filastyni in 1953, HT considers itself a non-violent political party that seeks to peacefully convert Muslim nations to Islamist political systems. The organization is banned in Indonesia as well as in several other countries, including China, Egypt, Turkey, and Germany. HT Indonesia reportedly has approximately tens of thousands of members, according to a CNN report. The group's website is regularly updated with articles and videos addressing domestic and foreign politics and social issues from an HT perspective. (Sources: [Centre for Social Cohesion](#) [75], [Hizb ut-Tahrir](#) [76], [Associated Press](#) [77], [The Local](#) [78], [Atlantic](#) [79], [Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz](#) [80], [CNN](#) [81], [Associated Press](#) [77])

In 2011, HT Indonesia's chairman, Rochmat Labib, told the Associated Press that HT's 10-year plan in Indonesia is to "reinforce the people's lack of trust and hope in the regime." HT is "converting people from democracy, secularism and capitalism to Islamic ideology." Among its disruptive activities in Indonesia, HT organized protests in the capital city throughout 2016. Protesters accused Jakarta's Christian governor, Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, of blasphemy. In April 2017, Purnama lost his reelection bid for governor of Jakarta. The following month, he was convicted of blasphemy for claiming that political rivals had used misinterpretations of the Quran to dissuade Indonesians from voting for a non-



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Muslim. HT and other Islamic groups called Purnama's comments insulting to Islam. Purnama was sentenced to two years in prison. (Sources: [Associated Press](#) [82], [Deutsche Welle](#) [83], [Associated Press](#) [84], [CNN](#) [85], [Guardian](#) [86])

On May 8, 2017, Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo announced plans to ban HT activities and dissolve the group's Indonesian chapter following an evaluation by an Indonesian government panel. Security Minister Wiranto told the media that HT has "clearly caused conflict in society" and worked against Indonesia's pluralistic society. Wiranto further said that HT's activities in Indonesia "create tensions in society, threaten security and order, and unity." State Intelligence Agency chief General Budi Gunawan justified the ban because HT Indonesia has caused "public restlessness." HT Indonesia responded on its website with a promise to "take the needed steps to reject its dissolution." Indonesian media and legal sources criticized the government for targeting free speech, as well as not alerting HT Indonesia before the announcement. (Sources: [Jakarta Post](#) [87], [Jakarta Post](#) [88], [The Australian](#) [89], [Reuters](#) [90], [Associated Press](#) [84])

On July 19, 2017, the Indonesian government formally revoked HT Indonesia's legal status and disbanded the organization. HT Indonesia attempted to fight its dissolution and filed a challenge to the government, but the Jakarta State Administrative Court (PTUN) judicial panel rejected the group's petition. As part of evidence presented to the judicial panel, a video taken during an HT Indonesia conference in 2013 showed the group's chairman "calling on participants to reject the principle of state sovereignty in favor of the sovereignty of God." According to Jakarta Globe, one of the judges said, "This is enough evidence for the judges to find that there is sufficient proof that the plaintiff planned to establish a caliphate." (Sources: [Associated Press](#) [77], [Jakarta Post](#) [91], [Jakarta Globe](#) [92])

### ***Foreign Fighters***

Australian authorities have expressed concerns that fighters trained by ISIS are returning to Indonesia, posing a threat to the region. Analysts fear that returnees could reignite extremism in Indonesia to the level seen during JI's violent wave in the early 2000s. These problems can, in part, be traced to Indonesia's relatively lax immigration laws, which allow Indonesian citizens to travel freely in and out of conflict zones. (Source: [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) [93])

In February 2020, the Indonesian government decided that it would not repatriate Indonesian foreign fighters. The government conceded that it does not have a precise understanding of just how many militants and their families traveled to join extremist groups abroad. Indonesia's Ministry of Law and Human Rights estimated that there could have been as many as 1,276 Indonesians that fled to conflict zones. However, the government has adopted a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimate of 689 Indonesian foreign fighters, of which only 228 identities have been established. The majority of Indonesian jihadists reportedly left to join ISIS while others joined the Nusra Front (Jabhat Fateh al-Sham). As of July 2018, the Indonesian government maintained that only 86 of those who fought in the region have returned to Indonesia, though 539 who attempted to travel to Syria were stopped and deported back, primarily from Turkey. According to June 2018 estimates, more than 120 Indonesian terrorists died while fighting in Iraq and Syria since 2014. (Sources: [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) [94], [Voice of America](#) [95], [USAID](#) [12], [CTC Sentinel](#) [4], [Asia Times](#) [96])

The majority of Indonesian foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria have links to Indonesian extremist groups such as the Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT), the Forum for Sharia Action in Indonesia (Faksi), Tawhid wal Jihad, or Darul Islam's (DI) Ring Banten. Most of these groups include former JI members as well. A group of Indonesian students already in the Middle East on student visas also reportedly joined ISIS. Many of these students were reportedly financially supported by extremist groups in Indonesia and are alumni of pesantren established by JI co-founder Abu Bakar Bashir. ISIS has also attracted non-affiliated foreign fighters. According to the Middle East Institute, a few students had no prior exposure to extremism, but wanted to join Arab youth in the fight against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. (Sources: [Middle East Institute](#) [97], [Soufan Group](#) [98], [Institute for Policy Analysis and Conflict](#) [99])

In February 2019, Syrian police confirmed the death of an U.S.- and U.N.-designated Indonesian militant known as Mohammed Karim Yusop Faiz. Faiz had traveled to Syria to join ISIS in 2014 and became a representative figure for Southeast Asian fighters in Syria, even reportedly becoming close to ISIS emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. He appeared in a June 2016 ISIS execution video, during which he urged Southeast Asian jihadists to join an ISIS affiliate in the Philippines. In June 2019, an Iraqi court sentenced an Indonesian woman to 15 years in prison for her membership in ISIS. (Sources: [Reuters](#) [100], [U.S. Department of Treasury](#) [101], [United Nations](#) [102])

Indonesia has previously dealt with foreign fighters and the threat posed by returnees. In the 1980s, young Indonesians

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traveled to Pakistan, which served as a base for the Afghan jihad against Soviet occupation. These foreign fighters established independent networks in Pakistan and with al-Qaeda affiliates, giving them access to financing and resources for their own groups in Southeast Asia. According to Zachary Abuza, a specialist in Southeast Asian security studies, Abu Bakar Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar founded JI by leveraging their newly-formed al-Qaeda contacts for resources. (Sources: [Brookings Institution](#) [103], [National Bureau of Asian Research](#) [104])

### **Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents**

Indonesia has experienced several high-profile terror attacks since the early 2000s. Perpetrators appear to predominately target tourist sites, as was the case during the bombings on the resort island of Bali. Terrorists also attack areas frequented by foreigners, such as in the January 2016 attack in Jakarta that targeted a major business district near foreign embassies and U.N. buildings.

#### *October 2002 and October 2005 Bali Bombings*

Indonesian extremist groups, primarily JI, have launched multiple terrorist attacks on tourists. The island of Bali has been the country's largest draw for tourism. On October 12, 2002, JI carried out the deadliest attack in Indonesia to date. JI-affiliated extremists launched a series of coordinated bombing attacks on two popular tourist locations, Paddy's Irish Bar and Sari Club. A bomb hidden in a backpack and another in a car exploded, killing 202 people and injuring more than 200. (Sources: [CNN](#) [105], [Bali Today](#) [106], [Daily Mail](#) [107])

Another major terrorist attack occurred on October 2, 2005, when three suicide bombers targeted two sites on Bali, killing 20 people and wounding more than 100. The bombers attacked the Four Seasons hotel and a shopping square heavily trafficked by tourists. Indonesian officials believe that known JI senior leaders Azahari Husin and his deputy Noordin Top planned the bombing campaign. (Sources: [CNN](#) [108], [New York Times](#) [109], [Daily Telegraph](#) [110])

#### *January 2016 Jakarta Bombings*

On January 14, 2016, five assailants—reportedly affiliated with ISIS—attacked the Thamrin business district of Jakarta. The bomb and gun attacks killed four civilians and wounded 25. The assailants died in the attack. (Sources: [BBC News](#) [111], [BBC News](#) [112])

After the bombings, Jakarta Police Chief Tito Karnavian expressed concern that ISIS presents an unprecedented danger because of the group's willingness to kill other Muslims. In an interview, Karnavian said that "ISIS... perceive[s] Indonesia as not Dawla Islamiya, not an Islamic country," despite Indonesia being the most populous Muslim country in the world. (Sources: [BBC News](#) [112], [CTC Sentinel](#) [48], [CNN](#) [113])

According to the Indonesian police's antiterrorism unit, the attackers were likely from an informal network of ISIS supporters calling themselves Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). The group is reportedly led by Aman Abdurrahman, who has been convicted of inciting the attacks from prison. The network reportedly formed in 2015 when several Indonesian extremist groups jointly pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. On January 7, 2017, the U.S. Department of State designated JAD as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist for its link to ISIS and its alleged role in the January 2016 attack. An Indonesian court outlawed the group on July 31, 2018. (Sources: [CNN](#) [65], [U.S. Department of State](#) [66], [CTC Sentinel](#) [48], [Wall Street Journal](#) [68])

The alleged architect of the January 14 attack was 32-year-old Bahrin Naim, who was expelled from the local chapter of the global Islamist group [Hizb ut-Tahrir](#) [114] in 2010 for undisclosed reasons. That same year, Naim was arrested for illegal firearms possession. Indonesian authorities believe Naim grew closer to other incarcerated jihadists and was further radicalized while serving his two-year prison sentence. He went to Syria after his June 2012 release from prison. Naim was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Syria in June 2018, according to both U.S. and Indonesian officials. Indonesian police believe that Naim sent money to Indonesia in order to finance a failed bombing attempt in the city of Solo and to finance Indonesian foreign fighters seeking to travel to Syria. Naim allegedly maintained a social media profile, which he purportedly used to encourage young Indonesians and would-be ISIS supporters. Naim also reportedly used the encrypted messaging service Telegram to distribute extremist messaging to Indonesian followers and coordinate ISIS operations in

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Indonesia. In August 2016, an Indonesian police spokesman stated that Naim instructed and provided funding to Indonesian plotters of a foiled attack on Singapore. The plotters were reportedly radicalized via social media. In July 2017, Indonesia's Ministry of Communication blocked the encrypted messaging service Telegram. The Ministry claimed that Telegram had been used to promote radicalism and convey instructions for terrorist attacks. (Sources: [Voice of America](#) [115], [BBC News](#) [116], [CNN](#) [117], [Jakarta Post](#) [118], [BenarNews](#) [119], [Reuters](#) [120], [Reuters](#) [121], [BBC News](#) [22])

### ***May 2018 ISIS-Linked Attacks***

In May 2018, Indonesia experienced several terror attacks, in particular incidents involving families. On May 14, 2018, a couple with their two teenage sons and an eight-year-old daughter rode two motorcycles to the gates of the police headquarters in Surabaya, East Java, and detonated explosives. Four police officers and six civilians were injured. ISIS claimed responsibility for the bombing through the group's Amaq news agency. (Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#) [122], [Guardian](#) [5])

The day before, a family of six carried out suicide bombings at three churches in Surabaya, East Java. The father targeted one church, two teenage sons another, and the mother and two daughters, ages 12 and 9, exploded themselves at a third. A total of 12 congregants were killed in the attacks. It was reportedly the first time a female suicide bomber carried out an attack in Indonesia. Later that day, a mother and her 17-year-old son were killed in Sidoarjo, East Java when a bomb the father was making exploded prematurely. The man was killed by police officers responding to the scene. (Sources: [Guardian](#) [5], [BBC News](#) [123], [Straits Times](#) [124])

On May 8, 2018, 156 pro-ISIS inmates staged a riot at a high-security detention center at the headquarters of the Mobile Brigade Corps—Indonesia's special police unit. The detainees seized dozens of weapons and as well as part of the facility, which is located south of Jakarta. The standoff ended the following day when police stormed the facility, killing one prisoner and forcing the surrender of 145 inmates, though 10 continued to fight. Five officers were killed during the riot, making it the single deadliest incident for Indonesia's elite counterterrorism force. It was reportedly the second prison riot at the detention center since November 2017, and several security analysts intimated that the facility was not equipped for a large number of high-risk inmates. All 155 surviving inmates were moved to Indonesia's maximum security prison island of Nusakambangan. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [125], [New York Times](#) [126])

- **March 26, 2020:** Indonesian anti-terrorism police conduct a raid on the main island of Java, killing one suspect and arresting two others associated with ISIS-affiliate JAD. The officers uncover a weapons cache and chemicals used for bombmaking. Source: [The Diplomat](#) [127]
- **February 5, 2020:** An Indonesian court sentences ISIS-sympathizer Asmar Husin, a.k.a. Abu Hamzah, to life in prison for plotting attacks against police and Christians. Husin leads a 10-member cell that had pledged allegiance to then-ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Husin's wife had killed herself and their 2-year-old child in March 2019 after hours of negotiations with counter-terrorism police who tried to search their home. Sources: [ABC News](#) [128], [Reuters](#) [129]
- **November 2019:** On November 13, a suicide bomber blows himself up at a police station in Medan, Indonesia's third largest city. The attacker, 24-year-old student Rabbial Muslim Nasution, is apparently able to pass through a guard post and detonates his explosives in a parking lot after being confronted by police officers. Five days later, Indonesian anti-terrorism police shoot dead two suspected bombmakers and arrest dozens of members of an ISIS-inspired network linked to the attack. Sources: [ABC News](#) [1], [Reuters](#) [1]
- **October 10, 2019:** A man attacks Indonesia's Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Wiranto with a sharp object, stabbing him at least twice in the abdomen. Local police arrest the suspect as well as a woman in relation to the attack and report that radical teachings inspired the man to launch the attack. Sources: [Jakarta Post](#) [71], [Associated Press](#) [72]
- **June 29, 2019:** Indonesian police arrest JI leader Para Wijayanto on the outskirts of Jakarta. He was involved in the 2002 Bali Bombings that killed more than 200 people and is known to have recruited extremists to fight in Syria since 2013. During the investigation, Indonesian police discover that JI operates two palm oil farms, where the group generates profits to finance terror activities. Sources: [Guardian](#) [50], [Jakarta Post](#) [51], [Vice News](#) [52]
- **March 18, 2019:** An Indonesian court sentences JAD leader Abu Umar, a.k.a. Syamsul Arifin, to 10 years in prison for his involvement in the May 2018 Surabaya bombings that killed more than a dozen people. He is known to have delivered speeches in East Java, including Surabaya, during which he praised martyrdom and encouraged followers to bomb churches. Sources: [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) [69], [Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict](#) [70]
- **March 13, 2019:** The wife of a recently arrested JAD leader blows up herself and her 2-year-old son in their home on



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the island of North Sumatra, following an hours-long standoff with Indonesian police.

The police discover explosives materials and bombs, including a landmine, pipe bomb, and vest bomb in the house.

Sources: [Reuters](#) [129], [Straits Times](#) [130]

- **June 22, 2018:**Aman Abdurrahman, a U.S.-designated terrorist and influential ISIS-supporter, is found guilty of inciting terrorism and sentenced to death for charges related to the January 2016 ISIS-linked terrorist attack in Jakarta.  
Sources: [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) [42], [CNN](#) [65]
- **May 14, 2018:**Five family members, including an eight-year-old girl, on two motorcycles launch an attack on a police station in Surabaya, East Java.  
The mother, father, and two teenage sons kill themselves while detonating their suicide bombs, but the young daughter survives. Ten people are injured, including four police officers. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack through the group's Amaq News Agency. Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#) [122], [Guardian](#) [5]
- **May 13, 2018:**A family of six consecutively bombs three churches in a coordinated attack in Surabaya, East Java. The father detonates at one, two teenage sons another, and his wife and two daughters, 12 and nine-years-old, blow themselves up at a third. The attack kills 12 church attendees. It is the first time a female suicide bomber carried out an attack on Indonesian soil. A few hours later, a mother and her 17-year-old son are killed in Sidoarjo, East Java, when a bomb the father was making prematurely exploded. The father is killed by police officers who arrive at the scene. Sources: [Guardian](#) [5], [BBC News](#) [123], [Straits Times](#) [131]
- **May 8, 2018:**156 Pro-ISIS inmates stage a riot at a terrorist detention facility at the Mobile Brigade Corps's headquarters, south of Jakarta.  
The standoff ends the following day when 145 inmates surrender and 10 holdouts are captured. One prisoner and five officers are killed, making it the single deadliest incident for Indonesia's counterterrorism force at the time. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#) [125]
- **August 15, 2017:**Indonesian police arrest five alleged ISIS supporters suspected of attempting to make chemical bombs for attacks on the presidential palace.  
The arrests occur in Bandung, approximately 90 miles southeast of Jakarta. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [132], [Reuters](#) [133]
- **June 25, 2017:**Two assailants with links to ISIS stab a policeman to death in Medan, in western Indonesia, just hours before the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.  
Police manage to kill one of the attackers and critically injure the other, as well as recover an ISIS flag and propaganda material from an attacker's home. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#) [134], [Reuters](#) [135], [New Straits Times](#) [17]
- **May 24, 2017:**Two suspected suicide bombers detonate explosives at a bus terminal in Jakarta, targeting police officers standing guard along a parade route.  
The attacks kill three police officers and wound 12 others, including six civilians. Indonesian authorities link the attack to ISIS following a raid on the home of one of the suspected bombers. Sources: [CNN](#) [136], [Reuters](#) [137], [Reuters](#) [138]
- **February 27, 2017:**A suspected terrorist detonates a pressure cooker bomb and attempts to start a fire at a government building in West Java.  
Indonesian police shoot and capture the attacker. He was reportedly being monitored by Indonesian anti-terror squad for his purported links to an extremist group. Sources: [News.com.au](#) [139], [Reuters](#) [140]
- **December 21, 2016:**Police raid a Jakarta neighborhood and kill three suspected ISIS members after one of the suspects throws a bomb at them.  
Police cordon off the neighborhood and diffuse another bomb. Another suspect was arrested before the raid. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#) [141]
- **December 10, 2016:**Police in Jakarta arrest three suspects and confiscate a pressure-cooker bomb.  
The terror cell reportedly planned to use the bomb and a female suicide bomber in an attack on the presidential palace the following day. Police tie the cell to Syria-based Indonesian terrorist Barun Naim, who orchestrated the January 14, 2016, attacks in Jakarta. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#) [142]
- **November 13, 2016:**An assailant throws petrol bombs at a group of children outside of a church on the island of Borneo.  
The attack kills a 2-year-old girl and injures three other children. Indonesian police arrest the suspect, a 32-year-old former terror convict, and four others in connection with the attack. Authorities link the attacker to local extremists believed to support ISIS. Sources: [BBC News](#) [143], [Deutsche Welle](#) [144]
- **July 5, 2016:**A suicide bomber on a motorcycle detonates in front of a police station on the island of Java, Indonesia. One policeman dies and another sustains minor injuries. The alleged bomber, 30-year-old Nur Rohman, is reportedly linked to Barun Naim, an Indonesian in Syria who police believe coordinated the January 14, 2016, bomb and gun attack in Jakarta. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [145], [Fox News](#) [146]
- **January 14, 2016:**Five assailants attack a major shopping and business district in Jakarta, killing four people and wounding 25.  
The ISIS-affiliated extremists target a Starbucks café and a traffic police post with multiple explosions and gunfire. Sources: [BBC News](#) [112], [CTC Sentinel](#) [48]
- **July 17, 2009:**Alleged JI suicide bombers attack the JW Marriott Hotel and the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Jakarta's business

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district.

The nearly simultaneous blasts kill eight people and wound approximately 50 others. Sources: [Reuters](#) [147], [New York Times](#) [148]

- **October 2, 2005:** Three suicide bombers carry out attacks at two sites on the resort island of Bali. The terrorists target the Four Seasons hotel and a shopping square heavily trafficked by tourists, killing 20 people and injuring more than 100. Authorities believe known JI senior leaders Azahari Husin and his deputy Noordin Top planned the bombing. Sources: [CNN](#) [108], [New York Times](#) [109], [Daily Telegraph](#) [110]
- **September 9, 2004:** Islamist extremists detonate a car bomb outside of the Australian embassy in Jakarta ahead of elections in both Indonesia and Australia. At least 10 people are killed and more than 100 others are wounded in the blasts. Indonesian police claim that the perpetrators are JI militants. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [149], [Guardian](#) [150]
- **August 5, 2003:** A car bomb explodes outside of the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, killing 12 people and wounding 150 others. The blast also hits an office building and a restaurant. Indonesian police believe the attack bears characteristics of the 2002 Bali bombings and attribute the attack to JI. Sources: [New York Times](#) [151], [CNN](#) [152]
- **October 12, 2002:** JI-affiliated extremists set off bombs at two crowded nightclubs, Sari Club and Paddy's, on the resort island of Bali. The bombings kill 202 people. Source: [Reuters](#) [147]
- **December 24, 2000:** JI executes its first major terrorist attack in Indonesia. Assailants bomb 28 churches in the capital city of Jakarta and throughout the islands of Sumatra and Java, killing 19 people and injuring more than 120. JI operational leader Hambali is reportedly the coordinator of the attack. Source: [Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs](#) [153]

### **Domestic Counter-Extremism**

Since the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, Indonesia has sought to improve its legislative and law enforcement efforts in order to dismantle major extremist networks operating in the country. However, Indonesia still has not adopted a national counter-extremism strategy. Meanwhile, extremist groups continue to exploit perceived injustices against the Muslim community in Indonesia and abroad, the Internet, and weaknesses in Indonesia's overcrowded prisoner system to influence and recruit new members, according to the U.S. Department of State. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#) [30])

#### *Legislation and Agencies*

In the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings, then-Indonesian President Megawati Soekamputri issued "Interim Law No 1 of 2002 on the Eradication of the Crime of Terrorism." The Interim Law, which was adopted by parliament as "Anti-Terrorism Law No. 15 of 2003," supplemented existing criminal law and gave the government the ability to efficiently investigate, prosecute, and convict terrorists. On July 30, 2010, the Indonesian government passed an addendum to the 2003 law, Presidential Regulation No. 46, which established the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT). The BNPT oversees the coordination for all existing anti-terrorism units in Indonesia. These units include the National Police's Detachment 88, the National Intelligence Agency, the military's antiterrorism units, and the Anti-Terrorism Desk. The BNPT reports to the president of Indonesia, but day-to-day operations are managed by the Coordinating Minister for Security, Political and Legal Affairs. (Sources: [University of Melbourne](#) [154], [Library of Congress](#) [155])

Following an ISIS gun and suicide-bomb attack in Jakarta's business district in early 2016, Indonesian President Widodo's government proposed a bill that would "toughen" Indonesia's terror law. The bill stalled in parliament amid concerns over civil liberties and greater military involvement in internal security. Following a series of ISIS-linked terror attacks in May 2018, Indonesia's parliament approved the counterterrorism bill. The new law gives police increased powers to take preemptive action, such as preventive detention of suspected terrorists. (Sources: [Reuters](#) [156], [Bloomberg](#) [157])

In February 2016, the Indonesian government announced it would take new measures to combat extremism in the country's prisons. Inmates at Indonesia's Nusakambangan prison have been grouped as ideologists, militants, or sympathizers and isolated from the general prison population in an effort to prevent the incarcerated extremists from radicalizing other inmates. The measure is in response to reports that inmates at Nusakambangan played a role in the January 14, 2016, terror attack in Jakarta. Nusakambangan prisoner Aman Abdurrahman reportedly masterminded the attack while imprisoned for aiding in the creation of a JI training camp in 2009. Former Nusakambangan inmate Syaiful Anam, a.k.a. Mujadid, also reportedly played a role in the attack. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [158], [Jakarta Post](#) [159],

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[Straits Times](#) [160], [Time](#) [32])

According to USAID, the Indonesian police's elite Detachment 88 has implemented the most successful aspects of Indonesia's counterterrorism responses. Between 2002 and 2015, Detachment 88 has arrested more than 1,000 suspected terrorists and prosecuted more than 700, with a nearly 100 percent conviction rate. Between 2015 and March 2020, Indonesian authorities arrested another 1,100 suspected terrorists, and as of 2018, there were 432 terrorists detained across 117 prisons. Detachment 88 also works to build and maintain relationships with former jihadists in an effort to lower the risk of recidivism. Detachment 88 officers are known to support families while the jihadist is incarcerated and assist reformed jihadists with start-up costs for businesses or access to employment. (Sources: [USAID](#) [12], [East Asia Forum](#) [13])

### ***Community-Based Programs***

Indonesian officials have implemented programs to address radicalization at the community level. In a September 2015 address at U.S. President Barack Obama's Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla stressed an approach to countering extremism that focuses on improving social welfare and rehabilitation programs. The National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) was established to lead preventive measures and coordinate counterterrorism efforts. Since 2010, the BNPT has tested various deradicalization programs with varying degrees of success. The agency reportedly found that its most effective program has been supporting jihadist families and equipping inmates with business training. A significant amount of BNPT's funding for anti-radicalization projects is doled out to community-based religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Returning foreign fighters reportedly are required to spend only one month in a deradicalization course before being allowed to return to their families. (Sources: [USAID](#) [12], [U.S. Department of State](#) [161], [New Strait Times](#) [17])

NU, the world's largest Muslim organization, has played a key role in countering extremism in Indonesia. NU aims to establish an international network that promotes Indonesian Islam as having a nonviolent, pluralistic tradition. NU has a nonprofit organization in South Carolina that serves as a U.S. hub for their work and partners with the University of Vienna in Austria to counter ISIS propaganda. NU's prevention center in Indonesia trains male and female Arabic-speaking students to respond to ISIS messaging. Analysts have praised NU's role in lessening ISIS's attractiveness to Indonesians. (Sources: [Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs](#) [162], [Atlantic](#) [163], [New York Times](#) [164], [Wall Street Journal](#) [165], [Guardian](#) [166])

Indonesia's Ministry of Social Affairs runs a deradicalization program for children in the capital of Jakarta. As of October 2019, about 100 children have attended Indonesia's formal deradicalization program. About half of the students in the program have parents who were killed in clashes with Indonesian counterterrorism police. Children of suicide bombers are enrolled in the government program for 15 months, while children of militants who attempted to travel to Syria are given only a month or two in the program. However, most of the children of the 1,000 or so terror-related convicts in the country reportedly are not given access to the education and rehabilitation program. (Source: [New York Times](#) [167])

### ***ISIS***

The Indonesian government, like other countries battling ISIS domestically, is struggling to overcome coordination and intelligence-sharing issues. One glaring example is highlighted by the release of a March 2015 report by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) on two pro-ISIS Indonesian airline pilots, Ridwan Agustin and Tommy Hendratno. The AFP believed that the two pilots could pose a general security threat. The AFP reportedly distributed the report to authorities in Turkey, Jordan, London, the United States, and Europol. However, Indonesian officials claimed that the AFP failed to share the report with them and they first learned of the two men from media reports on the Australian intelligence report four months later. (Sources: [Australian Federal Police](#) [168], [Guardian](#) [169], [Guardian](#) [170], [Intercept](#) [171])

On August 4, 2014, the Indonesian government banned support for or endorsement of ISIS and banned YouTube videos endorsing the terror group. Following the January 2016 attacks in Jakarta, the Indonesian government has blocked websites with jihadist material. The Indonesian government has also sent letters to social media and messaging platforms Twitter, Facebook, and Telegram asking them to remove extremist content. In July 2017, Indonesia's Ministry of Communication blocked the encrypted messaging service Telegram. The Ministry claimed that Telegram had been used to

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promote radicalism and convey instructions for terrorist attacks. (Sources: [Washington Post](#) [172], [Jakarta Post](#) [173], [Reuters](#) [120], [BBC News](#) [22])

Indonesia established a task force within the political, legal, and security affairs ministry responsible for determining the government's policy on ISIS foreign fighters. In January 2020, the ministry announced that it had begun discussions to potentially repatriate 660 Indonesian foreign fighters and dozens of family members who were detained abroad, including in Syria and Afghanistan. However, following a meeting with President Joko Widodo in February 2020, the ministry said it would not allow its citizens to return home to Indonesia. The minister for political, legal, and security affairs said that they would consider repatriating children below the age of 10 years on a case-by-case basis and whether or not they were orphans. (Source: [Straits Times](#) [174], [Voice of America](#) [175])

### **International Counter-Extremism**

Indonesia has convened several counterterrorism conferences in the region, in particular with regional allies such as Australia. In July 2017, Indonesia and Australia co-hosted a meeting with six countries including Malaysia, Philippines, and New Zealand to address the rising threat of foreign fighters. Indonesia has also spearheaded efforts to address terrorism financing, such as in August 2016 with the Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit. According to a report released by Indonesia and Australia in August 2016, self-funded terrorists and charities used as fronts for terrorism financing pose the biggest threats to the region. On February 2, 2017, the Indonesian and Australian governments pledged greater cooperation in financial intelligence in order to "choke off" terrorism financing. In 2015, Indonesian authorities said they suspected as much as \$450,000 linked to terrorism was transferred from Australia to Indonesia. (Sources: [Star Online](#) [176], [News.com.au](#) [177], [Channel NewsAsia](#) [178], [Agence France Presse](#) [179])

According to a January 2017 report from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Indonesia has played an active role in countering violent extremism and mitigating security threats posed by returning foreign fighters, and is currently co-chair of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum. Indonesia has also signed on to several terrorism-related treaties and resolutions. In September 2014, Indonesia co-sponsored U.N. Security Council Resolution 2178, which seeks to prevent radicalization and restrict the movement of foreign fighters. In 2012, Indonesia ratified the ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism, which mandates that ASEAN member states cooperate on terrorism prevention, law enforcement, terrorist rehabilitation, and information sharing. (Sources: [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#), [180] [Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) [181], [Jakarta Globe](#) [182], [ASEAN](#) [183])

The Indonesian government receives assistance to address security issues such as terrorism through a U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Program (2017-2020). UNODC assists Indonesia with drafting and implementing legislation that addresses terrorism financing and aims to align the country's criminal justice system with antiterrorism objectives. The Program also assists Indonesian authorities in facilitating mutual legal assistance and extradition on terrorism-related crimes. UNODC partners with bodies across the Indonesian government, including the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the judiciary, Attorney General's Office, Indonesian National Police, Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre. (Sources: [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#) [184], [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#) [185])

In 2009, the U.S. embassy in Jakarta and Indonesia's Directorate for Corrections began a two-year program that established best practices for dealing with terrorists and at-risk prisoners in the Indonesian correctional system. The aim was to enhance the Indonesian prison system's ability to prevent radicalization and deradicalize inmates. The Indonesian government also received support from the UNODC to optimize deradicalization programs in corrections from May 2012 through 2015. As of June 2017, Indonesia reportedly planned to introduce a new law permitting the imprisonment of returning foreign fighters for up to 15 years. The law also would allow the detention of terror suspects without trial and expand the definition of terrorism to include hate speech, partaking in paramilitary training, and membership in a banned extremist group. (Sources: [Search for Common Ground](#) [186], [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#) [187], [GlobalRiskInsights.com](#) [188])

Indonesia is part of the European Union-UNODC Joint Initiative for Supporting Southeast Asian Countries to Counter Terrorism, which also includes Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The fifth annual Project Steering Committee met in Jakarta in April 2016 to discuss continued cooperation. EU Ambassador to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam Vincent

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Guérend said at the meeting that the European Union will continue to cooperate with Indonesia to combat terrorism and violent extremism. According to the UNODC's 2014 annual report, Indonesia also participated in UNODC's regional counterterrorism training in Southeast Asia. (Sources: [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#) [189], [U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime](#) [190])

In April 2016, Indonesia called for maritime cooperation with Malaysia and the Philippines to counter the rise in Islamic terrorism and kidnappings at sea. The three countries' defense ministers met in August 2016 and agreed to launch joint patrols in the waters off southwestern Philippines. In July 2017, the defense ministers of Indonesia and Malaysia agreed to bolster military cooperation on counterterrorism efforts. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#) [191], [Wall Street Journal](#) [192], [Reuters](#) [193], [The Diplomat](#) [194])

### **Public Opinion**

A survey conducted by the International Republican Institute and the United States Agency for International Development in January 2019 found that when asked to rank the top three most important issues the country faces, Indonesians ranked "Security" only 16 percent of the time. In fact, "Security" ranked seventh behind "High prices for necessities" at 74 percent. Other issues of concern included "Poverty" at 56 percent, "Unemployment" at 35 percent, "Education" at 31 percent, "Healthcare" at 24 percent, and "Corruption" at 24 percent. (Source: [International Republican Institute](#) [195])

Research by statistics database Statista revealed that only 4 percent of Indonesians had a favorable view of ISIS in 2015. (Source: [Statista](#) [57])

According to a Pew Research Center poll released in August 2017, ISIS is considered the top threat to the country. Of Indonesians polled, 74 percent say that the Islamic militant group known as ISIS. A previous poll conducted in 2015 showed 65 percent of Indonesians viewed ISIS as the primary threat to global security. A November 2015 Pew poll found that 79 percent of Indonesians disapprove of ISIS. The poll focused on Muslim-majority countries. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#) [16], [Pew Research Center](#) [196], [Pew Research Center](#) [197])

According to a survey of Indonesians' attitudes toward Islamic extremism released by Jakarta-based pollster Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting on June 4, 2017, 9.2 percent of Indonesian believe the country's democratic system should become part of a global caliphate. The pollster noted that this percentage of the Indonesian population was more than the total population of Singapore at around 20 million people. At the same time, 92.9 percent of survey respondents said ISIS sympathizers should not be allowed to live in Indonesia, up from 79 percent who disapproved of ISIS in November 2015. (Sources: [Asian Correspondent](#) [15], [Pew Research Center](#) [197])