

# Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL  
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

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## Editorial Note

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# Southeast Asia Focus

**W**e are pleased to release Volume 6, Issue 3 (April 2014) of the Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) at [www.cttajournal.org](http://www.cttajournal.org) and [www.pvtr.org](http://www.pvtr.org).

This issue presents a regional focus on Southeast Asia, particularly on recent developments in southern Thailand and the southern Philippines, two of the epicentres of violent political conflict in the region, as well as the evolving threat in Indonesia.

Tom Farrell offers an in-depth discussion of the crisis in Bangkok and how it impacts the situation in southern Thailand. Muh Taufiqurrohman and V. Arianti analyse the implications involving the emergence of an 'anti-deradicalization program' in Indonesia, in which extremist groups seek to undermine the state's efforts towards deradicalizing terrorist detainees and their families. Taufiqurrohman and Arianti examine the case of 'GASHIBU' (Gerakan Sehari Seribu or 'One Thousand Rupiah (US\$0.1)-a-Day'), the most militant of the anti-deradicalization entities in Indonesia, which provides regular financial assistance to the families of terrorist detainees as a part of its anti-deradicalization program. Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin examines the nature of the threat posed by online extremism in Indonesia. She argues that tradecraft manuals posted on extremist websites are not as threatening as the efforts to raise funds and mobilize support for the wider cause of the community, including supporting activities in Syria. Anton Chan discusses the significance of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed in March 2014, and examines to what extent it strengthens the prospect for peace and stability in the country.

**Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis** is a monthly journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. The CTTA is circulated among 13,300 subscribers.

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# Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

**L** launched in 2009, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) is the monthly journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). Each issue of the journal carries articles with in-depth analysis of topical issues on terrorism and counterterrorism, broadly structured around a common theme. CTTA brings perspectives from CT researchers and practitioners with a view to produce policy relevant analysis.

The CTTA also accepts web-only contributions on its website ([www.cttajournal.org](http://www.cttajournal.org)), which offers flexibility of time for the coverage of topics of immediate importance.

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# Southern Discomfort: Prospects for Thailand's Malay Muslim Insurgency

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Tom Farrell

*The paradox of the political showdown between pro and anti-Thaksin elements may have given the government's negotiators some breathing space in order to rethink the peace process, but it has also sent negative signals to the Deep South about the ineptitude and opportunism of Bangkok's elite. The prospects for peace have become further elusive due to uncertainty about the insurgency's command and control structure as well as ideology and long-term objectives, the Thai Army's heavy-handed approach, the changing tactics of insurgents and objections to Malaysia's role in the peace process.*

## **Aftermath of Bangkok's Crisis and its Impact on the Deep South**

As the violence in Bangkok recedes, at least for the time being, it is uncertain what impact the nearly two-month state of emergency in the capital will have on the four provinces of the predominantly Malay Muslim Deep South.

So far, local Malay Muslim leaders are divided on whether or not to engage the regime of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, as she battles to avoid impeachment. The eruption of the crisis was sparked by the 'Pheu Thai' administration's plan to introduce a bill that would amnesty numerous discredited figures including, potentially, her exiled brother, the former prime minister Thaksin. Ranged against her administration is the Peoples' Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) led by the former deputy prime minister and secretary general of the Democrat Party, Suthep Thaugsuban. The PDRC is committed to establishing an unelected royalist council that will supposedly reform Thai politics.

Efforts to negotiate peace in the Deep South have been relegated to the margins by the crisis. The National Security Council (NSC) signed a document of 'general consensus' on the peace dialogue with a faction known as the Barisan Revolusi Nasional Co-ordinate (BRN-C) in February 2013. Although this process is being facilitated by the Malaysian government at present, previously Kuala Lumpur has alternated between tolerating insurgent factions on their soil and handing insurgent leaders over to the Thai authorities. The parties have met in March, April and June of 2013 for official plenary meetings. However, the 'Common Understanding on the Ramadan Peace Initiative' agreed upon on 12 July, 2013 soon lapsed into renewed violence.

Violence in the first weeks of 2014 has been characterized by murkiness, and the suggestion that pro-government paramilitaries have carried out savage killings followed by retaliation by the insurgents. That the cycles of revenge killings are likely in the coming months is evinced by the 24 January assassination of two paramilitary Rangers, when their car was set upon by a group of militants in Pattani's Sai Buri district. The insurgent leadership who are meeting the NSC may be divorced from the new generation of extremists - those radicalized as a result of the Thai Army's heavy-handed approach a decade ago. There is evidence that the violence is spreading: as of

December 2013, attacks have spread to Sadao town, in the fifth Malay province of Songkhla province. In that month, two motorbike bombs hit police targets and a car bomb was placed in a hotel parking lot. On 23 December 2013, an improvised explosive device (IED) was found in a



**Figure 1 – Thai security forces escort Muslim children to school in Tak Bai, scene of the conflict's worst massacre**  
*Photo by Tom Farrell*

pick-up truck that had been parked for a fortnight outside a Phuket police station. If a new generation of militants is on the rise, it is obvious that they will distrust Thaksin or acolytes, as they are associated with a particularly repressive period in the recent history of the Deep South.

### **An Overview of the Deep South Insurgency**

Since the latest phase of the long conflict erupted in mid-2004, just under 6,000 people, at least two thirds of them Malay Muslims, have been killed. Attacks by the insurgents have traditionally taken the form of drive-by shootings, car bomb blasts and assassinations. Occasionally, more audacious

attacks have taken place in the countryside, such as attempts to storm Army camps.

The conflict has ostensibly been ethno-nationalist in nature and has not been co-opted into the wider narrative of Southeast Asian jihad. The locally applied nomenclature of *juwae* (“warriors”) actually references supporters of several major factions, including three belonging to the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), Pattani Islamic Mujahideen Movement (GMIP), Pattani National Liberation Front (BNPP) and the three BRN factions (the structure of the three BRN factions are indeterminate at present, although BRN-C’s predominance is clear). Moreover, the *juwae* have also demonstrated a fealty to distinctly local customs and cultural idiosyncrasies not associated with Islamist groups. Typically, insurgents do not spend lengthy periods away from home and have little direct contact with the political leadership. A former BRN militant interviewed by the author in July 2013 said that he would only partake in operations lasting one or two days and seldom far from his home village, if summoned by his *pemimpin* (district commander).

### A Flawed Peace Process?

### ***Negotiations hampered by uncertainty of insurgency’s command and control structure***

While the 2013 peace dialogue has been lauded in some quarters, many critics have pointed out that it is uncertain to what extent the BRN-C delegation is representative of the insurgent movement as a whole. The planned December 2013 talks, curtailed by the crisis in Bangkok, would have involved more factions than before, each being allotted two seats. When the dialogue was initiated

last year, the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) was largely sidelined by the BRN-C; the PULO faction led by Noor Abdulrahman, a.k.a. Abae Kramae, was given one seat, while two other factions were excluded, whose leaders, Samsudine Khan and Kasturi Mahkota, are based in Europe. By the end of the year, however, the three PULO factions had been brought in along with the Barisan Islam

Pembangunan Pattani (BIPP), although the BIPP leadership is believed to be split on whether to engage Bangkok.

The persistence of the violence into 2014 indicates that the leadership of the insurgency, comprising men active since the 1990s and 1980s or further back, is being upstaged by younger potentially

**“Violence in the first weeks of 2014 has been characterized by murkiness, and the suggestion that pro-government paramilitaries have carried out savage killings followed by retaliation by the insurgents.”**

more fanatical *juwae*, over whom their control is at best tenuous. The young *juwae*, as if to underscore their defiance, was responsible for the bomb in Pattani within hours of the first dialogue being announced on 28 February 2013. On 30 March 2013, after the first official meetings between the NSC and the BRN-C convened, triple car bomb attacks took place across the south, killing 13 people and injuring over 100 more. The most visible of the BRN-C's negotiating team last year, Hassan Taib, has slipped from view amid rumours that the Malaysian authorities could have him under house arrest. His actions as 'liaison officer' did not always create a favourable impression. When, for example, the BRN-C published five wide-ranging demands ahead of last July's Ramadan ceasefire, Hassan Taib personally announced them through a *YouTube* video on 24 June 2013, without consulting his counterparts in the NSC. While all three PULO factions are now theoretically onboard for future peace negotiations, it is uncertain whether they will remain so. Meetings between the Kasturi-led PULO faction and the NSC took place from 2005 to 2011, facilitated by a Swiss NGO. The leadership will not have forgotten that Yingluck scrapped them soon after coming to power.

### **Objections to Malaysia's role in the peace process**

It was Thaksin Shinawatra's idea to bring in Malaysia as a facilitator: in March 2012 he travelled to Kuala Lumpur and met with 16 exiled

insurgent leaders. Future efforts to restart the dialogue may question what role should be played by the government of Najib Razak. The role of Kuala Lumpur has not proven as constructive as previously hoped: it is uncertain if the Malaysian authorities are implicated in the dropping of the BRN-C negotiator Hassan Taib from view. Moreover, another BRN faction, believed to be led by the respected Islamic educator Sapae-ing Basor, deeply distrusts Malaysia after some of its leaders were handed over to Thailand in the late 1990s.

In late February 2013, European envoys led by the Norwegian ambassador to Thailand visited the Deep South. They exchanged dialogue with Lt. General Sakon Cheuntrakul, the commander of Army Region Four, one of the country's four



**Figure 2 – Krue Se Mosque in Pattani, scene of the April 2004 massacre where 32 militants died after a seven-hour siege**

*Photo by Tom Farrell*

regional commands. This might be an early indication that the Thai military is listening to the suggestion of Wan Kadir Che Man, the exiled former leader of the defunct Barisan Bersatu Merdeka Pattani umbrella group, that a Western government should act as a mediator in the future. Wan Kadir's three trips to Thailand last year were sponsored by the Army who have also brought in General Akanit Muensawas, who was tasked with meeting the PULO leaderships in the pre-Thaksin era.

### ***The changing tactics of insurgents***



**Figure 3 – Thai national flag next to Islamic institute in Pattani**

*Photo by Tom Farrell*

The nature of the war the Thai Army is fighting is changing. The lack of ‘base areas’ may account for a shift in the focus of the attacks by the insurgents away from urban areas in recent months. Attacks in the countryside have become more audacious, often involving larger improvised explosive devices. The February 2013 attack on the Narathiwat marine base evidenced hubris: while 16 insurgents were killed, the attack had negligible impact on its intended target. More recent engagements have involved slightly more than a dozen *juwae*, typically attacking foot patrols or armoured vehicles. After the disasters of Tak Bai and Krue Se Mosque, a more nuanced approach by the security forces became evident after the coup of 2006, based around rural sweeps and aimed at disrupting insurgent recruitment and mobilization at village level. Although this had some success in reducing shootings and bomb blasts, insurgent attacks began to show a qualitative change in 2011-12. The use of car and motorcycle bombs, for instance, became a standard tactic in urban areas, although there was a great decrease in attacks from 13 taking place in 2012, to only two the following year. Car bomb attacks involve a complex process of vehicle procurement and preparation, a potentially risky endeavour in an era of improved Thai intelligence. Moreover, the killing of civilians in such attacks is likely to erode the support base of the insurgency. A shift towards more rural attacks, specifically targeting the security forces, indicates that insurgent tactics are moving in new directions.



Some aspects of the conflict have changed little in a decade, such as the brutal reprisals meted out to perceived collaborators. In October 2013, a senior insurgent commander was cornered and killed by the security forces in Narathiwat; his alleged informant was killed the next day.

***Vague nature of the insurgency's ideology and long-term objectives***

If the insurgents seek to impress upon the Malay Muslim population that they are still a formidable military force, their most serious shortcoming is the vague nature of their political agenda. The BRN-C have so far articulated five demands, including recognition of the BRN as a liberation movement, the lifting of arrest warrants, allowances for foreign observers, the release of prisoners and the recognition of the Malaysian role in the talks as 'mediators.' The very fact that they and the three PULO groups have been prepared to sit down with the NSC is a new departure since they have advocated full independence for decades. But it remains uncertain, given that they have abjured anything approaching Islamic radicalism, how far the separatists of the Deep South want to go or what the old Pattani Sultanate would look like, reincarnated as an autonomous region or even an independent state.

**Thai Elite's Standing Damaged in the South in Bangkok Crisis**

Neither the Democrats nor the PDRC advocate devolution for the Malay Muslim provinces. On the contrary, Democrat leader Abhisit used the 2013 peace process as a stick with which to beat the Pheu Thai regime, condemning the involvement of Malaysia in talks and arguing that the government must consult other insurgent factions, separate from BRN-C.

**“A shift towards more rural attacks, specifically targeting the security forces, indicates that insurgent tactics are moving in new directions ...”**

It has been theorized that the PDRC aimed to destabilize Pheu Thai authority – they prevented voting in 28 constituencies on 2 February 2014 - in the hope that the Thai military would step in, although Suthep and his supporters are surely aware of how little enthusiasm the Thai top brass would have of repeating the miserable experience of ruling the country in 2006-10. But Prime Minister Yingluck is likely to be -and remain- grateful for the Army's acquiescence, which will mean little change to the methodology of the peace process given the conservatism of senior officers. Meanwhile, the insurgent leaders in the Deep South now have clear evidence that in future dealings with

Yingluck, they will essentially be dealing with her exiled brother. Over the past few weeks, Yingluck made several abortive attempts to meet with opposition figures and protestors. She had also

prepared her own resignation statement, only to be told by her brother to stay put.

The leadership of the NSC has essentially been a double act, pairing Lt. General Paradon Pattanabut and Police Colonel Thawee Sodsong, both of whom are known to be close to the Pheu Thai regime and Thaksin himself. The peace process has also been hampered by the lack of a full time peace secretariat and the Thai participants having 'day jobs' in politics and the military which divert their energies. While the hiatus in Bangkok may have provided time for the Thais to reflect on these issues, the Deep South looks likely to remain peripheral. While Yingluck is preoccupied with remaining in power, no breakthrough in respect of the insurgency in the south seems likely.

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***Tom Farrell** is a senior journalist who has travelled extensively in Asia and reported from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, East Timor, Indonesia, China, and North and South Korea. A graduate of Dublin City University, his work has been published by the Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Age, Jane's Intelligence Review, The New Statesman and The Irish Times.*

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# The ‘Anti-Deradicalization’ Movement of Indonesian Terrorist Networks

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Muh Taufiqurrohman and V. Arianti

*A movement against deradicalization has emerged in Indonesia in which extremist groups seek to prevent state authorities from deradicalizing terrorist detainees and their families. The case of ‘GASHIBU’ (Gerakan Sehari Seribu or ‘One Thousand Rupiah (US\$0.1)-a-Day’), the most militant anti-deradicalization entity in Indonesia, reveals the reasons for the movement’s emergence, its past and present activities and the challenges it poses to the Indonesian government’s deradicalization program.*

## Introduction

The Indonesian government began its deradicalization program for terrorists and extremists in 2003, following waves of arrests of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) leaders and members - JI having masterminded a number of high profile bombings including the October 2002 Bali Bombings. Detachment 88, the specialized police unit for counterterrorism, and the Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT/ National Counterterrorism Agency), are the two government agencies responsible for Indonesia’s deradicalization program. To date, approximately 200 terrorist inmates have participated in the government’s deradicalization program. Indonesia’s deradicalization program is focused on ‘disengagement’ from violence by persuading participants to cooperate with authorities to denounce violence, and not necessarily disengagement from radical ideology. The results of the program have been mixed. There are some success stories which include some high-profile terrorists such as Ali Imron, Abdul Jabbar, Ahmad Sajuli, Farihin, Nasir Abbas, Hasyim (a.k.a. Acim), Khairul Ghazali, Masykur Abdul Kadir, Solahudin and Yusuf Adirima who have disengaged from violence. Those with public speaking and writing skills such as Nasir Abas, Ali Imron, and

Khairul Ghazali, have even contributed to spreading counter-extremist ideology by becoming speakers at various seminars, participating in television programs and writing books to fight against the cancerous radical ideology propagated by Indonesia's militants and extremists.

Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (YPP/ Institute for International Peace Building), *Lazuardi*

religious and social backgrounds further contribute to their deradicalization.

Presently, Indonesia's deradicalization efforts have been challenged by militant extremists and their supportive community networks through an 'anti-deradicalization' movement. The major threat emanates from the anti-deradicalization program for terrorist detainees and their families run by GASHIBU, (*Gerakan Sehari Seribu* or 'One Thousand Rupiah (US\$0.1)-a-Day'), which began as a small and secretive entity, but has now become a prominent one due to its anti-deradicalization program. Although there are two other such anti-deradicalization entities run by extremists in Indonesia, the Infaq Dakwah Centre ('Centre for Donations for Religious Outreach') (IDC) and Yayasan Rumah Putih ('White House Foundation'), this article focuses on GASHIBU as it is the most militant among these entities.



Figure 1 – A GASHIBU banner calling to free 'Muslim' detainees and featuring pictures of terrorist detainees such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Aman Abdurrahman and Umar Patek

Photo source: GASHIBU's Facebook Page ('GASHIBU')

*Birru* ('Sky': '*lazuardi*' means 'sky' in Bahasa Indonesia, while '*birru*' has no literal meaning, although '*biru*' means blue), Indonesian Institute for Society Empowerment (INSEP) and others have contributed both directly and indirectly to the state deradicalization program. YPP's program, for instance, includes employing former terrorist detainees in a restaurant; the voluntary and regular interaction with customers from various

### GASHIBU: A Great Obstruction to Deradicalization Efforts

GASHIBU is actively countering the government's efforts to deradicalize terrorist detainees and their families. Although GASHIBU outwardly claims to be a charitable organization, in actuality, its major activities are centred upon winning the hearts of terrorist detainees and their families with the aim of undermining the government's deradicalization program.

GASHIBU has emerged in a situation where families of terrorist inmates are financially vulnerable, as the economic assistance provided for them by the government is inadequate. Some economic incentives are given to selected, usually high-profile, terrorist inmates, such as scholarships for children's education or start-up capital to set up a business upon the completion of the detention period. However, economic assistance is not provided to many low-rank inmates, who form the majority of detainees.

The Indonesian government's deradicalization program also does not wholeheartedly attempt to fulfil the spiritual needs of the terrorist inmates and their families. Although Indonesia's deradicalization program provided religious counselling sessions with Indonesian mainstream Muslim clerics as well as with ideologists of Egypt's Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (GI) who have denounced violence (such as Najih Ibrahim and Hisyam al-Najjar), the sessions have proved to be ineffective as they were conducted on an ad-hoc basis, sometimes in the form of mass counselling or were not conducted in all the penitentiaries. On the other hand, GASHIBU's anti-

-deradicalization program conducts more frequent 'religious' discussions, albeit of extremist jihadist ideology. The 'religious counselling' provided by GASHIBU are especially a danger to the inmates who are only partially radicalized or the inmates' families who in most cases are not radicalized - but targeted by GASHIBU's anti-deradicalization program.

GASHIBU hopes that addressing the economic and spiritual needs of the terrorist detainees and their families will wean them away from the government's deradicalization program. GASHIBU's anti-deradicalization activities have increased its ability to raise funds and gain other types of support from detainees and their families, as there is no law in Indonesia preventing extremist entities from raising funds.

The leaders of GASHIBU are presently unknown. Although there are names of 'administrators' provided on its website ([www.gashibu.com/](http://www.gashibu.com/)), being a secretive entity, they are not likely to be real names. GASHIBU's physical location, even a city that it is located in, is not disclosed in the online domain. Its organizational affiliations are also unclear, although one of its website administrators, Irkham Fuadi, a.k.a. Izzi Imani, is a member of the

**“YPP’s program, for instance, includes employing former terrorist detainees in a restaurant; the voluntary and regular interaction with customers from various religious and social backgrounds further contribute to their deradicalization.”**

Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) organization, some leaders and members of which have been implicated in terrorism in recent years.

GASHIBU has two female administrators, Aini Shofi who is the wife of Izzi Imani, and Dzarwatu Sanaam. They are tasked with contacting beneficiaries, most of whom are women, the wives of detainees. Aini revealed that GASHIBU was struggling in its early days as many did not trust the newly formed fundraising entity, and that potential donors had avoided contact with terrorist families fearing that they might be implicated in terrorism. Aina also stated that campaigns by the mainstream media and the negative stigma over assisting terrorists also contributed to the difficulty of finding donors.

However, according to GASHIBU's website, in later years it has been able to increase the amount of monthly donations significantly, from just Rp 2,146,000 (US \$225) in March 2011 to Rp 30,676,468 (US \$2,711) in January 2014 (although the accuracy of the figures themselves is not clear). This increase in collection can be attributed to an increase in trust developed between GASHIBU and the extremist community and their sympathisers in Indonesia. GASHIBU updates its

financial report (revenue and disbursement of aid) almost monthly on its website. Besides general financial assistance for the wives, other forms of assistance include bursaries for children's school fees as well as clothes and traditional herbal medicines for the inmates. GASHIBU has facilitated prison visits for the families by renting a house in the suburb of Jakarta. GASHIBU also organizes *iftar* dinners (for breaking fast together) during the fasting month of Ramadan.

**“GASHIBU has emerged in a situation where families of terrorist inmates are financially vulnerable, as the economic assistance provided for them by the government is inadequate.”**

GASHIBU clearly poses a grave challenge to Indonesia's deradicalization efforts. For example, the case of GASHIBU's unwavering and systematic labours to undermine the work of the NGO Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian (YPP/ Institute for International Peace Building), which is actively contributing to the disengagement and deradicalization programs of terrorist inmates, confirms just how dangerous GASHIBU is. GASHIBU has specifically targeted YPP's deradicalization/disengagement efforts, as they believe YPP's deradicalization efforts are more of a threat than the Indonesian government's (BNPT's) deradicalization program due to YPP's effective soft approach to deradicalization, which includes vocational trainings and jobs for inmates and former inmates. To undermine YPP's

deradicalization/ disengagement program, GASHIBU keeps track of the inmates whom YPP's staff are working with and try to re-indoctrinate them with extremist ideology through senior inmates in the prisons. They also spread misinformation and propaganda to demonize the YPP among the terrorist inmates in prisons as well as their families outside, in order to dissuade them from accepting assistance provided by or even making contact with YPP staff.

### **The Need for a Comprehensive National Deradicalization Program**

Organizations like GASHIBU which pose as charities represent a new source of funding for the extremist community in Indonesia. GASHIBU does not disclose full financial reports like genuine Islamic charities in Indonesia, although it does always produce a report on the amount of money collected at the end of each fundraising drive, which includes a description on how it was disbursed among recipients. GASHIBU's success in influencing terrorist inmates and their families against Indonesia's deradicalization program is undeniable. For instance, for the period from mid-July 2013 to early February 2014, GASHIBU was successful in influencing the majority of the terrorist detainees in Kedung Pane and Nusa Kambangan prisons not

to participate in the state deradicalization program and to avoid making contact with YPP workers. While in early July 2013, these detainees were willing to accept visits by BNPT and YPP staff, by February 2014 they were reluctant to meet them, and some have even refused to meet at all with any staff from BNPT or YPP.

In overcoming the challenge posed by GASHIBU, the Indonesian government must adopt comprehensive deradicalization measures. Firstly,

**“Organizations like GASHIBU which pose as charities represent a new source of funding for the extremist community in Indonesia.”**

BNPT, which runs Indonesia's deradicalization program, must include programs to provide financial and other material assistance as well as religious and psychological counselling to the detainees. Detachment 88 could also work with BNPT in implementing as soon as possible the national blueprint already developed for

deradicalization work, in coordination with other relevant government institutions and non-governmental organizations. Detachment 88 has thus far played an important role only in the early stage of the deradicalization program, during the period which terrorist suspects were detained in police jails while awaiting trial. The proposed national plan for deradicalization comprises four core successive programs: 'prevention,' 'rehabilitation,' 're-education' and 're-socialization.' The proposed deradicalization program is doubly

valuable for its evaluation component, as presently there are no evaluation measures adopted by the BNPT, making it difficult to gauge the success of the program. There is to be an individual evaluation for participating detainees upon the completion of each program, to ensure that they are ready to graduate to the next. Failing to pass the evaluation component of one program will prevent a detainee from participating in the next program. For example, if a detainee does not pass the evaluation at the end of the 'rehabilitation' program, he or she will not be permitted to take part in the 're-education' program.

The program for 'prevention' focuses on the deradicalization of radical groups and individuals as well as on working with moderate groups. The prevention program is to counter the spread of radical ideology in the community by extremist groups and individuals. The program is to be conducted through persuasive dialogues, the creation and implementation of an educational curriculum which includes peace studies and encourages harmonious living, a peace campaign through the media and the strengthening of moderate educational institutions.

**“The proposed national plan for deradicalization comprises four core successive programs: ‘prevention,’ ‘rehabilitation,’ ‘re-education’ and ‘re-socialization.’ ”**

The program for 'rehabilitation' focuses on terrorist prisoners and their families. The rehabilitation program is twofold in that it aims to deradicalize terrorist prisoners through religious and psychological counselling and is also designed to help secure a livelihood or start a business of their through the provision of vocational skills and entrepreneurship training programs to terrorist prisoners and their families. Following the 'rehabilitation' program, the 're-education' program constitutes the inculcating of peaceful teachings to replace the violent jihadist ideologies that terrorist prisoners and their families have previously embraced.

The 're-socialization' program focuses on terrorist prisoners, former terrorist prisoners, the families of terrorist prisoners and the community where the terrorist prisoners' families or former terrorist prisoners reside. Specifically, the re-socialization program is aimed at achieving successful social reintegration of returning detainees as well as previously released terrorist prisoners into their home communities.

Implementing the proposed deradicalization program also requires that BNPT addresses other challenges such as the present debate on whether it will be conducted on the basis of voluntary



participation or enforced participation of detainees. Also, inter-agency cooperation needs to be strengthened and qualified human resources should be recruited in running the deradicalization program. Significantly, there has also not been as yet an official verdict on whether terrorist prisoners who would have completed serving their prison sentences are required to participate in the proposed deradicalization program, or whether they will be released from the prisons without having to complete it. In implementing the proposed deradicalization program, BNPT must also take on a soft, long-term and strategic approach to deradicalization as presently taken by YPP. For example, the present publicized ceremonial activities are not at all sufficient in meeting the religious rehabilitation needs of the detainees.

A strong, supportive legal regime is also necessary to ensure the sustainability of any deradicalization program. Thus, the Indonesian government must adopt without further delay legislation to prohibit (or at the least, restrict) fundraising for terrorist or extremist causes as well as proscribe covert movements such as GASHIBU's anti-deradicalization program. Additionally, strict legal requirements must be put in place with regard to the financial reporting of organizations registered as charities. Finally, in order to prevent subversive elements from entering the prison premises, the Indonesian government must strive to regulate prison visits so that only close family members or

next of kin are permitted to visit terrorist detainees.

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# Understanding the Contents in Bahasa Indonesia Extremist Websites

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Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin

*The discourse on online extremism in Indonesia seems to be overstated particularly in respect to tradecraft manuals posted in radical and extremist websites due to the lack of direct links to actual terrorist attacks. In contrast, fundraising campaigns conducted by terrorist and extremist groups online under the façade of humanitarian and developmental work have generated support and funds from the wider community.*

Tradecraft manuals for terrorist activities such as cyber hacking, bomb-making and weapons handling posted in the Bahasa Indonesia extremist websites appear to depict a community filled with the intention to embark on acts of real-world violence. This online community of Indonesians that adheres to Al Qaeda's ideology comprise news portals, individual blogs and Facebook groups. The postings reveal the interest of the community to assemble bombs and commit terrorist acts on the ground using the instructions posted online. This is a significant development and has come under the radar of the Indonesian authorities which tried to contain the threat by blocking some of the sites. BBC Indonesia reported that about 300 such sites were blocked in 2011.

However, there is a need to refrain from overstating the extremist threat posed by manuals posted on the Internet, including those posted in social networks sites such as Facebook, until there is a better understanding of the overall impact of such materials. A comprehensive understanding of the threat will also allow counterterrorism practitioners to put in place more effective and strategic measures in overcoming the threat.

### Understanding Manuals Posted Online

At present it is difficult to prove how tradecraft manuals available in Bahasa Indonesia (language of Indonesia) extremist websites provide sufficient information and instructions for an individual to conduct terrorist acts on the ground and pose a direct threat. Terrorists involved in some of the most noted attacks in Indonesia such as the 2002 and 2005 Bali Bombings, JW Marriot bombing in 2003, Australian Embassy bombing in 2004 and the bombings at the JW Marriot and Ritz Carlton in 2009, were directed by Noordin M. Top and trained physically, either in Afghanistan or subsequently by Azhari Hussein, the expert bomb-maker. They had no online presence and were not do-it-yourself entities as seen in some other parts of the world.

As both Azhari Hussein and Noordin M. Top, along with several other key operatives, including Azhari Hussein's students, are either dead or in custody, terrorist groups have presently lost most of their leadership and capacity to carry out attacks. Bombings and other terrorist attacks after the 2009 bombings have been on a lower scale - they were also conducted by individuals radicalized and trained in the real-world. This signifies that in Indonesia, radicalization and training in the real

world have been the primary driving force for terrorist operatives to carry out attacks.

However, there are instances where online manuals have been linked to terrorist acts in other parts of the world. An example of this is the Boston Marathon bombings in the United States in 2013 where pressure cooker bombs illustrated in Al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine were a part of the modus operandi. Yet, there is also no concrete

evidence to show that the primary perpetrator, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, had no real-world training. It has been reported that he was in contact with terrorist groups in the North Caucasus and had received training by insurgents there in 2012.

Secondly, the tactical value of tradecraft manuals posted on the Internet is questionable. Anne

Stenerson's study of online extremist materials, "The Internet: A Virtual Training Camp?" (2008), highlights the unreliability of online materials in providing the necessary training for individuals to carry out real terrorist attacks. She believes that the anonymity of individuals who post tradecraft manuals on extremist websites is a clue to the low quality of their tactical guidelines. Even the forum participants doubt the credibility of manuals. This is very significant, as trust is essential before one decides to give serious thought to studying a

**“... anonymity of individuals who post tradecraft manuals on Indonesian extremist websites is a clue to the low quality of their tactical guidelines.”**

manual posted online. Further, the online extremist community is aware that their domain is being monitored and infiltrated by the authorities. This leads forum participants to be very cautious in trusting each other, as well as be sceptical of materials posted.

A third reason to question the impact made by manuals posted online is that, in general, tactics cannot be mastered by way of reading manuals alone. A study by Michael Kenney on such manuals, "Beyond the Internet: Metis, Techne, and the Limitations of Online Artifacts for Islamist Terrorists" (2010), describes manuals posted in extremist websites as providing readers only with technical knowledge needed for an attack, not the full spectrum of preparation and operational activities required to carry out a real-life terrorist attack. Thus, Kenney describes online manuals as "aspirational" and not operational, and that they are merely "long articles with short lessons." Kenney asserts that the manuals posted online are potent only in combination with actual training which would provide individuals with the know-how and tactics of conducting an effective terrorist attack.

Finally, at present tactical manuals are relatively scarce and inaccessible to the general public in

the Bahasa Indonesia extremist websites. Since February 2014, the two online forums which actively posted such materials, 'Al Tawbah' and 'Al Busyro', are down (Al Tawbah went down first, followed shortly by Al Busyro). Reasons behind the sudden shutdown of these forums and inactivity thereafter are as yet not known. However, it is speculated that it could be due to the death of one of the forums' chief administrators, Handholah al Khurosany. He is a member of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), led by Abu Santoso. Khurosany was killed during an encounter with Detachment 88 in Poso in February 2014.

Even if the forums recover, they have password protected features, and would thus be difficult to access. Membership to the sites is

granted only through a recommendation from an existing forum member. Apart from these two forums, there are also other Facebook groups and individual blogs which post materials on tradecraft. However, such postings are rare, and are sketchy, usually appearing as a patchwork of ideas, unorganized and content-deficient. Thus, it appears that at present tradecraft materials in Bahasa Indonesia extremist sites are in general scarce, difficult to access or poor in quality.

### Leveraging on Current Events

**“... tradecraft materials in Bahasa Indonesia extremist sites are in general scarce, difficult to access or poor in quality.”**

As compared to the tradecraft manuals, the trend now seems to be the exploitation of current events by the extremist online community to mobilize a wider following. Discussion topics centred on domestic events affecting the majority Muslim population in Indonesia or those affecting other Islamic countries have garnered considerable interest. While such issues are non-extremist in nature and are directed to raise awareness within the Muslim community in Indonesia at large, it is with the aim of gaining recognition for the extremist group or movement.

News and commentaries on terrorists who have been arrested or killed by the Indonesian authorities appear regularly on the Bahasa Indonesia extremist websites. Such news is reported together with the plight of families of the concerned individuals mostly to mobilize fundraising activities. An example of an organization with extremist links which exploits this issue online is RUMPUT (*Rumah Putih* or 'White House'). It aims to raise money through business ventures to help the affected families of terrorists. RUMPUT regularly posts financial reports on how donations are disseminated and used.

Another issue that has been exploited by terrorists is the war in Syria. Regular themes on Syria on extremist Indonesian sites include the plight of Syrian children and families in need of basic necessities for their survival. These themes are used in fundraising campaigns conducted both on

the online realm and the real world. As stated in a report by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) in Jakarta, "Indonesians and the Syrian Conflict" (29 January 2014), an example of a terrorist-linked organization which conducts such fundraising activities and sends batches of volunteers to Syria is Hilal Ahmar Society Indonesia (HASI) (known as the 'Red Crescent Society Indonesia' in English).



**Figure 1 – Screen snapshot of a ‘terrorist version’ of a Honda 125 motorcycle in an Indonesian extremist Facebook group (originally published in the Autumn 2013 issue of *Azzan* magazine produced by the extremist, pro-Taliban Abtalul Media Group believed to be based in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region):**

It includes a small compartment to place rounds of RPG-7, a double side bag for storing small military items and puncture tools, a safe guard at the front of the motorcycle to protect it during accidents and an MP3 player which will play motivational tracks for the rider to stay determined throughout the operation.

HASI is the leading Indonesian humanitarian organization on the Syrian issue. As of February 2014, it has sent nine batches of volunteers to Syria ostensibly to disburse aid. Funds are raised through seminars held in 58 cities across Indonesia, where the general Muslim population

could be unaware of HASI's terrorist links and the terrorist activities their donations could be used for. HASI's operations, including its seminars, are funded by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and other extremist groups. The seminars also feature

prominent extremist figures such as Abu Rusydan. The spokesperson of HASI is Bambang Sukirno, a JI member whose publishing company produced the book *Aku Melawan Terroris* ('I Fight Terrorists') by Imam Samudra, one of the main perpetrators of the 2002 Bali Bombings. Bambang led HASI's fifth batch of volunteers to Syria in early 2013. The organization claims that it uses the funds collected for humanitarian purposes, as stated on its website as well as its printed magazine. However, analysts are concerned that HASI's trips to Syria could be helping terrorist groups like JI, in terms of developing their capacity and network to mount future attacks through interaction with the other terrorist elements operating in Syria.

Extremists and terrorists of groups such as '*Front Pembela Islam*' (FPI/ 'Islamic Defenders' Front'), and supporters of extremist websites such as '*Arrahmah.com*', also harp on other issues that would concern the larger Muslim community such as that of the rights of the LGBT (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders) community. Such tactics have allowed them to attract attention from a wider audience. Campaigns and movements created and conducted by such sites have resulted in the mobilization of individuals in the real world

and have united extremists and the larger Muslim community with regard to some causes. Such cases are not regular, but are greatly relished and exploited by terrorists and extremists.



Figure 2 – Logo of extremist movement #IndonesiaTanpaJIL (#IndonesiawithoutJIL) which has been exploited by extremists online

An example of this was seen in February 2012 in the cyber clash on Twitter between the online movements, '*#IndonesiaTanpaFPI*' ('Indonesia without *Front Pembela Islam*/ Islamic Defenders' Front') and '*#IndonesiaTanpaJIL*' ('Indonesia without *Jaringan Islam Liberal*/ Liberal Islam Network'). *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* is the account started by Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) against extremism, to take their campaign of '*Indonesia tanpa FPI, Indonesia tanpa kekerasan*' ("Indonesia without FPI, Indonesia without violence") to the cyber domain. The campaign started on the ground with a demonstration by JIL and its supporters held on 14 February 2012. Shortly after, its counter movement - *#IndonesiaTanpaJIL* - appeared. It is uncertain as to who started the *#IndonesiaTanpaJIL* ('Indonesia without *Jaringan Islam Liberal*/ Liberal Islam Network') movement.

There was a mushrooming of Twitter accounts posting the hashtag in both mainstream and extremist accounts. However, the movement became more structured when it entered Facebook. The *#IndonesiaTanpaJIL* Facebook page was coordinated by Akmal Sjafril, author of *Liberal 101*, a book which opposes 'liberal' Islam in Indonesia. Following this, Fauzi Baadila, a celebrity in Indonesia and a mainstream Muslim, was chosen to represent the movement. He appeared in the movement's video with the simple and short message: "Indonesia without JIL – because Indonesia is cool without JIL." Throughout this period, the extremist online community rendered its support and collaborated with *#IndonesiaTanpaJIL*.

They participated in demonstrations on the ground, conducted interviews of mainstream Muslims supporting the movement, and rigorously posted the interviews and news on the issue on their respective websites.

Events such as these showcase issues on which the extremist community and the mainstream Muslim community share the same sentiment. However, the latter's support for a particular cause promoted by an extremist movement does not mean that the majority mainstream community supports the extremist movements in general or

their beliefs which promote violence. In fact, the mainstream Muslim community of Indonesia has never showed support for violence online or on the ground. For example, in the online clash between *'#IndonesiaTanpaJIL'* and *'#IndonesiaTanpaFPI,'* while the mainstream community supported the prior, it never showed support for the FPI or extremist acts conducted by FPI.

Nonetheless, incidents such as these in which mainstream Muslims and terrorists and their supporters campaign for the same cause is of great import from a law enforcement perspective, as they reflect grievances of the majority of the (Muslim) population of Indonesia. If these grievances are addressed and the issues are resolved by the Indonesian government, it will work

to curb extremists and terrorists from gaining further support from the wider community. On the other hand, if popular support increases for campaigns conducted by extremist movements, there will be grave implications on the future political landscape of the country where the extremist community may influence the national policies and interests of Indonesia.

### Conclusion

Online extremism is the talk of the town. It is an acknowledged problem that cannot be dismissed. Many studies demonstrate the threat it poses in

**“... the trend now seems to be the exploitation of current events by extremist online forums to mobilize a wider following.”**

terms of online (self-) radicalization. In 2013, Muhammad Taufiqurrohman, an analyst from the Centre for Radicalism and De-radicalisation in Indonesia stated that 50 to 100 militants have been recruited directly through Facebook. At the same time, these cases involve real-world factors which led to their radicalization. This is not to undermine the danger posed by online radicalization. Rather, it is to emphasize the importance of understanding the precise nature of online terrorism, so that effective and specific counter measures can be adopted.

Presently, the presence of terrorist and extremist groups in the cyber domain appears to be a part of a long-term strategy to inspire aspiring persons to join the ranks – ‘inspiration’ being just one part of the radicalization process which would include real-world communication and training. For example, online extremist sites post both tactical and ideological materials to encourage potential terrorists to be more active in their battle in the real world by tempting them to gather more knowledge on the viability of suggested operations. Also, as described above,

**“Presently, the presence of terrorist and extremist groups in the cyber domain appears to be a part of a long-term strategy to inspire aspiring persons to join the ranks ...”**

the online extremist domain is used to gather mass support from both the

extremist and mainstream community by exploiting current events and social

issues relevant to the Muslim community. Thus, continued monitoring of extremist sites is imperative in developing strategic counter measures to overcome these threats. Very significantly, monitoring by authorities has led to the successful foiling of terrorist plots. For example, the planned attack to bomb the Embassy

of Myanmar in Jakarta was foiled when one of the perpetrators indicated his intentions to carry out the attack in a Facebook post. Apart from monitoring, there are several ways to tackle the extremist online domain which includes content contamination – a topic which warrants a detailed analysis for itself.

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*Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin is an Associate Research Fellow with ICPVTR.*



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# **‘Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro’ – A Roadmap to Peace in the Southern Philippines?**

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**Anton Chan**

*The Comprehensive Peace Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed on 27 March 2014 between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The signing is a landmark in the peace process which began on 15 October 2012, and is set to conclude in 2016 with the creation of the self-governing political entity ‘The Bangsamoro,’ which will replace the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).*

*Although the peace process is seen by many as the most positive step towards stability in the Southern Philippines to date, the process is far from over, with several issues remaining to be overcome such as the implementation of the agreement and legal provisions on the ground, finding space within the new entity for leadership of the rival Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and disarming militant cadres in the region.*

The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed by the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Teresita Deles and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal on 27 March 2014, a milestone of the steady progress made in peace negotiations that began with the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) on 15 October 2012. Peace negotiations have culminated in the proposed creation and official recognition of a new Bangsamoro political entity, which will replace the existing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and grant self-rule for those areas in the Southern Philippines.

President Benigno Aquino III has made it clear that he wishes the achievement of peace with the MILF to be a hallmark of his government, and that he is committed to continue giving his full support to the peace process until the end of his term (Aquino is barred from contesting the next presidential elections scheduled for 9 May 2016). Despite continuing tensions with

China and other claimants to areas of the South China Sea, it is likely that Aquino will not be swayed from pushing through the peace process as quickly as possible. This process has also the backing of the international community as indicated by the presence of representatives from 58 foreign countries and regional groupings as varied as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, India, Australia, the USA, other ASEAN member states, and the European Union, as well as United Nations and other international organizations including the United Nations Resident Coordinator

“... on the few occasions where MILF commanders on the ground found themselves facing off with government forces, both groups have been able to resolve their issues without bloodshot...”

(UNRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Bank (WB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Their backing could translate into financial and other types of support if the agreement is led to a successful conclusion.

The next step of the peace process is an administrative one. A draft ‘Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL)’ will be submitted to the Philippines Congress, urged by President Aquino to mark the bill as “urgent” with the intent of passing the proposed law by the end of 2014. This step is expected to proceed on schedule, as Aquino controls both chambers of Congress.

Commitment towards peace has been consistent on the side of the MILF as well. Talks with government officials have yielded promising results throughout deliberations on the annexes to the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB), which took place over 2013. Progress made in negotiations has also translated into cooperation on the ground; on the few occasions where MILF

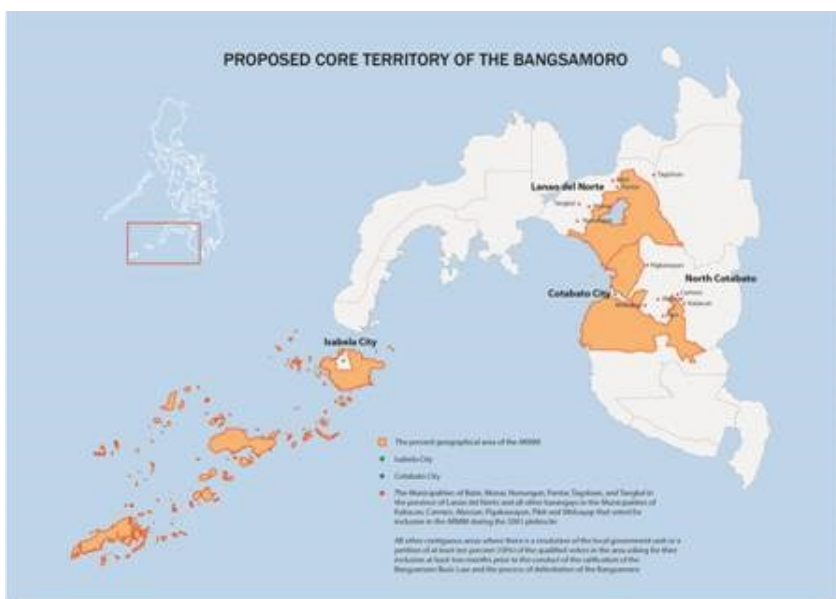


Figure 1 – Proposed core territory of the Bangsamoro

Image source: Government of the Philippines, Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process website; <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/media/infographic/proposed-bangsamoro-core-territory>

commanders on the ground found themselves facing off with government forces, both groups have been able to resolve their issues without bloodshed through the intercession of the respective leaders on each side who pledged themselves to peace.

## Challenges to Peace

### *The MNLF*

No matter how quickly the administrative aspects of a peace agreement are pushed through, the real challenge lies in its implementation. The MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are the

was made between the MNLF and the Philippine government in 1996 that led to the creation of the (now soon to be replaced) Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), only parts of it were enacted. Since the ARMM is thus historically closely linked to the MNLF, its transformation into a new political entity is seen by MNLF leadership as a loss of primacy to the MILF.

Yet, the current negotiations have given heed to 'inclusivity.' MNLF leaders were invited to the signing of the CAB on 27 March 2014, and had previously also been invited to deliberations on the

Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). The result of this has been a wary 'wait-and-see' attitude from the MNLF leadership, which, while far from ideal, is preferable to their outright opposition to the proposed new Bangsamoro entity. However, the formal inclusion of the MNLF in the present peace agreement will be a great challenge for the Philippine government, as the MNLF leadership has splintered into three main factions: (1) the MNLF 'Council of 15' led by Muslimin Sema (the former Cotabato City Mayor), (2) the MNLF 'Islamic Command Council' under the leadership of Habib Mujahab Hashim, and (3) the MNLF 'Central Committee' under Nur Misuari.



**Figure 2 – Signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on 27 March 2014**

*Image source: Government of the Philippines, Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process website: <http://www.gov.ph/2014/03/27/presidents-day-march-27-2014/>*

two largest armed groups in the Southern Philippines, and for any peace deal to succeed, both groups will have to be appeased. The MNLF has seen its own past attempt at peace negotiations with the government of the Philippines bear only partial success. Although an agreement

Misuari is an anathema to the Philippines government due to his almost certain involvement in the ‘Zamboanga City Siege’ in September 2013, that resulted in about 100,000 residents being made homeless due to the prolonged fighting. The march by MNLF elements under Misuari’s leadership to the City Hall to try and raise the MNLF flag resulted in the deaths of over 200 individuals. While Muslimin Sema was invited to the signing of the CAB, Habib Mujahab Hashim has complained that the CAB illegally supersedes the MNLF’s own talks with the government, but has said that he will continue to engage with the Philippine government. Perhaps expectedly, no mention was made of an invitation to the signing being extended to Hashim.

There has been an interesting development within the MNLF ranks recently with regard to Misuari’s group, with a report claiming that 33 of the remaining 39 original MNLF members had come together and signed ‘Resolution No. 01-2014’ on 10 March 2014. The resolution replaces Misuari with Datu Hajji AbulKhayr D. Alonto as the Chairman of the MNLF ‘Central Committee’ group. Alonto has a strong history with the MNLF starting in the 1960s, and is a member of a prominent political family in the

Philippines. Alonto was invited to the signing of the CAB in this capacity. There is, however, much suspicion that the alleged resolution is a ploy by the MILF and the government to weaken MNLF opposition to the CAB by implanting a ‘friendly’ leader within the challenging MNLF ‘Central Committee’ faction, especially as the resolution first appeared on the MILF website ([www.luwaran.com](http://www.luwaran.com)). Misuari still appears to control the MNLF ‘Central Committee’ website ([www.mnlfn.net](http://www.mnlfn.net)), and as per an anniversary message posted by Misuari on 18 March 2014, he continues to assert his position as Chairman of the MNLF.

As complicated as the situation is with the MNLF, the Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) may be able to play a role in bringing the government and the MNLF together for peace talks. The OIC has been involved in the MNLF’s

peace negotiations with the Philippine government in the past, and has also sat as an observer during negotiations. Trusted by both sides, the OIC, if it becomes more involved, may be a voice of authority to bring the MNLF in line, although the various MNLF factions will still need to find a united front.

### **Implementation**

**“The MILF and the MNLF are the two largest armed groups in the Southern Philippines, and for any peace deal to succeed, both groups will have to be appeased.”**

Challenges in implementation will be sure to follow the negotiation and administrative process for the Bangsamoro, even if the MNLF is positively engaged soon. One of the largest hurdles to overcome in implementing the CAB will be identifying roles for MILF (and possibly MNLF) leaders in political capacities. Power struggles seem inevitable in this, and it will be difficult to accommodate interests of all the leaders. At best, it can be hoped that the vying for power will take place within legal limits in the political arena. At worst, commanders who find themselves at the losing end may once more resort to violence, throwing their support behind other small groups who are openly opposed to the present deal, such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), itself a splinter group of the MILF, founded by former MILF commander Ameril Umra Kato.

Also, besides finding room within the new Bangsamoro political administration and security forces for leaders and members of the two large groups, those serving in the existing political administration of the ARMM will also have to be absorbed. For example, Mujiv Hataman, the present Governor of the ARMM, has publicly stated his support for the new Bangsamoro entity;

although he has been praised for agreeing to give up his position, it may be presumed that he and others in leadership positions in his administration expect to be included in the new governing structure.

### ***Disarming Militant Cadres***

The Southern Philippines is awash with weapons at present. The guns are in the hands of a variety of groups of varying sizes and interests. The MILF and the MNLF are thought to have at least 20,000 armed members between them. In fact, one of the major challenges faced by the former ARMM administration was disarmament. During that period, the Philippines Armed Forces and Philippine National Police were able to absorb approximately 5,000 of the MNLF's armed members, but it was not enough to resolve the issue. In the current CAB, it is proposed that all armed members of the MILF will be absorbed into police units, and that the MILF as an armed body will cease to exist. It is also certain, however, that as long as the MNLF holds on to its weapons, the MILF will be not be willing to give up all its arms. Additionally, there are countless other radical and clan-factional militias in the Southern Philippines apart from the two large groups. Attempting to disarm and/ or control these armed elements will be a major challenge for the eventual Bangsamoro

**“One of the largest hurdles to overcome in implementing the CAB will be identifying roles for MILF (and possibly MNLF) leaders in political capacities.”**

administration.

Thus, for peace to be truly achieved, challenges presented by the MNLF, the need to implement all parts of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) and the disarming of militant cadres on the ground must be addressed. The transition phase will surely entail overcoming these and other unexpected hurdles, and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) and eventual Bangsamoro government will have to continue to cope with them after the Aquino government ends in 2016. However, the outlook for the administrative and legal aspects of establishing the new Bangsamoro entity appears to be extremely positive with the development of what appears to be a peaceful relationship between the Philippine government and the MILF, both parties fully committed to the peace process.

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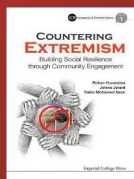


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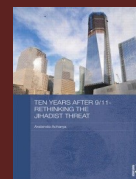
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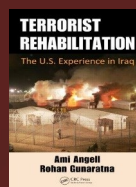
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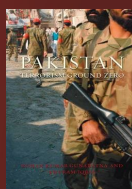
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