

## The Role of Police in Terrorism Prevention: Indonesia's Police Against ISIS Threat Case Study

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### Abstract

*The police have a central role in prevention, law enforcement, and deradicalization of terrorism in Indonesia. In view of counterterrorism itself, the ultimate mission and the most ideal condition to achieve is to prevent acts of terrorism that could have occurred. With regard to these preventive duties, the police have the ability to understand conditions in the community more effectively. This stems from the basic nature of the police which is the guardian and servant of the community, therefore the understanding of the source of problems in the community can be more effective. This becomes a natural advantage of the police compared with the military, which makes the police very dominant in terms of prevention of terrorism. Based on understanding of the role of the police in terms of prevention, it is necessary to have an understanding of social complexity which is the root of terrorism problems. Human security is a form of contemporary security arose from the demands to the state to protect the community further. In contrast to the war situation, after the cold war, this approach grew among others, by globalizing demilitarization and strengthening the police as a civil defense institution. Reflecting to Indonesia, it is understood that the police has the affairs of overcoming threats on humans, in contrast to the military affair in combating threats to the territory. Police have the ability to be close to the root of the problems of today's society, including horizontal and vertical conflict.*

### Keywords

prevention; terrorism;  
police; military



## I. Introduction

A fundamental understanding of human security, according to the United Nations Development Program is based on the two kinds of freedom of every human being embodied in "Four Freedom". Two of the four freedoms, which are conceptualized in human security, are freedom from want and freedom from fear. Freedom from want affirms that every human being must have a standard of living (economic, cultural) that is universally applicable. Meanwhile, freedom from fear stressed that there should be no fear of threats of violence that could befall humans. Terrorism is so closely linked to both, because this violence, at the local level, is a bit more excessive than a wide range of issues, from living standards to the threat of conflict and violence.

Looking at it from state perspective, Newman cites the importance of critical study so that policymakers do not get trapped in the wrong problem-solving circle. For that reason, Newman also mentions the importance of causality as analysis method of human security study, since it will be clear why the phenomenon of insecurity can occur and how the phenomenon of insecurity can be overcome. In the case of terrorism for instance, the government as a decision maker must understand the causal relationships around terrorist

groups and terrorist acts. Understanding this causality relationship will help from predicting terrorist acts to a thorough eradication.

Then, having understood the background of the existing problem, the immediate reaction to the terror act was responded by criminal law. Indonesia became one of the many countries that placed jurisdiction over criminal acts of terrorism. According to Yunanto (2017) who quotes Farouk Muhammad, terrorism is a criminal act as an evil reaction to what is considered more evil. Based on this understanding, then there is a basic logic of terrorism that the motivation of the act of the offender is hatred. Terrorism is hate crime in higher level. The terrorist acts on the basis of the perceived crimes of others. Here, it can be perfectly understood that a terrorist has a reason for hatred of a particular group, which enables them to act out of reasoning as to the act of terror. Hatred spurs this crime and it continues to justify the mind of a terrorist to be able to attack the target. Thus, from here it can also be seen the importance of distinguishing terrorists from other common criminal acts. If other crimes of terror can be rooted in simple economic goals, then the terrorism referred to here is terrorism with deep hatred motivation, rooted in the complexity of a unique socio-political problem in every single case found.

This is also called by Yunanto as a factor of interactionism in the struggle of terrorism problem-solving. An act of terror will always be the reaction of other acts perceived by terrorists as evil to them. Because they feel harmed by the crime on them, they then take the road of terror as revenge to their antagonists. Terrorism can never stand alone, but interactionism, because it is a form of revenge for what is depicted more evil. This 'more evil' definition is a subjective perception, in which individuals or groups perceive the attitude of other groups (generally the rulers of state) being arbitrary, discriminatory, and evil. The hatred can also change over time. The change occurred shifting from one target to another. For example, when in 2002 there was a Bali Bombing at Paddy's Club and Sari Club, it can be seen that the enemy of the terrorists was a group of 'infidels' or 'polytheists' perceived as western cultures such as the bar. Thus, the target of the attack was the center of the crowd that contained people from groups they hate. Then, as time passes, there is a shift in perception of who the enemy of them is, for example an Islamic group that does not support their actions. To such groups, terrorists usually call them "hypocrites" because they are faithful to Islam but do not follow their version of "jihad".

Furthermore, there is a motivation that is not only personal, but also communal in terrorism. Hatred can be spread by a key figure of a terrorist organization, such as an ideologue-charismatic leader, as a person capable of radicalizing members of terrorist groups. With what tool can a charismatic leader influence a mob to commit terror? The easiest way, historical-based, is with religion. Undoubtedly, acts of terror around the world are many that use the radicalization of religious teachings (rather than ethnic or ideological issues of a smaller number). Limiting view of world, such as us versus them, for example using the label "kafir" or "thogut regime" is a powerful way widely used nowadays to brainwash a terrorist soldiers.

The method of terror is used because there is no legitimate path (legal, using formal-political method) to respond to this more sinister act. According to Sri Yunanto quoting Michel Wieviorka and Spencer Metta, terrorism is a form of strategic choice of an insurgency movement born from the roots of social, economic, psychological, and political problems. According to him, terrorism is an asymmetric and irregular challenge that becomes a necessity for those who rebel against democracy, with a specific purpose and direction.

## II. Research Method

Research methods are the strategies, processes or techniques utilized in the collection of data or evidence for analysis in order to uncover new information or create better understanding of a topic (Asyraini et al., 2022; Octiva et al., 2021; Pandiangan et al., 2018). Research methods refers to the tools that one uses to do research. These can either be qualitative or quantitative or mixed (Pandia et al., 2018; Pandiangan, 2015; Pandiangan, 2022). The research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It is, therefore, based on the nature of the research problem being addressed (Jibril et al., 2022; Pandia et al., 2018; Pandiangan et al., 2018). The three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Octiva et al., 2018; Pandiangan et al., 2022; Tobing et al., 2018).

There are two approaches in dealing with the problem of terrorism and radicalism are hard line approach and soft line approach. The use of soft line approach takes precedence, it is based on the awareness that the use of violence in overcoming the problem of radicalism and terrorism does not really solve the problem (Golose, 2009). The use of the soft line approach has advantages when applied by the police in preventing this issue; because the police position is in the middle of society directly. However, the hard line approach is not excluded. Technically the use of the hard line approach includes weapon disarmament, or detaining operations. Soft line approach by police according to typology:

**Table 1.** Typology of Soft Line Approach

No.	Type	ACT	
		Police	Government
1	Politically Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining national or regional political situation.</li> <li>▪ Bridging communication between political groups and government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political inclusion.</li> <li>• Accommodate political interests or ideas.</li> </ul>
2	Economical Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actively involved in controlling the dynamics of the community's economy; avoiding economic fraud as a basis for inequality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic welfare.</li> <li>▪ Equal distribution.</li> <li>▪ Economic gap reduction.</li> </ul>
3	Culturally Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Controlling the development or ongoing culture.</li> <li>▪ Minimizing threats towards the exist culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acknowledge the expression of a culture.</li> <li>▪ Accommodate the existence of a culture.</li> </ul>
4	Psychologically Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthening the ability of police discretion on the psychological problems of the community, especially those that tend to act on terrorism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The eradication of psychological problems through various institutions; education, religion, and others.</li> </ul>

5	Ideo-Religiously Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring the dynamics of religious-based ideology; soft approach to certain religious groups that are judged to be “extreme” or have a tendency towards “radicalism”.</li> <li>▪ Controlling social media/cyber terror.</li> <li>▪ Mapping the network of ideo-religious groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal values in educational curriculum.</li> <li>▪ Cooperating with religious leader to invest universal doctrine.</li> <li>▪ Controlling social media and internet.</li> </ul>
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In addition, the other soft line approach is a police effort to engage directly in the community and the whole dimensions in society:

### **1. Foster and Enhance Trusting Partnerships with the Community**

“Trusted partnerships” of community policing based on trust, transparency, respect, and mutual understanding partnerships to gain a common purpose in aim of keeping communities safe from all types of violent extremism or radicalism.

### **2. Engage All Residents to Address Public Safety Matters**

Engaging individuals on a broad array of public safety and quality-of-life issues allows individuals and groups to address their concerns. Various subsets of the community may have different priorities. Providing each group with a forum to address their specific grievances, which may also be underlying causes of radicalization to violence, can help community members feel more involved. Engaging residents can be a valuable force multiplier for law enforcement.

### **3. Leverage Public and Private Stakeholders**

Leveraging the strengths of public and private stakeholders allows law enforcement to utilize resources from the entire community, share valuable information across the entire spectrum of services, and increase public recognition and visibility of countering violent extremism initiatives. These stakeholders can also serve as liaisons between law enforcement and their communities.

### **4. Utilize All Partnerships to Counter Violent Extremism**

Serving in a supporting role as educators, facilitators, and representatives of local government, law enforcement agencies can empower all of their partners—community members, public stakeholders, and private companies—to create counter-narratives, build resilience, and counter violent extremism.

### **5. Train All Members of the Department**

Training that complements the fundamental principles and tactics of community policing is necessary to facilitate the successful implementation of community policing. Training should be up to date and unbiased, stress the differences between countering violent extremism and counterterrorism, and be mandatory for all members of the department.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 The Role of Police in Terrorism Prevention**

Anxiety to understand the purpose and direction of terrorism acts, then made Abrahms (2010) conducted research to track what the strategic goals of a terrorist group is. According to him, to fully understand terrorism, we need to use strategic model to read mapping of terrorists' political direction. Initially, a terrorist is a rational actor who attacks masses for incentives or for clear political purposes. Thus, Abrahms initiated the mitigation of terrorism in the form of pruning political incentives that terrorists may gain, through strict policies or excessive blockade of terrorism acts, as well as with long-term mitigation such as peace-building and peace-keeping to solve problems to its root.

As an initial assumption, Abrahms calls the strategic model used by a rational actor of terrorism, adapted from the rational actor model in classical economics. First, it has a consistent and stable goal. Second, they weigh profits with definite and measurable options. Third, they choose one of the options that have the optimal utility. All these three stages of rationality in economics slightly underlie the early thinking of the perpetrators of terrorists.

As a counter-argument to his assumptions about the rational model of economics, Abrahms then exposes the seven puzzle tendencies of the terrorist organization. These are the original findings that are likely to enrich the view of what the terrorist groups really want, rather than just seeing them as rational economic actors. Of the seven, there are five that are at least relevant to Indonesia's conditions:

#### **a. Terrorist Organizations Cannot Achieve Their Intended Purpose by Carrying Out Attacks**

First, from this perspective there is often anomalous evidence that constant terrorist organizations carry out planned attacks on civil society, never reach their final destination. This is in stark contrast, for example, with a group of guerrillas or insurgences who are structured and well-organized being able to campaign, rally, or protest, to successfully seize a similar goal, namely to overhaul the government. For example, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which replaced the absolute monarchy with the government of the Islamic Republic. Instead of protesting with the terror method against the Shah Pahlavi monarchy, Ayatollah Khomeini's group actually protested with consistent demonstrations. Slowly, from 1977 to 1979, they successfully increased the number of supporters.

A bad example is the Irish Republican Army (IRA) that perpetuated the continuous terror of British society. What happened after IRA terror attacks was the escalation of negative perceptions of the struggle of the people of Northern Ireland, and hampered the nonviolent process, such as referendum, desired by the majority of people. Or, in the case of the New Order era, there was Komando Jihad that often terrorizes people to threaten the government. However, the overthrow of government was effectively executed by academics, Islamic intellectuals, laborers, and youth, who regularly and consistently oversaw government and used the government's fatal mistake to finally overthrow them.

#### **b. Terrorist Organizations Never Use Terror as Their Last Resort and Rarely Take Advantage of Opportunities to Become Political Parties**

The fundamental assumption of the birth of a terrorist organization is that there is no satisfying political path that can be used to voice their interests other than terror. However, Abrahms' study states that terrorist groups never actually run out of other alternatives to convey their political aspirations. The finding is that the more repressive and



authoritarian a regime, the less terrorism will arise. Terrorism actually comes flourishing in an open regime, which allows political freedom. Thus, it should be noted about how to best promote alternative channels of political expression, which can reduce the motivation of violence that can be carried out by terror groups. Although, for example, the road to political parties is too far for terrorist organizations, at least their existence as a pressure group that has good communication with the government should continue to be encouraged. There are two reasons terrorist groups have difficulties, first they have fundamental values that are completely non-negotiable, making them a binary opposition to government and even the state. Secondly, they have become an extremist group in the eyes of society, so it is not easy for them to transform into a moderate political entity.

#### **c. Terrorist Organizations Often Reject a Significant Compromise Policy Proposal From the Government**

Seemingly a natural law, terrorists cannot negotiate with the government as the highest authority of the country. The terrorist group has a strong dividing wall with the government and must constantly fight against the state with its acts of terror. Very little, according to Crenshaw (1985) terrorist group that after a successful peace-process, then willing to negotiate policy. In history, there have been several attempts to negotiate with groups labeled by terrorists by the state. For example, liberal terrorists in the Soviet Union, constantly attacked the communist regime. Compromising efforts, including with their negotiations to encourage civil liberties in the constitution, had failed, both because of the strong regime, as well as the extreme nature of their organization when negotiations failed. In Pakistan, with Pakistani Taliban groups in the fata area, the government had held several peace talks, for example by offering some (not all) of their requests into the constitution. However, whenever the negotiation was broken down, the Taliban continued terror attacks to society. The characteristic that terrorism is a political means and not a political goal must be understood by both decision makers and law enforcement officials to deal with this group more efficiently.

#### **d. Terrorist Organizations Often Use Different Platforms**

If the initial assumptions says that terrorist organizations uses the same platform based on stable and consistent goals, Abrahms's findings do not say so. There are so many terrorist groups in other countries that have changed alliances, changed the target of the attacks, and changed the flow. For example, the French terrorist group action directe, who repeatedly transformed their enemies, ranging from Israel, nuclear energy policy, to the Catholic Church. Along with the change of targets, there was also a change of their alliance. Another example is Al-Qaeda. The group switched alliances and turned against its old alliance, the United States and became the most active terrorist against the establishment of the United States around the world. The fact that the continuous shift in the platform of struggle has occurred suggests a change in the types of threats that must be followed and understood by the state security forces.

#### **e. Terrorist Organizations Often Carry Out Anonymous Attacks**

The last argument point of Abrahms that is relevant to Indonesia, is that often, terror attacks are perpetrated by self-perpetrators, which are then not claimed by any terrorist organization. The perpetrators were left without identity; the terror action was left unclaimed by any group. In fact, in some cases such as the Pan Bomb or Book Bomb in Indonesia, it was the police who must work to track the case and its relations with certain terrorist groups. This fact becomes so anomalous, as should terrorist groups fight for

claims over an attack, to have their names covered on national news. There is a mismatch with the assumption that terrorists will consistently spread terror by maximizing media coverage. In fact, in many cases, terrorist groups do not want to talk and really put the distance out of reach with the government and society in general.

Therefore, from the existence of puzzling characteristics inherent in the reality of terror groups, the organizers of state defense, the police can give the initiative a more policy based on strengthening the country's identity as a counter-narrative of the threat of terrorism. The conclusion is clear, that stunting against acts of terrorism is the best effort among the worst to dampen the spirit of terrorist fighters. Telling them that "their actions only undermine their political goals, without affecting US (the State)" is an effective symbolic means against the violence symbols sent by terror groups. The police, in this case, can be a tool of the government to convey this message through the strength of the unit.

However, there are more micro-issues, such as social relations within the community that must be handled along with the counter-narrative and counter-symbols. The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe has offered another perspective to prevent terrorism from planning levels in the smallest communities. There is always a local dimension of terrorism, whether it is the root of local conflicts, the use of certain territories by terrorist groups, the hiding places of actors and weapons, and the recruitment process that uses the social space of a particular community.

Terrorists are radical groups hostile to anyone outside their group. Even when faced with other terrorist groups, there can be conflict too between them. They also do not care about who their target is, as long as they do the action, their mission is achieved. Even so, the explanation behind the action is often irrational; the political narration that they want to achieve is never clearly mentioned, let alone accomplished. Therefore, the police officers who often get the threat of terror lately, should understand this issue more comprehensively, and stay alert in the process of daily duty or patrol. Countering terrorism is not a battlefield, therefore the military is not needed. Counter-terrorism is the field of conflict resolution, peace process, communication network, synergy with society, and consistent supervision by the apparatus, which is still feasible to be carried by the police.

There was basic explanation on the terrorism precautions that can be done by the police. The police can carry out counterterrorism role by community policing. Contextualizing to the Indonesian society, community policing should be returned conceptually to the meaning and the form Indonesian community. The culturally diverse communities in Indonesia differs community policing in Indonesia from what is commonly practiced in Western countries. In order to understand what the police can do to counter terrorism, it is important for the police to understand terrorism and its dimension and typology.

#### **f. Radicalism**

Similar to the act of terrorism, radicalism is a cluster of interrelated concepts in this discussion. Radicalism alone can serve as a basis for acts of terrorism and has a more massive and sporadic character for society. Similarly, the task is to prevent and deal with the phenomenon in the community. Police or other government apparent efforts in handling or prevention may refer to the typology below:

**Table 2.** Typology of Handling or Prevention

No.	Type	Cause	Target
1	Politically-Based Radicalism	Political dissatisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marginalized position, un-proportional role.</li> <li>▪ Incapacity of political aspiration, injustice treatment of the state.</li> </ul>	Advocate the opponent parties, extreme ideologies Fascistic nationalism.
2	Economical Based Radicalism	Economic dissatisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High unemployment.</li> <li>▪ Poverty rate.</li> <li>▪ Wide economic gap among people.</li> </ul>	Economic welfare. Equal distribution. Economic gap reduction.
3	Culturally Based Radicalism	Cultural egocentrism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ethno-centrism.</li> <li>▪ Fascistic.</li> </ul>	Cultural dominance/superiority. Cultural monopoly.
4	Psychologically Based Radicalism	Psychological abnormalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth heroism.</li> <li>▪ Selfish end and satisfaction.</li> <li>▪ Necrophilia.</li> <li>▪ Ideological absolutism.</li> <li>▪ Personality disorder.</li> </ul>	Individual actualization. Selfish satisfaction.
5	Ideo-Religiously Based Radicalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling of being marginalized of Religious followers, group, or cult.</li> <li>▪ Advocating new religious doctrine to change the state.</li> <li>▪ Influence of the global organization.</li> </ul>	State. Westerners or opposite of religious groups. Police.

Referring to the typology that has been presented, the five types are related to each other. This requires the police and apparatus concerned to deal with this issue comprehensively and systemically. Particularly the role of the police, example focusing on the grassroots symptoms that occur in the community and to prevent it.

Prevention, from how it is viewed by policy-maker, can be distinguished as ‘high policing’ and ‘low policing’. High policing focuses more on ‘macro crimes’ or types of crimes considered as threat to society in general, such as illegal drugs, human trafficking, or political corruption. The focus of ‘high policing’ is more on general symptoms of crimes and how the ‘big business’ doing crime that harms society. On the other hand, ‘low policing’ focuses more on prevention through clear patrols and prevention through the application of criminal law. High policing differs sharply from normal standard practice or "low" policing because it is less transparent, less accountable, and less cautious about human rights.



## IV. Conclusion

Efforts to prevent acts of terrorism and its indications can be emphasized through a soft line approach. Because the hard line approach does not necessarily solve the problem of terrorism and its indications. A more coherent approach is needed between the police and the community. The advantages of this approach are bridging the police with the community, launching the implementation of terrorism-related policies and their indications, and also strengthening the public's position in preventive efforts on acts of terrorism.

This approach must of course take into account the conceptual typology of terrorism and its indications. At least, there are five types that are related to each other. This needs to be emphasized, because the acts of terrorism and its indications are multidimensional issues. To maximize this effort, not only the police force needs to be empowered, but also maximize government policy along with all stakeholders in the community.

It can also increase community members' understanding of the role and function of the police, particularly those related to counterterrorism and build the cohesion within the community and mobilize its members to engage collectively and develop partnerships with the police and to socialize knowledge about countering terrorism. It also provide feedback on the effectiveness and shortcomings of police action or governments policies.

In the other hand, the soft line approach is a police effort to engage directly in the community and the whole dimensions in society to gain a common purpose in aim of keeping communities safe from all types of violent extremism or radicalism and help community members feel more involved in countering violent extremism. It can also create counter-narratives, build resilience, and counter violent extremism and necessary to facilitate the successful implementation of community policing training.

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