

# Indonesian Muslim Women: Jihad, Radicalism, Terrorism

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## Abstract

This study aimed to explore the understanding of Indonesian Muslim women regarding jihad, radicalism, and terrorism. The study found that women have an understanding that terrorism is all forms of adverse action, carried out in a structured and grouped manner. They understand that all forms of terrorism activities usually have goals to be achieved and are based on religious or ideological understandings that are considered correct according to terrorist groups. Muslim women try to minimize this Islamophobia through improving understanding for themselves, their family, and community. The involvement of Muslim women in supporting counter-terrorism can be one of the strategies to create an atmosphere of peace in the community. Muslim women realize that the perpetrators of acts of terror in carrying out their actions sometimes act in the name of religion, even though there is no religion, including Islam, that legalizes the killing of fellow human beings and actions that cause damage to the environment. Therefore, one way to counter-terrorism according to Muslim women is by improving the mindset starting from themselves and their family. A person's actions originate from the mindset, which is why the mindset must be fixed first, before preventing the doctrines of misguided notions.

**Keywords:** Counter-Terrorism; Family; Islamophobia; Jihad; Muslim Women

## Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has never been devoid of acts of terrorism. There were eight acts of terrorism that occurred in Indonesia in 2019. The number has decreased from the previous year, which amounted to 19 acts of terror in 2018 (CNN, 2019). There were two major acts of terror in Indonesia that occurred in 2019, namely the attack on Wiranto, who was then serving as Minister of Politics, Law, and Security in Menes

Square, Pandeglang, Banten. The second incident was an act of terror at the Medan North Sumatra Police Station. Five major cases of terrorist acts that occurred in 2018 were the first terror bombing in three churches in the city of Surabaya in May 2018 at the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) in Jalan Diponegoro Surabaya, the Blessed Santa Maria Catholic Church (STMB), and the Pentecostal Church in Jalan Arjuno Surabaya. The bombing left three people dead and dozens seriously injured. This bombing occurred in the morning, a few hours before worship took place at the church. Secondly, a terrorist attack took place at the Brimob Command Headquarters in Kelapa Dua, Depok, West Java, in May 2018. Riots occurred because terrorist prisoners damaged their detention cells, resulting in a fight with the police who were on guard at the time. This riot caused one detainee and five police officers to die. Third, a terrorist attack was carried out on the Riau Police Headquarters in May 2018. Fourth, a suicide bombing was carried out by a family of terrorists at the Surabaya Police Station on 14th May, 2018. This family used two motorcycles and explosive bombs in their actions. This suicide bombing resulted in four deaths. Fifth, a suicide bombing occurred in Rusunawa (housing complex) Wonocolo in Sidoarjo, East Java on 13 May 2018. The suicide bombing was carried out by a husband and wife and four children. This explosion occurred when the father was making a bomb that would be used for their actions. His 17-year-old wife and first child died (Arfiyani, 2018). This condition illustrates that the crime of terrorism requires serious attention from the government.

The government must play an active role in combating terrorism activities by not only involving security forces, the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), and community leaders but also Muslim women. Seniwati et.al., in their research looking at the involvement of women in supporting counter-terrorism showed that women can play

an active role in activities related to combating terrorism if they have education and skills. A high level of education and good skills support the movement of women's empowerment. Empowered women can improve the family economy so that family welfare can be realized. A prosperous family will keep them away from actions that lead to acts of terrorism (Seniwati, Pulubuhu, Unde, & Alhaqqi, 2019). Empowering women is a form of soft power of combating terrorism (Seniwati, Pulubuhu, & Alimuddin, 2017). The involvement of women in all sectors, such as social, environmental, political, economic, and technological, is important. Women's involvement in addition to supporting the United Nations program in the form of an agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is also indirectly involved in combating terrorism (Pulubuhu, Seniwati, & Alimuddin, 2017). The involvement of women in combating is needed through innovative deradicalization programs, which will ultimately have a major influence on other groups.

The issue of terrorism has become an important agenda at the international level (Seniwati & Alimuddin, 2016). Moreover, there has been a shift in roles, in which initially, women were only supporting their husbands as a terrorist, but now they are directly involved as suicide bombers, as has been seen in several cases of terrorism in Indonesia. Riri Khariroh, as Commissioner of the National Commission on Violence Against Women, said that Indonesia has great potential in terms of the involvement of women as terrorists (VoA, 2019). Women can be victims and also can become actors who have an important role in carrying out acts of terrorism by reason of carrying out jihad. One example is Dian Yulia Novi, who played an active role in organizing suicide bombings at the State Palace in 2016. This situation illustrates that the government needs to innovate in supporting de-radicalization activities by increasing the involvement of women. The importance of the role of women is also included in the An-Nisa Letter (4): 1 which reads:

The search for knowledge and its acquisition has begun since the beginning of life. Activities that occur during the learning process will provide an easy transformation to the community (Brookfield, 2000).

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا  
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ  
بِهِ وَالْآرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝١

The meaning is: humans, fear you of your Lord who created you from one self (Adam), and (Allah) created his partner (Hawa) from him, and from both of them God multiplied many men and women. Devote to Allah, in whose name you ask one another and (maintain) family relationships. Verily, Allah always watches over and watches over you (An-Nisa:1).

The Qur'anic verse above explains the importance of women as well as the role of men. Islam teaches the principles of social justice and equality between women and men who have the same potential for achieving God's pleasure for prosperity in the hereafter and in the world. Islam is a religion that can provide motivation to its people, especially women, because it upholds human dignity and maintains social behavior in the community. This study aims to explore the understanding of Indonesian Muslim women regarding jihad, radicalism, and terrorism. Through this understanding, we can see the relationship between Islam and terrorism as well as Islam and radicalism.

### Snowball Effect

The first Bali bombing occurred in Kuta Bali on 12 October 2002, which resulted in 202 deaths, and the majority of those killed were Australian citizens. The Bali bombing II occurred on 1 October 2005, which resulted in 23 deaths and 129 serious injuries (Baharruddin & Seniwati, 2015). The Bali bombing I and the Bali bombing II impacted various sectors, including the tourism, social, political, and security sectors. The number of tourists continues to decrease, resulting in many hotels, restaurants, service bureaus, and small-scale handicraft and industrial businesses in Bali being closed. Like a snowball, destruction in the tourism sector has an impact in other sectors. Failure in the tourism sector caused the country's foreign exchange earnings to decline because export, production, and investment activities were experiencing obstacles. Gross Domestic Revenue (GDP) in the fourth quarter after the explosion of the Bali bombing I in 2002 dropped dramatically to 2.61 percent due to a decline in income in the tourism sector by 0.9 percent. After the Bali bombing II



in 2005, the tourism and hospitality sector declined from 8 percent to 6 percent. The business world is experiencing difficulties in developing business because the fluctuations in the exchange rate of the rupiah on the money market have not been stable and are above 9000 IDR per US dollar. The number of unemployed increased by 3.5 percent, real wages also decreased by 47 percent, and household income declined to 22.6 percent (Liputan6, 2012). The Bali bombing also had an impact on the household economy, especially groups of women who were directly involved in the entrepreneurship sector in Bali. To maintain business, the entrepreneurship sector reduced the number of employees by about 60 percent and small entrepreneurs and home businesses sold many of their properties (Mawdsley, Piza-Lopez, & Kaiser, 2004). There are two impacts arising from acts of terrorism, namely the first impact is a direct impact in the form of physical damage, death, and health (treatment of severe injuries and psychological trauma). The second impact is the disruption of economic activities and processes, especially in the economic sector in the household, public sector, and firms (Brück, Schneider, & Karaisl, 2007). Acts of terrorism cause a lot of damage to strategic places in public areas because the targets of terrorist acts in general are public facilities. Acts of terrorism also threaten the security and political stability of a country, which will ultimately slow down national development.

In addition, acts of terrorism give rise to negative responses to the Islamic world, which in turn give rise to Islamophobia, which is fear of disturbance with the presence of Muslims (Alshammari, 2013). Islamophobia also means dislike for adherents of the Islamic religion (Selim, 2016). Islamophobia increased after the first Bali bombing in 2002 (Istriyani, 2016). In general, Muslim women are the main target of Islamophobic crime, for example, around 81.5% of Islamophobic acts that occur in France target Muslim women, while around 70% Islamophobic acts in the UK target Muslim women (ENAR, 2016). Islamophobia will continue to occur if organizations that use Islamic identities, such as ISIS, are still bombing. Islamophobia perception can be eliminated by looking at the role that has been performed by Muslim women in society. This research explores the daily activities of Muslim women in social life.

## Vulnerability to Terrorism Actions

There are several cases involving women directly in acts of radicalism and terrorism as examples of acts of terrorism that occurred on 10 October 2019. A couple attacked Wiranto who was then serving as Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs. After attending the event at Mathla'ul Anwar University, Wiranto was attacked when he got out of the car at Menes Square, Pandeglang Regency. The male perpetrators attacked Wiranto, while the female perpetrators attacked the Menes Sector Police Chief Kompyanto Dariyanto, who was near Wiranto and tried to prevent the female perpetrators from stabbing Wiranto (Kompas, 2019).

The following example is the wife of an alleged terrorist Abu Hamzah or Husain blowing himself up when the police were attempting to arrest him in Sibolga, North Sumatra (OkeNews, 2019). In another example, one family committed suicide bombings in three churches in the city of Surabaya on 13 May 2018, which resulted in 14 deaths and six of them were suicide bombers. The terrorist act was carried out by six people who were a family consisting of husband, wife, and four children. Among these six suicide bombers there were three women (Liputan6, 2018). The family was not poor; rather, they had an average level of income (Tribun Jakarta, 2018).

The above conditions illustrate that the recruitment and indoctrination network in women is getting stronger. Women can become active participants in radical activities. Based on the evidence above, socio-economics is not the main motivating factor in supporting radical acts of terrorism. Sydney Jones of the Institute for Policy Analysis Conflict (IPAC) said that poor urban communities and middle-class people have the same opportunity to take radical action and support terrorism activities. In fact, there are fewer urban poor who support terrorism compared to the middle class. Jones further explained that there are several reasons that cause someone to support radical actions, such as wanting to find a sense of togetherness through groups in an unfamiliar environment or wanting to find relationships or bonds with other people. Participants can be recruited not only through social media but also through recitation or closed meetings (Pasinringi, 2018).

Factors that cause women to support radical actions or participate in terrorism activities are discrimination and gender-based inequality, lack of educational opportunities, violence against women, lack of opportunities for women to support the family economy, few opportunities to use political rights and civil rights are few (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2013). Meanwhile, according to Taskarina in his book, the crime of terrorism involves a wife because it is dominated by patriarchal relations. This relationship is a form of victimization. Therefore, the wife or women involved are victims, not perpetrators. The wife is helpless, so she wants to follow her husband's will in committing acts of terrorism (Taskarina, 2018). The vulnerability of women to participate in radical activities and terrorism is very large because of the patriarchal system in the form of victimization and inequality in the fields of education, politics, and the economy.

### **The Positions of Muslim Women in Combating Terrorism**

The Qur'an, Surah Al Maidah verse 33 says: "the truth is that in retaliation against those who fight against Allah and His Messenger and make mischief on earth, only they are killed or crucified, or their hands and feet are cut off in return, or thrown out of the land (where they live). Such is (as) an insult to them in the world, and in the hereafter, they will suffer great torment" (QS, Al Maidah:33)

The above verse provides an explanation that Islam has never condoned the killing of other people. If there is someone who kills one human without having a correct reason it means they have killed a whole human. Furthermore, the Qur'an in Al Maidah verse 32 explains: "Whoever kills a human being, not because of that person (kills) another person, or not because of making mischief on earth, as if he had killed a whole human" (QS, Al Maidah:32). The Qur'an, Surah Al Maidah:32 explains that the killing of fellow human beings is not an Islamic act because the killer has followed their passions to eliminate the lives of others without a valid reason.

Hadiths prohibit acts of terrorism, for example: "no one of you can take the things of his brother, both joking and serious" (HR. Abud Daud No.5003 and Tirmidzi No.2160). The other

hadith said: "He who takes the stick of his brother, he must return it" (HR.Abu Daud no.5003). Both of these hadiths explain that taking other people's belongings without their permission is considered a crime of theft. Another hadith explained, "It is not lawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim (HR.Abu Daud No.5004 and Ahmad 5:362). This hadith explains the prohibition for a Muslim to frighten other Muslims, let alone kill. The verses of the Qur'an and the hadith above explain that acts of terrorism that kill other people, create fear in an area and do damage to other people's belongings or public property, which is an act that is prohibited in Islam.

Lynch said that extremism, radicalism, and terrorism are related to ideas about multiculturalism, segregation, integration, and identity (Lynch, 2013). The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia said that the global terrorism movement always finds new forms and ways to threaten the world. Therefore, there are three strategies in counter-terrorism, namely first, strengthening sub-regional and regional mechanisms that are effective in preventing terrorism; second, strengthening acts against spreading terrorism ideology at the national level; third, the need for synergies at the national, regional level, sub-regional, and global level for the prevention of terrorism (BeritaSatu, 2019).

The second strategy is to strengthen actions to prevent the spread of ideology at the national level. This strengthening can involve women to help in combating terrorism. Retno, Indonesian Foreign Minister, who attended the Ninth Ministerial Plenary of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), said that women have a big role in instilling positive values in the family (TribunNews, 2018). Muslim women can also play an active role in preventing the occurrence of terrorism, such as providing education to their children about the dangers and effects of acts of terrorism so as to shape the character of children who can distinguish between positive actions and radical actions.



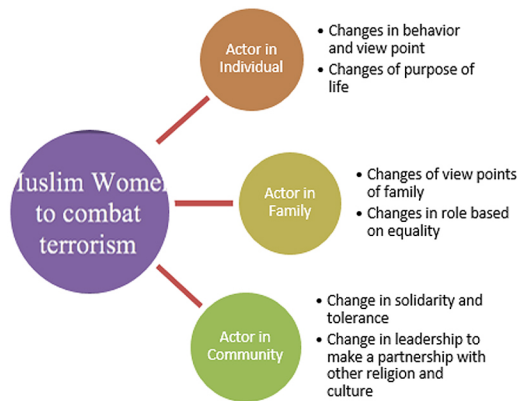


Figure 1. Model of combatting terrorism through the role of Muslim women

The figure above explains that Muslim women can play an active role as a motivator for change in counter-terrorism by focusing on targets for change, namely individuals, families, and communities. Muslim women can promote tolerance and peace through positive attitude.

## Methodology

This study uses empirical data to explore women's activities related to counter-terrorism. This research examines the experience of Muslim women in preventing themselves, their families, and their communities from engaging in radical acts and terrorism. The women involved in the research are those who are Muslims; active in community activities; active in religious activities; working as educators, students, decision makers, or entrepreneurs, totaling 48 women. This research was conducted through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The study was conducted from 2017 to 2019.

This study applies the snowball sampling technique and was conducted in Jayapura City and Merauke Regency in Papua Province, Makassar City, and four regencies in South Sulawesi Province, Yogyakarta City, Bandung City, and Solo City in Central Java Province. Study participants were recruited through religious organizations, mosques, colleges, and Muslim women organizations. The location of the interview was chosen based on the participants' wishes, such as at work, mosque, and at the home base of religious organizations. Muslim women involved in this study had a minimum of senior high school education.

This study applies the Charmez ethnographic

method. Ethnographic methods produce complete and detailed data through interviews, field notes, information in reports, and records (Charmaz, 2006). Field observations were carried out for six months, after which data collection from the research library was continued for six months, followed by semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule was adjusted to the person to be interviewed. Researchers used Nvivo 9 and 10 to analyze data. Charmaz (2006), in his book said that there are four stages of scrutiny, namely the first stage, developing preliminary codes through identifying anchors in research data; the second stage is to group codes through the development of concepts; the third stage is to bring up the theory through grouping concepts; the last step is to explain the findings through the theories that have emerged and the explanation of the data (as cited in Lynch, 2013).

## Results and Discussion

The Bali bomb I, which took place in three different places, namely in Paddy's Pub and in the Sari Club, which is located in the Kuta area, and near the United States Consulate Office in 2002, left a deep sorrow for the families of the victims because these acts of terror claimed many victims who were of foreign citizenship, especially Australian citizens. This incident was a severe test for President Megawati Sukarno Putri's government to make the issue of resolving terrorism one of the main agendas. The following is the opinion of a young woman about terrorism.

in my opinion, terrorism is any form of terrorist activity which is certainly detrimental to various parties, both individual human beings themselves, community groups, a particular entity, even to the international world. The terror activity in question can be in the form of fighting for human rights, territorial rights of the state which are usually carried out by militant groups with the aim of expanding their territory, bombing and destruction of state assets or other public facilities and infrastructure, robbery and piracy of an asset, even to the disappearance of human lives by force. These actions are not taught in the Qur'an; therefore, their actions are wrong (Source: Muslim woman, student, aged 22, Merauke City).

The statement above reflects that although there

are some parties linking terrorism with Islam, this is not entirely true. People or groups who support radical activities to become terrorists are related to this matter because of the wrong understanding about their religion, or the existence of certain ideologies that make them radical and tend to justify any means to justify the ideology. Terrorist organizations or other militant groups are detrimental to humanity. Organizations like this must be removed from the face of the earth for world peace. For this reason, there needs to be contributions from various parties, not only from the government or related stakeholders that need to be empowered, but also in terms of increasing public awareness, especially among women.

The following participants see people involved in terrorism activities as those who have the wrong understanding of the meaning of jihad. The participants below try to provide solutions to support counter-terrorism activities, including collaboration at regional and international levels because terrorism is a transnational crime. In addition, these participants see that the government needs to involve women, including Muslim women, in every counter-terrorism activity that is carried out. A woman can be an important actor in her family to prevent her family from participating in radicalism and terrorism activities.

Terrorism is a radical activity that is usually in the name of Islam, especially for jihad in the path of the Islamic religion. They think what they are doing is right so killing others through bombing is the right thing. The terrorists did not understand the meaning of jihad in Islam. In addition to carrying out jihad, they have a specific purpose in carrying out suicide bombings. To support the counter-terrorism movement of the government, there must be collaboration with other countries or with other organizations. In addition, the role of Muslim women in a family can also be a driving actor in supporting counter-terrorism (Source: Muslim woman, lecturer, aged 43, Makassar City).

Participants above explain that terrorism is an act of terror and is a form of criminality that damages the infrastructure of a region so that it causes losses to various parties. The participants below explain the wrong understanding of the meaning of jihad. Jihad is used as an excuse to justify what is done by radical groups and

terrorists. Jihad is a form of devotion that is the totality of a Muslim to God that can include only not only self-defense but also fighting (Rahmatullah, 2017). Participants below explain that the jihad carried out by terrorist members is an inappropriate action because Indonesia is currently not at war but in a peaceful atmosphere.

Terrorism tends to be prone to occur and develop in a society that has a wrong perception of religion. Nevertheless, acts of terrorism cannot be attributed to Islam. Islam has never taught to force the will by hurting each other's fellow human beings especially if it takes the lives of others. To prevent or overcome radical actions, the first thing that must be considered is starting from oneself, family, and the closest people. The role of Muslim women is needed as an active actor in providing a true understanding of religion, especially related to jihad. Islam never teaches violence and anarchist actions to achieve a goal (Source: Muslim woman, lecturer, aged 27, Yogyakarta City).

The participants below link terrorism and the laws in force in Indonesia. The definition of terrorism contained in Law No. 5 of 2018 regulates many variables. Article 1 paragraph 2 explains terrorism as an act that uses threats or violence that generate fear or a widespread atmosphere of terror, which results in mass death, or causes destruction or damage to important and strategic objects, public facilities, the environment, or international facilities with political motives, ideologies or security disturbances. With this explanation, as Muslim women, the participants explained the need for a preventive effort to respect one another among adherents of different religions in Indonesia.

Acts of terrorism are actions that are against the law because they have damaged infrastructure in public places and caused other people to die. Their actions have also disturbed order in society. The definition of terrorism is stated in Law No. 5 of 2018 clearly. Therefore, we must make a preventive effort that can prevent the spread of misconceptions related to terrorism, such as associating with anyone regardless of the religion of the person. Other efforts that should be carried out are the strengthening of good and correct religious values and the strengthening of morals that are needed so that they are not easily exposed to religious radicalism or wrong ideas



(Source: Muslim woman, entrepreneur, aged 47, Makassar City).

This research is limited to only explaining the understanding of Muslim women that terrorism is any form of terrorist activity carried out by a group of people in a heinous manner. Terrorism has a specific purpose in every bombing action and is carried out by an organized group of people who usually have a radical ideology or understanding of something. They also understand that the perpetrators of terrorism usually use various ways of launching the action, even to the point of not losing the lives of others. Muslim women support acts of combating terrorism such as preventing the spread of wrong ideas that can harm others through oneself, their family, and community. However, this study does not analyze the views or opinions of others (other religions) on actions taken by Muslim women. For future research, research is needed on feedback on activities that have been carried out by a person or by a group of people to support counter-terrorism.

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