

**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TERROR ACTION IN INDONESIA.  
A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY**

**Oleh :  
Dr. Zainal Abidin, M.Si**



**DISAMPAIKAN DALAM ACARA  
ASIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION FIRST CONVENTION  
BALI , 18-20 AGUSTUS 2006**

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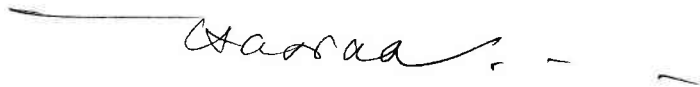
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**Asia Psychological Association First Convention  
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**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TERROR ACTION IN INDONESIA.  
A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY**

By  
**Zainal Abidin**

A number of writers and observers of terrorism admitted the difficulty in defining and explaining terrorism comprehensively, acceptable to all parties. It is understandable since terrorism is a multidimensional issue, involving many aspects such as politic, legal, culture, social, history, psychology, ideology, religion, morality, humanity, ethnicity, and race. Therefore, when it comes to defining terrorism, observers and writers are merely capable of explaining one (or two) of these dimensions, giving no consideration to other aspects. Indeed, I myself cannot escape from such difficulty. However, in this paper I try to unveil at glance the historical, social, political, and socio psychological dimensions of terrorism in Indonesia.

Discussing terrorism in Indonesia is very interesting, taking into account that it tends to proliferate continuously since 2000 until 2005. Indonesia becomes the focus of international world due to numerous terrorist acts and violence taking place in the country. Several countries such as United States and Australia had warned their citizens not to visit Indonesia because it is considered as a dangerous country for their citizens. This is reasonable since several citizens from the two countries had been the targets and victims of terrorism in Indonesia.

The following are data of terrorist acts and violence in Indonesia:

- In 2000, a bomb blast occurred at the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta, a grenade explosion at the Malaysian Embassy, a bomb explosion at the Jakarta Stocks Exchange Building, and a bomb explosion during Christmas at several regions (nine cities) in Indonesia.

- In 2001, there was a bomb explosion at the Jakarta Atrium Plaza, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Makasar, and Australia International School in Jakarta.
- In 2002, there was a grenade explosion at new year in front of Jakarta Bulungan Chicken Restaurant, a bomb explosion in Bali (The first Bali Bombing), Philippine General Consulate in Manado North Sulawesi, and at Mc Donald's Reastaurant in Makassar.
- In 2003, there was a bomb blast at one part of National Police Headquarter, Cengkareng International Airport and J.W. Marriot Hotel.
- In 2004, there was a bomb explosion at Palopo Cafe and Australian Embassy.
- In 2005, there was a bomb blast in a housing estate in Tangerang and two other explosion in Bali.
- A number of bomb explosions occurred in Ambon and Poso between 2002-2005.
- Since 2002 until now there has been a widespread terror action without bomb explosion, grenade or gunfire but in the form of destruction of places suspected to solicit immoral activities (hotel, bar, cafe, karaoke); attacks and destruction of citizens's house and worship places that are perceived as offering deviant practices; and threat towards people whose opinions on religious teachings are perceived as "misguiding".

Giving consideration to targets of terrorism in Indonesia, the above data may be grouped into the following categories:

1. The Embassy of the United States, its citizens as well as its allies, especially Australia, and symbols reflecting the Western or the United States (such as: KFC, McDonald's, Paddy's Club, Marriot Hotel, etc.). The reason as to why the United States and Australian citizens and Western symbols become the target of terror is primarily due to their hostile actions toward Islamic World and Arabic people, including, among others, the attack to Afghanistan and Iraq.
2. The Embassy and General Consulate Office of Malaysia and Philippine. It is possible that the attacks toward representative offices of the two countries in Indonesia were carried out due to the fact that it is too risky to perform terrorist action in respective countries (attributable to tight security in those two

countries). Therefore the terrorists shifted their targets of the two countries in the Indonesia territory where security system is relatively loose. These act of terrorism become a strong indicator that terrorism in Indonesia is in the same network as terrorism in Malaysia and Philippine (also Singapore).

3. Churches. Attacks against churches occurred following the blowing up of religious conflict in Ambon and Poso. The attacks were aimed at spreading up the conflict and arousing the fear of the people in several regions of Indonesia.
4. Government offices, especially Police Headquarters. No obvious reason could explain as to why the National Police Headquarter became one of the bombing targets. However, it is suspected that the terror was meant to be a shock therapy for the police or to flaunt terrorists' power in Indonesia.
5. Public spaces, especially malls and luxurious places or buildings where it is assumed to be frequently visited by foreigners and the affluent. It is clear that these places are relatively strategic to be a target of a blast, no matter how minor it, since it would gain media attention.
6. Places suspected to solicit immoral activities. Such places are not only perceived as operating against the law but also violating morality and religious teachings, and may damage the society.

A question remains, who are indeed the actors behind those terrorism actions?

A number of observers and mass media suspect that the JI (Jamaah Islamiyah) is believed to have been involved in all the four major bomb attacks – in Bali in October 2002 and 2005, at the Marriott Hotel, Jakarta in 2003 and outside the Australian Embassy, Jakarta in 2004 (ICG, 2005). JI is also suspected to be involved in the bombing of the Embassies and General Consulate Offices of Malaysia and Philippine. Meanwhile Laskar Jihad is suspected to carry out the bombing of a number of churches, Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defendant Front) is suspected to have attacked several places suspected to solicit immoral practices.

It would be interesting if that suspicion is proved to be true since those organizations are indeed independently exist even though they are under the same theological umbrella of Islam. However, in this case, it is not Islam as it is understood

by the majority of Moslem in Indonesia and many countries. To the terrorist actor all Islamic values have to be applied in every aspect of life without exception and those not in line with the values are considered sinful and should be combated. Holy war (jihad) against sinful practices and fight against non-believers should be done physically and directly. Terrorist actions are part of the Holy War (jihad)

### **Socio historical and social psychological perspective on terrorism in Indonesia.**

Based on documentary study on terrorism in Indonesia there are factors that may explain the cause of terrorism emergence in Indonesia. These factors, among others, include:

#### **Historical, economic, and political factors:**

- (1) The history of rebellious acts in Indonesia. Several observers believe that terrorism in Indonesia is inseparable from the history of separatist movement done by Darul Islam (DI) that had been growing since 1948 in West Java and spreading out to several regions in Indonesia (Sulawesi and Sumatra). DI movement was aimed at building Islamic nation in Indonesia. According to ICG (International Crisis Group, 2005) the terror movements that happened lately are inseparable from DI and more or less have network with DI. Ideas, patriotism, heroism, and method or tactic to move their bases to escape from the opponents chase (army and police) adopted by current terrorists mostly reflect those embraced by DI figures in the past.
- (2) Problem of injustice in economic development. Economic development initiated during the New Order era had created social, cultural, economic, political, and educational inequality. As a result, there has been social and cultural gap between members of the society and between some social groups and the government. This condition had left a number of people feeling underprivileged, such as some Islamic group who feel disappointed and treated unfairly. Terrorists in Indonesia generally come from the society who are moslem and in term of economy, social and education are



relatively low. Only a small number of their leaders come from social and economic class that are relatively high.

- (3) Political factor. The era of repressive New Order regime left no space to radical Islam to openly criticized the government. During that period, many Islamic boarding schools were suspected and several outspoken students and ulema were arrested (...) However, soon after the fall of New Order, radical Islamic organisations such as FPI, Laskar Jihad, and MMI were emerging without political pressure and legal sanction from the government even though some of their actions may be categorized as terror actions.

#### **Socio Psychological Factors:**

- (1) Inferiority feeling and anger. Terrorist actors generally come from a marginal group in term of economy and politic. They position themselves as the abused group, mistreated by political power and market economy. They refuse to get involved in political circle or mainstream because they perceive those acts as dirty practices. Those who want to enter political arena and mainstream had failed due to their incompetence in the areas. As a result, they feel inferior and angry.
- (2) Isolation and brainwashing. There are formal and informal religious organisation or institutions that facilitate, organize, and educate the youngsters from that marginal group. Within those institutions there is a firm line between in-group and out-group, "we" and "you", the righteous and the wicked, the right and wrong. In-group is the group who is righteous while the out-group is the wicked, evil, devil, and sinner. Brainwashing processes take place within those institution. To a certain degree, they are also isolated into different group within the insitutions themselves to ensure strong in-group and out-group identity and to guarantee that the ideology or doctrine entrenched in their mind by their leaders are not "polluted" by the outside world. Although they can lead a normal life in the community, they are capable of hiding their self-identity and their terrorism activity. Their ability to hide their identity is made possible by the fact that they always move from one place to another.

- (3) Conformity. Within every institution there is always a leader and followers. Generally, a leader holds a central position and is charismatic that every word or order he says will be followed unconditionally by his followers. The followers highly respect the leader and would do any suggestion proposed by the leader, including to carry out a suicide bombing.
- (4) Affirmation of in-group identity ("we") and out-group ("you") and a negative perception against the out-group set off the emergence of dehumanization attitude toward the out-group. The out-group is assumed to be inhuman or half-human being. In this context it is understandable that terrorist acts against the out-group is deemed as normal. Killing and massacre of ideological opponents are normal because the out-group is considered as enemy and not a human being.
- (5) The terrorists experienced an out-group homogeneity bias, causing them to perceive every member of the out-group as the same, bearing no differences. As the result, every member of the opposition group (out-group) will potentially become a victim of terror, with no exception. Innocent civilians can be the target of terror because they belong to the opposition side or part of the opponents (Imam Samudra...).
- (6) Rationalization. Theological justification for terrorism acts is intentionally searched from the verses of the holy book. Terror is interpreted as jihad (holy war) and jihad is interpreted as physical war against religious enemy and people with different beliefs. Verses from the holy book are used to justify the terrorist acts. There are numbers of verses in Al Qur'an that tell story about the struggle and battle of the prophet Muhammad and his army against the enemy of Islam. The verses are then interpreted as to validate their terrorist acts with their own interpretation.
- (7) Belief in going to heaven. Based on theological foundation, risk and death including death caused by exploding a bomb in one's own body (suicide bombing) is believed by the actors to be a passport to heaven guaranteed by God. To die on the struggle is to die as a martyr (syahid death).

- (8) Perception on the lacking of law enforcers to change the prevailing situation. This perception has been mentioned, for example, by FPI leader, Habib Rizieq, who said that FPI will be disbanded if police and law enforcers truly carry out their duties to abolish immorality. If this is true, then terrorism becomes an alternative. When the law is perceived to be dysfunction and preaches are considered to be ineffective, then terror is the option. In many terrorism cases in several countries, terrorist act becomes the strategic choice (Martha Crenshaw, 1998).
- (9) Belief that terror is a tool and not a goal. The main goal of terrorism act is to engender changes, especially a change toward a society that hold values they adopt. Therefore, if there are victims of terror who come from the similar religion (brother in faith) they are believed to die as a martyr and will go straight to heaven. Victims are only the price to be paid in struggle to achieve the ultimate goal, that is a society embracing the values they adopt (See Imam Samudera, 2004).

### **Characteristics of terror action in Indonesia**

How does terrorism in Indonesia differ from that of other countries?

Some psychological factors experienced by the terrorists in Indonesia may be similar to those experienced by their counterparts in other countries and those with different religious background (for example, terrorists who are Christian and Jewish in other countries). There are, however, distinguished factors that are different and characterize terrorism in Indonesia. These differences are, for example, noticed through:

1. History. Terrorism in Indonesia is rooted from the historical struggle of some Indonesian people in order to find the nation's form and ideology. Several years after Indonesian independence from the Dutch colonial (1945) there were rebellion and terrorist acts done by DI to turn Indonesia into an Islamic nation. The influence and network of DI now still exist inside organisations that carried out terrorist acts. Terrorism in other countries certainly have their own respective history.

2. The actors are from the majority group. In other countries such as Philippine and India, for example, terrorist acts are done by the minority groups against the majority group who has economic and political power. The terrorist acts they do were meant to fight against the majority hegemony. On the other hand, in Indonesia, actors actually come from majority group (moslem) even though they are the minority within the group (radical moslem). How could this possibly happen? This is due to the fact that the majority of people at national level economically belong to the minority groups. It means that even though by number moslem population is the majority in Indonesia, nationally they belong to the minority group in term of economic ownership (power).
3. There is no social support for terrorists. In many other countries, especially in term of religious and political terrorism such as in Israel and Palestine, a number of citizens support the actors. In Indonesia, however, there is no social support from Indonesian society toward the terrorists. This absence of support is recognizable by the lack of mass protection for terrorist actors. Only a few citizens protect and hide terrorists from the police. Since they gain no support, the terrorists often seek hiding places in the area where people are paying less attention to one another. These places among others are boarding houses, recreational areas, and isolated places.
4. Variety of terrorist organisation and target. As mentioned above, organizations suspected as the terrorist actors are coming from different organizations with various motives and targets. This means, terrorism in Indonesia widely diversified. It has not been known for sure whether organizations suspected as terrorist in other countries have a wide range of targets as those in Indonesia. If not, then Indonesia may be among a few (if not the only one) countries in the world with the most terrorist organizations and with the widest variation of terrorism targets.

### **Reccomendation**

Efforts to combat terrorist acts in Indonesia should consider the following matters:

1. Economic and educational development should give priority to the empowerment of adherents of Islam with lower economic, social, and cultural status. Despite the fact that they are the majority of Indonesian society, their social and economic status are relatively low. The prevalent feeling of defeat and hopelessness experienced by some of them are potentials in creating other terrors in the future.
2. The big and moderate Islam organizations (especially, NU, Muhammadiyah, MUI) has to play their strategic role for empowering their members and elevating the quality of life of moslem community as to promote their status to be equal to other segment of society who has achieved higher standard of living.
3. In quantity, the role of the moderate and intelligent ulemas should be promoted. Today and in the future, Indonesia needs ulemas who are capable of empowering and elevating the quality of life of moslem community as to promote their status to be equal to other segment of society who has achieved higher standard of living. These leaders must be able to interpret jihad (holy war) in term of building and empowering Moslems so that they are not left behind compared to other groups or parties.
4. Law enforcement and police professionalism. Law enforcement is an essential element to hamper terrorist acts. Indecisiveness and unprofessionalism of the law enforcers and police in handling the terrorist acts will not only encourage terrorist acts in Indonesia but will also nurture the sympathetic feeling toward the terrorists. Sympathy for terrorists has been growing higher in a number of moslem communities such as toward two executors of the Bali Bombing, Amrozi and Imam Samudera.
5. As long as the United States and its allies are still perceived as arrogant and hostile toward a number of Islamic Nations, they will always become the object and target of terrorism in Indonesia. The United States and its allies have been widely perceived as terrorists by many Indonesian that they are likely to be the target of attack and the object of revenge and holy war by radical Moslem in Indonesia. The United States and its allies are seen as the

enemy of Islamic Nations because of their brutality againsts Afghanistan and Iraqi citizens as well as moslem hostages at the United States military prisons. Therefore, to prevent terrorism in Indonesia targetted to the interests of the United States and its allies, Indonesian government need to put political pressure to the United States, demanding them to impose a more sympathetic policy toward the Islamic Nations.

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2. Full amount transfer to Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono's Rupiah Account No. 01.016.0020.002333, Bank MEGA, Fatmawati, Jakarta.
3. Full amount payment by Master Card, please mention your name, your card number and date of expiry.
4. Cash on site.

(Italy) "Asian Psychology in the view of western psychologists".

2. Representative of IAAP, Prof. Raymond Fowler, PhD (USA), "Applied psychology in non-western societies".
3. President of APsyA, Prof. Dr. Sarlito W. Sarwono, "Wayang as a representation of Javanese Psychology".

#### **ASIAN TERRORISM LECTURERS**

- Head of Special Detachment 88/Anti Terror, Brig. Jend. Drs. Bekto Suprpto, M.Si (Indonesian Police Headquarters), "Asian Terrorists: the Indonesian Police Experience".
- Boon Van Ostade (Padjadjaran University, Indonesia), "Altruistic Suicides of Aggressive Bombers".
- Rudy Heryanto, "Video clip presentation on Indonesian terrorists".
- Ustaz Mohamed Bin Ali (Institute of Defense & Strategic Studies, Singapore), "Ideological Response to Terrorism and Extremism" and "Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Jihadists".
- Sarlito Sarwono & Team (University of Indonesia), "Research Presentation on Indonesian Terrorism".
- Hamdi Muluk (University of Indonesia), "On Explaining Terrorism in Indonesia: Personality, Socio-Cultural and Political Aspect"
- Zainal Abidin (Padjadjaran University, Indonesia), "The Characteristics of Terrorism in Indonesia: A Social Psychological Study on Terrorism in Indonesia"
- Mirra Noor Milla (State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim, Indonesia), "Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Personality Process".
- Fatima Astuti (Institute of Defense & Strategic Studies,

The Organizing Committee will confirm registration after receipt of both your Registration Form and payment fees.

Please note that your registration and abstract will not be considered final until the Organising Committee has received payment from the presenting author.

#### **Cancellation Policy**

Written notification is required for all cancellations and changes to your itinerary. A copy of the registration and accommodation form should be attached to the letter of notification and sent to [secretariat@apsya.org](mailto:secretariat@apsya.org)

Registration fees and deposits will be refunded after charging an administration fee.

Cancellations received up to May 30th, 2006 = 50% Cancellation fee.

Cancellations received after June 30th, 2006 will be at the discretion of the Organizing Committee.

Note: All Refunds will be made 1-2 months after the Congress. Bank charges will be deducted from the amount due.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

##### **Currency**

All Congress fees are calculated in Rupiah. Participants from countries where currency restrictions prevent them from sending registration fees in advance are asked to inform the Congress Organising Bureau to avoid being charged the late registration fee.

**For further information, please visit our website at**

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# Asian Solidarity in Diversity

Towards a better quality of life in Asia

The Asian Psychological Association (APsya) is a new professional society founded in 2005 to bring together psychologists in the rapidly developing countries of Asia. APsya's mission is to advance the science and practice of psychology throughout Asia. To this end APsya seeks to strengthen regional and international bonds between psychologists and to promote and to facilitate channels of communication between individual psychologists.

To organize the association and plan for its initial convention in 2006, an Interim Board of Directors has been formed, with Dr. Sarlito W. Sarwono of Indonesia serving as interim president. Other officers and directors at large include psychologists from the Philippines, Australia, Canada and Malaysia as well as other Asian countries.

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

The theme of the Convention will be "ASIAN SOLIDARITY IN DIVERSITY: towards a better quality of life in Asia". The Scientific Program will consist of a broad range of presentations. It will consist in invited keynotes, symposia, group and individual presentations, conversation hours, poster symposia organized by the Scientific Committee, and workshops. The Conference language will be English.

thematic domains:

- Asian Terrorism
- Indigenous Asian Psychology
- Cross-Cultural Research and Applied Psychology: Asian paradigms in Western Psychology, and Western paradigms in Asian Psychology
- Well-being: Asian way (therapy, counseling, social intervention)
- Conflicts, disasters, stressors and traumas
- Family, women and children issues in Asia
- Other

The Congress Secretariat, is available to help participants. The emails of the Convention are [secretariat@apsya.org](mailto:secretariat@apsya.org)

scientific program matters and regarding organizational matters. The website [www.apsya.org](http://www.apsya.org) will be continually updated.



Kuta Paradiso Hotel Kuta

Friday, August 18 - Sunday, August 20, 2006

### Congress Venue

The 2006 APsya Convention will be held at the Hotel Kuta Paradiso, Bali.

**Language:** The official language is English. No simultaneous translation will be provided, but this should not deter you from registering, as English is not the native language of many of the participants.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### REGISTRATION FEE

Until August 1, 2006	
Foreigner : US\$ 290	Indonesian : Rp. 2.000.000,-
Himpisi : Rp. 1.800.000,-	Students* : Rp. 1.440.000,-
Accompanying Person:	
US\$ 125 (foreigner), Rp. 800.000,- (Indonesian)	

August 2 - 17, 2006	
Foreigner : US\$ 334	Indonesian : Rp. 2.300.000,-
Himpisi : Rp. 2.070.000,-	Students* : Rp. 1.660.000,-
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\* A certificate of STUDENT status issued by the applicant's department is required.

Note: Registration after August 17 still can be made, price to the latest fee, excluded seminar kit, shuttle transport, and general tour.

### Kuta Paradiso Hotel

Room Type	Rate / one night		Breakfast
	Indonesian	Overseas	
Deluxe	Rp. 585.000,-	US\$ 85	Included

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1st APSYA

Bali, 18 - 20 August 2006

# Certificate

This Certificate is given to:

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