

Indonesia: The Hotel Bombings

I. OVERVIEW

On 17 July 2009, suicide bombers attacked two hotels in the heart of a Jakarta business district, killing nine and injuring more than 50, the first successful terrorist attack in Indonesia in almost four years. While no one has claimed responsibility, police are virtually certain it was the work of Noordin Mohammed Top, who leads a breakaway group from Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the regional jihadi organisation responsible for the first Bali bombing in 2002. One of the hotels, the Marriott, was bombed by Noordin's group in 2003; this time, a meeting of mostly foreign businessmen appears to have been the target. The restaurant of the nearby Ritz-Carlton was also bombed.

The attack sets back Indonesia's counter-terrorism efforts, but its political and economic impact has been minor. On 23 July President Yudhoyono was declared the winner of the 8 July elections with more than 60 per cent of the vote; nothing about the bombing is likely to weaken his government or prompt a crisis. The impact on the business community, which lost four prominent members, has been devastating, but economic indicators are stable.

The question everyone is asking is whether it will happen again. If the perpetrators are arrested quickly, Indonesians and expatriates will relax, although it will not necessarily mean the end of terrorist cells in Indonesia. If Noordin Top eludes police again, as he has for the last seven years, the nervousness will remain. One key question for the police to answer is how the operation was funded. It is possible the bombers raised the funds locally through armed robberies as they did for the October 2005 Bali bombing. If money came from an outside donor, a possible source would be al-Qaeda or its affiliates. This would open the possibility that outside donors could look for other Indonesian partners in the future, even if Noordin Top is behind bars. A third possibility is a donation from an Indonesian source outside the Noordin group itself.

This briefing provides answers to some frequently asked questions about the bombings: where did Noordin Top come from? What is his relation to JI? Why were these hotels targeted? What does this mean for

the government's deradicalisation program? And what additional measures should the government take? The easiest step and the most unwise would be to turn the anti-terrorism law into an internal security act that allowed for lengthy preventive detention. Instead, Indonesia needs continued attention to community policing, more attention to JI-affiliated schools that offer protection to men like Noordin and opportunities for recruitment, more understanding of international linkages, better intelligence and more support for prison reform.

II. FAQs

1. What led to this attack?

The attack is the latest in a series that began in the late 1990s when several factors converged. In February 1998, Al-Qaeda issued a declaration in the name of the World Islamic Front, calling on Muslims to "kill Americans and their allies – civilians and military – ... in any country in which it is possible to do it". In May 1998, Indonesian President Soeharto resigned, beginning a process of democratisation, and many senior JI leaders who had been living in exile in Malaysia returned home.

In January 1999, communal conflict broke out in the province of Maluku, and JI sent some of its "Afghan alumni" – men who had gone through military training in camps on the Afghan-Pakistan border – to the area to train new recruits. Later that year, JI's founder, Abdullah Sungkar, died, leaving the leadership to Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, a man less interested in or capable of controlling rogue elements. A small group of JI members, most of them Indonesian nationals but residents or former residents of Malaysia, then began a bombing campaign inspired by al-Qaeda but in the name of avenging Muslim deaths in Maluku. Most of the initial targets were churches and pastors. That campaign, controversial even within JI, was led by Hambali, now the only Indonesian detained in Guantanamo.

In late 2001, after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, evidence was uncovered there of a plot to attack Singapore, for which JI was seeking al-Qaeda support. Separate discovery of JI cells in Malaysia led to a crack-

down in both countries and several JI members who feared arrest fled to Indonesia. Two Malaysian nationals, Noordin Mohammed Top and Azhari Husin, were among them. Azhari was already part of Hambali's group; Noordin was a peripheral player. As plans for the first Bali bombing progressed later that year, neither man was in on the initial discussions. Azhari was brought in at the last moment to help construct the bomb; Noordin knew of the project but was not one of the operatives.

But after the wave of arrests that followed Bali I in October 2002, Noordin went off on his own. The first Marriott bombing in 2003 was planned by Noordin and Azhari from start to finish. He had some communication with the JI leadership but apparently not its endorsement. Many in JI, while supporting ongoing attacks against Christians in Poso, Central Sulawesi, where another communal conflict had raged and many Muslims had died, believed that al-Qaeda-style attacks on Western targets were not justified. They were also seen as counterproductive, especially because they generated more arrests and lost community support. By 2004, when Noordin directed the bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, he was very clearly operating a splinter group, although still heavily dependent on JI for protection. By 2005, he was calling himself "al-Qaeda for the Malay Archipelago".

This attack was the first successful one in the country since that time. In December 2007, a planned bombing of a café frequented by tourists in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, was aborted by the perpetrators at the last moment, and police arrested members of the group shortly thereafter.

2. Why is Noordin Top's group the most likely suspect?

Of the several violent extremist groups operating in Indonesia, only the network around Noordin Top has both an interest in attacking Western targets and the proven capacity to do so.¹

¹For more on terrorist networks in Indonesia, see among other Crisis Group publications, Asia Briefing N°92, *Indonesia: Radicalisation of the "Palembang Group"*; Asia Report N°147, *Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Publishing Industry*, 28 February 2008; Asia Report N°142, "Deradicalisation" and Indonesian Prisons, 19 November 2007; Asia Briefing N°63, *Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Current Status*, 3 May 2007; Asia Report N°114, *Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin's Networks*, 5 May 2006; Asia Report N°92, *Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing*, 22 February 2005; and Asia

He has shown an ability to recruit new operatives with no previous history of violence, although he has always relied on an inner circle of JI members committed to the same extreme interpretation of jihad. He had about five close JI associates around him for the Australian embassy bombing, although the actual field operation was carried out by men from a completely separate group called Ring Banten, a splinter of Darul Islam in West Java.² In 2006 and 2007, he was in communication through an intermediary with a group in Palembang that initially had been more interested in fighting Christian efforts to convert Muslims than in bombing foreigners. The intermediary, Saifuddin Zuhri alias Sabit, provided explosives, bomb-making training, and suggestions for targets to the group, but it ultimately failed to carry out an attack.³ Sabit was arrested on 21 June 2009 in Cilacap, south-central Java. It remains unclear whether he was in on the plans for the Jakarta bombings, but after his arrest, police uncovered more bomb-making material at his uncle's house, and his uncle is believed to be Noordin's father-in-law.⁴ A police spokesman said the material was similar to that used in the hotel bombings.

Noordin is believed to have around him a few other fugitives with bomb-making expertise, most notably Reno alias Tedi, from Wonogiri, Central Java, who attended the JI school Mahad Aly. Reno studied bomb-making with Azhari but he escaped when police surrounded Azhari's hideout in Batu, Malang, East Java, and shot him. Police suspect he may be the man known as "Aji", sent by Noordin to instruct the Palembang group in bomb-making in mid-2007.⁵

Noordin seems to have been living in the Cilacap area at least since 2006 and perhaps even earlier, finding shelter and protection from JI-linked families. In previous attacks, he has always stayed well away from the bomb site and has never taken a direct field coordination role. He has, however, helped select and indoctrinate the selected suicide bombers prior to their deployment.

Report N°83, *Indonesia Background: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix*, 13 September 2004.

²Crisis Group Report, *Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing*, op. cit.

³Crisis Group Briefing, *Indonesia: Radicalisation of the "Palembang Group"*, op. cit.

⁴The uncle, Baharudin Latif, ran a small religious school and was the mentor to one member of the Palembang group. His daughter, Arina, is believed to be Noordin's third wife. She was arrested on 22 July 2009.

⁵Crisis Group Briefing, *Indonesia: Radicalisation of the "Palembang Group"*, op. cit.

All this said, no conclusive evidence has been released to the public as this report goes to press that the hotel attacks were Noordin's work. There are other radical groups operating in Indonesia, and some of these have members who have trained in Mindanao, Ambon and Poso. It is not difficult to obtain material for making explosives. The Ring Banten group is largely intact, and there are other Darul Islam factions whose members have shown an interest in waging active jihad on Indonesian soil. But Noordin is the only one who has a track record for this kind of violence and, according to some reports, an obsession with iconic landmarks.

3. What is the relationship between Noordin and JI?

Noordin's group is not the same as JI. It is a splinter group that includes some JI members but others as well. In at least two of his earlier operations, he has included in the team people newly recruited with no previous experience in JI or any other group.

Noordin himself is an inducted JI member. He began taking part in JI study sessions in Malaysia in 1995 and became a full member in 1998, although he never held a major leadership position.⁶ He eventually became the director of Lukmanul Hakiem, the Islamic boarding school that served as the headquarters of the JI division in Malaysia, taking over from Mukhlas, one of the three Bali bombers executed in November 2008.⁷ By all accounts, he idolised Mukhlas. Since Noordin arrived in Indonesia, he has almost always been under the protection of individual JI members who believed it was wrong to turn him in to the police, even when they did not agree with his actions.

JI itself still exists as an organisation, although it seems to have lost a sense of direction. It has gone from being a hierarchical structure with cells in five countries (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia) to a largely Indonesian grouping with a loose system of territorial coordinators and some individual members elsewhere – especially the Philippines. No one is sure who the commander or *amir* is today. While some sources point to a Semarang-based religious teacher, information from some JI members suggest that Zuhroni alias Zarkasih, the acting *amir* arrested in June 2007, continues to sign off on key decisions from prison.⁸

JI continues to have a military wing and looks for ways of providing military training for members. Some 25 to 30 members are believed to be in Mindanao, some of them in a camp called Jabal Quba in an area controlled by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Maguindanao, and others working with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Jolo and several other South East Asian jihadis affiliated to JI or other like-minded organisations such as KOMPAK. The latter group includes two of the Bali I bombers, Dulmatin and Umar Patek. Azhari was known to be in contact with them before his death in 2005; it is not clear if Noordin has maintained that link.

There may well be communication but not direct cooperation between JI's military wing more generally and Noordin's group. JI also has its own international links. In 2007, one member of JI's leadership council, Para Wijayanto from Kudus, introduced two senior JI members to a North African living in Jakarta, Ja'far al-Jazairi, who subsequently provided false passports and air tickets for them to fly from Kuala Lumpur to Damascus. The two were arrested in Kuala Lumpur in January 2008 and Ja'far himself disappeared. But the incident suggested that links to jihadis outside Indonesia continue.

In September 2008, many JI members joined Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's new organisation Jamaah Ansharud Tauhid (JAT), a radical but above-ground and non-violent group that rejects democracy and seeks the immediate application of Islamic law.⁹ Most of the old East Java division of JI has joined JAT, for example. Other members of JI reject the notion that one can be a member of both JAT and JI simultaneously; these "pure" JI members may number only about 200, according to one of their group. Their focus is on religious outreach (*dakwah*), sometimes preaching the same message as JAT but holding on to the idea of JI as a clandestine, rather than open, organisation like JAT.

Another rift in JI relates to released prisoners. With about 75 JI men still in prison (out of about 150 jihadi prisoners altogether) and over 100 others now free, prisoners and ex-prisoners constitute a large constitu-

⁶ See Crisis Group Report, *Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin's Networks*, op. cit.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Zarkasih was technically head of an executive council called the "amir search committee" (Lajnah Ihtiar Linasbil

Amir, LILA). He therefore was never formally installed but continued to serve as the top executive while the search for an appropriate commander continued.

⁹ When JAT was first formed, it was reported to have a secret military wing but accounts of the training suggested it consisted largely of physical fitness and martial arts. Crisis Group interviews, Jakarta, October 2008. Nothing recent has emerged about such a wing.

ency within JI.¹⁰ Known as *alumni bui* (*bui* is a slang term for prison) many of these men, especially those who have been actively cooperating with police, are considered tainted by their colleagues and have been marginalised within the organisation. This has generated resentment, but it is unlikely that Noordin would exploit it to draw more men into his circle, if only because it would not be in his interests to make use of people who are already well-known to the police and perhaps under surveillance. That said, there may be four or five men among the released prisoners who have resumed active ties to Noordin. If so they still would be unlikely field operatives because of their previous exposure.

Whatever the rifts within JI, however, it remains a strong social network, held together by bonds of family, school, business and sometimes training as mujahidin in Afghanistan, Mindanao, Ambon or Poso.

As noted, many in JI's senior leadership reportedly believe that the kind of attacks carried out by Noordin are illegitimate, counterproductive or both. Some, like Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, continue to defend him on the grounds that his tactics are misguided but his intentions are pure: to defend Muslims under attack.

4. Why has it been so long since the last attack?

Many Indonesians and others were lulled into a sense of security because after annual bombings between 2002 and 2005, foreigners had not been targeted again until now. There are a few possible reasons why the interval between major attacks this time was longer:

- Noordin lost key members of his team after 2005. This included Azhari, who was killed in a police raid following the 2005 attack. Azhari was not only the master bomb-maker; he also appears to have been the major operational planner and therefore difficult to replace.
- After Bali II, Noordin was reportedly under JI protection on the condition that he not engage in any attacks. If there ever was such an agreement, it may have broken down after the early June 2007 arrest of Abu Dujana, a JI leader in communication with Noordin before and after the first Marriott bombing.

- The complete failure of the Palembang group to carry out an attack as Noordin's proxy may have prompted him to take charge of an operation.
- Noordin may have been the beneficiary of a sudden infusion of funds that made planning an attack more thinkable.

5. Why would the bombers target the hotels?

One of those involved in 2003 Marriott attack told police:

Based on the *fatwa* [of Osama bin Laden urging attacks on the US and its allies], we wanted to defend the Muslim faithful who were being oppressed by the people of the US, England, Australia and Israel, by undertaking acts of terror aimed at facilities owned by Americans, British, Australians or Israelis in the hope that these acts would cause loss of life and property and strike fear into the hearts of the people of those countries.¹¹

That kind of thinking almost certainly still prevails. But some additional clues come from an extraordinary document found on Azhari's computer after he was killed that proved to be the planning manual and after-action report for Bali II. In it he says that the only two places worth attacking in Indonesia are Bali and Jakarta "because the international impact is more easily achieved".¹²

More chillingly, the document includes the results of a survey of possible targets by the bombers prior to the actual operation. The bombers chose the area of Jimbaran on Bali as a target area and the document explains why:

Survey results show that the number of foreigners is far higher at Jimbaran. Indeed, visitors at Jimbaran are businessmen as compared to the foreigners on Jalan Legian who are mostly young people. The deaths of foreign businessmen will have a greater impact than those of young people.¹³

This could explain why the bombers deliberately sought out venues where the business community gathered. The global profile of these attacks had the potential to be much larger as they came two days before the

¹⁰The number of prisoners released after serving sentences for terrorism-related activity now totals over 200 but only about half are JI. Others are members of KOMPAK, Darul Islam, Laskar Jundullah, and in some cases local gangs.

¹¹Testimony of Ismail alias Muhamad Ikhwan alias Agus alias Iwan, Jakarta, 28 January 2004.

¹²Proyek Bali, a document found on Azhari's computer, November 2005. Photocopy made available to and translated by Crisis Group, March 2006.

¹³Ibid.

Manchester United football team was due to stay in the Ritz-Carlton. The club quickly cancelled the Indonesian leg of its Asian tour. It is highly unlikely that the bombers knew where the team would be staying when planning for this operation began. If they found out when the plans were near fruition, they may have decided that attacking the business executives, who regularly met on Fridays at the Marriott, was still more important. It is also possible that the arrest of Saifuddin Zuhri on 21 June caused the bombers to speed up their plans for fear the operation could be discovered.

In addition, a statement praising the bombing that was posted on a radical website two days after the bombing referred to the hotels as the centre of “Jewish business activity” in Jakarta and went on to discuss how in the ongoing war between Muslims and infidels, causing fear to the enemy is justified.¹⁴ A subsequent posting entitled “Why Was the Marriott Bombed?” picked up on this theme saying:

In Palestine, Jews suffer and feel they are in hell because every day they are the target of attacks and operations. But Jews never feel worried about demonstrations carried out by Muslims in London or Jakarta.¹⁵

Therefore, it concludes, they needed to be woken up.

Those who posted the statements are not necessarily connected with the bombers, and there is no acknowledgment of responsibility. But the site belongs to Al-Muhajiroun, and its diatribes have been picked up by other sites close to JI.¹⁶ In any case, the argument used follows that in other publications linked to Noordin.

Another important clue to Noordin’s thinking lies in a book he commissioned in 2004, called *Sowing Jihad, Reaping Terror*. The original author was a JI member

named Ubeid, but after he was arrested in 2004, it was completed by another JI man close to Noordin named Parmin alias Yasir Abdul Baar (arrested in April 2008). It states:

The idea that the U.S. is in the Arabian peninsula, Iraq and elsewhere simply as a reaction to the war on terror is nonsense; The U.S. is there to rob Muslim countries of their natural resources and to make war on Muslims using a variety of weapons including the UN Security Council, economic embargos and military attacks. The corollary is that the U.S. will not leave even if al-Qaeda and the Taliban disappear. This is a war for world domination and subjugation of Islam.

The authors go on to justify the use of violence because it is the only way to confront a stronger enemy.

One question is why the bombers would return to a hotel they had already attacked; one possibility is that it was the best way to prove that they could, and that therefore any place in the capital was vulnerable.

6. How could the bombers get past hotel security and pass themselves off as guests?

There is increasing speculation in the Indonesian media now that the bombers inserted one of their members into the hotel staff long before the bombing took place. Whether that is confirmed, what we know is that in every previous operation, the bombers have carried out a meticulous survey of the intended target looking for weak points in the security system. They would almost certainly have gone to the hotel several times before the operation – in the foiled Palembang attempt, the bomber went back and forth to the intended target sixteen times.

They also would have studied the behaviour of Indonesian guests staying at the hotel, noting the clothes they wore and their style of walking, talking and interacting. This we know from the Bali document, where the bombers were not only told to study how Indonesian tourists there looked but to report back to the field coordinator, including such details as the trademarks of shoes commonly worn.¹⁷

Much commentary in the press has focused on how the terrorists for the first time apparently brought the explosive materials into the hotel and built the bomb inside, instead of bringing it to the site already made. But again we can go back to the Bali document, when Azhari wrote in 2005:

¹⁴“JW Marriot [sic] dan Terorisme”, 20 July 2009, www.almuhajirun.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=145:jw-marriot-dan-terorisme&catid=37:jihad&Itemid=59.

¹⁵ “Mengapa JW Marriot Dibom?”, 21 July 2009, www.almuhajirun.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147:mengapa-jw-marriot-dibom&catid=36:syariah&Itemid=56.

¹⁶Al-Muhajiroun is an international organisation that is a splinter of Hizb ut-Tahrir, a radical but non-violent organisation committed to the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate. Some of its members were involved in the July 2007 London underground bombing. Nothing is known about the group’s size or membership in Indonesia, but it has never been implicated in violent crime there. A magazine published by Al-Muhajiroun has the same design team as several JI publications, and there may be some sharing of resources.

¹⁷Proyek Bali, op. cit.

The first attack in Bali on 12 October 2002 used a car bomb (Mitsubishi I300). The same method cannot be used because security is tighter. It is not easy to find and bring in explosives in the quantity needed. It is more difficult to rent a house with a garage to assemble the car bomb. The presence of a team to stay for a few weeks in a rented house to support the bombing operation will be easily detected.

The method of attack has to change. A large-scale bomb is no longer possible. The bomb must be smaller and brought in ready to use. The work of assembling it must be done outside Bali. In this way the support team does not have to be in Bali and it's no longer necessary to rent a house.¹⁸

This documents shows there is a learning process after each attack: in the first Bali bombing, the bomb was assembled in Bali but outside the target area itself; in the second, it was brought in from outside, ready to go. For the 17 July bombs, the components were brought into the target site and for the first time, the bombs appear to have been actually constructed on site. This shows that past methods are not necessarily a clue to how new attacks will take place.

7. How big is Noordin's group?

It is probably closer to dozens than hundreds, although nothing is known of its structure. Noordin has used several different names for the group at different times: Thoifah Muqatilah (roughly Fighting Forces); Brigade Firaqul Maut (Dare-to-Die Brigade), Anshorul Muslimin (Muslim Partisans), and Tanzim al-Qaedat al-Jihad untuk Gugusan Kepulauan Melayu (Al-Qaeda Jihad Organisation for the Malay Archipelago).

One possibility is that the group has no clear structure beyond Noordin and his inner circle and consists only of ad hoc cells put together for specific operations. One document found in the possession of men that Noordin brought into the Bali II operation was called *Sel Tauhid*, translated from the Arabic. It states that small jihadist cells, working autonomously but toward the same goal, can be as or more effective than a larger organisation like al-Qaeda.¹⁹

The inner circle probably includes seven or eight men from Noordin's network who have escaped capture in earlier dragnets. Reno alias Tedi mentioned above is one, but there are a number of others, including two linked to a safe house in Wonosobo, Central Java, set up for Noordin's operatives in early 2006 after the Bali II bombing. One, Nur Said Abdurrohman, was originally thought to be the suicide bomber for the Marriott but DNA tests on the body showed he was not.

8. Does this mean the "deradicalisation" program has failed?

No. Indonesian police have been working closely with prisoners and former prisoners involved in terrorism, as well as with some "Afghan alumni" who were never arrested.²⁰ Their efforts, which are more economic than ideological in focus, have been widely praised. There is nothing to suggest that any released prisoners involved in this program have been involved in the attack, and in any case, it is unlikely that the people behind the bombing would rely on anyone who had been previously arrested. The risk of infiltration would be too great. The document for the Bali II operation stressed that only those without criminal records should be used for the operation.

9. Will there be another attack and if there is, will it weaken the government?

No one can say until a few of the perpetrators of this attack are arrested. But in every previous bombing, arrests have come quickly, and they have already begun. If the police succeed in arresting Noordin Top, it will not mean the terrorist threat is over, but it will certainly take out of circulation the man who has been most responsible for targeting civilians in this kind of operation.

A critical question, however, will be where the funding came from. Earlier operations have not been particularly expensive. Financing for Noordin's first major operation – the 2003 Marriott bombing – was arranged by Hambali, a JI member now in Guantanamo, through al-Qaeda contacts in Pakistan. \$50,000 was transferred from Pakistan to Thailand, of which \$30,000 was then carried to Indonesia by a Malaysian courier. Of this, \$15,000 was to be used for "operations" and the Marriott bombing cost less, because there was some left over for the Australian embassy attack.²¹ The bombers

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ This is consistent with the teachings of the Spanish-Syrian al-Qaeda ideologue, Abu Musab al-Suri, who was arrested in 2005. The document in question has references that suggest Syrian authorship but there is no indication of authorship in the Indonesian translation.

²⁰ Crisis Group Report, "Deradicalisation" and Indonesian Prisons, op. cit.

²¹ Department Of Defense, Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "Summary Of Evidence

attempted to raise additional funding through a bank robbery by members of *JI-Medan* that netted Rp.113 million (\$11,300) but none of this reached the operatives, because the man with the bank account was arrested before the money could be spent.

This operation could have been more expensive, because it involved two hotels, a stay in the hotel, sophisticated planning, and likely rental of a house in Jakarta, although no purchase of a car was necessary since a car bomb was not used. It is possible that the team could have raised the funds needed through robberies.²² But if it came from outside as before, *al-Qaeda* would have to be a likely source. This would suggest a partnership between jihadi groups inside and outside Indonesia that would raise serious concerns about future attacks.

Indonesian jihadis have old links to Pakistan and Afghanistan. From 2000 to 2003, *JI* had a cell in Karachi, some of whose members received training from *Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*, the Pakistani group responsible for the Mumbai attack. There is no reason to believe that any members of that cell, most of whom have returned to being law-abiding citizens, are currently involved with *Noordin*, but contacts in Pakistan and elsewhere do exist.

Tragic as these attacks are, there is no indication that they will have any impact on the political stability of the government. *Noordin* has never been particularly interested in Indonesian politics, and in the past, when elections have factored into his scheduling, it was not the political aspect that concerned him. For example in the Australian embassy bombing, one calculation was that the bombing had to be carried out before security tightened up a week before the 20 September 2004 presidential elections. The bombers cut it close, detonating the bomb on 9 September. This time, the attack might have been timed for just after the 8 July 2009 elections, when security might have been more relaxed.

For Combatant Status Review Tribunal - Mohd Farik Bin Amin [Zubair]", 8 March 2007; See also testimony of Gun Gun Rusman Gunawan alias Abdul Hadi, in trial dossier BP/04/III/2004/Densus 88, 5 March 2004.

²² On 12 May 2009, a bank was robbed in Kutablang, Bireuen, Aceh by a marijuana dealer named Safrizal who had been radicalised while in prison in Medan, North Sumatra. His cellmates were the *JI* men responsible for the robbery in Medan before the first *Marriott* bombing. There may be no link, but the incident shows how alert police need to be to seemingly ordinary crimes that may have more sinister implications. See "Fadli Sadama dan Jejak *JI* di Aceh", *Modus Aceh*, 20-26 July 2006.

Despite an emotional statement from President Yudhoyono immediately after the bombings in which he said there were intelligence reports suggesting that groups in Indonesia wanted to start an Iran-like uprising to protest the election results in the aftermath of the 8 July elections and prevent him from being installed as president for a second term, there is no reason to believe that any of the government's political opponents had links to the bombers; provided support, directly or indirectly; or seek to benefit politically from the fallout. All have expressed horror over the attacks.

10. What can the government do?

The most important step in the short term is to identify and arrest the perpetrators, and every assistance should be given to the Indonesian police. The police should also be open to offers of outside help where additional expertise, forensic or otherwise, could contribute substantially to the investigation.

The government should not overreact by rushing to strengthen anti-terrorism legislation; it is too easy to change the laws without understanding why some terrorist cells have taken root. Indonesia has rightly taken pride in its decision to bring terrorism suspects to trial quickly in open trials that are fully covered by the media and to release them when their terms are completed. Police efforts to work with prisoners after their release have provided a useful way of ensuring ongoing communication and information about radical networks. There were always ideologues who refused to work with police, but the fact that these attacks took place does not mean the programs were a failure. They should be expanded, but with ongoing evaluation of the results achieved.

A careful assessment of how the attackers were able to plan for such an operation without being detected would also be desirable, not to assign blame but to strengthen capacity to prevent future attacks.

The police need a nationwide system to profile certain crimes, like armed robberies of gold stores, that could be linked to terrorism, to ensure that they get immediate attention. They need to be much more vigorous about fighting abuse and corruption in the police at the local level so that people feel comfortable about reporting suspicious behaviour, and investigation skills of local police need to be improved.

Beyond law enforcement, the government needs to understand why and how fugitives as dangerous as *Noordin Top* continue to find shelter in Indonesian villages. There needs to be far more attention to a network of *JI*-affiliated schools, not to close them but to

design programs that will entail more interaction with and observation by the Indonesian government.

The government also needs to understand recruitment patterns by getting in-depth interviews with men who have already been arrested in connection with Noordin's activities and understanding how and why each individual was brought into the network. Useful counter-radicalisation programs can only be developed based on solid information rather than unproven premises such as poverty leads to radicalisation.

Some good work on prison reform has begun and should continue, so that prison officials have more information about the men in their custody, improve prison security, understand the dangers of in-house radicalisation, and build stronger programs for post-release follow-up.

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