



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

A Centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Spot Report on Police Raid in Solo, 16-17 September 2009

The Incident

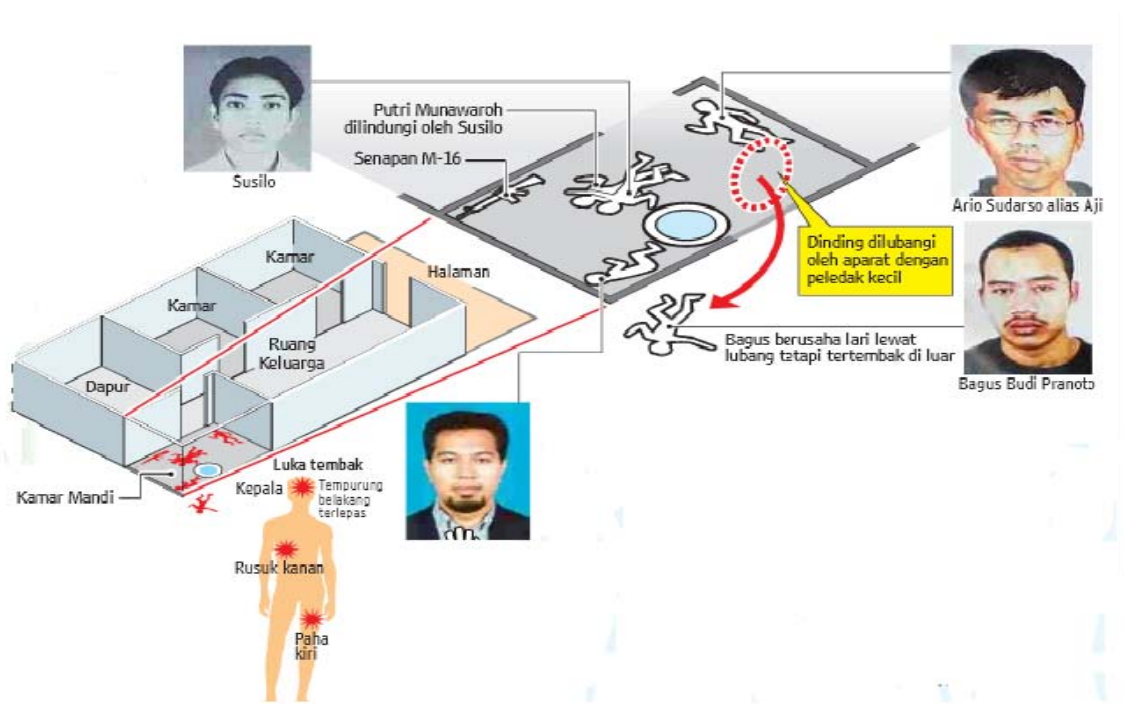
On 17 September 2009, exactly two months after the 17 July Jakarta Bombings, the Indonesian police killed Noordin M. Top, the most wanted fugitive, in a counter-terrorism raid in Solo, conducted by Detachment 88, a special Anti Terrorism unit in the Indonesian Police. The 7 hour long raid killed four terrorists - Bagus Budi Pranoto alias Urwah, Hadi alias Adit Susilo, Aryo Sudarso alias Aji, and Noordin M. Top. One woman, Putri Munawaroh, Susilo's wife, was injured and she is currently under custody.



Map of Susilo's house (Source: Koran Tempo)

The information about Noordin whereabouts was revealed after the arrest of two suspected terrorists in Gading Market, Solo on 16 September 2009. The two; Rahmat Puji Praboso alias Bejo and Supono alias Kedu, are believed to be members of Nordin's organization and were able to identify the house in Susilo where Noordin was hiding.¹ The operation began at 23.30 local time on 16 September 2009 and concluded early the morning of 17 September 2009 at 23.30 (local time).

¹ "Episode Ketukan Terakhir," *Koran Tempo*, 18 September 2009.



The blueprint of the operation's result (Source: Kompas)

The house was surrounded and remained quiet until approximately 01.00 (local time) on 17 September 2009, when the suspects began to fire at the police, who retreated to the bathroom of the house. At 05.00 (local time), police created an explosive breach in the wall of the bathroom, and at 05.19 an explosion was heard. After no activity was observed in the house for sometime police moved into the house at around 06.00 (local time), three vehicles (two ambulances and one forensic team) left the house evacuating the deceased and injured terrorists. Noordin Top reportedly died from injuries suffered in the raid (he had bullet wounds to the head, right chest, and left thigh).² In this operation, police confiscated around 200 kg explosives, one M16 with ammunition, one Baretta shotgun with ammunition, documents and a laptop that believed belonged to Noordin M Top.³

² The information is collected from different articles from Indonesian newspaper: Koran Tempo, Media Indonesia and Kompas.

³ "Kronologi Penangkapan," *Media Indonesia*, 18 September 2009.



The house after the raid
(Source: detik.com)



One of the bodies of the terrorists
(Source: detik.com)

Assessments: Has the Threat Ended?

The police success will clearly diminish the group's capabilities for sometime to come. The death of a senior bomb maker in the raid will compound the operational disruption. Compounding this, the capture of documents and a laptop could lead to a wider attack on the group and will force the group to focus on their internal security rather than operations for the immediate future. The wider information trove will help the Indonesian authorities to gain valuable insight into the group and to answer critical basic questions on the capability, size, and other operational information of the group. This should be cited as one of great achievements of Indonesian government

One key question that may become clear is how independent is Noordin from the rest of JI? It has been assumed that Noordin has broken form central Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) over strategy. JI is thought to be dismayed by the violence masterminded by Noordin's faction and was pressuring him to coordinate more with the mainstream JI. If the supposition is confirmed, it offers

tantalizing clues to possible political openings to JI. While the possibilities are suggestive, it should be noted that the armed threat has not ended. Noordin's faction was able to acquire perhaps as much as 600kg's of explosives, place them in safe houses and to plan a spectacular operation against the President of Indonesia, and the 17 July attacks in Jakarta. All of this while being under intense scrutiny. This is clearly a dangerous organization.

Additionally, there are several important actors in JI circles that are still at large. Two names have been mentioned in the aftermath 17 July Jakarta Bombings, Syaifudin Zuhri and Muhammad Syahrir alias Aing. Syaifuddin Zuhri is believed to be the recruiter of the two suicide bombers in the 17 July Jakarta bombings, while Muhammad Syahrir is suspected of having provided a house in Jati Asih, Bekasi – the safe house for the preparation the second attacks after the 17 July Jakarta bombings, which was foiled by a raid on 8 August 2009.⁴

JI has demonstrated an ability to replenish its ranks, and particularly its leadership level over the years. Noordin's faction will have to accomplish the same if they are to survive. Whom ever replaces Noordin will have to have the charisma to lead the faction, the connections to sustain the group, as well as an ability to bridge the gap between JI and this faction. One likely replacement for Noordin is Zulkarnaen. Zulkarnaen is believed to be responsible for the sending of JI member to Afghanistan from 1989-1995 and the set up of JI training camps in the Southern Philippines. Given his organizational ability, international links, and his decades in the movement Zulkarnaen and ability to heal the rift, is potentially the ideal candidate. There is no information on his whereabouts.

Beside Zulkarnaen, there are some fugitives from Poso conflict that were trained by Dr. Azahari, the JI master bomb maker who was killed in 2005. Though their capability in bomb making will not be as sophisticated as their master, Dr. Azahari, they can still conduct operations.

The critical factor in sustaining JI and its many splinters and associates is the unchallenged ideology that fuels the extremist movement. JI has taken the vanguard position within the armed portion of the extremists movement, but it rests on a wider interlocking network of schools, publications, charities and other groups that, while in most cases not violent, serve as the recruiting ground for JI and help provide a wider and deeper support and sympathy network for the extremists. Until that is addressed, there will be important tactical victories against, but no strategic defeat of JI.

⁴ "PKS politician apologizes for brothers' `terrible deeds'", *The Jakarta Post*, 25 August 2009