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**Title** : Many in Singapore say bounty for Mas Selamat's capture a good idea**By** : May Wong, Channel NewsAsia**Date** : 22 Jul 2008 2102 hrs (GMT + 8hrs)

SINGAPORE: It is a proven tactic worldwide - monetary rewards have led to the capture of notorious terrorists.

So, many in Singapore say the S\$1 million bounty for Jemaah Islamiyah fugitive Mas Selamat Kastari is a good idea. Mas Selamat, who escaped from a Singapore detention centre about five months ago, had planned to crash a hijacked plane into Singapore's Changi Airport.

Monetary rewards have led to the arrests of terrorists like Riduan Isamuddin, better known as Hambali and dubbed Southeast Asia's Osama bin Laden.

Hambali was Al-Qaeda's military commander in Southeast Asia and a Jemaah Islamiyah leader. He was captured in Thailand in August 2003 after a reward of US\$10 million was offered, and is now in US custody.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, an international terrorism expert at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, said: "The Thais were deeply motivated by an offer of several million dollars by the CIA, and the US government said that they would give (it) to a government if Hambali is arrested.

"(Following the offer)... we saw investigators specially look for him. So, certainly, money is a powerful motivator."

Hambali was responsible for a string of bombings in Indonesia, including the devastating Bali attack in October 2002 that killed 202 people.

Another terrorist, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks on the US, was also captured after a bounty offer.

Dr Gunaratna said the monetary reward for Mas Selamat must be publicised constantly, especially in the region, to remind everyone to keep a lookout for the terrorist.

Dr Gunaratna said: "This reward will keep not only the security and intelligence and law enforcement agencies alert and vigilant, but make the public also aggressively and actively look out for him. So (a) reward is important, but publicising the reward is equally important.

"(Mas Selamat) Kastari can be captured any moment, especially if there's a reward. It can be a few weeks, it can be a few months. Certainly, Kastari can hide, Kastari can run, but he will be eventually captured. Patience is key in good counter-terrorism work."

Dr Gunaratna added that the S\$1 million reward offer will also make Mas Selamat grow more suspicious of his own associates and those he has recruited.

He said: "When such a reward is offered, it will make Mas Selamat's position unstable, and he will not be able to rely on a bigger network to do attacks. So certainly, the offer of a reward at this point of time will have a big psychological and operational impact on (Mas Selamat) Kastari's mind and on his network."

Other terrorism experts Channel NewsAsia spoke to said the S\$1 million bounty is a timely and effective option to get information about Mas Selamat.

The reward, they said, is also a classic psychological warfare tactic which will put pressure on those who may be harbouring the fugitive.

Experts added the reward is a good attempt to exploit the momentum created by the recent capture of Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists in Indonesia.

The man in the street also approved of the bounty.

"This monetary reward is a good incentive, but the downside is you don't know how many people will try and make the claims just for the sake of collecting the one million dollars," said a member of the public.

"It's good for whoever can do something about it, one million dollars is a lot of money," said another.

"I don't think people (within Singapore) will be particularly motivated because of that... But I think (outside Singapore), they might be motivated because of the money," said a third.

"Not only in Singapore, if you look at other Western countries, for instance, Osama bin Laden, people have put a price on his head, so at least that's the right way, I should say, to do it," said a fourth.

- CNA/ir

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