



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

A Centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Al Qaeda Serambi Mekkah (Al Qaeda in Aceh)



Logo of the organisation calling itself the media wing of AQ in Indonesia.



Footage of training complemented with a lecture by Osama bin Laden



Footage of training complemented with a lecture by Abdullah Azzam.



Acehese man propagating on the importance of physical jihad

DETAILS			
Video Code		Date of Download	8 March 2010
Main Voice	A mixture of voices from Acehnese and Javanese men who had their face blurred in the video.	Date of Video	6 March 2010
Website	First found in alufuq.wordpress.com/ This profile is done based on posting of video in Al Tawbah/ alufuq.wordpress.com was brought down by Wordpress for violating its terms of service at on 6 March 2010.	Duration	1hr 15 mins 33 sec
Producer	Claimed to be produced by Al-Ufuq (Allegedly the media wing of Al Qaeda in Indonesia)	Language	Acehnese, Javanese, Arabic (Music background)

DESCRIPTION
<p>The video starts with quotes from the Quranic verses of <i>Annisa</i> and <i>At-Taubah</i> which are selectively chosen to emphasise the importance of physical jihad throughout the video. This is followed by the usual jihadi rhetoric which provides a cause to their struggle, one which portrays the grievances of Muslims, creating a sense of victimhood on their part. This is presented in a binary worldview which perceives a world united against Islam, devoid of the political, cultural, economical and social aspects responsible for a particular conflict. This is made available in this video through the footage of past atrocities in the conflicts of Tanjung Priok, Aceh, Poso and Ambon.</p> <p>Upon the presentation of justification of their beliefs, physical training footages that symbolize their effort towards the attainment of their beliefs followed. These footages show groups of men running obstacle courses with rifles by their side. They are accompanied by speeches by Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden which yet again highlight the imperative nature of physical jihad today. However, the faces of the men in the video are all blurred. Benefiting from the advertising tactic that teaches the art of persuasion through a constant repetition of a message, the notion of an imperative jihad is reiterated by speeches made by Acehnese and Javanese individuals in the training camps. They urge for the synergy of the Muslim groups including the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and The Indonesian Islamic State (NII) to unite in waging physical jihad, "To all members of Jemaah Islamiyah, unite! Jihad is not waged with pens, <i>sarung</i> (Cloth worn from the waist down) and <i>pici</i> (rimless cap). This is highlighted vis-à-vis their mockery of the trivial proselytisation that other groups were focusing too much of their funding on. As complained by the last featured Javanese (Deduced from the Javanese language he spoke) male in the video, that wrong move has led to the poor treatment of the mujahid in</p>

training who had to survive hard conditions including having to live on meager meals

ANALYSIS

The nature of the online Islamist extremist sites remains reactive and exerts a mirroring effect on offline events. However, it provides another dimension and space for the dissemination of the *jihadi* ideology and message. Though there are still doubts on the online existence of the Al Qaeda in Indonesia as expressed in the earlier video released on 6 October 2009, this now seems trivial as online participants focused their attention on the offline existence of the group itself. This could be fuelled by two elements; visuals of training footage in the video; Indonesian authorities' crackdown on the training grounds of the alleged Al Qaeda in Indonesia since 22 February 2010.^{1 2}

As much as it is hard to confirm the identity of the group offline, it is even harder to establish its identity online. While experts such as Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group and intelligence analyst Dynno Chressbon expressed uncertainty regarding the group's links to Jemaah Islamiyah and ultimately Al Qaeda³, the authenticity of the group's presence online manifested in the video can only be gauged through the visuals and audio of Javanese and Acehnese speaking men in training footages complete with jungle setting and backdrop.

It is especially difficult to track the online authenticity of the group because of the inconsistencies in logos and names used in the materials it has claimed to post since October 2009. For instance, the first video was without audio and claimed to have had the appearance of 'Abu Fatima Al Indonisi' as well as produced by 'Al Qaeda in Indonesia'. The second seems to have been produced by 'Al Ufuq' that claims to be the media wing of 'Al Qaeda Serambi Mekkah'. Another statement released on 27th February stating its endurance against the Indonesian authorities' crackdown on its facilities claimed to have been written by 'Abu Saif Al Aceh' from 'Al Qaeda Serambi Mekkah'.

Although it is imperative that we identify the authenticity of the group and its materials online, it is ultimately the perspectives molded in online participants that would create an impact. After all, the fundamental role of online materials is to serve as propaganda to gain support for terrorist groups on the ground. Nevertheless, this video whether it authentic or not, could arguably very well attain its aim of gathering support for the burgeoning terrorist group in Aceh today.

¹ The Jakarta Post, Police arrest 14, confirm one dead in Aceh raid, 5 March 2010
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/03/05/police-arrest-14-confirm-one-dead-aceh-raid.html>

² Viva News, Densus Bekuk 13 Orang Diduga Teroris di Aceh, 2 March 2010
http://nasional.vivanews.com/news/read/133346-densus_bekuk_13_orang_diduga_teroris_di_aceh

³ ICPVTR, Weekly Country Report, 8 March 2010
<http://www.pvtr.org/pdf/weekly%20reports/Indonesia/March10/Indonesia-01-07March10.pdf>