Monthly Informatics Report

Developments in the Bahasa Indonesia Websites

February 2012

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of significant developments and trends of the online extremist websites and communities during the month of February 2012. For the purpose of this report, Islamist extremist online sites refer to those propagating violence, or have members affiliated to terrorist organizations.

Summary of Significant Developments

- Islamic Defenders’ Front (FPI) was defended online because its members were active volunteers in tragedies and have helped Indonesians in need amidst call for its abolition by Liberal Islam Network (JIL) and rejection by the Dayak\(^1\) community.

- Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) posted response after it was categorized as a terrorist group by the United States. JAT accused the United States of having links with Al-Qaeda and attempting to repress Indonesian Islamist activists.

- Several materials on the Syrian revolution were posted in the extremist online sites. The documents were supportive of the Syrian revolution and called its audience to support the revolution.

\(^1\) Indigenous people who originated from Borneo. Today, apart from Borneo, they are also found in different parts of Indonesia and Malaysia.
Explanation of Sources

Bahasa Indonesia Websites

The Bahasa Indonesia sites which have been selected for monitoring have been evaluated and determined to represent important nodes of discussion and information exchange for Islamists in Indonesia and the neighboring region. This web presence is considerably smaller compared to the Arabic websites, and has a local focus on Indonesia or nearby countries. Some of these sites have an element of interactivity, whereby members may contribute to content. Unlike the Arabic sites where there is more user input, content on most regional sites is controlled by an administrator or a group of administrators.

This report will cover three key extremist and radical websites – arrahmah.com, muslimdaily.net and al-tawbah.com. Arrahmah.com and muslimdaily.net are run by and associated with high-profile Islamic extremist figures of the region. The former is owned and managed by Mohamed Jibril, son of Abu Jibriel - one of the key founders of Jemaah Islamiyah and current emir of Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia. Mohamed Jibril was also recently arrested for allegedly funding the July 2009 twin hotel bombings in Jakarta through links with Al-Qaeda. The latter is managed by the son of Abu Bakar Basyir, the former spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, former emir of Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia as well as current head of Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid. Al-tawbah.com or Forum Islam Al Tawbah is a password protected website that is among the most active in the region. This website is regularly updated with potentially dangerous materials such as motivation on jihad, videos of operations and bomb making manuals, cyber warfare manuals, combat training manuals and others. As part of a more holistic approach in analyzing online extremist activity, the report will also include extremist blogs and personal/group websites that do not have the same high traffic volume as the main sites listed above but contain useful information nonetheless.

*Full URL of sources gathered will not be disclosed in this report.*
User Statistics

Featured below is the percentage of a site’s total visitor access from a given country. The main objective of featuring this information on a monthly basis is to capture the country distribution of the visitors for each website. The monitoring of trends over a few months could shed light on the different reasons for which the website is being viewed. This is especially so when done in comparison to events and occurrence for that month. This analysis would then shed light on whether mainstream reporting could underscore the website’s presence in the global Islamist extremist community.

The data presented is for the top countries from which visits originate. They are gathered from alexa.com. Data is available only for select websites and is extrapolated from a sample of traffic captured from the website. The true geographical locations of users employing proxy servers may not be represented accurately. Data in this instance represents traffic to the site on 27th February 2012. The following online sites have been chosen because of the bulk of articles selected from them for this report. We acknowledge that the tool used to gather these statistics bear weaknesses, but it is thus far the best tool detected for the gathering of the little nonetheless useful information reflected in this section.

arrahmah.com

Arrahmah media

Percentage of a site’s total visitor access from a given country:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com) is a comprehensive web information company that provides traffic data and rankings for websites.
3 There is no information available on the percentage of site’s total visitor access from al-tawbah.com
The month of February 2011 observed a new development in counter extremism efforts in Indonesia in which the community appears to be fighting back extremism on its own volition. *Front Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defenders’ Front-FPI) was rejected by the Dayak community in Central Kalimantan and urged to cease its existence by *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (Liberal Islam Network-JIL). These developments were updated regularly in the Bahasa Indonesia Islamist extremist online sites. The updates condemned the demonstrations and demonstrators who were against FPI, and defended the hard-line group FPI as the upholders of truth. They further asserted that the FPI had been victimized by ignorant and misinformed communities in Indonesia.

**Dayak Protestors Portrayed as Violent and Intolerant**

A negative perception of the Dayak community was propagated by the Bahasa Indonesia extremist online sites. The Dayak community was portrayed as intolerant villains who had used violence against FPI in their protests and demonstrations against the presence of FPI in Central Kalimantan. They were also described to be a community who is ignorant of FPI’s contribution to the society. The Dayak community was reported to have responded to this description when they stopped an FPI delegation from entering Central Kalimantan. On 11 February 2011, they gathered and waited for the delegation at the Bandara Tjilik Riwut airport with ‘sharp weapons’.
Apart from that, they were also reported to have ransacked the house Mukri Bahasim, a nominated FPI coordinator in Central Kalimantan, and burnt FPI banners used for mass gatherings in the state. They had also physically assaulted a FPI preacher and planned to kill the FPI delegation of leaders. The FPI delegation had flown into the state to attend an FPI election and religious event of Maulid Nabi (An event which celebrates Prophet Muhammad in remembrance of his birthday). Eventually, the FPI election had to be cancelled. The Maulid Nabi event continued without the FPI delegation. With the help of the District Military Command (KODIM), the FPI delegation left the state through Banjarmasin According to FPI leader Rizieq Syihab, FPI had worked well with the Bupati (Government officer) and Kapolres (Head of the state Police) in planning for the event. He asserted that it was disrupted by provocation of Central Kalimantan Governor Agustinas Teras Narang, Brigadier General Damianus Jackie and Yansen Binti, a popular Dayak figure.

These ill sentiments are not representative of the whole Dayak community. Several reports have highlighted that the protestors do not represent the Dayak community. For instance, an article in MuslimDaily features Haji Budi, a prominent leader in the Dayak Community, stated that the Dayak community supports FPI and that the establishment of FPI administration in Central Kalimantan. He further stated that despite the recent incidents, the establishment of FPI administration will still be realized. Other reports also defended the Dayak Community and explained that the Dayak community had been maligned by a group of ‘fasis, rasis dan anaris’ led by Yansen Binti. Yansen Binti is reported on the extremist sites as a leader of a large drug syndicate in Central Kalimantan.

**JIL Regarded as Unislamic**

A group of JIL protestors demonstrated on Valentine’s Day against the FPI with the theme of ‘Indonesia Tanpa FPI, Indonesia Tanpa Kekerasan’ (Indonesia without FPI, Indonesia without Violence). This demonstration was labeled on extremist sites as Un-Islamic. In the same vein, extremist sites also called for restrictions on the lifestyle of JIL and its supporters which were deemed as Un-Islamic.

The JIL demonstrators and its supporters present at the protest were described by as ‘gerombolan bencong, pria rambut gimbal dan cewek perokok (A gathering of transvestite, men with curly hair and women smokers) by extremist websites. JIL attempted to defend its image and argued that the demonstration was intentionally held on Valentine’s Day, a day which celebrates love, to emphasize on JIL’s anti violence stance.
**FPI’s Contribution to the Indonesian Society**

The FPI attempted to defend against its negative image of its protestors by emphasizing its contribution to the Indonesian society. Religious leaders such as Dr Mu’inudinillah Basri of the Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir insist that FPI is protecting the Indonesian society from tragedies through its activities of ‘Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Munkar (Loyalty and hatred). It was claimed that these demonstrations were held to protest against vice and sinful activities. Dr Mu’inudinillah Basri explained that the abolition of FPI will cause Indonesia to suffer tragedies, “…pembubaran FPI akan menjadi percepatan turunnya azab dari Allah (FPI dismissal will accelerate the befalling of tragedy from Allah)’. He also called for the FPI to confront JIL and it Dayak protestors with jihad and war.

Apart from conducting ‘Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Munkar’, FPI was also praised as active volunteers who have contributed tremendously when the society was in need, namely during the Tsunami tragedy in Aceh and major floods in Jakarta.

**Christian Supporting FPI**

In an attempt to prove its acceptance by the Indonesian Society, FPI posted a letter written by a Christian on its webpage, Arrahmah.com. The letter titled, ‘Saya, seorang Kristiani yang mendukung FPI (I am a Christian who supports FPI) was written a woman who claimed to be a Catholic, a Lia Christine. This letter was taken from kompasiana.com, a secular news online site. The author stated her support for the FPI and reasoned that the FPI was not as violent as the mainstream news frames them to be. She also stated that the FPI operates to eradicate vice in the community. She argued that this conclusion could be arrived at if one researches on FPI and its activities.

The posting of this letter in an extremist site could signify two things. First, the extremists are using such support as leverage as it attempts to gain support in other communities. Second, the extremists are tolerant and accepting of other communities should they support their cause. There are also speculations that Lia Christine is not a Catholic. This speculation does not undermine the significance of its presence in the extremist online domain.

**Extremists’ Use of the Internet**

These online activities reiterate the notion that the Bahasa Indonesia extremist community uses the online platform for its own agendas. It uses this platform to counter the views of information
found in the mainstream news; and provides an alternative news source for the Indonesian society. Apart from that, instances of acceptance by communities of other beliefs could signify that the extremist communities’ are interested in gaining support from other religious audiences. Continuous observation on other religious communities lending support to Bahasa Indonesia extremist community is important to ascertain the impact of extremists’ use of the internet in the Indonesian society.

**JAT Reiterates its Innocence**

Members of Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) raised allegations on the internet against the United States this month. First, they accused the United States of having links with Al Qaeda. Second, they ridiculed it as being scared of Islamic activists. Third, they insisted that the United States is maligning Abu Bakar Ba’asyir amidst the lack of evidence. They assert that the United States is doing so to convict the terrorist spiritual leader of a harsher sentence. This allegations were raised as a response to the United State’s latest action of categorizing the JAT as a terrorist group. The United States claims that JAT is behind terrorist activities in 2011 such as the September Church bombing, attacks on the Indonesian Police and bank robberies aimed at funding the group’s military capabilities. Apart from placing the JAT in the blacklist, the US also imposed sanctions on 3 JAT members and forbid US businesses and citizens from having any transactions with them. The acting JAT leader is Mochammad Achwan. His fundraiser and recruiter is Abdul Rosyid Ridho Ba’asyir while his spokesman is Son Hadi. These individuals are known JAT members playing important roles in the organization.

Extremist online sites posted JAT responses to the US labeling from at least 3 prominent JAT members. Acting leader Mochammad Achwan stated that he treats the blacklist and sanctions placed on him as a joke and insists that they are all part of a conspiracy theory aimed at pushing for harsher sentence for Abu Bakar Ba’asyir. He also claimed that it was the US and not JAT that has close ties with Al Qaeda. He is reported to be calm and in a joking mood when he made these statements. Mochammad views are also shared by another JAT member Abdul Rahim Ba’asyir who is the son of Abu Bakar Ba’asyir. He adds on to Mochammad’s statements by asserting that the blacklisting and sanctions show the US’s malevolence in its repression against Muslim activists. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir views on this issue were released in a JAT linked online site. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir expressed discontent with the Detachment 88 and the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT). He claimed that they are working with the United States in an attempt to convict him of a harsher sentence. He further commented that the US and Detachment 88 were very fearful at the present due to the ongoing book review of “Ya... Mereka Memang Thagut (Yes... they are apostates)” written by Aman Abdurrahman. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir asserts that this book will expose all the lies of the US, Detachment 88 and BNPT.
This statements made by prominent JAT members on the internet signifies that Indonesian terrorist groups’ are adept at using of the internet to counter mainstream views and news reporting.

**Call to Support Syrian Revolution**

Several materials on the Syrian revolution were posted in the extremist online sites. All the material sourced were in support of the Syrian Revolution and and called for its support. These materials are gathered from both local Indonesian and international sources. They attempt to justify their support for the Syrian demonstrators by portraying the Assad government to be malevolent and apostate that needed to be toppled for the freedom of Muslims in Syria. The followings are descriptions of some of these materials.

One of the materials sourced claimed that the Assad government and Alawite military were conducting atrocious acts of torture on Muslims in Syria. In an English article posted in Arrahmah.com, the Alawite military were described to have stripped, killed and skinned women, murdered babies and electrocuted prisoners. They further claimed that the Alawite military was forcing prisoners and their families to surrender to the regime and to regard Bashar al-Assad as their God. This portrayal of malevolence was echoed by Ayman Al Zawahiri in his latest video on Syria, Indonesian Hartono Ahmad Jaiz and Ghiyath Abdul Baqi bin Ibrahim. In an approximately eight minute video titled, 'ila al-amam ya usud asy-syam (Onwards, Lions of Syria)’, Al Zawahiri called for Muslims in Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. He called them to rise and assist their brothers and sisters in Syria with all their ‘life, possessions, views and whatever information they possess’. Al Zawahiri regards the Assad regime’s oppression of Syrian Muslims as a phenomenon that is part of a conspiracy of the West, America, Israel, Arab league and Turkey. He also advised protestors against the Assad regime to refrain from accepting help from the West or from America and to continue on their fight with happiness to attain freedom in the path of God.

In Indonesia, the portrayal of the atrocities of the Assad regime was propagated on the ground. Online articles posted sermons on ‘Tragedies in Syria’ conducted by Hartono Ahmad Jaiz and Ghiyath Abdul Baqi bin Ibrahim in the Islamic Centre of Islam in Indonesia and in several mosques throughout Indonesia. In his sermons, Ghiyath Abdul Baqi emphasized on the importance of spreading the news of malevolence perpetrated by the Assad regime to the Indonesian society. He reasoned that the awareness would then allow for discussions on ways and actions on how Indonesians can assist Syrian protestors.
Apart from this portrayal of malevolence, ill sentiments on the Assad regime were aggravated by reports on polytheist Alawites, Assad supporters and military who worship Assad instead of Allah. They were described to be deviated Muslims who had forced monotheist Muslims and protestors to convert into their religion and beliefs. This is especially observed in a two minute English video posted in Arrahmah.com. It showed pro-Assad supporters disregarding Allah and glorifying Assad as their God above Allah. This video included a picture slide show of Assad supporters prostrating on Assad’s pictures.