

# STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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TO COMBAT EXTREMISM,  
HOW TO FRAME RELIGION MATTERS:  
SOUTHEAST ASIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Takeshi Kohno

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THE ROOTS OF INDONESIA'S RESILIENCE  
AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Jamhari & Testriono

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REVISITING THE DUSUN NYOIR REBELLION  
IN NARATHIWAT (SOUTH THAILAND), APRIL 1948

Christopher Mark Joll

# **STUDIA ISLAMIKA**



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## The Roots of Indonesia's Resilience Against Violent Extremism

**Abstract:** *This article explores Indonesia's institutional foundations to understand the country's resilience against violent extremism. First, Pancasila has been the foundation of an inclusive state that can bind Indonesian diversity. Second, multiparty elections allow Islamist groups to participate in politics and express their aspirations constitutionally, thus moderating their violent strategies. Third, the support of the largest Islamic organizations, especially NU and Muhammadiyah, for counterterrorism and law enforcement against extremist orchestrated by the government. Both organizations exhibit a stronghold essential to countering the Salafi jihadist ideology. However, although infrequent and small in scale, the continued acts of violent extremism in Indonesia have shown that there is still room for the terrorist ideology to grow. Some Islamic educational institutions deliberately educate students to support Islamism, and some students are introduced to Salafi jihadist ideology. Such a development should serve as a warning for the government to pay more attention to the curriculum and teachers, especially in Islamic educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Violent Extremism, Pancasila, Political Institutions, Islamic Organizations.



**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mengeksplorasi fondasi kelembagaan Indonesia untuk memahami ketahanan negara terhadap ekstremisme kekerasan. Pertama, Pancasila telah menjadi dasar negara inklusif yang dapat mengikat kebhinekaan Indonesia. Kedua, Pemilu multipartai memungkinkan kelompok-kelompok Islamis untuk terlibat dalam politik dan mengekspresikan aspirasi mereka secara konstitusional, sehingga memoderasi strategi kekerasan mereka. Ketiga, dukungan organisasi-organisasi Islam terbesar, terutama NU dan Muhammadiyah, untuk kontraterorisme dan penegakan hukum terhadap kelompok ekstremis yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah. Kedua organisasi Islam tersebut menjadi benteng penting untuk melawan ideologi jihadi salafi. Namun, berlanjutnya aksi ekstremisme kekerasan di Indonesia, meski tidak sering dan dalam skala kecil, menunjukkan bahwa masih ada ruang bagi ideologi teroris untuk tumbuh. Beberapa lembaga pendidikan Islam sengaja mendidik siswanya untuk mendukung Islamisme di mana beberapa di antaranya memperkenalkan ideologi jihadi salafi. Perkembangan tersebut menjadi peringatan bagi pemerintah untuk lebih memperhatikan kurikulum dan guru, khususnya di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Indonesia, Ekstremisme Kekerasan, Pancasila, Lembaga Politik, Ormas Islam.

**ملخص:** يستكشف هذا المقال الأسس المؤسسية لإندونيسيا لفهم قدرة الدولة على الصمود في مواجهة التطرف العنيف. أولاً، أصبحت البانتشاسيلا أساساً للدولة الشاملة يمكن أن يربط التنوع الإندونيسي. ثانياً، تسمح الانتخابات متعددة الأحزاب للجماعات الإسلامية بالمشاركة في السياسة، والتعبير عن تطلعاتهم دستورياً، وبالتالي تعديل استراتيجياتهم العنيفة. ثالثاً، دعم أكبر المنظمات الإسلامية، ولاسيما نخضة العلماء، والمحمدية، لمكافحة الإرهاب، وتطبيق القانون ضد الجماعات المتطرفة من قبل الحكومة، بحيث تعتبر هاتان المنظمتان الإسلاميتان حصناً هاماً ضد الفكر السلفي الجهادي. ومع ذلك، فإن استمرار أعمال التطرف العنيف في إندونيسيا، على الرغم من ندرة حدوثها وعلى نطاق ضيق، يظهر أنه لا يزال هناك مجال لنمو أيديولوجية الإرهاب. وتقوم بعض المؤسسات التعليمية الإسلامية بتعليم طلابها لدعم الإسلام السياسي، في حين تقدم بعضها الأيديولوجية السلفية الجهادية. ويعدّ هذا التطور بمثابة تحذير للحكومة لإيلاء المزيد من الاهتمام للمناهج والمعلمين، وخاصة في المؤسسات التعليمية الإسلامية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** إندونيسيا، التطرف العنيف، البانتشاسيلا، المؤسسات السياسية، المنظمات الإسلامية.

Democratic Indonesia has seen the rise and fall of violent extremist groups over the last two decades. Inspired by Salafi-jihadism, violent extremists believe that Muslims must return to the practices and precepts believed to have been followed by the Prophet and his immediate followers, and that jihad<sup>1</sup> or violent enforcement is legitimate (Wiktorowicz 2005). Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) represents one of the most prominent contemporary extremist groups in Indonesia. The group is responsible for the Bali bombings of October 2002 and the Australian Embassy bombing of September 2004 (ICG Asia Report 2004). Some literature traces back the roots of JI to the Darul Islam (DI) movement that struggled to establish an Islamic state and considered their war against the Indonesian Government to be a jihad (ICG Asia Report 2004; Singh 2017; Solahudin 2013; Temby 2010). Some splinter groups, which broke away from either DI or JI, have emerged, such as Ring Banten and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) (ICG Asia Report 2007; IPAC Report 2021; IPAC Short Briefing 2020). In addition, a number of extremist groups supporting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) continue to emerge in Indonesia, including Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), Mujahidin of Eastern Indonesia (Mujahidin Indonesia Timur, MIT), and Muhajirin Anshar Tauhid (MAT).<sup>2</sup>

The Government has taken a number of measures, primarily through the strategies of securitization and criminalization of terrorism<sup>3</sup> (Van Damme 2007; Wibisono 2015) and counterterrorism approaches (Lamchek 2018). These strategies are relatively successful in procuring resources to manage the threat, and the Government has gained public support for its efforts on the war on terror and making the existence of violent extremist groups short-lived. The increasing effectiveness of the police, combined with widespread public revulsion toward terror attacks and the imprisonment of the key masterminds of major terror attacks, have fragmented many Indonesian violent extremist groups, and the frequency and deadliness of their attacks has diminished. In short, in terms of scale and number of deaths caused, the Indonesian Government has been able to curb terrorist activity. What makes Indonesia so resilient in dealing with violent extremism?

Existing studies on violent extremism in Indonesia have focused primarily on genealogy, ideology and networks, as well as factors that caused terrorist acts in the country (van Bruinessen 2002; ICG Asia

Report 2004; Solahudin 2013; Karnavian 2014; Hwang 2018; Hwang and Schulze 2018). Other studies have emphasized the Government's security and counter-terrorism strategies for dealing with terrorism (Van Damme 2007; Wibisono 2015; Lamchek 2018). However, a discussion that focuses on the resilience of the Indonesian nation state against violent extremism is still understudied. In addition, Indonesia has a relatively long history of dealing with religious-based violent extremism that can be traced to the early years of state formation. Nevertheless, although several acts of terrorism have posed serious threats to domestic security, terrorism has never really undermined Indonesia's resilience as a nation state (Jones 2013). Hence, it is necessary to examine the factors that are fundamental for Indonesia's resilience to this perpetual challenge.

### **Resilience Against Violent Extremism**

The concept of resilience concerns "social entities—be they individuals, organizations or communities—and their abilities or capacities to tolerate, absorb, cope with and adjust to environmental and social threats of various kinds" (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013, 8). The definition reveals three underlying principles that constitute the concept of resilience, which include persistability, adaptability, and transformability (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013). This study focuses on the persistability dimension of social resilience: The ability of many communities in Indonesia to persist and protect themselves from all kinds of hazardous events or threats. Scholars usually consider threats that either originate externally, with regard to social units, or threats that stem from internal dynamics (Gallopín 2006). In Indonesia, the threat of violent extremism may originate internally, such as *Jemaah Islamiyah*, or stem from external origins, such as the global jihadist movements of *Al Qaeda* and *ISIS*.

How resilient is Indonesia's nation state against violent extremism? According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index,<sup>4</sup> Indonesia ranked 37th (the score of 4.6, where ten is the most troubled by terrorism and violence), indicating a medium impact from terrorism. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines ranked 10th, meaning the country suffered more trouble from terrorism than Indonesia. Indonesia's rank is also better than its neighboring countries, such as Thailand (21st) and Myanmar (25th), but lower than Malaysia (76th). Furthermore, the percentage of

people in Indonesia who are very concerned about Islamist extremism<sup>5</sup> is below the global average of 42%. Approximately 20% of people in the country are concerned about Islamist extremism, meaning terrorism is not the most significant concern.

A 2015 report by the Pew Research Center, collected in 11 countries with significant Muslim populations, revealed that Indonesia is among those whose people expressed overwhelmingly negative views of ISIS. According to the report, six-in-ten or more had unfavorable opinions of ISIS in a diverse group of nations in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> A 2015 national survey conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) found that 95.3% said they knew about the existence of ISIS but firmly stated that terror acts by the organization should not occur in Indonesia. The rejection of ISIS is evenly expressed by respondents across all categories of gender, rural-urban residence, age, education, occupation, income, region, ethnicity, and religion. Only 0.3% of respondents had a favorable opinion of ISIS existing in Indonesia.<sup>7</sup>

The 2017 national survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI), UN Women, and the Wahid Foundation, revealed that only 9% of Indonesian Muslims support radical Islamic organizations that use violence to achieve their goals, including ISIS, JI, Al Qaeda, JAD, and Islam Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI).<sup>8</sup> Another survey by SMRC in 2017 found that most Indonesians reject the idea of changing the Pancasila state into a caliphate—a reference to the Islamic state.<sup>9</sup> Around 79.3% of respondents thought that the Republic of Indonesia, which relies on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, is best for the Indonesian people. Conversely, only 9.2% thought the caliphate was the best state foundation for Indonesia. In terms of the public acceptance of ISIS, more than 80% of those aware of the organization reject it, and only 2.7% agree or strongly agree with it. Furthermore, almost all people who disapproved with ISIS asked the state to ban its existence in Indonesia and said it is a real threat to the country.<sup>10</sup>

The empirical evidence above reveals Indonesia's resilience to terrorism. While Indonesia's Global Terrorism Index score is at a medium level, which reflects that the country still has a problem in comparison to the countries at the top of the index, Indonesia's rank is evidence of the country's resilience against terrorism and violent extremism compared with other Muslim majority countries. A small number of supporters of violent extremism, and a much smaller who have joined

violent extremist groups, reveals that terrorist campaigns have not succeeded in attracting a significant followership in the country. As the biggest Muslim majority country in the world, the world's fourth most populous nation, and an archipelagic state, Indonesian's resilience against terrorism is interesting to examine.

### **Institutional Foundations of Indonesia's Resilience Against Violent Extremism**

Indonesia's political institutions provide foundations for Indonesia's resilience against terrorism. Institutions here refer to the rules of the game in a society that constrain and shape human interaction (North 1990, 3). Institutions, both formal (written: constitutions, laws, property rights) and informal (unwritten: sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), evolve through history and can have long-lasting consequences. Current institutionalists argue that once a set of institutions becomes embedded, actors adapt their strategies in ways that reflect but also strengthen the logic of the system (Pierson 2000; Thelen 1999). Therefore, formal institutions, represented mainly by the country's Constitution, constrain the behavior of political actors when they make it in their interest to adhere to constitutional rules and procedures (Alberts 2009).

#### *Pancasila*

As Indonesia's state philosophy, Pancasila (some scholars call it a national ideology or state ideology) represents the most crucial institution and has a role in explaining why most Indonesians remain tolerant and pluralistic. As its name suggests, Pancasila consists of five principles: belief in one God, humanitarianism, national unity, representative democracy, and social justice. The Pancasila has also been linked to the values encapsulated in the national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", an old Javanese phrase officially translated as "unitary in diversity", which is similar to the "e pluribus unum" (out of many, one) principle of the United States (Templer 2020, 18). These principles have been a foundation of modern Indonesia and the basis of the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) that instituted the foundation of law for Indonesia (Prawiranegara 1984).

How does Pancasila influence the behavior of political actors and citizens? Pancasila, along with the 1945 Constitution, establish the

basic rules and procedures of politics and governance in Indonesia. They provide legitimacy and efficacy for the government and its political system to work, because the constitution provides institutionalized protections, predictability, and peaceful resolution of political conflicts (Alberts 2009). It generates direct incentives for political actors to sustain the rules, since the rules benefit them as long as they comply, including by protecting political and civil rights. Therefore, Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution influence political behavior by way of creating opportunities and constraints within which actors pursue their goals. It articulates collective goals and establishes the institutional architecture of the Indonesian state.

One important point to note is how Pancasila does not mention Islam in its principles, yet speaks of the belief in “One God” as one of the five guiding principles of the nation. This implies equal respect of the State towards, and mutual tolerance of, the recognized religions (van Bruinessen 2018, 5). The Pancasila underscores pluralism because it emphasizes monotheism rather than a specific faith. Hosen (2005) argues that Pancasila is considered a compromise between secularism (the principle of separation of the state from religious institutions) and religiosity, where religion (especially Islam) becomes one of the important pillars of the state. It is a common belief among Indonesians that the country is neither a secular nor an Islamic state (Hosen 2005, 424). The idea of a Pancasila state has consistently been put forward as the alternative to an Islamic state. Scholars have praised Indonesia for its deliberate choice of religious pluralism (Hefner 2001; Künkler and Stepan 2013).

As a result, while acknowledging the importance of religion, many Indonesians respect their culture and celebrate diversity. Pancasila has been considered a set of principles that can bind Indonesians together regardless of their differences. For example, all political parties engaged in electoral politics and most civil society organizations would say that they support Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Pancasila has been a bedrock for Indonesian diversity and culture and thus provides a strong counter-identity to the narratives of extremist groups (Strickler 2016). The campaigns and attempts at establishing an Islamic state by *Jl* and other extremist groups deal with strong opposition from the majority of Indonesians who believe that Pancasila should be the basis for the state and its constitution.

In political, legal, and constitutional terms, Pancasila is the foundation for the Constitution and all rules of the game in the country. Furthermore, as the alternative to Islam and as the non-Islamic philosophical option, Pancasila can be interpreted as facilitating a state role in Islam and vice-versa for those who accept the idea of an Indonesian nation (Ricklefs 2012). The democratization of politics since 1998 has been accompanied by an increase in the number of Islamic laws in Indonesia.<sup>11</sup> Efforts by some Islamist political parties to promote Islamic-based policies have been successful in some regions, shown by the sharia regulations that have proliferated across the archipelago, where laws governing morality were tightened (Buehler 2016; Buehler and Muhtada 2016). Typically, sharia-based regulations in Indonesia spread across jurisdictions where local Islamist groups situated outside the party system had an established presence (Buehler and Muhtada 2016). However, recent years have seen the aspiration to formulate sharia-based policies wither and fade. It confirms that sharia regulations have partly been the politicization of religions given the presence of direct elections for legislature and executive government posts following democratization, where Islamist groups tried to take advantage of political processes. However, such Islamist aspirations have always had to deal with the majority population who still believe in policy based on Pancasila and the respect for diversity of culture and religion.

A 2019 survey conducted by the LSI found that 86.5% of the country's Muslims accept Pancasila, together with the 1945 Constitution.<sup>12</sup> Those Muslim respondents believe the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are the best options currently available for Indonesian citizens. The survey found only 4% of respondents against the Pancasila on the basis it contradicted Islamic laws. Those who are against the Pancasila, one of them is ex-JI leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, consider Pancasila as *haram* (forbidden) because it underpins the Indonesian State, which is itself unacceptable because national identities divide and thus weaken the global Islamic *ummah* (Muslim community).

Moderate and liberal Muslim figures have no difficulty in supporting Pancasila. For moderates it merits support because Pancasila (a) endorses nationalism, which also (b) religionizes the public space (Ricklefs 2012). The liberals support it as a means of reclaiming a secular or religious neutral public space. Many believe the importance of

reinforcing Pancasila as the national ideology, as a means of preventing unconstitutional conduct, such as violent extremism.

### *Islam and the State in Indonesia*

The state's accommodationist nature with regard to Islam has been an essential aspect of Indonesian politics that has moderated Indonesian Islam. The accommodationist state has provided opportunities for Muslim political aspirations to be included in the State's rules and policies. The Government administers some aspects of Islam, such as Islamic education and hajj, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The national legislature and executive have also enacted laws, applicable only to Muslims, which incorporate Islamic legal norms into national law. For example, Indonesia created religious courts (*peradilan agama*) that have jurisdiction over family law, inheritance, and Islamic finance (Butt 2010). The positive relationship between the State and Islam has resulted in a growing development of moderate political activism. As a consequence, the accommodationist state in relation to Islam has led to the emergence of an inclusive state that binds Indonesian diversity and hampers the development of extremist Islamic views.

Indonesia has witnessed an uneasy relationship between Islam and the State across its history (Effendy 2009). Issues arose relating to the position of public religion in the plural society of Indonesia, including the choice between Islamic law and secular law, issues relating to whether Indonesia should be a Pancasila state or an Islamic state, and its relationship to sharia (Hosen 2005; Künkler 2017; Ropi 2017). The latter, regarding the search for the proper relationship between the State and Islam, namely the extent to which the state should be responsible for upholding Islamic values, has been a contested dispute in Indonesian politics for decades<sup>13</sup> (Bourchier 2019; Hosen 2005).

The political marginalization of political Islam during Soeharto's authoritarian rule had pushed Muslim activists and intellectuals to find a more substantive and integrative political approach to the State to form a synthesis and harmony between Islam and the State (Effendy 2009). Despite the constitutional basis for religion, relations between the two remained unchanged during the 32-year period of the New Order, although some variation in how the State engaged in Islamic organizations occurred (Künkler 2017, 199). In responding to the new approaches of Muslim intellectuals and activists, the Soeharto regime



was accommodating in various aspects, including institutionally, structurally, and culturally (Effendy 2009). For example, in 1989, the House of Representatives passed Law No. 7 of 1989 on Religious Courts, which elevated the Islamic courts to courts of first instance, and created an Islamic appeals court. In 1990, Soeharto's government facilitated the establishment of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), and his cabinet minister at the time, B.J. Habibie, became its leader (Effendy 2009).

In 1991, the Ministry of Religious Affairs provided a standard recommendation of Islamic jurisprudence with the 'Compilation of Islamic Law' (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, KHI), that attempted to achieve a standardized application of Islamic law (Künkler 2017, 198–99). Similarly, the Islamic organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah have developed a policy of accommodation with the State. In many ways they avoid conflicts with the rulers, maneuvering themselves into a position of accommodation with the regime (Liong 1988). Muslim intellectuals and activists have also developed an accommodationist attitude towards the regime. For example, Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid both accepted a position in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in 1990s. The Muslim Students' Association (HMI), another example, entered the official State sponsored youth organization, the National Committee of Indonesian Youth (KNPI) (Liong 1988).

In terms of administrative and legal accommodations, Indonesia can put sharia under state control while keeping Pancasila values as its primary basis. The accommodationist state concerning Islam has, to some extent, shown the success political actors have had in moderating Islam by taking some aspects of sharia and adopting them for the Indonesian context. Butt (2010) notes several aspects of Indonesia's accommodation strategies in the administrative and legal realm. First, the Indonesian Government has confined the operation of Islamic law to certain narrow fields that exclude public and criminal law. Second, the State has adopted Islamic norms that are producing fewer conservative interpretations of Islamic law. For example, in marriage law, polygamy is permissible only in very limited circumstances, and only with a religious court's prior approval. Third, by taking control over bureaucrats and judges responsible for enforcing Islamic law, the State has ensured that these actors give state law predominance in their

policy and decision-making. Fourth, the State has denied sharia direct and independent authority as a source, and in so doing replaced sharia's divine authority with statutory authority (Butt 2010, 285).

The years after the 1998 downfall of Soeharto's authoritarian regime saw the increase of Islamization, both in the private and public sphere. Being more democratic, Indonesia is also more Islamic, in both spheres (Bourchier 2019). Society as a whole has become more pious in its religious practice, with public expressions of Islamic identity, from headscarves to Islamic banks and popular films, more evident than ever before (Fealy and White 2008; Heryanto 2014). More importantly, Salafist groups have proliferated across the archipelago, successfully promoting an exclusively Islamic concept of citizenship (Chaplin 2017). As scholars claim, democracies are vulnerable to a variety of forms of mobilization (Robertson and Teitelbaum 2011). The freedoms to associate within democracies provide opportunities for Islamist groups, including the radical and terrorist ones, to take root in societies and perform actions against either their own governments or against foreign governments (Eubank and Weinberg 1994). In addition, sharia regulations proliferated across the archipelago, and laws governing morality were formally tightened and endorsed by local governments (Bourchier 2019, 727; Buehler 2016). The mobilization of Islamist groups during the 2017 Jakarta election raised the stakes dramatically, when Islamist groups in alliance with conservative nationalist figures effectively intervened in democratic and legal processes (Bourchier 2019, 727).

However, amid the increasing trend of Islamization after Soeharto's decline, and the ability of extremist groups to grow during democratization, Pancasila remains the symbolic soul of the state, symbolizing tolerance, equality, and the pluralism of the Indonesian nation. Pancasila, which highlights the indigenous cultural roots of Indonesia's democracy, has been used a symbol of compromise between secularism, where no single religion predominates in the state, and religiosity, where religion becomes one of the important pillars of the state. An Islam-inspired agenda is welcome to the extent that it corresponds with, and does not contradict, Pancasila (Hosen 2005). Therefore, Pancasila has been a foundation for the relationship between the State and Islam, where Indonesia is neither a secular nor an Islamic state, while at the same time shutting the door on efforts to adopt the

caliphate system aspired to by Salafi jihadist groups. Pancasila has also paved the way for the rise of an accommodationist state toward Islam, which has had a moderating effect on Indonesian Islam (Künkler 2017).

### *Multiparty system*

Several studies emphasize the importance of the electoral system in the formation as well as development of extremist groups (Hwang 2009; UNDP 2016). An inclusive country, represented mainly by a multi-party electoral system, will provide a political opportunity and channel for the Islamist groups to establish political parties and civil associations (Hwang 2009). As a result, the radical groups will attempt to achieve their goals through the system rather than through violent anti-systemic strategies. They will use elections and lawmaking to shift policy, such as passing sharia-inspired laws on matters like personal modesty, clothes, and Quran literacy.

Electoral institutions shape individuals' incentives to pursue conventional (peaceful) ways of attaining their political goals (Aksoy and Carter 2014, 185). Proportional representation plays a significant role in reducing the number of terrorist incidents because terrorism in democracies takes place when the citizens have inadequate opportunities to make themselves heard, and when they fail to be represented in any meaningful way (Qvortrup 2015). Essentially, the lack of political representation in democracy can endanger the political system and pave the way for the process of radicalization. Therefore, it is expected that greater influence over policy making—i.e. by participating in coalitions or concessions on important legislation, which are often the result of multi-party systems found in countries with proportional representation (Lijphart 2012)—would discourage minority groups from resorting to any form of political violence (Qvortrup 2015).

In addition, proportional representation is beneficial for the peaceful resolution of social tensions in plural societies (Lijphart 1977). Proportional electoral institutions do not cause the emergence of anti-system groups, which are discontented groups that aim to overhaul a country's existing political system or government (Aksoy and Carter 2014). At the same time, it decreases the likelihood that within-system groups, discontented groups seeking policy change on a particular issue but who do not threaten the continuation of the broader political regime, will use violent methods like terrorism, thus explaining why

some proportional democracies are more likely to reduce terrorist activities and mobilizations (Aksoy and Carter 2014, 203).

Indonesia is a multi-party system with no dominant political party. In the past five elections (1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019), few parties have obtained more than 20% of the vote. In democratic Indonesia, some version of a multi-party democracy appeared to be the obvious and safe choice. The choice of a multi-party system is rooted in the main features of Indonesia's democratization, which allows the regime in control during the transition to be able to avoid so much violence (Horowitz 2013, 1–2). After the Soeharto regime fell in 1998, new electoral legislation was finalized in late January 1999. The electoral system—described as a 'proportional system with district characteristics'—was the product of incremental political negotiation against a time deadline (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network 2005). This agreement was reached in the legislature by the parties of the Soeharto era, which were under pressure from the new parties and others outside the negotiations, who were defending their own positions and coming under pressure from their own power bases. Horowitz argues that initial conditions, namely the relations between political forces and the structure of cleavages, constrain political choices. Still, in Indonesia's context, they are political endowments that determine the choice of institutional design in structuring the renovation of the political system (Horowitz, 2013: ix).

Strong ethnic, religious and cultural differences are reflected in a fragmented party system. This implies that winners cannot take all, and the consensus is challenging to achieve (Horowitz, 2013: 6). Meanwhile, the experience of past failure, such as the failed constitutional reforms of the 1950s, combined with legislature deadlock, has led political elites to avoid political stalemates in the process of decision-making (Horowitz, 2013: 262). In short, the choice of both method and political institutions, influenced by historical and existing conditions, have contributed to reduced conflict in ways that are compatible with democracy and which make the democratic process more sustainable.

The multiparty system allows various groups, including Islamist groups, to be involved in politics and express their aspirations constitutionally, thus diminishing unconstitutional efforts and violent strategies pursued by those extremist groups. Indonesia's multi-party democratic system has seen various nationalist, inclusive Islamic, and

Islamist parties compete. Islamist parties such as PKS have engaged in multiple electoral and legislative coalitions with secular, nationalist, and other Islamic parties. The multi-party system has enabled Islamist groups to be involved in the legislative process, become chiefs of executive offices at subnational levels of government, and promote Islam-inspired policies. The fact that most Indonesians vote for nationalist parties, and do not favor a formalization of Islam within the political system, has reinforced the inclination towards moderation of Islamist parties by promoting moderate Islamic laws (Hwang 2010).

### **Civic Associations and Indonesia's Resilience Against Violent Extremism**

Indonesia's resilience against terrorism can also be traced to its vibrant civic associations or civil society organizations that are not only crucial in determining democratic performance (Putnam 1993), but also in affecting the government's effectiveness in formulating and implementing public policies related to counterterrorism programs. A vibrant civil society allows community members to participate in political processes and to cooperate to improve social life. In addition, it also facilitates active engagement of citizens in community affairs, while at the same time creating egalitarian patterns of politics, as well as trust and law-abidingness (Putnam 1993).

In Indonesia, the largest Islamic organizations perform their true function as civic associations, which are crucial in both countering the Salafi jihadist ideology and supporting counterterrorism efforts by the government. By civic associations we refer to self-organizing groups and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, that attempt to articulate values, solidarity, and interests (Linz and Stepan 1996, 7). Those moderate Islamic organizations represent the vibrant social capital of Indonesian society, referring to the networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust that is fostered among the members of community associations by virtue of their experience of social interaction and cooperation (Putnam 1993). It can be further argued, where civil society is dense, and citizens are joining more of these voluntary groups, extremist groups will not find the fertile ground to grow, meaning joining Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah has both internal effects on individual citizens and an external impact on the polity (Timberman 2013). Therefore, civil society is a critical instrument for

both countering the proselytization of violent extremist ideology and counterterrorism efforts pursued by the government.

With more than 60 million members, NU is the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia. Established in 1926, NU has its roots in the Indonesian countryside and rural areas and has been more difficult for extremist groups to penetrate due to its traditional, Sufi orientation (Wahid and Taylor 2008). Established in 1912, Muhammadiyah is the world's second-largest Muslim organization, with around 30 million members. Muhammadiyah is a modernist Muslim organization whose membership is concentrated primarily in urban areas. NU and Muhammadiyah have the vast network of both Islamic education institutions (including Islamic boarding schools, madrasahs, and Islamic schools) and community-based services including hospitals, orphanages, and welfare programs, such as micro-finance banking. Furthermore, some of their leaders and clerics are respected internationally as inclusive and pluralist Islamic scholars of considerable repute. Both NU and Muhammadiyah have demonstrated their moderate nature. They have voiced objection to radicalism and have attempted to promote a friendly face for Islam that acknowledges the rights of people of other faiths and supports the continuation of religious nationalism in the archipelago (Brown and Cheng 2007, 12).

Furthermore, these two large organizations have long been pillars of support for Indonesia's Constitution, embracing Pancasila and rejecting calls for an Islamic state. Therefore, if either group falls into the hands of extremists, Indonesia's future as a moderate state—home to the world's largest Muslim population and democracy—would be in severe danger (Wahid and Taylor 2008). Islamists such as PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir,<sup>14</sup> and extremist groups, view NU and Muhammadiyah as critical targets. Wahid and Taylor (2008) point out that the two organizations face steady infiltration of its mosques and institutions, some of which are being turned into extremist bases used to distance local populations from the NU and Muhammadiyah itself. In 2005, for example, PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir cadres dominated public forums at the July 2005 Muhammadiyah Congress, held in Malang, East Java, where they persuaded Muhammadiyah members to “purify” the organization's Central Board of “liberal and pluralistic” influences (Wahid and Taylor 2008). Such a move triggered a mobilization by the Muhammadiyah Central Board to reject the PKS decisively. They issued a formal decree

calling for the elimination of such outside influences for the sake of the organization's survival.

The decree includes: all Muhammadiyah branches, institutions, and charitable businesses must free themselves from outside influences (PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir); leaders at every level of the organization are instructed to clean up their ranks, adopt policies, and institute programs that will strengthen the organization following its fundamental principles and mission, including opposition to the establishment an Islamic state (Wahid and Taylor 2008). In 2007, similar developments took place in NU, which issued decrees stating that there is no theological requirement for Muslims to establish a caliphate or reject democracy (a direct negation of Hizb ut-Tahrir). Also, NU leaders condemned the spread of extremist foreign ideology and instructed their members to safeguard their heritage, so that the NU's mosques were not turned against it and used to attack the NU and the Republic (Indonesia) (Wahid and Taylor 2008).

There are many examples of NU and Muhammadiyah involvement in programs to counter extremism. Both made crucial joint statements on radicalism and terrorism in 2006, where both spoke out plainly against the more radical versions of political Islam (Muhammad 2014). Furthermore, in partnership with NU, the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* or BNPT) run anti-radicalization projects to rehabilitate returning foreign fighters. In addition to preaching inclusivity and tolerance of other faiths, as opposed to ISIS's Wahhabi-inspired theology, NU also established both local and international networks that promote Indonesian Islam as having a nonviolent, pluralistic tradition (Counter Extremism Project 2021; Delman 2016). NU's prevention center in Indonesia trains male and female Arabic-speaking students to respond to ISIS messaging (Counter Extremism Project 2021).

Muhammadiyah, through its schools and universities, rejects the formalization of Indonesia as an Islamic State and develops school curricula consistent with moderate Islam, rationality, and modern values, such as democracy and human rights. A further example is a Muhammadiyah-based organization called the Maarif Institute, which undertakes programs focused on countering violent extremism. Maarif identified educational institutions affected by extremism in Banten, West Java, Yogyakarta, and Central Java, and engaged them in their

programs. Maarif also conducted programs such as Maarif's Peace Journalism Workshop and annual youth camp (Sumpter 2017).

NU and Muhammadiyah's support for the war on terror, orchestrated by the Indonesian National Government, has made counterterrorism and law enforcement toward extremist groups effective, and contributed to Indonesia's resilience against terrorism. The struggle of moderate Islam against religious extremism, as represented by NU and Muhammadiyah, is part of a much broader, global battle for Islam as a peaceful and inclusive religion (Wahid and Taylor 2008, 38). With its religious pluralism and tolerant traditions, Indonesia and its civil society can serve as mediators, helping remove the poison of religious extremism that has long afflicted the Middle East and North Africa. Noteworthy is that both reject extremist groups' aspiration to establish an Islamic state, and both have launched their programs to counter the narrative of extremist groups contributing to the nation's resilience against violent extremism.

### Challenges in Countering Violent Extremism

The continued acts of violent extremism in Indonesia, although infrequent, have shown that there is still room for the ideology of terrorism to grow.<sup>15</sup> In Indonesia, there are a number of madrasahs, or religious schools, and *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools)<sup>16</sup> deliberately educating students to support Islamism and conservatism (Aiyar 2015; van Bruinessen 2008; Mas'ud 2013), which can serve as sites of recruitment and radicalization, and thus breed future extremist movements.<sup>17</sup> Some Salafi madrasahs, for instance, introduce militant ideas to their students during classes, including the concepts of jihad, using books by militant ideologues such as Salim Sa'id's *al-Qabtanī's al-Walā' wa al-barā'* and Sa'id Hawwa's *Jundullāh* (Hasan 2010).

To use education as part of a strategy to reduce terrorism, Krueger and Malečková (2003) suggest, the government should not limit itself to increasing years of schooling, but must also consider the content of education (Krueger and Malečková 2003). However, curriculum and teachers have been a challenge for the Indonesian government in its efforts to counter extremism (Zuhdi 2018). Research in 2016 by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) on the religious textbook produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture for school teachers and students revealed that many textbooks are problematic. The



textbooks contain intolerant views (negative opinions of non-Muslims) and an emphasis on the implementation of sharia by establishing an Islamic state (caliphate) (PPIM UIN Jakarta 2016). In addition, a 2018 study by PPIM, involving 2,237 teachers at schools and madrasa across Indonesia, found that the majority of Muslim teachers are religiously intolerant and prone to radicalism. The survey found that 57% of teachers tend to reject people who hold differing spiritual beliefs. Meanwhile, 46% of teacher respondents adopt extremist world views and anti-democratic principles for influencing sociopolitical change (PPIM UIN Jakarta 2019).

Another challenge comes from the declining authority of NU and Muhammadiyah. Both religious organizations do still play an important role for a significant majority of Indonesians, as a significant proportion of Indonesian Muslims continue to consult religious leaders from NU and Muhammadiyah on social and religious issues. However, some studies show that religious leaders are declining in influence within NU and Muhammadiyah, especially with regard to politics (Bush 2014; Fealy and Bush 2014). Even in rural areas, Indonesian Muslims are no longer consulting their religious leaders on political matters (Fealy and Bush 2014). One example is a series of mass demonstrations in late 2016 and early 2017 against Jakarta's Chinese and Christian Governor, Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, over alleged blasphemy against Islam. The protests prompted many critical analyses about an apparent backslide in Indonesian pluralism, religious tolerance, and democracy (Syechbubakr 2017). One important aspect to note is how NU and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Islamic organizations, were sidelined by smaller, conservative organizations, such as the Islamic Community Forum (FUI), Hizb-ut Tahrir Indonesia, and vigilante group FPI. While NU and Muhammadiyah leaders refused to endorse the protests in Jakarta, partly because they refused to engage in street-level politics, their members attended the rallies and joined these other organizations (Muryanto 2017; Syechbubakr 2017).

## **Conclusion**

This essay has discussed the Indonesian political institutions and civic associations that have been the foundation of the country's resilience against violent extremism. Pancasila represents a most crucial institution that has consistently been put forward as the alternative to

an Islamic state. It has been a foundation for the proper relationship between the State and Islam, and at the same time countering efforts to adopt a caliphate system aspired to by Salafi jihadist groups. The Pancasila and the accommodationist relations of Islam and the State have led to the emergence of an inclusive state that can bind Indonesian diversity. In addition, Indonesia's multi-party electoral system, applied after the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian regime, allow various groups, including Islamist groups, to be involved in politics and express their aspirations constitutionally, reducing the appeal of violent strategies. As a result, Islamist groups attempt to achieve their goals through the system, rather than through violent anti-systemic strategies.

Furthermore, moderate Indonesian Islamic organizations, especially NU and Muhammadiyah, represent a vibrant civil society supporting the war on terror orchestrated by the Indonesian National Government. Both organizations exhibit a stronghold essential to countering Salafi jihadist ideology. Extremist groups will not find fertile ground to grow so long as NU and Muhammadiyah continue their roles as moderate civic associations for the majority of Muslims in the country and support the governmental system. Both civil society organizations have been a critical instrument and partner for counterterrorism efforts pursued by the government.

Nevertheless, the continued threat of violent extremism in Indonesia, albeit small in scale, has shown that there is still room for the ideology of terrorism to grow and disseminate. There are several pesantrens, madrasahs, or Islamic schools that deliberately educate students to support conservatism, and some of them introduce the concepts of jihad through books by militant ideologues. Moreover, Islamic conservatism and radicalism have penetrated two essential elements of religious education in Indonesia: curriculum and teachers. Such a development has been a warning sign for the government to pay greater attention to the content of school curricula and its teachers, especially in Islamic educational institutions.

## Endnotes

1. Literally, “jihad” means “struggle” or “striving” (in the way of God). Muslims themselves have disagreed throughout history about the meaning of the term jihad. The Qur’an uses the word jihad to refer to both fighting in the path of God and warfare against the enemies of the early Muslim community. Abu al-A’la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was the first Islamist writer to approach jihad systematically. In his view, jihad was akin to the war of liberation and was designed to establish politically independent Muslim states. Radical Egyptian Islamist thinkers (and members of the Muslim Brotherhood) Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) took hold of Mawdudi’s conception of jihad and incorporated Ibn Taymiyya’s earlier notion of jihad that includes the overthrow of governments that fail to enforce the sharia. Those conceptions inspired Al Qaeda’s leaders, such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, and thousands of others, to wage perpetual holy war as struggles against infidels (non-Muslims) or Muslims who they consider heretics and apostates. They justify the use of violence against both their own governments and Western targets. For further discussion on the meaning of jihad see: (Bakircioglu 2010; Gerges 2005; Kepel 2002; Knapp 2003; Schmid 2014; Sedgwick 2015; Wiktorowicz 2005).
2. For the development, network structure, and current status of these groups, see “The Decline of ISIS in Indonesia and the Emergence of New Cells,” IPAC Report No. 69 (2021) and “COVID-19 and The Mujahidin of Eastern Indonesia (MIT),” IPAC Short Briefing No. 3 (2020).
3. This essay uses the terms terrorism, extremism, and radicalism interchangeably. Terrorism refers to the use of fear-generating tactics, using coercive and direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, for idiosyncratic and political reasons (Schmid 2012; Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2004). Extremism refers to “the belief that an in-group’s success or survival can never be separated from the need for hostile action against an out-group” (Berger 2017, 23). Extremism may take the form of ideologies and beliefs based around religion, and is characterized by dogmatism, intolerance, and unwillingness to compromise (Berger 2017; Bötticher 2017). Radicalism is a concept that has changed considerably from its initial meaning. The original definition, which goes back to the 19th century, denotes a political agenda advocating social and political reform by delegitimizing an old socio-political order (Burgess and Festenstein 2007; Schmid 2013). In contemporary use, as in radical Islam, the term points in the opposite direction: embracing an anti-liberal, fundamentalist, anti-democratic and regressive agenda. This essay uses the contemporary definition of radicalism, which refers to an ideology that advocates strategies to generate a system-transforming radical solution for Government and society through violent and non-democratic means (Schmid 2013). In addition to radical Islam, other terms used in the literature include radical Salafi, radical fundamentalist, and radical jihadis (Jamhari 2004; Kepel 2002; Lav 2012; Wiktorowicz 2005).
4. For a full report of 2020 Global Terrorism Index, see Institute for Economics & Peace. “Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism,” Sydney, November 2020. Available from: <https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>.
5. The term refers to the Islamist groups who advocate or practice jihad and violent tactics to pursue their goals. The terms “Islamism” or “Islamist politics” or “political Islam” refer to the phenomenon of Islamic movements aspiring to Islamize society through the implementation of Islamic law (sharia) in all public spheres and the embodiment of an Islamic state (Roy 1994, 35-39; Munhanif 2010, 35-38; Schwedler 2006; Esposito

- 1997). Two of the most active Islamist movements in Indonesia today are Hizb ut Tahrir—which seeks to establish a global caliphate—and the Justice and Prosperity Party (known as PKS) influenced by the Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.
6. See Jacob Poushter. "In nations with significant Muslim populations, much disdain for ISIS." PEW Research Center, November 17, 2015. Available from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/>.
  7. See Fathiyah Wardah. "Survei: 95% Masyarakat Indonesia Tolak ISIS." *VOA Indonesia*, January 23, 2016. Available from: <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/survei-95-persen-masyarakat-indonesia-tolak-isis-/3159461.html>.
  8. See Danu Damarjati. "Survei: Mayoritas Muslim Indonesia Antiormas Radikal, yang Pro 9%." *detikNews*, January 29, 2018. Available from: <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3839810/survei-mayoritas-muslim-indonesia-antiormas-radikal-yang-pro-9>.
  9. Generally, an Islamic state refers to "a mode of government that has come to mean the application of sharia (Islamic law) within a specific country" (Al-Rasheed, Kersten, and Shterin 2012, 2).
  10. See Ahmad Faiz. "Survei SMRC: Mayoritas Masyarakat Tolak ISIS, HTI dan Khilafah." *Tempo.co*, June 4, 2017. Available from: <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/881411/survei-smrc-mayoritas-masyarakat-tolak-isis-hti-dan-khilafah/full&view=ok>
  11. Buehler's studies (Buehler 2016; Buehler and Muhtada 2016) compile at least 443 sharia regulations that appeared between 1998 and 2013. The data shows that 67.5 percent (299/443) of all sharia regulations adopted between 1998 and 2013 are clustered in six of Indonesia's thirty-four provinces: West Java (103), 15 West Sumatra (54), South Sulawesi (47), South Kalimantan (38), East Java (32) and Aceh (25).
  12. See Egi Adyatama. "Indonesia's Muslim Majority Embraces Pancasila, Says LSI Survey." *Tempo.co*, November 4, 2019. Available from: <https://en.tempco.co/read/1268017/indonesias-muslim-majority-embraces-pancasila-says-lsi-survey>.
  13. There were three historical periods in which the place of Islam within the Indonesian State had been debated. The first was in August 1945, in the moments leading up to the country's independence, when two groups (nationalists and Muslims) preparing for independence became involved in the debate to determine the basis of the new state. Muslim activists had successfully lobbied to include the so-called "Jakarta Charter" (Piagam Jakarta) in the final draft of Indonesia's first independent Constitution. This Charter required Muslims to follow Islamic law. The Charter was, however, quietly dropped from the final version of the 1945 Constitution. The second is in 1955 when Indonesia's Constituent Assembly (Konstituante) drafted a new Constitution. Islamist parties struggled for a constitution based on Islam. President Sukarno's 5 July 1959 decree terminated further discussion of Islam's formal place in the Indonesian Constitution. The third is in 1999-2002, when Indonesia's People's Consultative Council was deliberating proposed amendments to the 1945 Constitution, following the democratic transitions after the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian regime in 1998. Islamic parties failed again to convince other parties to support the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter in the amended Constitution. For further discussion see (Butt 2010; Elson 2013; Hosen 2005)
  14. On July 19, 2017, the Indonesian government disbanded Muslim hard-line group Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) for conducting activities that contradicted the state philosophical foundation, Pancasila, and the principle of a unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. The Law and Human Rights Ministry officially revoked HTI's status as a legal entity following the issuance of regulation in lieu of law (Perppu) on mass organizations.
  15. For example, the clandestine movement and recruitment process by JI members continued until recently (Singh 2017, 2018). Specifically, JI members continued to build

- a clandestine military wing while broadening its traditional base through above-ground preaching and recruitment on university campuses (IPAC Report 2017).
16. See Abdurrahman Mas'ud, "Pesantren and Radicalization," *Jakarta Post*, May 17, 2013. Available from <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/05/17/pesantren-and-radicalization.html>.
  17. Sidney Jones estimates that only around 40 pesantren have terrorist connections. Another 200 or so emphasize Salafism but do not preach violence. Jones argues that many more pesantren focus on grooming "upstanding citizens in a way that reinforces their own local settings and values," which may serve as a bulwark against extremism (Aiyar 2015).

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### Submission of Articles

**S***tudia Islamika*, published three times a year since 1994, is a bilingual (English and Arabic), peer-reviewed journal, and specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general. The aim is to provide readers with a better understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia's Muslim history and present developments through the publication of articles, research reports, and book reviews.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10,000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should be translated into English. *Studia*

*Islamika* accepts only electronic submissions. All manuscripts should be sent in Ms. Word to: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>.

All notes must appear in the text as citations. A citation usually requires only the last name of the author(s), year of publication, and (sometimes) page numbers. For example: (Hefner 2009a, 45; Geertz 1966, 114). Explanatory footnotes may be included but should not be used for simple citations. All works cited must appear in the reference list at the end of the article. In matter of bibliographical style, *Studia Islamika* follows the American Political Science Association (APSA) manual style, such as below:

1. Hefner, Robert. 2009a. "Introduction: The Political Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," in *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Hefner, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
4. Wahid, Din. 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang. 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

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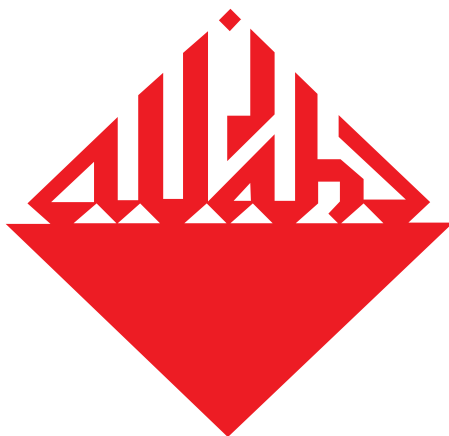


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الحدائة الإسلامية المتغيرة:

صورة للصوفية الحضرية

في إندونيسيا وباكستان

ر. يانعة ورداني ومحمد نداء فضلان

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