



Reintegration or Recidivism? Rethinking Indonesia's Policies Toward Former Terrorism Convicts

Rohadhatul Aisy* 

Faculty of Law Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

Dheni Anugerah Prasetya 

Faculty of Law Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Chandan Kumar Sah 

School of Computer Science and Engineering, University: Beihang University, Beijing,
China

*Corresponding email: rohadhatul.aisy@unsoed.ac.id

Abstract

The recurrence of terrorism cases in Indonesia remains frequent and continues to pose a threat despite the government's efforts to promote deradicalization programs in recent years. The implementation of these programs has yet to achieve optimal outcomes, as many former terrorism inmates rejoin their networks and engage in further acts of terrorism after release. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of deradicalization programs for former terrorism inmates in Indonesia and to formulate an ideal policy framework. Employing a qualitative approach with a socio-legal method, the findings reveal that deradicalization programs have not been effective. Contributing factors include fragmented and sectoral implementation, insufficient competence and quantity of correctional officers, prison overcrowding, the uniform treatment of terrorism

inmates with general prisoners, and persistent social stigma. An ideal deradicalization policy should be implemented through systematic stages Identification, Rehabilitation, Re-education, and Resocialization by fostering synergy between government and non-government institutions using a humanistic approach. In conclusion, deradicalization programs in Indonesia remain ineffective and require comprehensive policy reformulation.

Keywords

Deradicalization; Former Convicts; Terrorism; Reintegration.

© 2023 Authors. This work licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0). All writings published in this journal are personal views of the authors and do not represent the views of this journal and the author's affiliated institutions.

Submitted: 26/07/2023 Revised: 29/08/2023; 11/09/2023 Accepted: 17/09/2023

I. Introduction

Terrorism has become a global threat that has drawn serious attention from the international community, particularly since the attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York on September 11, 2001. The incident claimed thousands of lives and underscored that terrorism is an extraordinary crime that violates fundamental human values and human rights.¹ The profound impact of this tragedy has made the issue of terrorism increasingly prominent and a subject of ongoing discussion to this day.

Indonesia was initially not regarded as a country with terrorist networks. However, allegations of an Al-Qaeda cell in Poso and the 2002 Bali Bombings shifted global perceptions.² The attack in Legian, Kuta, carried out by the Jamaah Islamiyah network, killed hundreds of people, most of them foreign tourists. Since then, Indonesia has been stigmatized as one of the bases of terrorist

¹ Mahdi Abdullah Syihab and Muhammad Hatta, "Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia," *Cendekia: Jurnal Hukum, Sosial & Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2023): 13–27.

² Muhamad Haripin, *Intelijen Dan Keamanan Nasional Di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2022).

activities in Southeast Asia.³ The government responded by enacting Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) No. 1 of 2002, which was later ratified as Law No. 15 of 2003, and most recently revised into Law No. 5 of 2018 on the Eradication of Terrorism Crimes.

Despite the strengthening of regulations, acts of terror have continued to occur in various regions, ranging from the Poso bombing, the Australian Embassy bombing, the J.W. Marriott bombing, the Thamrin attack, to the explosion at the Makassar Cathedral Church in 2021. Data from BNPT in 2022 indicate that terrorism cases over the past five years have shown a fluctuating trend rising in 2019, declining in 2020, and increasing again in 2022.⁴ This condition demonstrates that a penal approach through arrests and prosecutions alone has not been sufficiently effective in eradicating terrorism.⁵

One of the major challenges faced is recidivism. Many former terrorism convicts return to terrorist activities after being released from correctional facilities.⁶ This phenomenon raises serious concerns regarding the effectiveness of the prison rehabilitation system. According to Azil Masykur, prisons often reinforce radicalism, as terrorism convicts do not express remorse but instead become more cohesive and professional. This situation is further exacerbated by overcrowded prisons, limited personnel and competencies, as well as the strong

³ Tegar Bimantoro, *Pekerja Migran Indonesia & Terorisme, Mengungkap Jeratan Jaringan Terorisme Pada Pekerja Migran Indonesia* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Publishing, 2023).

⁴ Dedi Anwar, "Analisis Fungsi Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme (FKPT) Dalam Upaya Kontra Radikalisasi Di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan" (Universitas Hasanuddin, 2022).

⁵ Natalia Budi Darma, Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, and Latifah Hanim, "Kebijakan Formulasi Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Daulat Hukum* 1, no. 1 (2018): 305–16, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jdh.v1i1.2649>.

⁶ Farrel Carlo Bramudia Brahmana and Mitro Subroto, "Evaluasi Program Deradikalisasi Narapidana Teroris Dalam Lembaga Pemasyarakatan," *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial Dan Sains* 12, no. 02 (December 29, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v12i02.20195>.

social stigma against former terrorism inmates. Several cases have even shown that the perpetrators of major terrorist attacks in Indonesia were prison alumni.⁷

Beyond structural factors, the root of the problem lies in radical ideologies framed in religious narratives. For terrorist groups, violent jihad is regarded as a path to paradise.⁸ This strong ideological conviction makes it impossible to eradicate terrorism solely through repressive measures; instead, non-penal strategies or a soft power approach are needed to address the roots of radicalism.⁹ This approach is embodied in deradicalization programs designed to transform radical mindsets, prevent the spread of extremist ideology, and facilitate the reintegration of former convicts into society.

However, the implementation of deradicalization in Indonesia still faces numerous obstacles. The programs are often sectoral, lack integration, and are not sustained once convicts are released from prison. Limited access to employment, social exclusion, and economic pressures drive many former inmates back to their old networks. Such conditions risk fostering the emergence of a new generation of terrorists.

Several previous studies have highlighted this issue from different perspectives. Aysha Rizki Ramadhyas (2020) emphasized the importance of empowering families, particularly the wives of former terrorism convicts, as social capital in breaking the chain of radicalism at the family level.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Marina Adriana (2020) argued that although the implementation of deradicalization programs by BNPT is not yet optimal, it still plays a role in

⁷ Azil Masykur, "Deradikalisasi Pelaku Teror," *Suara Merdeka*, 2016.

⁸ Muhamad Jajang Komarudin, Muhammad Luthfi, and Muhammad Abdul Fatah, "Akar Radikalisme Dan Terorisme," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 03, no. 04 (2024): 220–26.

⁹ Meidika Dwiantara Putra Jati, "Paradigma Kepolisian Dalam Upaya Deteksi Dini Perkembangan Paham Radikalisme Dan Terorisme" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024).

¹⁰ Aysha Rizki Ramadhyas, "Pemberdayaan Istri Mantan Narapidana Terorisme Dalam Upaya Deradikalisasi Di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Di Provinsi Jawa Tengah)" (Universitas Indonesia, 2020).

preventing recidivism in terrorism-related crimes.¹¹ On the other hand, Hoiruddin Hasibuan (2017) pointed out that weaknesses in regulation are one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of deradicalization policies, as they focus more on punitive measures rather than preventive approaches.¹²

Based on these studies, it is evident that the existing research has primarily focused on family empowerment, the implementation of deradicalization programs, and regulatory weaknesses. The novelty of this study lies in providing a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of deradicalization programs for former terrorism convicts in Indonesia, particularly by addressing the persistent phenomenon of recidivism. Furthermore, this study proposes an ideal policy formulation for deradicalization, consisting of systematic stages of Identification, Rehabilitation, Re-education, and Resocialization, carried out synergistically by both governmental and non-governmental institutions through a humanistic approach.

II. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a socio-legal research design, examining laws and regulations related to terrorism crimes and their implementation in social practice. The research was conducted at the Class I Correctional Facility in Semarang and two partner institutions, namely the Lingkar Perdamaian Foundation and the Persaudaraan Anak Negeri Foundation, both of which are actively involved in deradicalization programs. Data were collected through interviews with foundation leaders and members, as well as correctional staff, and were complemented by literature reviews and relevant legal documents. Data validity was tested using triangulation techniques by comparing interview findings, observations, and documentary sources, thereby ensuring the reliability and credibility of the information obtained.

¹¹ Marina Adriana, “Pelaksanaan Deradikalisasi Oleh Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme Dalam Pencegahan Pengulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme” (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2020).

¹² Hasibuan Hoirudin, “Reformulasi Kebijakan Deradikalisasi Mantan Narapidana Terorisme Dalam Upaya Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia.” (Universitas Brawijaya Malang, 2017).

III. Result & Discussion

A. The Effectiveness of the Deradicalization Program for Former Terrorism Convicts in Indonesia

The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), mandated by Law No. 5 of 2018 on the amendment of the previous law on the eradication of terrorism crimes, is responsible for addressing terrorism-related issues, one of which is through the deradicalization program. Deradicalization is defined as a planned, integrated, systematic, and continuous process aimed at eliminating, reducing, or reversing radical terrorist ideologies.¹³ This definition is consistent with the provisions stipulated in the terrorism law.

The targets of the deradicalization program include suspects, defendants, convicts, inmates, former terrorism convicts, as well as individuals or groups exposed to radical ideologies. According to the law, the program consists of several stages: identification and assessment, rehabilitation, re-education, and social reintegration. Thus, the success of deradicalization requires optimal resources and strong institutional synergy to support its implementation.

However, the findings of this study show that the deradicalization program in Indonesia has not been fully effective.¹⁴ A significant number of former terrorism convicts return to their previous networks and re-engage in acts of terrorism after release. Several factors contribute to this ineffectiveness, including the sectoral and partial nature of program implementation, the limited competence and capacity of correctional officers, the overcrowded condition of correctional facilities, and persistent social stigmatization of former terrorism convicts.

¹³ Moh. Djafar Shodiq and Moh. Ismed, "Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum Legalitas* 15, no. 2 (2021): 59–64, [http://repo.jayabaya.ac.id/1708/1/Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia.pdf](http://repo.jayabaya.ac.id/1708/1/Deradikalisasi%20Penanganan%20Terorisme%20Secara%20Terintegrasi%20Di%20Indonesia.pdf).

¹⁴ Khosim Adhi Pangestu, Neni Vesna Madjid, and Bisma Putra Pratama, "Peran Satintelkam Kepolisian Resor Lima Puluh Kota Dalam Program Deradikalisasi Eks Narapidana Terorisme," *Unes Journal of Swara Justisia* 9, no. 1 (2025): 170–78.

These findings indicate that deradicalization efforts have not yet succeeded in addressing the root causes of radicalism or in ensuring sustainable reintegration. Instead of reducing recidivism, the prison environment often strengthens radical ties, with some inmates becoming more ideologically rigid and professionally connected during incarceration. Consequently, without comprehensive post-release monitoring and reintegration support, deradicalization programs risk being ineffective in preventing the recurrence of terrorism-related crimes.

However, the persistence of recidivism highlights the challenges faced in the implementation of deradicalization programs. A clear example is the suicide bombing at the Astana Anyar Police Station on December 7, 2022, which drew significant public attention. The perpetrator, Agus Sujatno, also known as Abu Muslim or Abu Abdullah, was a former terrorism convict who had served a four-year sentence at Nusakambangan Prison and had only been released in March 2021.¹⁵ This case illustrates how inadequate rehabilitation and reintegration efforts may contribute to the reemergence of terrorism.

Agus Sujatno's involvement in the 2017 Cicendo "pressure cooker bomb" case illustrates a recurring pattern of recidivism. Although not the executor, he played a role in preparing the explosives. The executor, Yayat Cahdiat, was himself a former terrorism convict released in 2015. Similar incidents include the 2016 Thamrin attack led by Afif (alias Sunakim), a recidivist influenced by Bahrin Naim and Aman Abdurrahman,¹⁶ as well as the suicide bombings at Surakarta Police Headquarters and the Oikumene Church in Samarinda, both perpetrated by ex-convicts previously imprisoned for terrorism.

The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has repeatedly emphasized that recidivist offenders are individuals who have not, or have never, participated in BNPT's deradicalization programs. However, this claim has been challenged by empirical evidence. In 2018, a series of bombing attacks occurred in several regions of Indonesia, most of which were perpetrated by terrorism

¹⁵ Adrianus Eliasta Meliala, *Studi Terorisme Dan Kontra-Terrorisme* (Salemba, 2023).

¹⁶ Annizar Octavan, "Kebijakan Kontra Terorisme Indonesia Terhadap Kelompok Jaringan Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) Tahun 2016-2019" (Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2024).

recidivists who had been released from prison on parole. This indicates that BNPT's deradicalization programs have not succeeded in ensuring that former terrorist convicts truly "repent" or reintegrate into society. A notable example is the case of Isnaini Ramdoni, who in 2018 was convicted in connection with the Surabaya bombing. Despite having participated in BNPT's Deradicalization Center (Pusderad) program, and being released on parole for only two months, he was once again involved in bomb-making activities.

Another noteworthy case is that of Ismarwan, also known as Ismail bin M. Yusuf, a former terrorism convict who had participated in deradicalization programs, was closely monitored by BNPT, and even received multiple rounds of financial assistance. Despite these measures, he was re-arrested in November 2019 for engaging in terrorist activities. Ismarwan had completed the full range of deradicalization programs implemented by BNPT. After his release in 2015, he received government aid amounting to IDR 10,000,000, followed by an additional grant of the same amount in 2017. In 2018, through a collaboration between BNPT's Directorate of Deradicalization and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ismarwan was again provided with entrepreneurial capital assistance of IDR 15,000,000, and in 2019 he received a further IDR 5,000,000. He was also frequently involved in deradicalization activities and civic education programs. Nevertheless, he ultimately returned to militant activities by joining a military training organized by Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) in North Aceh.¹⁷

Based on research conducted by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) in its report *Prison Problems: Planned and Unplanned Releases of Convicted Extremists in Indonesia*, since the 2002 Bali bombings, Indonesian police have arrested and prosecuted approximately 700 terrorist suspects, most of whom were convicted due to direct involvement in terrorism-related activities. Of the 270 inmates released after serving their prison sentences, 28 were re-arrested or killed during police operations. This figure around 10 percent could

¹⁷ Shodiq and Ismed, "Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia."

in fact be higher if it were to include the broader group of recidivists whose initial offenses were not directly related to terrorism.¹⁸

As reported by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in its study *Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons*, an illustrative case occurred at Kerobokan Prison in Bali, where the main perpetrators of the Bali Bombings Amrozi, Imam Samudra, and Mukhlas were able to influence both fellow inmates and prison guards. One notable case involved Ahmed (not his real name), a Hindu inmate imprisoned in 2001 on charges of bombing and drug-related offenses. The initial interactions between the trio of bombers and other inmates often took place while they served as mosque caretakers (*tamping masjid*), during which Ahmed admitted to developing sympathy toward Amrozi's demeanor.¹⁹

Furthermore, Noor Huda Ismail, Director of the Institute for International Peace Building (Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian), in his article published in *The Jakarta Post* on August 7, 2010, titled *Prison Radicalization and How It Happens: an Analysis into Root Causes of Terrorism*, argues that radicalization is often a consequence of imprisonment itself, affecting not only terrorism convicts but also ordinary inmates. Huda further notes that Aman Abdurrahman, a hard-line extremist, successfully recruited at least three inmates who had previously shown no inclination toward jihad while incarcerated at Sukamiskin Prison, Bandung. The first was Yuli Harsono, a former military officer dishonorably discharged who later engaged in terrorist activities and killed two police officers in Central Java before being fatally shot during the arrest of terrorist suspect Abdullah Sonata. The second was Hamzah, who was arrested in early August 2010 in Cibiru, Bandung, and strongly suspected of involvement in a planned attack on the presidential convoy. The third was Gema Awal Ramadhan, a graduate of the Institute of Public Administration (STPDN), who became

¹⁸ IPAC, "Prison Problems: Planned and Unplanned Releases of Convicted Extremists in Indonesia" (Jakarta, 2013).

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, "Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons" (Jakarta, 2007), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/deradicalisation-and-indonesian-prisons>.

involved in a terrorist training camp in Aceh in February 2010.²⁰ This experience underscores that any individual can potentially become a target of radicalization.

According to the author's analysis, the imprisonment of terrorism offenders is a crucial aspect in maintaining long-term security stability. Correctional institutions, which currently serve as rehabilitation centers for convicted terrorists, should therefore play a strategic role in guiding inmates to prevent recidivism. However, imprisonment does not automatically lead to remorse or deterrence; on the contrary, prisons often become spaces where extremist ideologies are further reinforced and disseminated among fellow inmates. For this reason, the rehabilitation of terrorism convicts within correctional facilities must differ from that of ordinary offenders, as the underlying motives of terrorism are rooted in ideology rather than common criminal behavior.

Terrorism is not merely about the perpetrators, their groups, or networks—it is fundamentally an act deeply rooted in belief systems, doctrines, and ideology. As of December 2019, data from the Directorate of Identification and Resocialization of Densus 88 AT of the Indonesian National Police recorded 52 terrorism recidivists out of approximately 2,000 individuals arrested, representing a recidivism rate of about 2.6 percent.

According to the author's analysis, correctional institutions should establish specialized programs for terrorism convicts that are distinct from those provided to ordinary inmates. The quality and quantity of correctional officers, particularly those assigned to guide terrorism convicts, play a decisive role in ensuring the success of rehabilitation efforts within prisons. In this regard, Machmudi Hariono, also known as Yusuf Adirama a former terrorism convict interviewed by the author has been actively involved in deradicalization initiatives. Having founded the Persaudaraan Anak Negeri Foundation (Persadani) in Semarang, Central Java, Yusuf frequently visits prisons where

²⁰ Noor Huda Ismail, "Prison Radicalization and How It Happens: An Analysis into Root Causes of Terrorism," *The Jakarta Post*, 2010, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/27/prison-radicalization-and-how-it-happens-an-analysis-root-causes-terrorism.html>.

jihadists are detained, encouraging them to return to a normal life, including by providing vocational training such as cooking and culinary skills.

According to Yusuf, the relapse of former terrorism convicts into extremist communities and violent acts cannot be attributed solely to shortcomings in prison-based rehabilitation. Instead, it is often due to the absence of social reintegration mechanisms after release. Many former convicts face difficulties in finding employment, lack access to dialogue forums, and struggle to engage in productive activities, all while carrying the burden of supporting their families. Unlike in prison, where structured programs exist, life outside offers no such framework, leading some to rejoin extremist groups or even travel to conflict zones such as Syria.

In relation to Soerjono Soekanto's theory of legal effectiveness, which posits that the effectiveness of law is determined by five factors,

- 1) the first factor—the law itself—can be observed through the enactment of Law No. 5 of 2018 amending Law No. 15 of 2003 on the Eradication of Terrorism Crimes. This legislation serves as the primary legal framework for counterterrorism in Indonesia. Although revised and improved, the law remains incomplete and contains certain juridical weaknesses. Notably, it does not provide a clear regulatory framework regarding the coordination between the Directorate General of Corrections (Ministry of Law and Human Rights) and the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) as the authority mandated to combat terrorism.

In practice, all terrorism offenders apprehended by BNPT are transferred to state detention centers or correctional facilities under the jurisdiction of the Directorate General of Corrections. Despite the signing of a Cooperation Agreement (PKS) between the Directorate General of Corrections and BNPT's Deputy II for Enforcement and Capacity Development—as a follow-up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between BNPT and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights on 30 May 2018—its implementation remains far from straightforward.²¹

²¹ Jerry Indrawan and M. Prakoso Aji, "Efektivitas Program Deradikalisasi Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme Terhadap Narapidana Terorisme Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara* 9, no. 2 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.33172/jpbh.v9i2.561>.

Furthermore, in relation to the prevention of terrorism crimes as regulated in Chapter VIIA, it is evident that the responsibility for deradicalization has been entrusted to the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT). However, the government should also incorporate provisions regarding the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations, many of which have actively supported deradicalization programs, particularly for former terrorism convicts. These NGOs could serve as third-party actors that enhance the effectiveness of deradicalization efforts.

To date, numerous organizations outside of BNPT have indeed been involved in the deradicalization process. Unfortunately, there is a lack of clear coordination among the various institutions engaged in these efforts. In some cases, NGOs have carried out deradicalization programs in prisons without BNPT's authorization, working directly with correctional facilities instead.

The government recognizes that deradicalization cannot be carried out solely by BNPT and that community participation is essential. However, this reality is not explicitly reflected in the revised Terrorism Law (Law No. 5 of 2018). The absence of clear legal provisions concerning the role and legitimacy of non-governmental institutions risks undermining the overall effectiveness of deradicalization. As a result, existing programs often lack coherence, operate in silos, and risk overlapping rather than functioning in a coordinated and complementary manner.

1. The Role of Law Enforcement Factors

The second factor concerns law enforcement actors, namely those responsible for formulating and implementing the law. As mandated by the Anti-Terrorism Law, deradicalization is carried out by the government, coordinated through the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), with the involvement of relevant ministries and institutions. However, BNPT has thus far faced challenges in effectively implementing deradicalization. This is primarily because deradicalization is a complex process that requires strong collaboration among all

stakeholders, including both government institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In addition, correctional officers play a pivotal role in the deradicalization process. Yet, many prison staff members lack the capacity to identify “high-risk” inmates who may recruit others into jihadist networks. The main issue lies in the limited access to information they receive, as well as the insufficient training provided to prison guards. Most correctional officers have inadequate understanding of religious matters and radicalism, making them unable to engage in meaningful religious discussions or provide ideological guidance to terrorist inmates.

Given their strategic role, correctional officers can have a significant influence on the success of deradicalization programs. If equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills, they could more effectively coordinate and guide terrorism convicts to willingly participate in rehabilitation programs conducted within correctional facilities.

2. The Role of Facilities and Supporting Infrastructure

Another important factor is the availability of facilities and supporting infrastructure in law enforcement. Indonesian correctional institutions, as is widely known, are currently facing a condition of overpopulation, with prison occupancy far exceeding their intended capacity. This situation makes them ill-prepared to handle terrorism convicts, who often hold extremist ideologies and ideally should be placed under a “one man, one cell” policy.

In practice, however, inmates categorized as militant are often housed together with those who are merely sympathizers, which inadvertently fosters a more radical environment inside the prison. Rather than reducing radical tendencies, this overcrowded and inappropriate placement system risks further strengthening radicalization among terrorism convicts.

3. The Role of Society

Society plays a critical role in the implementation of deradicalization programs, particularly in relation to former terrorism convicts. In many cases, individuals who have shown signs of repentance and disengagement

from radical ideologies eventually relapse into radical groups. This recurrence is largely driven by the strong stigma within communities, which prevents them from being accepted as ordinary members of society.

At the same time, there is often a lack of monitoring and post-release support from the government. When stigma and social exclusion persist, former extremist networks step in to provide assistance, addressing the needs of ex-terrorism convicts as a means of persuading them to rejoin radical communities and, ultimately, participate once again in acts of terrorism.

4. Cultural Factors

Cultural factors, as the result of human creativity, thought, and feeling in social interaction, also play a pivotal role in the effectiveness of deradicalization efforts. As previously noted, society tends to stigmatize and ostracize former terrorism convicts, making it difficult for them to be reintegrated into their communities. In fact, individuals convicted of crimes other than terrorism already face significant barriers to acceptance, let alone those who were involved in radical movements and acts of bombings.

In principle, former convicts are individuals who have already served their sentences and regained their freedom. Therefore, society should contribute to their resocialization process to prevent recidivism. This requires collective efforts involving community leaders, traditional leaders, and religious figures, who can play a significant role in facilitating the reintegration of ex-terrorism convicts. Public awareness campaigns are also essential to encourage societal acceptance and support, particularly in fostering economic and social independence, thereby reducing the likelihood of these individuals re-engaging in terrorist activities.

Achmad Ali argues that in order to determine the effectiveness of the law, one must first measure “the extent to which legal norms are complied with or disregarded.” Furthermore, he emphasizes that the effectiveness of legislation is generally influenced by the professionalism and optimal performance of law enforcement officers in carrying out their roles,

authorities, and functions—both in executing their assigned duties and in upholding the law itself.

The professional and optimal implementation of the roles, authorities, and functions of law enforcement, particularly in apprehending perpetrators of terrorism, deserves recognition, as it has led to the successful prosecution and conviction of terrorists proven guilty in court, who were subsequently placed in correctional institutions. However, the suboptimal role and function of institutions tasked with deradicalization, such as BNPT and correctional facilities, have rendered deradicalization efforts less effective.

From the various explanations outlined above, as well as from the results of the interviews conducted by the author, it can be concluded that the ineffectiveness of the deradicalization program for former terrorism convicts can be attributed to several factors, which can be categorized as follows:

- 1) Factors within the Correctional Institution, including:
 - a) The treatment of terrorism convicts in correctional facilities is often equated with that of ordinary criminal offenders, resulting in ineffective rehabilitation. Terrorism convicts are primarily motivated by ideological goals, particularly the establishment of a state, rather than by conventional criminal motives. Therefore, correctional institutions must implement specialized deradicalization programs aimed at addressing and countering extremist ideologies. Radical ideas cannot be effectively minimized when terrorism convicts are subjected to the same rehabilitation approach as other prisoners, leading to a high likelihood that upon release they remain radicalized and may re-engage in acts of terrorism.
 - b) The limited human resources of correctional officers, both in terms of quantity, quality, and competence, to effectively rehabilitate terrorism convicts. A significant number of terrorism convicts are dispersed across 92 correctional facilities and 1 detention center; however, most correctional staff lack the competence to implement

deradicalization programs. This issue was highlighted in the research of Milda Istiqomah and further confirmed by a staff member of the Class I Semarang Correctional Facility interviewed by the author, who stated that in practice, there are relatively few officers with the specialized expertise to handle terrorism cases, and such expertise is unevenly distributed across correctional institutions. Moreover, there is still no clear standard of competence established for those responsible for carrying out deradicalization within correctional facilities, which could serve as a guideline to enhance the capacity and skills of correctional staff.²²

Therefore, the knowledge and capacity of correctional officers must be continuously improved, both through regular training and specialized courses containing material on jihad and the behavioral tendencies of terrorist inmates. This is crucial in order to ensure that officers are adequately equipped to engage in effective deradicalization efforts. Given that the inmates they deal with are often committed to radical ideologies, correctional staff must possess a sufficient understanding of these perspectives to counter them effectively. Without such preparation, there is a risk that correctional officers themselves could inadvertently be influenced or even recruited.

- c) The condition of correctional facilities, which are currently experiencing overpopulation, poses a significant challenge, especially as arrests and prosecutions continue to increase. This overcrowding hampers the implementation of effective deradicalization programs, as militant terrorist inmates may intermingle with those who are merely sympathizers or passive supporters. Such interactions risk intensifying radicalization within the prison environment, rather than reducing it.

2) External Factors include:

²² Milda Istiqomah, "De-Radicalization Program in Indonesian Prisons: Reformation on the Correctional Institution," in *The Proceedings of the 1st Australian Counter Terrorism Conference* (Edith Cowan University, Perth Western Australia, 2011).

- a) The deradicalization program lacks a comprehensive framework that effectively integrates the involvement of various stakeholders. Its current implementation tends to be partial and sectoral, carried out independently by each institution. Addressing and preventing radicalism is an arduous task, as it requires not only special treatment for those already radicalized and incarcerated but also interventions targeting their surrounding environment. All relevant actors—Correctional Institutions, BNPT, the Police, and Densus 88—hold distinct roles, yet must work synergistically to form a cohesive and unified deradicalization program.
- b) The persistence of negative stigma within society. In many cases, former terrorism convicts relapse into radical groups due to the strong social stigma that prevents them from being accepted as ordinary citizens. At the same time, insufficient monitoring and post-release assistance from the government exacerbate this problem. When rejection and marginalization occur within society, old networks reemerge to offer support, fulfill their needs, and entice them to rejoin extremist groups and engage in terrorism once again.
- c) The absence of institutional platforms or support systems for reintegration. Upon release, former terrorism convicts often lack safe spaces or community initiatives to guide their return to society. When both the government and society neglect their reintegration, old radical groups are ready to welcome them back, often offering incentives or a sense of belonging that lures them into renewed participation in extremist activities.

From these external factors and the recurring patterns of terrorism cases in Indonesia, it becomes evident that many incidents are perpetrated by individuals previously incarcerated for terrorism offenses. This strongly indicates that existing deradicalization programs have yet to achieve their intended effectiveness, as former terrorism convicts remain highly susceptible to recidivism.

B. Formulating the Ideal Policy of Deradicalization for Former Terrorism Convicts

Acts of terrorism appear to be endless. As long as the ideological goals of terrorist groups remain unfulfilled, the potential threat will continue to persist. Therefore, counter-terrorism policies will not be effective if they only address superficial symptoms without tackling the root causes. Repressive measures may create a temporary deterrent effect but fail to provide substantive and comprehensive solutions.

Terrorism is not merely about individual perpetrators, groups, or networks; it represents a manifestation of belief, doctrine, and ideology that has the potential to influence public consciousness. Consequently, law enforcement measures (hard approach) alone are insufficient to prevent the recurrence of terrorism. On the contrary, such approaches often trigger resistance and nurture resentment toward law enforcement authorities. The core of the problem lies in extremist ideology, which requires a more profound and holistic solution.

In this regard, preventive measures developed by the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) play a crucial role by adopting a soft approach, one of which is through deradicalization programs. Deradicalization in Indonesia has been implemented since 2012. As stated in Article 43D paragraph (2) of Law No. 5 of 2018, deradicalization is directed toward suspects, defendants, convicts, inmates, former terrorism convicts, and individuals or groups exposed to radical ideologies, with the objective of eliminating such radical beliefs. Accordingly, deradicalization must be understood as a continuous and complex process that cannot solely rely on BNPT, but instead requires synergy among all stakeholders and active participation from non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs).

The involvement of non-governmental institutions is particularly vital, as some former terrorism convicts and their families remain reluctant to engage directly with government institutions. Civil society organizations and foundations can function as reintegration platforms, while also serving as mediators that bridge communication between

former convicts and the wider community, thereby facilitating the success of deradicalization efforts.

However, the implementation of deradicalization programs in Indonesia still faces significant challenges. Coordination between government and non-government actors remains suboptimal, with initiatives often conducted in a fragmented and sectoral manner. Moreover, the absence of specific legal provisions governing the implementation of deradicalization has hindered the establishment of coherent and binding cooperation across stakeholders. As a result, deradicalization programs tend to emphasize outputs (the implementation of activities) rather than outcomes (tangible impacts) for former terrorism convicts and society at large.

To formulate an ideal deradicalization policy, a national blueprint is required as a common guideline for all actors involved. This blueprint could take the form of a National Action Plan (RAN) on Deradicalization, which integrates the roles of various stakeholders. In line with the legal framework, the deradicalization process should be implemented systematically through the following stages Identification and Assessment, Rehabilitation, Re-education, and Social Reintegration.

With a structured and coordinated policy formulation, deradicalization programs can be more effective in preventing recidivism among former terrorism convicts and strengthening community resilience against radical ideologies. The stages of deradicalization as outlined above can be explained in greater detail as follows:

1. Identification and Assessment

The first stage of deradicalization is identification, in which individuals involved in terrorism are arrested by Densus 88 AT of the Indonesian National Police. After arrest, an investigation is carried out and serves as the basis for judicial proceedings. This phase also represents the appropriate time to begin deradicalization through careful identification and assessment of the suspects.

Identification must be conducted with extreme caution and through a humanitarian approach, avoiding any form of verbal or

non-verbal violence. The purpose is to build trust with terrorist actors so they are willing to communicate.

The main objective of this stage is to uncover the motivations and root causes of involvement in terrorism, the process of radicalization, who influenced the suspect, and when radicalization took place. At this point, categorization of terrorists is also determined. The BNPT generally uses the categories: core, militant, follower, and sympathizer, while Densus 88 employs the categories: green, yellow, and red. Similar categorizations are also applied within prisons.

The author suggests that a standardized categorization system should be established to avoid differing interpretations among institutions. Based on this categorization, placement of inmates can be arranged accordingly. Core and militant members should not be housed together with followers or sympathizers. Likewise, individuals should be separated from groups. This is crucial because deradicalization efforts targeting sympathizers and followers are more effective if not dominated by core or militant inmates. Accurate identification and assessment will allow the formulation of appropriate rehabilitation programs and reduce the likelihood of terrorist recidivism.

2. Rehabilitation

The second stage of deradicalization is rehabilitation, which focuses on the recovery of mindset, psychological well-being, and physical condition. This stage is implemented during incarceration. Previously, BNPT combined rehabilitation with re-education, but under the Terrorism Law, these two stages are distinct and must be carried out separately. Rehabilitation requires collaboration not only with correctional institutions, but also with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, academics, NGOs, religious organizations, and other stakeholders.

Rehabilitation is carried out through two types of development programs:

1. Personality Development, which includes:
 - b. Religious Awareness
 - c. National and Civic Awareness
 - d. Attitudes and Behavior
 - e. Physical and Mental Health
 - f. Legal Awareness
 - g. Other personality-focused programs as needed
2. Independence Development, which provides practical skills for life after release, such as:
 - a. Vocational training
 - b. Work and production exercises
 - c. Other forms of skill-building according to interests and talents
3. Re-education

The third stage is re-education, which represents a further intervention for terrorist inmates who have completed rehabilitation or have been recommended to proceed. Re-education involves a transformation of thought, understanding, and attitudes, encouraging inmates to adopt a more open perspective toward religious and social diversity. This stage includes:

- a. Vocational training
- b. Religious education
- d. Civic and tolerance education
- e. Reconciliation programs, such as meetings with victims of terrorism

These programs build upon earlier rehabilitation efforts but are conducted with more intensive dialogue and communication.

4. Resocialization / Reintegration

The final stage is resocialization or reintegration, aimed at reintegrating terrorist inmates or former inmates and their families

back into society. This process focuses on preparing them to live and interact productively in the community, especially by reshaping their understanding and attitudes so they can be accepted and resume normal social and economic activities.

Resocialization is implemented post-release, as former convicts remain highly vulnerable to recidivism due to stigma and rejection by society. Therefore, ongoing assistance is critical to prevent them from rejoining radical networks.

This stage often involves civil society organizations or foundations that work in the field of deradicalization and can serve as partners of BNPT. Programs include:

- a. Resocialization assistance: supervision and mentoring after release, organizing activities that allow former convicts to interact positively with communities.
- b. Mental support: peer-group discussions to share needs, aspirations, and future goals.
- c. Business capital and financial assistance.
- d. Family support programs: counseling and assistance for spouses and children of former terrorists.
- e. Entrepreneurship training: skills such as small business management, journalism, business innovation, accounting, calligraphy, therapy, and other practical skills to foster economic independence.
- f. Prison visits and outreach (“Prison Safari”) to encourage current inmates to commit to reintegration programs once released.

One of the policies in addressing crimes such as terrorism is penal policy. Penal policy is part of crime prevention efforts (criminal policy), which in turn constitutes part of social policy in dealing with crime in society, both through penal and non-penal means, with the ultimate goal of achieving social welfare. Therefore, the eradication of terrorism must be carried out through two approaches, penal and non-penal. In addition to

the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, deradicalization efforts must also be implemented through humanistic approaches.

According to Ali Masyhar, the penal approach represents progress compared to previous policies; however, it also has inherent limitations, especially when facing terrorism as a form of transnational organized crime. For this reason, it must be complemented by non-penal measures such as education, economic empowerment, moral approaches, and others. Deradicalization policy is one of the preventive strategies against terrorism that continues to be developed by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT). As previously discussed, deradicalization in Indonesia is still carried out separately and lacks synergy across stakeholders. In several other countries, deradicalization is conducted by a coordinated team composed of both government and non-government institutions. The head or coordinator of the team usually comes from a government institution with the authority and responsibility for handling terrorism, while the members consist of government agencies, non-government organizations, practitioners, and academics who have competence in implementing deradicalization.²³

Based on the author's analysis, if the measures above are implemented alongside improvements in the competence and capacity of deradicalization practitioners, the success rate of deradicalization programs could be significantly increased. This can be seen in the growing number of correctional facilities equipped with "Super Maximum Security" standards, such as Class II Pasir Putih and Class I Besi Prisons in Nusakambangan, Central Java; Class II Gunung Sindur Detention Center in Bogor; BNPT's Special "Deradicalization Center" in Sentul, Bogor; and the Special Detention Center of Cikeas managed by Densus 88 AT Polri. These facilities provide hope for the improved implementation of deradicalization programs.

Former terrorism convicts who become "agents of change" by actively engaging in deradicalization and counter-terrorism initiatives also play a

²³ Sapto Priyanto, "Model Residivisme Teroris Di Indonesia" (Universitas Indonesia, 2020).

crucial role in minimizing recidivism. Moreover, public awareness and participation in combating terrorism have begun to grow, as evidenced by the increasing number of non-government organizations involved in deradicalization. This contributes to the government's efforts in enhancing both the quality and quantity of deradicalization outcomes.

III. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the deradicalization program for former terrorism convicts in Indonesia has not yet been effective. Evidence shows that many ex-terrorism convicts relapse, with some even becoming repeat offenders for the second or third time. This phenomenon indicates that deradicalization continues to face various obstacles, both internal and external. Internally, many ex-inmates remain unwilling to open themselves to rehabilitation efforts. Externally, the challenges include programs that are still carried out in a partial and sectoral manner without an integrated framework, limited competence of prison staff, overcrowded correctional facilities, the absence of a clear post-release continuation program, and the strong social stigma that prevents ex-convicts from being accepted back into society. Collectively, these issues hinder the overall effectiveness of deradicalization efforts.

An ideal deradicalization policy should be implemented comprehensively by involving multiple stakeholders and adopting a humanistic approach. Its implementation must align with the stages outlined in Law No. 5 of 2018, namely identification, rehabilitation, re-education, and resocialization, to be carried out jointly by governmental and non-governmental institutions within a coordinated team framework. As the main coordinating body, BNPT should map the roles of each institution to avoid overlap while ensuring systematic reporting and evaluation of all activities. Moreover, the success of deradicalization depends on synergy among all parties, including civil society, supported by non-penal approaches such as entrepreneurship training, economic empowerment, and family guidance. Therefore, deradicalization in Indonesia must be designed as an integral policy, combining penal measures (law enforcement and prosecution) with non-penal strategies (social, economic,

educational, and cultural approaches) to achieve sustainable prevention of terrorism.

IV. References

- Adriana, Marina. "Pelaksanaan Deradikalisasi Oleh Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme Dalam Pencegahan Pengulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme." Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2020.
- Anwar, Dedi. "Analisis Fungsi Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme (FKPT) Dalam Upaya Kontra Radikalisasi Di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan." Universitas Hasanuddin, 2022.
- Azil Masykur. "Deradikalisasi Pelaku Teror." *Suara Merdeka*, 2016.
- Bimantoro, Tegar. *Pekerja Migran Indonesia & Terorisme, Mengungkap Jeratan Jaring-Jaring Terorisme Pada Pekerja Migran Indonesia*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Publishing, 2023.
- Bramudia Brahmana, Farrel Carlo, and Mitro Subroto. "Evaluasi Program Deradikalisasi Narapidana Teroris Dalam Lembaga Pemasyarakatan." *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial Dan Sains* 12, no. 02 (December 29, 2023). <https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v12i02.20195>.
- Budi Darma, Natalia, Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, and Latifah Hanim. "Kebijakan Formulasi Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Daulat Hukum* 1, no. 1 (2018): 305–16. <https://doi.org/10.30659/jdh.v1i1.2649>.
- Haripin, Muhamad. *Intelijen Dan Keamanan Nasional Di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2022.
- Hoirudin, Hasibuan. "Reformulasi Kebijakan Deradikalisasi Mantan Narapidana Terorisme Dalam Upaya Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia." Universitas Brawijaya Malang, 2017.
- Indrawan, Jerry, and M. Prakoso Aji. "Efektivitas Program Deradikalisasi Badan

- Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme Terhadap Narapidana Terorisme Di Indonesia.” *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara* 9, no. 2 (2019): 1. <https://doi.org/10.33172/jpbh.v9i2.561>.
- International Crisis Group. “Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons.” Jakarta, 2007. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/deradicalisation-and-indonesian-prisons>.
- IPAC. “Prison Problems: Planned and Unplanned Releases of Convicted Extremists in Indonesia.” Jakarta, 2013.
- Ismail, Noor Huda. “Prison Radicalization and How It Happens: An Analysis into Root Causes of Terrorism.” *THE Jakarta Post*, 2010. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/27/prison-radicalization-and-how-it-happens-an-analysis-root-causes-terrorism.html>.
- Istiqomah, Milda. “De-Radicalization Program in Indonesian Prisons: Reformation on the Correctional Institution.” In *The Proceedings of the 1st Australian Counter Terrorism Conference*. Edith Cowan University, Perth Western Australia, 2011.
- Jati, Meidika Dwiantara Putra. “Paradigma Kepolisian Dalam Upaya Deteksi Dini Perkembangan Paham Radikalisme Dan Terorisme.” Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024.
- Komarudin, Muhamad Jajang, Muhammad Luthfi, and Muhammad Abdul Fatah. “Akar Radikalisme Dan Terorisme.” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 03, no. 04 (2024): 220–26.
- Meliala, Adrianus Eliasta. *Studi Terorisme Dan Kontra-Terrorisme*. Salemba, 2023.
- Octavan, Annizar. “Kebijakan Kontra Terorisme Indonesia Terhadap Kelompok Jaringan Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) Tahun 2016-2019.” Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2024.
- Pangestu, Khosim Adhi, Neni Vesna Madjid, and Bisma Putra Pratama. “Peran

- Satintelkam Kepolisian Resor Lima Puluh Kota Dalam Program Deradikalisasi Eks Narapidana Terorisme.” *Unes Journal of Swara Justisia* 9, no. 1 (2025): 170–78.
- Priyanto, Sapto. “Model Residivisme Teroris Di Indonesia.” Universitas Indonesia, 2020.
- Ramadhyas, Aysha Rizki. “Pemberdayaan Istri Mantan Narapidana Terorisme Dalam Upaya Deradikalisasi Di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Di Provinsi Jawa Tengah.” Universitas Indonesia, 2020.
- Shodiq, Moh. Djafar, and Moh. Ismed. “Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia.” *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum Legalitas* 15, no. 2 (2021): 59–64. [http://repo.jayabaya.ac.id/1708/1/Deradikalisasi Penanganan Terorisme Secara Terintegrasi Di Indonesia.pdf](http://repo.jayabaya.ac.id/1708/1/Deradikalisasi_Penanganan_Terorisme_Secara_Terintegrasi_Di_Indonesia.pdf).
- Syihab, Mahdi Abdullah, and Muhammad Hatta. “Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Di Indonesia.” *Cendekia: Jurnal Hukum, Sosial & Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2023): 13–27.

Acknowledgment

None

Funding Information

None

Conflicting Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

Publishing Ethical and Originality Statement

All authors declared that this work is original and has never been published in any form and in any media, nor is it under consideration for publication in any journal, and all sources cited in this work refer to the basic standards of scientific citation.