

The Establishment of a Terrorist Prison: Insights from Indonesian Prison Officers' Perspectives

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Abstract

The increasing number of 'terrorist prisoners' in Indonesia has resulted in the establishment of a separate penal institution. This development is novel to Indonesian secure settings, and the perceptions of prison officers' who work in these specialist prisons offer distinct practical insights into the efficacy of these correctional facilities. The present study provides innovative findings by exploring, for the first time, the perspectives of Indonesian prison officers working in specialist prisons for terrorist prisoners in Indonesia. This study conducted focus groups with Indonesian prison officers in Cipinang, Pasir Putih Nusakambangan, and Surabaya prisons. A qualitative content analysis was deployed that identified several themes for future policy decisions. These included, the establishment and ongoing administration of a special prison, the need to improve data collection of terrorist inmates; the importance of partnerships with key stakeholders, and the centrality of review mechanisms to

ensure that processes for prisoner selection, management, and release are optimised and enhanced to ensure future community safety and security.

KEYWORDS *Indonesian Penal Policy, Specialist Terrorist Prison, Prison Officer Perspectives, Community Safety and Security*

Introduction

The establishment of a special prison for convicted terrorists in Indonesia was proposed by the former Minister of Law and Human Rights 2009–2011, Patrialis Akbar. When this proposal was introduced, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and the House of Representative (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* – DPR) agreed with its intent.¹ However, some scholars and practitioners disagreed with this initiative as noted by Bakti.² Basra and Neumann argued that concentration models cannot curtail nor contain the dissemination of radical ideologies.³ Other scholars argue that if terrorist inmates are held in one place, they will become stronger as a group with increased opportunities to incite and perpetuate violent ideologies and subject prison personnel and correctional institutions to increased risk and insecurity.⁴

In 2014, the Government of Indonesia decided that, rather than adopting the label of ‘special prison’ for terrorist inmates, the new facility would be referred to as a deradicalisation center.⁵ The decision was made based on an evaluation by the National Counter Terrorism Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* – BNPT), which determined that the rehabilitation programs at that time were not sufficiently effective, as some former terrorist convicts had reoffended after their release from prison. Prior to 2012, before

¹ Agus Surya Bakti, *Darurat Terrorisme: Kebijakan Pencegahan, Perlindungan Deradikalisasi* (Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2014), 289.

² Bakti, 195–96.

³ Rajan Basra and Peter R Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries* (London: ICSR King’s College London, 2020), 37–38.

⁴ I Gede Widhiana Suarda, “Challenges of Implementing Deradicalisation Programs for Terrorist Prisoners: An Examination of Indonesian Prison Officers’ Experiences,” *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 15, no. 2 (2020): 173–90, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3830309>.

⁵ Editor, “Baasyir Direkomendasikan Masuk Pusat Deradikalisasi,” *Koran Tempo*, January 21, 2014, <https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/332823/baasyir-direkomendasikan-masuk-pusat-deradikalisasi>.

the implementation of the deradicalization policy, 3 out of 300 released former inmates reengaged in terrorist activities.⁶ However, following the enforcement of the deradicalization policy from 2012 to 2019, there were no recidivist cases.⁷

The BNPT built the centre in Sentul, Bogor, West Java, as a basecamp to deradicalise terrorist inmates.⁸ However, at the beginning of 2016, the insistence to establish a special prison for terrorist inmates re-emerged after the apparent recruitment and increased spread of radical beliefs in Surabaya Prison. The government decided to proceed with the original plan to establish a special prison for terrorist inmates. A legal basis for the special prison was created through the Decision of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights on the Establishment of Sentul Special Prison in Bogor, West Java.⁹

Prior to the establishment of the Sentul Special Prison, the way terrorist inmates in Indonesia were housed in prisons could be classified as a mixed model of isolation and separation, following Neumann's pattern. It adopted three options: isolation, separation, and concentration. Isolation means that terrorist inmates are isolated from each other; separation means that terrorist inmates are separated from the general prison population; and concentration means that terrorist inmates are held in one place.¹⁰ Terrorist inmates were previously only dispersed throughout Indonesian prisons because Indonesia had no single strategy on how convicted terrorists should be housed.¹¹ The practices in each prison that holds terrorist inmates differ. For example, in Cipinang and Surabaya prisons,¹² terrorist inmates are segregated from other inmates, while

⁶ 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): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33172/jpbh.v9i2.561>.

⁷ Indrawan and Aji, 2.

⁸ Bakti, *Darurat Terorisme: Kebijakan Pencegahan, Perlindungan Deradikalisasi*, 197.

⁹ Ditjenpas RI, "Lapas Khusus Deradikalisasi Sentul Mulai Beroperasi," Kementerian Hukum dan HAM RI, November 22, 2017, <http://www.ditjenpas.go.id/januari-2017-lapas-khusus-deradikalisasi-sentul-mulai-beroperasi/>.

¹⁰ Peter R Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and de-Radicalisation in 15 Countries* (London: ICSR, King's College London, 2010), 17.

¹¹ Clarke R. Jones, "Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization," *Punishment and Society* 16, no. 1 (2014): 74–103, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474513506482>.

¹² Mufti Sholih, "Aman Abdurrahman, Ideolog Teroris Yang Salahkan Bom Surabaya," *Tirto*, May 30, 2018, <https://tirto.id/aman-abdurrahman-ideolog-teroris-yang-salahkan-bom-surabaya-cLnP>; Afdhalul Ikhsan and Aprillia Ika, "Bahar Bin Smith Masuk Sel Khusus Teroris, Puluhan Orang Protes Di Depan Lapas Halaman," *Kompas*, May 19, 2020, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/05/19/23115061/bahar-bin-smith-masuk-sel-khusus-teroris-puluhan-orang-protes-di-depan-lapas?page=all>.

in Nusakambangan Prison they are integrated.¹³ However, in Cibinong Prison, an isolation policy has been implemented.¹⁴ For this reason, the Indonesian practices are a mix of isolation and separation models.

After the opening of the Sentul Special Prison, the pre-existing Indonesian model on the distribution of terrorist inmates changed to reflect a concentration principle. This included a reduced number of terrorist inmates housed in this special prison as per the official policy,¹⁵ then the practice could be described as a partial concentration policy. Neumann's analysis that compared the practices of five countries (Netherlands, the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain) indicates that only Indonesia has opted for a mix of the three models, including dispersal and isolation, separation, and (partial) concentration policy.¹⁶

Even though it remains operational, the impact of the establishment of Sentul Special Prison on counterterrorism warrants attention. Whilst previous studies examine the classification, programs and progress of terrorist prisoners in specialist correctional facilities,¹⁷ research that focusses specifically on the Indonesian context is lacking. This study aimed to contribute to the literature on the establishment of special prisons for terrorist prisoners by considering its advantages and disadvantages, based on the perceptions of prison-based deradicalisation programs.

The current study provides original empirical evidence for future strategic policies and for formulating procedures in the context for establishing and managing a special prison for terrorist inmates in Indonesia. Wilkinson and Quraishi argue that it is essential for policy development to conduct research by

¹³ I Gusti Agung Bagus Angga Putra, "Lapas Menjadi Tempat Penyebaran Radikalisme," Kompas, November 15, 2019, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/utama/2019/11/15/lapas-menjadi-tempat-penyebaran-radikalisme>.

¹⁴ Afdhalul Ikhsan and Aprillia Ika, "Bahar Bin Smith Masuk Sel Khusus Teroris, Puluhan Orang Protes di Depan Lapas Halaman," Kompas, May 19, 2020, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/05/19/23115061/bahar-bin-smith-masuk-sel-khusus-teroris-puluhan-orang-protes-di-depan-lapas?page=all>.

¹⁵ Ditjenpas RI, "Lapas Khusus Deradikalisasi Sentul Mulai Beroperasi".

¹⁶ Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and de-Radicalisation in 15 Countries*.

¹⁷ Hamed El-Said, *De-Radicalising Islamists: Programmes and Their Impact in Muslim Majority States* (London: ICSR King's College London, 2012); ICG, "Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons" (Jakarta: International Crisis Group, 2007); Jones, "Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization"

seeking the voices of professional and experts in the corrections field.¹⁸ They employed a survey of wardens at maximum security state prisons in the UK, Switzerland, and France including questions on policy, training, and other issues related to the incarceration of extremist individuals.¹⁹ Their findings combined with the conclusions of the current study are particularly relevant for the Directorate General of Correction (DGC) of the Republic of Indonesia, the institution responsible for the management of such a prison, as well as for the BNPT, the coordinator of the Indonesia deradicalisation program.²⁰

This article explains: (1) facts and figures on the number of terrorist inmates in Indonesia; (2) the model for housing terrorist convicts in Indonesian prisons; and (3) the methodology used in this study. It also provides an overview of the findings and conclusions of this study sequentially.

Terrorist Inmates in Indonesia: Facts and Figures

Data concerning the exact number of convicted terrorists in Indonesian prisons vary between reports and articles. Some reports,²¹ estimate that more than 300 individuals were sent to prison by 2007, while Ungerer suggests that around two-thirds of nearly 600 suspects were convicted between 2000 and 2010.²² Similarly, the IRIN reported that 600 of 830 individuals were sentenced for conducting acts of terrorism in the decade 2002 – 2012.²³

More accurate data about the number of terrorist convicts can be obtained from the official website of the DGC, a government database, established in 2011. The number of terrorist prisoners in the years 2011 – 2023 is given as

¹⁸ Matthew L.N. Wilkinson and Muzammil Quraishi, “Defining and Illustrating ‘Extremism’ Using the Largest Investigation into Islam in Prison,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 1 (2024): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2247620>.

¹⁹ Wilkinson and Quraishi, 5–6.

²⁰ Yuliyanto Yuliyanto, Donny Michael, and Penny Naluria Utami, “Deradikalisasi Narapidana Teroris Melalui Individual Treatment,” *Jurnal HAM* 12, no. 2 (August 26, 2021): 205–6, <https://doi.org/10.30641/ham.2021.12.193-208>.

²¹ Kurt Braddock, “Rehabilitation of Jihadi Terrorists: Current Understanding and Perspectives,” *The Handbook of Collective Violence: Current Developments and Understanding*, January 1, 2020, 171, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429197420-15>.

²² Carl Ungerer, *Jihadists in Jail: Radicalisation and the Indonesian Prison Experience*, 2011, 11.

²³ IRIN News, “‘Deradicalization’ - Is Indonesia’s Approach Working?,” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, October 15, 2012, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2012/10/15/%E2%80%9Cderadicalization%E2%80%9D-indonesia%E2%80%99s-approach-working>.

109 (2011),²⁴ 204 (2012),²⁵ 276 (2013),²⁶ 277 (2014),²⁷ 216 (2015),²⁸ 205 (2016),²⁹ 234 (2017),³⁰ 459 (2018),³¹ 179 (2019),³² 274 (2020),³³ 156 (2021),³⁴ 258 (2022),³⁵ and 156 (2023) respectively.³⁶ The data show that by August 2013 the number of terrorist inmates had increased by nearly three times the number in August 2011. Although the number of terrorist inmates remained steady in 2014, the number fell sharply from 277 in 2014 to 216 in 2015, and then remained fairly steady in the following two years. Overall, the number of terrorist prisoners in Indonesia has been above 150 between 2012 and 2023, as illustrated in Figure 1.

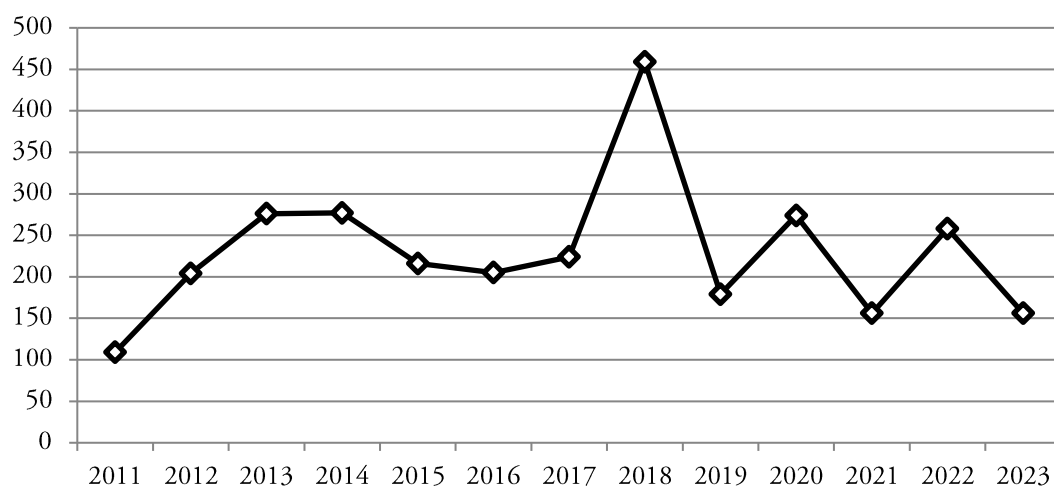


FIGURE 1. The Number of Terrorist Prisoners in Indonesia (2011 - 2023)

²⁴ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2011).

²⁵ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2012).

²⁶ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2013).

²⁷ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2014)..

²⁸ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2015).

²⁹ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2016).

³⁰ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2017).

³¹ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Terakhir Jumlah Khusus Penghuni Perkanwil" (Jakarta, 2018).

³² Ditjenpas RI, "Data Warehouse Penghuni Lapas Berdasarkan Kategori Tindak Pidana Khusus (Terorisme)" (Jakarta, 2019).

³³ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Warehouse Penghuni Lapas Berdasarkan Kategori Tindak Pidana Khusus (Terorisme)" (Jakarta, 2020).

³⁴ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Warehouse Penghuni Lapas Berdasarkan Kategori Tindak Pidana Khusus (Terorisme)" (Jakarta, 2021).

³⁵ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Warehouse Penghuni Lapas Berdasarkan Kategori Tindak Pidana Khusus (Terorisme)" (Jakarta, 2022).

³⁶ Ditjenpas RI, "Data Warehouse Penghuni Lapas Berdasarkan Kategori Tindak Pidana Khusus (Terorisme)" (Jakarta, 2023).

These prisoners are not isolated in one or two special prisons, but are dispersed among several prisons across the provinces. By August 2023, the data show that 156 convicted terrorists were held in four prisons, as presented in Table 1. Kembang Kuning Nusakambangan Prison holds 30 terrorist inmates, followed by Cipinang Prison (60), Depok Prison (6), and Semarang Prison (60). Additionally, the data indicate that there are only six female terrorists held in Indonesian jails.

TABLE 1. The Distribution of Terrorist Prisoners in Indonesian Prisons and Detention Centres³⁷

Prison/Detention Centre	Province	Number of Terrorist prisoners
Kembang Kuning Nusakambangan Prison	Central Java	30
Semarang Prison	Central Java	60
Cipinang Prison	Jakarta	60
Depok Prison	West Java	6
Total		156

Compared with the total number of convicted prisoners under the charge of special criminal acts in Indonesian prisons, Table 2 indicates that the number of terrorist prisoners is small. Specifically, of 3,990,410 prisoners convicted of special criminal acts during the period 2011 to August 2023, the number of terrorist prisoners was only 156. Therefore, the percentage of prisoners convicted of terrorist offences is less than 1 percent of the total number of prisoners held under special criminal acts. Table 2 shows the number of other types of prisoners convicted under special criminal acts as of August 2023.³⁸

TABLE 2. The Number of Prisoners convicted under Special Criminal Acts as of August 2023

Type of Crime	The Number of Prisoner
Corruption	41,431
Drugs and Narcotics	3,913,155
Psychotropic	14,847
Illegal Logging	2,598
Human Trafficking	9,103
Money Laundering	3,465

³⁷ Ditjenpas RI (2023).

³⁸ Ditjenpas RI (2023).

Type of Crime	The Number of Prisoner
National Security	930
Fishery	4,545
Other	180
Terrorism	156

These facts and figures for convicted terrorists are similar to the trends in other countries. For example, The Netherlands held only 36 terrorist prisoners in 2020, while Denmark held 19, and Norway held 25.³⁹ Despite these relatively small totals, Silke argues that “when such prisoners do start to appear in the prison system their impact can be out of all proportion to their number”,⁴⁰ a concern that raises the issue of recruitment and radicalisation of “ordinary” prisoners. Similarly, with regard to suspected terrorists, they are predicted to pose a threat larger than that of almost all other criminals. This is because terrorist acts differ significantly from other forms of criminals; they are often carried out by groups of perpetrators who act in coordination with one another or remain in close contact with a broader network. Unlike other crimes, terrorism involves a calculated strategy to instill fear and achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives, often requiring sophisticated planning and collaboration. The collective nature of these acts and the potential for widespread destruction make the threat they pose particularly severe and challenging to prevent.⁴¹

In addition, although Indonesian officials claim that many convicted terrorists repeat acts of terrorism, a firm official number of recidivism cases for acts of terrorism has not been provided within the official website of the DGC. This lack of clarity has been underlined by C. R. Jones,⁴² and Ungerer.⁴³ The dearth of understanding regarding recidivism has become a concern, as the rate of re-engagement remains relatively high.⁴⁴

³⁹ Basra and Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries*, 7–8.

⁴⁰ Andrew Silke, “*Terrorists, Extremists and Prison: An Introduction to the Critical Issues*,” in *Prisons, Terrorism, and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3.

⁴¹ Anne-Lynn Dudenhoefer et al., “Leaking in Terrorist Attacks: A Review,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 58 (2021): 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2021.101582>.

⁴² Jones, “*Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization*”, 87.

⁴³ Ungerer, “*Jihadists in Jail: Radicalisation and the Indonesian Prison Experience*”, 17.

⁴⁴ Altier, Leonard Boyle, and Horgan, 836.

Distributing Terrorist Inmates in Indonesia: General Prison or Special Prison?

In Indonesia, there are two types of prison, namely the general, and special prison. The institutionalisation and management of both prison types is similar. Both special and general prisons are operated and controlled by a Branch Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (*Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Hukum dan HAM*) in the local government, and the DGC in the central government, which has responsibility for the Minister of Law and Human Rights. Currently, the administrative structure of Indonesian corrections consists of four levels of institutions, from central to local:

1. The Ministry of Law and Human Rights.
2. The DGC.
3. The Branch Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights.
4. Prisons (special or general).

Prisons are established and built in each district level. Apart from prisons, the Government of Indonesia also has a detention centre (*Rumah Tahanan - Rutan*) in each district level, the main function of which is to detain those who are on remand for criminal acts but are not yet convicted.

The differences between special and general prisons are articulated in their intended purpose. Special prisons are for specific offenders; for example, an offender of a drugs-related crime is sentenced to imprisonment, they will be housed in special prison called a narcotics prison. Thus all the inmates in narcotics prisons are 'drug offenders', and no prisoners convicted of drugs-related offences are held with regular prisoners in general prisons. Therefore, in the context of this article, the scope of special prisons differs from that of general prisons, based on crime types; special prisons may use treatments for inmates that differ from those in general prisons. The management of prisons in the Indonesian context dictates that special prisons be built separately from general prisons.

In addition, there are also special prisons based on the gender and age of the offenders, such as those for women and juveniles. For example, Indonesia has established the Kupang Women's Prison and the Mataram Juvenile Prison, based on the Decree of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number: M.HH-10.OT.01.01 year 2011. In terms of narcotics prisons, additional prisons were established in 2012 in Langsa, Langkat, Muara Subak, Pangkal Pinang, and Kasongan, based on the Decree of the Minister of Law and Human

Rights Number: M.HH-04.OT.01.01 year 2012. Also based on this decree, juvenile prisons were established in Bandar Lampung and Bandung.

The discourse on establishing a special prison for convicted terrorists in Indonesia was developed as an initiative to the established prison classifications of juvenile prisons, youth prisons, women's prisons, men's prisons, general prisons, narcotics prisons, and open prisons. Though many scholars and practitioners disagreed with the initiative,⁴⁵ interest in establishing a special prison for terrorist convicts re-emerged after apparent recruitment and the spread of radical beliefs in Surabaya Prison as mentioned previously. Therefore, the government decided to establish a special prison for terrorist inmates that is called Sentul Sepecial Prison.⁴⁶

In this matter, the current policy of the Government of Indonesia is to have a special prison for convicted terrorists – not only a deradicalisation centre – with all required facilities and resources. When fieldwork for this study was completed in July 2016, the prison development was ongoing, with operations commencing in January 2017. Currently the prison is fully operational with the limitation that only terrorist prisoners with the less radical classification are sent to Sentul Special Prison.⁴⁷

Based on these policies and practices, following Neumann's pattern, it can be stated that the existing Indonesian model on the distribution of terrorist inmates has become a mix of the *isolation*, *separation*, and partial concentration models. Referring to the results of the Neumann comparative study, it shows that only Indonesia has opted for a mix of the three models. The Netherland adopts fully concentration policy while the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Spain uses the same model, namely A mix of dispersal and (partial) concentration policy, as can be seen in the table 3.

TABLE 3. Comparison of the Distribution of Terrorist Inmates (Adapted from Neumann's Findings)

Country	Model
Netherlands	Fully concentration policy
United States of America	A mix of dispersal and (partial) concentration policy
France	A mix of dispersal and (partial) concentration policy

⁴⁵ Bakti, 195-96.

⁴⁶ Ditjenpas RI, "Lapas Khusus Deradikalisasi Sentul Mulai Beroperasi."

⁴⁷ Ditjenpas RI.

Country	Model
United Kingdom	A mix of dispersal and (partial) concentration policy
Spain	A mix of dispersal and (partial) concentration policy
Indonesia	A mix of dispersal and isolation, separation, and (partial) concentration policy

France, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States—have addressed these challenges in similar ways. Most practice a policy of dispersal and (partial) concentration, which distributes terrorists among a small number of high security prisons. The overall approach can be characterised as ‘security first’, with little attention or effort expended on attempts at rehabilitation and reform. Furthermore, with just one exception, no particular provisions have been made for ‘after-care’—sometimes for entirely understandable reasons.

In the context of the implementation of a deradicalisation program in a particular prison, the International Crisis Group (ICG) demonstrated that decisions about segregating terrorist inmates from, or integrating them with, other types of inmates are important.⁴⁸ However, there are methodological dilemmas because both segregation and integration have negative impacts. For example, in one case integration resulted in the recruitment of non-terrorist prisoners, while in another case segregation resulted in the terrorist inmates gaining strength and solidarity.⁴⁹ Interaction between terrorist inmates and other types of inmates remains a problem, even though a segregation policy has been applied in some Indonesian prisons.⁵⁰ Indonesia is still striving for an ideal equilibrium by combining several models to reach a common ground. The government's political will continues to focus on efforts for the deradicalization and reintegration of terrorist convicts. Evaluating Indonesia's model of distribution for terrorist inmates after the establishment of the special prison for convicted terrorist needs further empirical research. More specifically, identifying the most appropriate model for each type of terrorist inmate in Indonesia is essential.

⁴⁸ ICG, “*Deradicalisation*” and *Indonesian Prisons*.

⁴⁹ Caitlin Clemmow, Noémie Bouhana, and Paul Gill, “Analyzing Person-exposure Patterns in Lone-actor Terrorism: Implications for Threat Assessment and Intelligence Gathering,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 19, no. 2 (2020): 451–52.

⁵⁰ Jones, “*Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization*.”

This research was originally based on the concept that the need for a special prison for terrorist inmates was still the subject of debate, and that there was a possibility the government would adopt an alternative solution. Although the policy of the Government of Indonesia had changed from discourse about a plan for the prison to actually establishing the prison, the focus of this study was not affected. The focus of this study was solely to provide insights into the perspectives of Indonesian prison officers on the establishment of the prison, regardless of whether it was built or not.

Method

This study employed qualitative social research methodology to investigate the perspectives of Indonesian prison officers in the establishment of special prisons for terrorist prisoners in Indonesia. The chosen methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences and perceptions of these officers. Following Brinkmann's method,⁵¹ the study utilized focus group discussion to gather detailed data, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how prison officers perceive and experience the policies related to special terrorist prisons.

However, the methodology also considers potential biases and limitations. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, there may be biases related to self-censorship or social desirability in responses, as participants might withhold or alter their opinions due to fear of repercussions or to present themselves in a positive light. To mitigate these biases, the study ensured anonymity and confidentiality for all participants and encouraged open and honest dialogue.

Research Location

Three of Indonesian prisons were selected as the research sites, namely Cipinang, Pasir Putih Nusakambangan, and Surabaya prisons, since they hold significant numbers of terrorist prisoners compared to the numbers held in the other prisons and detention centres. The largest number of convicted terrorist inmates was in Pasir Putih Nusakambangan Prison, which held 37 individuals, followed by Cipinang Prison with 23 individuals.⁵² Surabaya Prison held 12

⁵¹ Svend Brinkmann, *Qualitative Interviewing* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2013), 50.

⁵² I Gede Widhiana Suarda, "A Literature Review on Indonesia's Deradicalization Program for Terrorist Prisoners," *Mimbar Hukum* 28, no. 3 (2016): 532, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jmh.16682>.

inmates which is lower than that of Batu Nusakambangan, Cibinong, Semarang, and Tangerang prisons. Yet, Surabaya Prison was selected because a previous study found that this prison was successfully managing terrorist prisoners and achieving the goals of a prison-based deradicalisation program.⁵³ Examining the thoughts of Surabaya's prison officers is, therefore, was invaluable for gaining insights into the efficacy and effectiveness of a specialist prison model for terrorist inmates.

Participants, Procedure, and Data Collection Methods

In line with the aim of this study, participants in this research were Indonesian prison officers. They were selected using a purposive sampling method normally adopted for focus group research.⁵⁴ To generate desired data, the criteria that the participants had to meet for the focus group were: (1) to have duties and responsibilities associated with prisoners' rehabilitation and/or deradicalisation, including terrorist inmates; and (2) to have a minimum work experience of 2 years. Further, the focus groups were used as the method of data collection to capture broader themes for analysis as well as individual 'hands-on' experiences Liamputong,⁵⁵ and Morgan.⁵⁶ As a result, three focus groups were conducted in Cipinang, Pasir Putih Nusakambangan, and Surabaya prisons with the number of participants of 3, 5, and 5 respectively.

A set of primary questions was prepared to guide the discussion. For instance, do you agree with the establishment of a special prison for terrorist convicts in Indonesia? How do you think the impact of a special prison will support in achieving the aim of deradicalisation programs? What policies should guide management if terrorist inmates are housed in one specialised prison? These questions elicited unique responses from Indonesian prison officers on the veracity and utility of a special prison for terrorist prisoners.

⁵³ Bella Widya, Muhamad Syauqillah, and Sri Yunanto, "The Involvement of Ex-Terrorist Inmates and Combatants in the Disengagement From Violence Strategy in Indonesia," *Journal of Terrorism Studies* 2, no. 2 (2020): 12–13, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jts.v2i2.1022..>

⁵⁴ Pranee Liamputong, *Focus Group Methodology: Principle and Practice*, *Focus Group Methodology* (London: Sage Publication., 2011), 5.

⁵⁵ Liamputong, 7.

⁵⁶ David L Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, vol. 16 (London: Sage publications, 1996), 13–4..

Data Representation

To simplify the representation of ethically approved data, two sets of characters were used to index the prisons: letters and numbers. Cipinang Prison was indexed as FG1, Pasir Putih Nusakambangan Prison was indexed as FG2, and Surabaya Prison was indexed as FG3. Yet, for the confidentiality of the participants, only numbers were used. These provided specific short names for the information of focus group participants. To designate the research sites at which the focus groups were conducted, they were separated by a colon and marked in numerical order. For example, FG1:2 denotes information given by focus group participant number 2 in Cipinang Prison and FG3:4, denotes information given by focus group participant number 4 in Surabaya Prison.

Data Analysis

There are various ways of analysing focus group data as noted by Wilkinson: “content, thematic, ethnographic, phenomenological, narrative, experiential, biographical, discourse, or conversation analysis”.⁵⁷ For the purposes of this study, thematic analysis was applied. According to Braun and Clarke,⁵⁸ thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data”. In performing the thematic analysis, we undertook six processes in line with the step-by-step guide of Braun and Clarke.⁵⁹

First, familiarisation with the data. Focus group data was transcribed into written form. This phase is usual for all qualitative studies in which data is generated through verbal communication such as in-depth interviews. Drawing from the existing literature, Braun and Clarke noted that this stage was “an interpretative act, where meanings are created, rather than simply a mechanical act of putting spoken sounds on paper”.⁶⁰ This phase was challenging and time-consuming. However, after transcription of the focus group proceedings, the data its content becomes more familiar. By doing this, an initial list of ideas regarding the content of the data was generated.

⁵⁷ Sue Wilkinson, “Analysing Focus Group Data,” in *Qualitative Research*, vol. 3 (London: Sage Publication, 2011), 169.

⁵⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 79, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

⁵⁹ Braun and Clarke, 86-93.

⁶⁰ Braun and Clarke, 87–88.

Second, generating initial codes. After data familiarisation, I started coding. Coding is necessary in thematic analysis, and initial and axial coding are required to deconstruct data.⁶¹ Coding is a technique of assigning codes and sub-categories to written codes or transcripts in order to aid meaningful data retrieval.⁶² In the early stages of coding, index the information was started. Indexing acts “as [a] signpost to interesting bits of data, rather than representing some final argument about meaning”.⁶³ After the indexing, a table was created. The left column indicated data extract while the right column indicated the codes. By doing this, initial codes from the data produced.

Third, searching for themes. In this phase, broad themes were identified. The codes was analysed and considered how different codes could combine to form a broader theme. A visual method was used – a thematic map – to help sorting the codes into themes. At the end of this activity, some candidate themes and subthemes had collected. Then, these candidate themes and subthemes grouped into the main issue of the study, namely the opinions regarding the establishment of a special prison for terrorist inmates. As a result, some candidate themes and sub themes were generated to the proposed issues.

Fourth, reviewing themes. The next stage was reviewing the themes. It found that some candidate themes were not really themes because there was not enough data to support them, for example, the candidate theme of “payment”. It also found that some themes collapsed into each other; for example, the themes of “strengthening partnerships” and “data availability on terrorist prisoners’ backgrounds” could be combined into one theme, the “policy issues”. I checked the results against the data set as a whole to ensure that the thematic map accurately reflected the meanings evident in the data set.⁶⁴ At the end of this stage, it found that the thematic map worked, and so progressed to the next phase of defining and naming the themes.

Fifth, defining and naming themes. At this point the themes were defined and refined. By defining and refining the themes, I identified, in the words of Braun and Clarke,⁶⁵ “the essence of what each theme is about (as well as themes overall), and determined what aspect of the data each theme captures”. Related to the initiative of the Government of Indonesia to establish a special prison for convicted terrorists, it was found that two identified themes contained subthemes while one theme, “an absolute agreement”, had no subthemes.

⁶¹ Liamputtong, *Focus Group Methodology: Principle and Practice*.

⁶² R Barbour, *Introducing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2008), 81.

⁶³ C Seale, *The Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 1999), 154.

⁶⁴ Braun and Clarke, “*Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*,” 91.

⁶⁵ Braun and Clarke, 92.

Sixth, producing the report. Writing the report for this study was the last phase of this analysis. The complicated story of focus group data was presented in detail, showing the validity of the analysis. The thematic analysis revealed three broad themes on the issue of the establishment of special prison for terrorist prisoners in Indonesia namely: (1) an absolute agreement on the establishment of a special prison for convicted terrorists; (2) the advantages and disadvantages of a special prison for terrorists; and (3) the policy issues related to a special prison for terrorist inmates. These views and perspectives are presented in the discussion section below.

Indonesian Prison Officers' Perspectives on the Establishment of a Terrorist Prison

A. The Establishment of Special Prison for Convicted Terrorist: An Absolute Agreement

Through the discussion of the need for a special prison for convicted terrorists, focus group results indicated that there was absolute agreement on this initiative. All the participants in the focus groups agreed with, and fully supported, a designated or specialist institution for convicted terrorists. One participant expressed a strong belief that *"if you ask whether it was needed or not, yes absolutely it's necessary"* (FG1:2). A participant in a different focus group also said that *"yes, a special prison for terrorist prisoners must be established"* (FG2:1). Although other participants were less emphatic – *"I think that's fine if the terrorists' prison will be established"* (FG2:3) – they still indicated agreement. The following responses from the Indonesian prison officers show agreement on the need for a special prison for convicted terrorists:

Yes, I agree. That's why in every briefing or meeting with the authorities, I always said we have to have a special prison for terrorist prisoners. Through this prison we might develop special treatments and interventions intended to solve terrorist prisoners' issues and also the terrorism problem. (FG3:5)

I believe that a special prison is urgent. This is because we applied a general method in rehabilitating inmates in this prison. A special method

then can be developed in a special prison. It should be different, how narcotics' offenders were treated in narcotics prisons. (FG1:2)

The data showed that there was agreement among Indonesian prison officers on the initiative in the three research sites (FG1, FG2, and FG3); no participant showed any signs or made any comments indicating disagreement. Therefore, the first finding on this issue was that Indonesian prison officers unilaterally agreed with the establishment of a special prison for terrorist inmates in the Indonesian correctional system.

This finding demonstrates that Indonesian prison officers agreed with the establishment of a special prison for terrorist inmates. The need to pursue policies of isolation for religious extremist inmates in the context of UK, Switzerland, and France prisons was examined by Wilkinson and Quraishi.⁶⁶ Based on a survey of the wardens of all state-level prisons in the UK, Switzerland, and France, the study indicated that the most effective approach for dealing with religious extremists was an isolation policy.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the current finding is also consistent with the recommendation proposed by Hassan and Yasin. Referring to the Saudi and Singapore prison models, they recommended the Government of Indonesia establish a special prison facility for convicted terrorists.⁶⁸ This argument also appears to be supported by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, as terrorist inmates, if treated the same as other inmates, could spread their radical ideologies to other prisoners. Moreover, terrorist inmates could still maintain communication with terrorist networks outside the prison.⁶⁹

To enhance the robustness of the study, it is recommended to include a more diverse array of stakeholders in future research, such as policymakers, rehabilitation experts, and the inmates themselves. Additionally, exploring the potential unintended consequences and providing a balanced view of both the benefits and drawbacks would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

⁶⁶ Wilkinson and Quraishi, "Defining and Illustrating 'Extremism' Using the Largest Investigation into Islam in Prison," 2–3.

⁶⁷ Wilkinson and Quraishi, 2–3.

⁶⁸ Muhammad Haniff Hassan and Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin, "Indonesian Prisons: A Think Tank for Terrorists," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 4, no. 8 (2012): 13.

⁶⁹ Kasmanto Rinaldi and Rio Tutrianto, "Indonesian Terrorism Prisoners' Treatment: A Case Study at Nusakambangan Class IIA Correctional Institution," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 20, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 69–70, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v20i1.6417>.

B. Advantages and Disadvantages of a Special Prison for Convicted Terrorist

Focus group participants noted several factors that must be considered during the establishment of a specialist prison. Specifically, one focus group participant said: “To my understanding, Indonesia has approximately 270 or 280 terrorist prisoners. If they were held in one special prison, it will have positive and negative impacts” (FG1:3). Similarly, a participant stated: “If terrorist prisoners were housed in a special detention centre, separated from other prison populations, this policy will produce good and bad sides indeed” (FG3:1).

From the focus groups, three advantages for a terrorist prison were identified, notably improving security and supervision, preventing the spread of radicalisation in prisons, and increasing the likelihood of terrorist deradicalisation. Participants thought a special prison for terrorist inmates would probably lead to improved security and supervision. Some participants argued that “security might be easier to be maintained” (FG1:3) and that “it could improve supervision for terrorist prisoners” (FG3:1). By segregating terrorist inmates, there is no opportunity for conflict with general inmates. In contrast, if convicted terrorists are held in general prisons, the chances of conflict are high because tensions with gang affiliates and violent offenders in general prison populations, for example—Cipinang Prison.⁷⁰

A special prison for terrorist inmates was viewed by focus group participants as likely to prevent the spread of radicalisation in prisons. As one focus group participant put it: “Concerns about recruitment of other targeted prison population were nil. It was because they were only one group, terrorist inmates” (FG1:3). another focus group participant said that: “The advantages? Surely, they cannot establish a new group with ordinary inmates as new members. There was no way to communicate with other types of inmates” (FG3:1). Furthermore, participants thought a specialised prison would increase the opportunities to achieve deradicalisation. A special prison for terrorist inmates would be supported by both professional officers and specific programs for terrorist inmates. For example, a focus group participant said:

⁷⁰ ICG, “*Deradicalisation*” and *Indonesian Prisons*, 7.

I do believe that the establishment of special prison for terrorist prisoners will be followed by the availability of specific programs to be applied for terrorist inmates. So, the goal of terrorist rehabilitation can be achieved. We don't have this resource in general prisons. (FG2:2)

Another officer noted: “If this prison is established, I do believe that it will be equipped with professional officers who get specific training in dealing with the issue of terrorism, including terrorist prisoners” (FG3:5). Because focus group participants believed that a special prison for terrorist inmates would be equipped with professional officers and specific programs, they also believed that the possibility of rehabilitating terrorist inmates would be increased.

On the other hand, two issues under the disadvantages theme were identified: increased solidarity among terrorist convicts and hindering the collection of intelligence data. Participants were concerned about increased solidarity among terrorist prisoners. The following quotes illustrate the participants' perception that terrorist inmates would gain solidarity inside a special prison facility:

Due to daily interaction and chance to interact each other, they will become a strong terrorist group. I do believe they will have an intense discussion regarding their beliefs inside this special prison. (FG3:5)

If they were held in the special prison together, I think they will have a leader which is an ideologue or non-cooperative terrorist inmate. This leader will be respected and followed by all terrorist inmates. It was the reality that I experienced in dealing with terrorist inmates. (FG1:3)

Moreover, a cooperative terrorist inmate could become more radical and then become a non-cooperative terrorist (i.e. high risk, hard core, or an ideologue). This transformation could occur because other ideologue or non-cooperative terrorist inmates would have ample opportunity to spread their radical beliefs to cooperative convicted terrorists (i.e. supporters). A focus group participant said that:

In this special prison, if they were mixed between non-cooperative and cooperative terrorist inmates, I believe that they who are cooperative terrorist inmates or low risk terrorist inmates will be affected by those who are non-cooperative. Non-cooperative terrorist inmates will transfer

their radical beliefs so those who are cooperative terrorist inmates might be become more radicals. (FG2:1)

Turning now to the focus group findings on hindering collection of intelligence data, concern was expressed about reduced opportunities to gather intelligence data on terrorist inmates' activities inside the prison. Because the prison would only hold terrorist inmates, opportunities to use non-terrorist inmates as informants to gather intelligent data would be lost. Some information might still be forthcoming, but the validity of the information would be unknowns. As a focus group participant said that:

If in this special prison only occupied by terrorist prisoners, for example 10 terrorist inmates. Like or dislike, I would gain information from only those 10 people. But, are they willing to say the truth? I don't think so. It was different with the situation where they were housed in the general prison with other types of inmates. Here for example, there are 1700-plus prisoners while terrorist inmates were below than 20. For gathering intelligent data, I can ask the rest of population. Might be information from around 50 prisoners was enough. (FG3:1)

This quote illustrates that, if terrorist prisoners are housed in general prisons and are integrated with other types of inmates, intelligence data can be collected via other types of prisoners who cooperate with officers. This cooperation is important to prison officers for security and supervision reasons. One participant said that *"even though they were housed in the special prison, I think we still can gather data from those who are classified as medium-risk or low-risk terrorist inmates"* (FG2:5). But he also stressed that *"the chance was limited and not as many as if they were housed in a general prison together with ordinary inmates"* (FG2:5).

Thus, although gathering information within a special prison for terrorists is possible, it would not be easy. From the focus group results, it can be concluded that difficulties in gathering intelligence data are a key disadvantage of establishing a special prison for terrorist inmates.

These findings indicate that the establishment of special prison for terrorist inmates might have both advantages and disadvantages. These findings concur with Hill, that *"staff on a terrorist wing become experts because they work with radicalized prisoners on a daily basis; only a small group of staff members must be*

trained".⁷¹ On the other hand, each special population is unique, and it is not adequate to provide services or programs that are responsive to the needs of some offenders while ignoring the needs of others. This statement indicates that a specialised prison for specific offenders may face challenges, regardless its benefit.⁷² Neumann and Basra also demonstrated that holding all convicted terrorists in a separate prison facility or concentration was beneficial in that these inmates would no longer adhere to their former leader or may have already turned against their former leader.⁷³ However, if they still engaged with their group and their leader, a new structure might be created. Hence, the nature of the terrorist group should be examined before a particular policy is selected.

Future research should incorporate a more detailed strategy for addressing the highlighted disadvantages, such as detailed counter-radicalization programs, methods to ensure the collection of reliable intelligence, and a thorough evaluation of resource allocation. Including perspectives from a broader range of stakeholders, such as policymakers, counter-terrorism experts, and rehabilitation professionals, would also provide a more balanced and actionable set of recommendations.

C. Policy Issues Related to a Special Prison for Convicted Terrorist

Despite agreement on the need for such a special prison for terrorist inmates, another broad theme emerged that was around policy issues for the future management of such specialist correctional facilities. Five issues were identified as of concern for the management of this special prison: (1) the distribution criterion for the categories of terrorist inmates that should be sent to a terrorist prison; (2) the decision maker for the distribution; (3) distribution timing; (4) strengthening partnerships; and (5) data availability on terrorist prisoners' backgrounds. Focus group participants argued that these issues must

⁷¹ Gary Hill, *Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism N Prisons: A Practical Guide* (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), 2020), 67, https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/2023-01/Chapter-8-Handbook_1.pdf.

⁷² I Gede Widhiana Suarda et al., "Unprocedural Designation of the Papuan Armed Criminal Groups as Terrorist Groups," *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 18, no. 2 (2023): 349–50, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4756322/IJCJS>.

⁷³ Peter R Neumann and Rajan Basra, "Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures? Jihadist Recruits in Western Europe," in *The Nexus Between Organized Crime and Terrorism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 100–102.

be considered if a specialised prison for terrorists is to be established in Indonesia.

1. Type of Inmate: Non-cooperative Terrorist Inmates

The most notable policy issue related to the placement criterion for terrorist inmates, notably which terrorist inmates and how many should be housed in this special prison? A common view among focus group participants was that non-cooperative terrorist inmates (high risk, hard core, or the ideologue) must be housed in this special prison. One focus group participant said that:

If the Government does establish this special prison, the population should be non-cooperative terrorist inmates. It should be selected then who are non-cooperative terrorist inmates. For those who are cooperative terrorist inmates can be still held here in this general prison. So, terrorist inmates with strong ideology or hard liners must be housed in the special prison. (FG3:3)

Another focus group participant agreed, stating that:

So, this special prison, as expressed by [Mr FG3:3] must be a prison for terrorist inmates who are classified as non-cooperative terrorist inmates. They are radicals. As long as they are willing to cooperate with the officers, I think they do not need to be housed in the special prison. (FG3:1).

The following comments explain why the Indonesian prison officers suggested housing non-cooperative terrorist inmates (high risk or hard core or the ideologue) in the special prison:

I believe such special prison will be equipped with suitable resources to handle non-cooperative terrorist prisoners, or ideologue, or high-risk terrorist prisoners. This was not evident in general prisons, so if the non-cooperative terrorist inmates were housed here, we will find difficulties to rehabilitate this type of terrorist inmates. (FG3:2)

Non-cooperative terrorist inmates must be placed in the special prison. It is because they are so strong to hold their ideology, and we can do nothing with that. But for medium or cooperative terrorist inmates they can be rehabilitated here in general prison. (FG2:1)

Focus group participants argued that whatever the program implemented for non-cooperative terrorist inmates, it would not be effective in general prisons. On the other hand, prison officers were willing to postulate rehabilitation for terrorist inmates, particularly those who are medium risk (grey group) and cooperative terrorist inmates. Although they agree with the establishment of a special prison for terrorist inmates, they maintain the value of placing some terrorist inmates in the general prisons. They assert that low-risk and medium-risk terrorists may be managed and deradicalised, and were amenable to implementing deradicalization programs within general prison populations.

Regarding which group of terrorist inmates should be housed in a special prison, the results indicated that *non-cooperative terrorist inmates* (the ideologues, the hardliners, and the high-risk terrorist inmates) should be housed there while non-cooperative and cooperative terrorist inmates must be placed separately. These results are consistent with those of Bakti who suggested that terrorist leaders must be housed separately from other terrorist inmates, including militants and supporters.⁷⁴

The results also showed the majority of focus group participants confirmed that they could implement deradicalisation or rehabilitation programs for terrorist inmates who were classified as cooperative terrorist inmates (the supporters, and medium-risk or low-risk terrorist inmates). Participants agreed that cooperative terrorist inmates can be housed and placed in general prisons, where they can interact with ordinary inmates. This finding implies that not all terrorist inmates should be held in the special prison. The finding corroborates Chatterjee and Ashok research in the Sri Lankan context that found segregation of the more and the less seriously committed offenders reduced inmates' rejection of deradicalisation.⁷⁵

2. Decision Maker for the Distribution

⁷⁴ Bakti, *Darurat Terrorisme: Kebijakan Pencegahan, Perlindungan Deradikalisasi*, 199-200.

⁷⁵ N. Manoharan, Drorima Chatterjee, and Dhruv Ashok, "The New 'Other': Islamic Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in Sri Lanka," *India Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (December 1, 2021): 18–19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09749284211047723>.

A key policy issue was who will decide the placement of convicted terrorists? For example, should it be decided by prison officers? A focus group participant argued that it must be decided by the Indonesian National Police (INP), specifically by the Special Detachment (*Detasemen Khusus* – Densus) 88:

The decision maker must be the INP, in this regard was Detachment 88. I believe that they are the first officers who really engage in the identifying characteristics or personalities of a single terrorist inmate. They understand it because they've got lots of data on a single suspected terrorist. So, in deciding the distribution of a convicted terrorist, it should be decided by the INP, especially by Detachment 88. (FG3:1)

Similarly, another participant implied that the decision maker should be the INP since “they have all data from the investigation processes” (FG1:3). However, a focus group participant at a different site commented that it must be decided by the BNPT:

For the assessment of a convicted terrorist in the special prison, it should be BPNT's task. They then should select it, which one for the inmates who were non-cooperative and cooperative. (FG2:4)

In conclusion, the focus group participants did not regard themselves as decision makers for the placement of terrorist prisoners in the special prison. This suggests that the risk assessment processes for terrorist inmates should not be responsibility of prison officers, but should be conducted by other authorities. The results show that it should be decided by either the INP, specifically by the Detachment 88, or the BNPT. This result explicitly informs who the key actors for risk and needs assessment of terrorist inmates should be.

There are two possible explanations why Indonesian prison officers do not want to handle this responsibility. The first is a lack of training related to the readiness of Indonesian prison officers to deal with terrorist inmates. The second is unclear job descriptions among agencies (the DGC, the BNPT, and the INP) that are involved in prison-based deradicalisation programs. Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted with caution, and possibility investigated further.

Regarding this issue, a regulation has been introduced by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights: The Regulation of Ministry of Law and Human Rights Number 12 of 2013 on the Risk and Need Assessment for Prisoner and Probationer (*Assessment Risiko dan Assessment Kebutuhan bagi Narapidana dan*

Klien Masyarakat). Although the assessor and the supervisor responsible for conducting risk and needs assessments for prison inmates are not stipulated explicitly, this regulation implicitly places the responsibility on prison officers. Article 1 paragraph 3, in Chapter I on General Provisions stipulates that the meaning of “officer” in this regulation is a prison officer. Subsequently, the title of Chapter III of this regulation nominates the officer (i.e. the prison officer) as the implementer of risk and need assessments for prisoners. In other words, based on the interpretation of the Regulation of Ministry of Law and Human Rights Number 12 of 2013, prison officers are the official officers for the purposes of assessing the risk and needs of an individual prisoner, including a terrorist inmate. However, as the results of the current study show, prison officers face difficulties in handling this task, further research is recommended on who is best placed to conduct risk and needs assessments of terrorist inmates.

3. Timing of Distribution to the Special Prison

Focus group participants believed that all convicted terrorists should be sent directly to the special prison, not to a general prison, after they are sentenced by the courts, even those classified as cooperative convicted terrorists and without any preliminary risk assessment. It was argued, in due time, specifically when inmates show good behaviour and a decreased inclination to support terror acts or violence, they may be transferred to a general prison. The following quotes emphasise the participants’ views that a convicted terrorist must be sent directly to the special prison, and that decisions to hold a convicted terrorist in the special prison or to move them to a general prison should be based on the result of a risk assessment. Focus group participants said that:

Soon after the conviction, they must be housed in the special prison. After they receive specific treatments and activities and they have been assessed as cooperative terrorist inmates or low risk, then they could be housed in general prisons, such as in Cipinang, Palembang, Jember, etc. But, for those who still identified as ‘ideologue’ or non-cooperative terrorist inmates, they must be still there in the special prison. (FG1:3)

Yes, they must be held in the special prison for terrorist prisoners since the court sentenced the prisoner to jail. Then, they should participate in the prison-based deradicalisation program organised by the special prison authorities. Based on the risk assessment, non-cooperative terrorist inmates must be still there in the special prison; meanwhile the cooperative or low risk then could be dispersed to general prisons. (FG3:5)

These results show that Indonesian prison officers disagree with the existing practice of sending convicted terrorists to general prison after they are sentenced. Terrorist inmates are placed in several Indonesian prisons and detention centres after they are convicted. A focus group participant strongly disagreed with this existing practice:

I strongly disagree if convicted terrorists were sent to the special prison in three months before they were released. To me, it will not be a real deradicalisation for just three months before they were released. Convicted terrorists must be distributed to this special prison directly after they are convicted by the court. (FG2:2)

These results indicate that the Indonesian prison officers consider that a convicted terrorist should be placed into special prison directly after the court verdict, and that a prison-based deradicalisation program should be implemented in this special prison. After a risk assessment is completed by the authority in the special prison, a terrorist inmate who is classified as cooperative can then be sent to a general prison to receive further intervention from the correctional services, as stated by a focus group participant: “... *meanwhile the cooperative or low risk then could be dispersed to general prisons*” (FG3:5).

Even though such prisoners might be sent to a general prison – after the assessment indicates that they are cooperative, the finding that a convicted terrorist should be placed into special prison are not consistent with the views of Hannah et.al. that argues that if terrorist prisoners concentrate in one prison it will have several negative impacts. In the Maze Prison, Northern Ireland for example, paramilitary prisoners engaged in “intimidating prison staff, maintaining organizational structure and discipline, conducting ideological and practical training for members, planning and executing escape plans and generally continuing to contribute to the struggle from the confines of the prison”.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, according to the Indonesian law of criminal procedures, the distribution of convicted terrorists should accord with the court jurisdiction in which they were convicted. For example, for a terror act committed in Denpasar, a suspect will be both accused and convicted in Denpasar District

⁷⁶ Rubin, Hannah, and Clutterbuck, “*Radicalization or Rehabilitation: Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners*”, 51.

Court, and then sent to a prison that covers the Denpasar region. *However, transferring an inmate to another prison outside the jurisdiction where the criminal acts were committed is permissible. The legal basis for transferring prisoners to other prisons is Government Regulation No. 31 year 1999 on Guidance of Prisoners, specifically stated in articles 46 to 54. This analysis is consistent with the report of the ICG, which acknowledged that: "In Indonesia, there is not a single strategy, although there is a general policy that prisoners who are threats to internal prison security should be segregated", including terrorist prisoners.*⁷⁷ The argument is consistent with the notion that there is no one perfect solution for managing terrorist prisoners. Policies for managing terrorist prisoners should align with the characteristics of the population. What works for one kind of extremist prisoner population may not necessarily be effective for another.⁷⁸

4. *Strengthening Partnerships*

Strengthening partnerships also emerged as a policy issue for the management of special prisons for terrorist inmates. This issue relates to the state agencies that will be involved in the management of the special prison. Focus group participants believed that, in order to deradicalise or rehabilitate terrorist inmates in a special prison, some key state agencies should be involved: the INP, the BNPT, the DGC, and the MoRA (FG1; FG2; and FG3). Among these key state agencies, effective coordination and distribution of responsibilities should be developed; otherwise, deradicalisation objectives and rehabilitation of terrorist prisoners will not be achieved. Focus group data emphasised these views:

Related to the management of the special prison for terrorist inmates, some state agencies must be involved in it and then specific responsibility must be identified. For example, the INP or Detachment 88 was responsible for the security. For correctional services, that's the prison officers' responsibility. However, for religious matters it should be under the MoRA. BNPT can provide the real programs for terrorist deradicalisation. Something like that. (FG2:3)

And, for this special prison, I do agree with [Mr FG2:3]. Dealing with terrorist inmates is not just the prison officers' task. Corrections, the police, MoRA, BNPT must be working collaboratively. (FG2:4)

⁷⁷ ICG, "Deradicalisation" and Indonesian Prisons, 7.

⁷⁸ Basra and Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries*, ii.

Of these state agencies that should be involved in the prison-based deradicalisation program in the special prison for terrorist prisoners, focus group participants said the BNPT should be the coordinator. For example, one participant said that: *“I hope that BNPT will be the coordinator for the prison-based deradicalisation program in Indonesia and of course for this special prison”* (FG1:3). Other focus group participant said: *“BNPT must be the first institution on terrorist’s rehabilitation. It was because our organisation’s [DGC’s] vision and mission are not specifically directed to terrorist inmates, while BNPT has it”* (FG2:3).

Furthermore, an interesting finding was the officers’ view on the level of coordination between the DGC and the BNPT on the prison-based deradicalisation program at the coalface. Even though participants emphasised that the BNPT must be the coordinator, they expressed the view that the BNPT must work actively with the DGC to implement the program. Focus group participant said that: *“If this prison is established, BNPT must work directly in the field with the prison officers. We must be working together to implement prison-based deradicalisation programs”* (FG1:3). Another asserted that: *“Don’t put us at the front and BNPT’s staff at the back. Again, we must be working together. That’s what we want”* (FG2:4). Apparently, Indonesian prison officers explicitly hope that effective coordination between the BNPT and the DGC occurs to implement the prison-based deradicalisation program in the special prison for terrorist inmates. They suggest that the BNPT should also become actively involved.

This result indicated that partnerships must be strengthened for management of the special prison for terrorist inmates. There are four state institutions that were recommended to be actively involved in the management of the prison, namely DGC, INP, BNPT, and MoRA. Due to the involvement of many agencies, a specific task must be given to each agency. The findings indicated that DGC is responsible for day-to-day management and INP for the security. BNPT on the other hand was responsible for designing the programs, while MoRA in supporting high profile clerics or Islamic scholars.

The need for good collaboration among institutions on the management of terrorist inmates in prisons has been recommended in Altier’s article in the context of US corrections. She argued that active cooperation between local, state, and federal corrections and law enforcement organisations involved in

anti-terrorism efforts is essential.⁷⁹ Such cooperation should be supported by strong political buy-in, ensuring that all levels of government are committed to a unified approach. Additionally, adequate government funding is crucial to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure for these efforts. Transparency is also vital, as it builds trust among the agencies involved and with the public, ensuring that anti-terrorism measures are effective, accountable, and respect civil liberties.⁸⁰

Specifically related to the Indonesian context, Ungerer identified that the coordination among the BNPT, the INP and prison services should be improved in the efforts to rehabilitate convicted terrorists.⁸¹ Furthermore, Agastia et al. recommend the collaboration of sponsorship between the government and civil society organizations in terms of rehabilitation and social integration to address the increasingly complex issue of terrorism in the future.⁸² Further research on the topic of collaborative mechanisms for the management of the Indonesian special prison for terrorist prisoners is recommended aiming to provide a detailed framework for how these collaborations would be operationalised.

5. *Availability of Data on the Background of Convicted Terrorists*

In addition to strengthening partnerships, the results also indicated that to support the rehabilitation effort in the special prison for terrorist inmates, data on prisoners' backgrounds should be made available to senior prison officers. This implies the need for management reform of the existing criminal justice processes for handling terrorism cases. Focus group participants said that:

We are part of the criminal justice system right? It consists of the investigator, prosecutor, and the judge until the prison officers. They all have data on terrorist inmates' backgrounds except the prison officers. It must be synchronised from the beginning until the end. So that's why the

⁷⁹ Mary Beth Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist? Fear, Bias, and Public Support for Prisoner Reentry Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 1 (2023): 97–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1866556>.

⁸⁰ Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist? Fear, Bias, and Public Support for Prisoner Reentry Programs," 97–98.

⁸¹ Ungerer, "Jihadists in Jail: Radicalisation and the Indonesian Prison Experience," 19.

⁸² I Gusti Bagus Dharma Agastia, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, and D. B. Subedi, "Countering Violent Extremism through State-Society Partnerships: A Case Study of de-Radicalisation Programmes in Indonesia," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 18.

data on a convicted terrorist should also be passed to prison officers as the implementers of the criminal justice system. (FG1:3)

There should be a completed document covered the terrorists inmate's background since the investigation processes by the police officers. From this document, we will have preliminary data about the convicted terrorist. We can learn about the motivation of the offender from this document. More importantly, from this document we can classify the convicted terrorist whether they are an ideologue, a medium risk, or low risk or just a supporter. So, this data is important to be passed to prison officers who work at this special prison. (FG2:3)

As evident from the statements, currently Indonesian prison officers do not have sufficient information or data regarding the background and characteristics of convicted terrorists. After an accused terrorist has been convicted and sent to prison, they do not transfer complete data. This data is available because of the investigation, prosecution, and trial stages, but when the accused is convicted, the information is not passed to correction staff. Prison directors receive only a short summary of the court verdict (*Petikan Pputusan*), which contains brief summaries of personal details, the criminal acts, and the sentence - participants were not satisfied with this current practice.

Regarding the availability of data on the background of convicted terrorists, the current study found that available data on convicted terrorists' backgrounds is critical for Indonesian prison officers. Based on the Article 270 Indonesian Law Number 8, year 1981 on the Law of Criminal Procedure (*Kitab Undang Undang Hukum Acara Pidana – KUHAP*), a full copy of the court verdict is passed by the clerks to the prosecutor as the executor of the court verdict. It was not stated explicitly in the KUHAP whether a full copy of the court verdict should be passed to the prison officers or not.

Documents which provide data on the background of convicted terrorists, including a full copy of the court verdict, are valuable for the Indonesian prison officers to provide preliminary data for the risk assessment of individual terrorist inmates. However, no studies are available on this issue. Future studies on the topic of Indonesian criminal justice procedures, particularly on the management of legal data on terrorist convicts, are therefore recommended. Future studies that provide detailed framework for how these data-sharing mechanisms would be beneficial.

Conclusion

Establishing a special prison for terrorist inmates is one way to suppress the spread of radicalism in prisons as well as potentially implementing effective policy to deradicalize such prisoners. However, development and policies for housing terrorist prisoners are not straightforward. Holistic studies from various perspectives are required before this development and policy initiative will be implemented. A perspective that can be taken into consideration is the view of prison officers who have had experience in supervising and rehabilitating terrorist inmates in prison. This study focuses on the perspectives of Indonesian prison officers on the establishment of a special prison for terrorist prisoners.

It was revealed that there was total agreement regarding the establishment of a special prison for terrorist inmates in Indonesia. It confirms that this policy was supported by the Indonesia prison officers, regardless of its impact on counterterrorism. Furthermore, the Indonesian prison officers realised the potential drawbacks of this initiative, despite their overall support for it. In this regard, five policy issues about the management of a special prison for terrorist inmates identified: (1) the distribution criterion for the categories of terrorist inmates that should be sent to the special prison for terrorists; (2) the decision maker for the distribution; (3) the timing of the distribution to the special prison; (4) strengthening partnerships; (5) availability of data on the background of convicted terrorists.

Regarding future research direction, it is concluded that research using various methods and approaches about the policy of establishing a special prison for convicted terrorists in the context of Indonesia is still required. Future research should aim to develop concrete strategies for inter-agency coordination, establish clear guidelines for the selection and distribution of inmates, and propose robust training programs for prison officers. Moreover, incorporating a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives, including those of legal experts, human rights advocates, and rehabilitation specialists, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implications and feasibility of this policy initiative.

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