





The Habibie Center

Exploring the Nexus between Trafficking in Persons and Violent Extremism in Indonesia

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RESEARCH REPORT

Exploring the Nexus between Trafficking in Persons and Violent Extremism in Indonesia

**The Habibie Center
2019**



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About The Habibie Center

The Habibie Center was founded by Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie and family in 1999 as an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation. The vision of The Habibie Center is to create a structurally democratic society founded on the morality and integrity of cultural and religious values.

The missions of The Habibie Center are first, to establish a structurally and culturally democratic society that recognizes, respects, and promotes human rights by undertaking study and advocacy of issues related to democratization and human rights, and second, to increase the effectiveness of the management of human resources and the spread of technology.

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Foreword

Violent extremism and trafficking in persons continue to pose imminent threats to Southeast Asian society. Our commitment to uphold freedom and democracy continues to be challenged by the rise of radicalism and intolerance. Meanwhile, the persistent network of human trafficking also appears to continue to weaken our efforts to promote human rights.

Links between human trafficking and violent extremism or terrorism have been investigated in some parts of the world. A number of studies have explored the intricate links between human trafficking and violent extremism, particularly in settings of armed conflicts or weak states with corrupt government or vacuum of power where it would be easier for violent extremist groups to take control of the populations.

There has also been a growing concern of the international community on this matter. As noted by the United Nations Secretary General in his 2018 report, trafficking in persons continues to be increasingly identified as a feature of armed conflict.

However, while the intersections between violent extremism and trafficking in person

have been analysed elsewhere, including in West Africa and the Middle East, these remain largely unexplored in Indonesia, the Philippines, and indeed in ASEAN more generally. It is against this background that The Habibie Center and UNDP, with a support from the Government of Japan, conducted this exploratory research to better understand the nexus between violent extremism and trafficking in persons in these two countries and Southeast Asia in general. This report presents the findings of the research.

Executive Summary

This research report presents the findings of an exploratory study aimed to examine whether there is any potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. Notting the growing awareness and concern of the fact that violent extremist organisations have benefited from human trafficking methods in other regions where armed conflict or war were more prevalent, Indonesia is chosen as one of the sites for the study as the country represents a peaceful context where human trafficking and violent extremism are quite significant. The country is one of the source countries for victims of human trafficking, and, as the world's largest Muslim majority state, it has an extensive history and experience in dealing with various types of violent extremist attacks. As human trafficking and violent extremism have been largely treated as two mutually exclusive problems in Indonesia, this research is the first to examine the existence of a nexus between the two crimes.

This in-depth qualitative study primarily employed open-ended interview method with relevant stakeholders, including human trafficking victims, former terrorist

prisoners, relevant ministries, local and international NGOs/organisations, scholars, and security officers. In total, 22 informants were interviewed between November 2018 and January 2019. Participants were asked is there any evidence of direct nexus between violent extremism and human trafficking in Indonesia, and to what extent human trafficking and violent extremism can be interlinked in the country. Additionally, two focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted at The Habibie Center on January 9th and 10th, 2019 to bolster the data by inviting relevant and strategic stakeholders. Secondary sources are relied on, including academic publications, public records, governmental documents, and local and national newspapers and magazines.

Five overarching findings emerged from this research:

1. Lesson learned on the nexus of human trafficking and violent extremism in other regions

Direct intersections between human trafficking and violent extremism are more evident in areas of conflict or war, such as

Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, and Somalia. In those areas, the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism is found in three ways: (1) violent extremist groups have utilised human trafficking methods as a modus operandi for various objectives, including to generate funding, as a systematic means of terror, recruitment, and other operational purposes; (2) conflict or instability driven by violent extremism seems to be the intervening variable that has intensified the circumstances that make people vulnerable to human trafficking, such as weak law enforcement, poverty, weak social welfare system, and forced migration or displacement; and (3) violent extremist groups have used ideology, particularly through the interpretation of religious scriptures, to justify the use of human trafficking methods (sexual slavery, forced labour) in their operations.

2. Key trends of human trafficking in Indonesia

Despite increasing efforts in eliminating human trafficking, Indonesia continues to be one of the source country of human trafficking victims. Major cases of exploitation include forced labour and debt bondage, which have mainly victimised Indonesian migrant workers. Most reported cases of exploitation were found amongst domestic workers as well as factory and construction workers in Asia and Middle East, workers in palm oil plantation in Malaysia, and workers in the fishing industry in Indian and Pacific oceans. Additionally, sexual exploitation for prostitution business is also cited as the most reported case of internal trafficking, which mainly has victimised women and girls. Common means of recruitment include job offers and promises of economic profits.

3. Key trends of violent extremism in Indonesia

Generally, violent extremism in Indonesia has seen a trend of declining number of victims. According to The Habibie Center's in-house violent extremism database Deteksi Indonesia (www.deteksiindonesia.com), between 2017 and 2018, there were 19 recorded incidents in the country, which caused 52 deaths and 69 casualties in total. Recently, the main target of violent extremist attacks have increasingly been the officers or infrastructure of Indonesian national police. The perpetrators of violent extremist attacks were mostly affiliated with ISIS. Furthermore, there has also been a new trend of recruitment of women and children as combatant or suicide bombers.

4. Stakeholders' perception on the nexus of human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia

The research found that there was a general perception amongst stakeholders in Indonesia that the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism simply does not exist in the country. So far, Indonesia has no record of reported, investigated, or convicted cases that indicate direct nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism. Cases of human trafficking and violent extremism are still treated separately within different policy frameworks. Stakeholders emphasised that unlike other regions, Indonesia is still relatively more peaceful and law enforcement still works properly. However, this research has found that the indication of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in the country only exist in terms of potential.

5. Potential of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia

Potential links between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia are reflected in the cases of people's migration to Syria to join ISIS, migrant workers radicalisation, recruitment and exploitation of members of Islamic State of Indonesia (NII), and recruitment of women and children as active participants in terror acts. Indication of nexus are found in three ways: (1) similarities in the methods of recruitment (the use of deceptions, promises of rewards, and abuse of position of vulnerability) as well as exploitation (forced labour, forced combatants, and forced marriage); (2) similarities in exploiting the same factors of vulnerability (poverty, unemployment, weak social welfare, condition of isolation and desperation, and low education attainment), and (3) similarities in targeting women and

children for their purposes.

Five key recommendations:

- More critical and nuanced understanding of violent extremism and human trafficking will enable better analysis and data collection to understand the nexus;
- Improving access to information and sharing of experiences between related stakeholders to learn from the best practices;
- Opening channel of communication and collaboration between stakeholders responsible for human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia;
- Raising public awareness to prevent the nexus; and
- Protection for victims of human trafficking or migrants from the negative prejudice related to violent extremism.

Terrorism threat in Indonesia is especially challenging because we deal with religion-inspired terrorism. When terrorist groups use religion as their shield, they will appear sacred, they represent faith.

List of Abbreviations

ABK	Anak buah kapal - boat crews
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BNPT	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme - National Counter-Terrorism Agency
Densus 88	Detasemen Khusus 88 - Special Detachment 88
Deteksi Indonesia	Database Terorisme dan Kontra-Terrorisme di Indonesia - Database on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Indonesia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTF	Foreign terrorist fighters
GT PP-TPPO	Gugus Tugas Pencegahan dan Penanganan Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang - Task Force for the Prevention and Eradication of the Criminal Act of Human Trafficking
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IT	Information technology
JAD	Jamaah Ansharud Daulah
JI	Jamaah Islamiyah
MIT	Mujahiddin Indonesia Timur - East Indonesia Mujahideen
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NII	Negara Islam Indonesia - Islamic State of Indonesia
NII KW-9	Negara Islam Indonesia Komandemen Wilayah IX - Islamic State of Indonesia Commandement Area IX

List of Abbreviations

NTB	Nusa Tenggara Barat - West Nusa Tenggara
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur - East Nusa Tenggara
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê - Kurdistan Workers' Party
Polri	Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia - Indonesian National Police
SeRVE	Society Against Radicalism and Violent Extremism
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Violent extremism
YPP	Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian - Institute for International Peace Building



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Introduction & Research Design

Introduction & Research Design

This section outlines the purpose of the research project. Firstly, it describes the conceptual framework of human trafficking and violent extremism. Secondly, it examines global research findings on the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism to establish what have been learnt about the nexus at the global level and the gaps in the study. Third, it outlines the research design and how the research agenda is relevant in the context of Indonesia. Lastly, it introduces the methodology used in the research.

Human trafficking and violent extremism are major transnational security threats. In Southeast Asia, despite regional stability, human trafficking and violent extremism have become more visible.

While human trafficking and violent extremism have been researched as two separate transnational crimes operating in the region, there remains far less understanding of the possible nexuses between the two crimes. Indonesia, the most

populous country in South East Asia has been victim to both human trafficking and violent extremism and the purpose of this study is to examine whether a nexus between them exists and what this may mean for policy.

1.1. Human Trafficking and Violent Extremism Frameworks

For the purpose of this analysis, conceptual definitions of human trafficking, violent extremism, and terrorism need to be clarified. Of all the three concepts, human trafficking is relatively well defined in the international law. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. The Protocol also rules that the consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation is irrelevant where any of the means mentioned above have been used.

The Palermo Protocol was signed by 117 states with 173 states are registered as the parties to the Protocol. It is also echoed in the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of which Indonesia is a party. Despite general agreement from the international community with regard to the general provisions of the Palermo Protocol, it is not without criticism. It is argued, for instance, that the UN definition leaves uncovered a grey area, where there are processes that end in exploitation, but in which coercion is not always identifiable

(Palmer 2012).

In Indonesia, the rather narrow definition of human trafficking outlined in the Palermo Protocol has been expanded to better capture the reality on the ground. Law No. 21/2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons defines trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, sending, transfer, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force, abduction, incarceration, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or position of vulnerability, debt bondage or the giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, whether committed within the country or cross-border, for the purpose of exploitation or *which cause the exploitation of a person*” [emphasis added]. This research uses this national legal definition.

There is no international agreement on a definition of violent extremism or terrorism.

...the most common understanding of violent extremism is one that “refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals.”

Despite significant achievements in the last couple of decades with regard to multilateral efforts to counter terrorism, international community has been unable to agree on a definition.

UNESCO, within the *Preventing violent extremism through education: a guide for policy-makers* document, for instance, suggests that the most common understanding of violent extremism is one that “refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals.” This can include “terrorism and other forms of politically motivated violence.” The USAID paper *Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency* identifies violent extremism as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.” The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines violent extremism as “promoting views which foment and incite violence in furtherance of particular beliefs, and foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence.”

In light of the need to capture the local context of the Indonesian case, this research uses the definition of terrorism provided in national legislation. Law No. 5 Year 2018 defines terrorism as “the acts of the threat or use of force that create widespread climate of terror or fear, that might cause mass casualties, and/or cause damage or destruction to the vital objects with strategic importance, environment, public facilities, or international facilities with the motives of ideology, politics, or disruption of security” [unofficial translation]. “Violent

extremism” and “terrorism” are thus used interchangeably in this report to refer to the same phenomenon.

1.2 Overarching Review of Intersections between Human Trafficking and Violent Extremism

Links between human trafficking and violent extremism or terrorism have been investigated in some parts of the world. Whilst human trafficking and violent extremism have mostly been studied as two separate subjects, growing attention has been paid to the possibility of a nexus. This has been noted in a number of UN’s documents, including Security Council resolutions 2195 (2014), 2253 (2015), 2199 (2015), 2368 (2017), and 2388 (2017).

There are various types of nexuses, and generally, direct intersections between human trafficking and terrorist or violent extremist activities. These are more visible in areas of conflict or war. In his study on the terror-crime nexus in Georgia, Traugher noted that in places where human trafficking represents a significant portion of organized criminal activity, a link with terrorism is suspected (Traugher 2007). Additionally, the use of human trafficking by terrorist groups is also arguably more common in conflict areas or weak states with corrupt governments or vacuum of power where it is easier for violent extremist groups to take control of the population. In these areas, instability and the failure of the rule of law have facilitated impunity and enabled human trafficking and violent extremist network (UN SG 2016; Walt 2015; Welch 2017; Shelley 2003).

In those settings, terrorist organisations have been reported in some cases to use

human trafficking for various purposes. One of the purposes is funding. Since the 1990s, terrorist organisations have been involved in organised crime to fund their operations (Curtis and Karakan 2002; Mili 2006; Shelley and Melzer 2011). One of the most notable examples of the nexus between terrorism and organised crime is the use of drug trafficking, arms smuggling, people's smuggling, money laundering, robbery, and smuggling of other goods by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey to generate funding for their organisation (Roth and Sever 2007; Cinar 2010). In recent years, it is highlighted that more terrorist groups have benefited from international organised crimes and the trafficking in people, drugs, arms and corruption (Schantz 2018). Organised criminal activities, including human trafficking, are mainly used by violent extremist organisations as an alternative source of funding, particularly when their main sources of funding were disrupted. Al-Qaeda, for example, turned to organised crime activities, including human trafficking, to finance their operations as a result of the US-led war on terror which had disabled their traditional funding sources (Gonzalez 2013). ISIS was also reported to be involved in antiquities smuggling, migrant smuggling, and human trafficking to generate funds since 2014 when the US and its allies attacked their oil facilities, their main source of funding (Walt 2015). It has been argued that organised criminal activities, including sex trafficking and drugs trafficking, were chosen as an alternative source of funding due to the relatively lower investment, quick returns, high profit margins, low risk of arrest, and low penalties (Shelley 2003).

By means of human trafficking, terrorist groups have been reported to gain

profits from slave markets, sexual slavery, and ransom or rescue payments. As an illustration, ISIS was reported to have kidnapped and exploited Yazidi, Christian, and Shiite communities in Iraq for ransom payments or to be sold as sex slaves (Lynch 2014; FATF 2018a). The organisation was reported to have operated a systematic market for the sale of abducted women by ways of slave auctions via the internet, sexual slavery in brothels, and domestic slavery (Gonzalez 2013; Lynch 2014; FATF 2018a). Al-Shabaab was also reported to exploit women by deceiving them with the promise of better work opportunities, but in reality, their wages were paid directly to the group (FATF 2018). Although not as substantial as, for instance, drug trafficking, terrorists often depend on profits from human trafficking (GFI 2017; Traughber 2007).

Despite being one of the most profitable organised crimes and alternative sources of funding, human trafficking, however, is not the main source of terrorist financing. Profits from human trafficking are not substantial for terrorist groups and it does not represent a key source of funding (Traughber 2007; Shelley 2003; FATF 2018a). Most of terrorist financing generally comes from more conventional ways of raising funds. Donations, crowd-funding, crowd-lending, and other legitimate means of non-profit funding such as charity were reported to be part of the popular ways for terrorist organisations to generate funding (FATF 2018b). Human trafficking is considered to be an opportunistic source of funding for terrorist groups (Gonzalez 2013; Schantz 2018; FATF 2018a). ISIS, however, presents an exceptional case. Its control over substantial size of territory and population allowed it to generate incomes from oil smuggling as well

as extortion and taxation of populations in Iraq and Syria (NTFRA 2018).

Beyond a funding opportunity, human trafficking has actually been used by terrorist groups for far more substantial purposes, which are: (1) systematic means of terror; (2) recruitment and exploitation; and (3) operational mechanism. For the first purpose, terrorist groups are reported to use human trafficking as part of a broader tactic of systematic warfare and terror to exploit, conquer as well as suppress or intimidate certain populations and reduce the resistance to their control, or to permanently cleanse and destroy the communities within the areas of their control (UN 2016; Binetti 2017; Welch 2017; GFI 2017). The method is arguably systematic because it was carefully planned and they have a chain of command for the operations to attack, kidnap, and exploit the populations, including the arrangement system for forced labour or sexual slavery (Murad 2018). The use of human trafficking as a means of terror was not only done by ISIS in Iraq. Boko Haram was also reported to use abductions and exploitation in their area of control in Nigeria (Shelley 2014).

In terms of recruitment and exploitation, human trafficking has been used in two ways. First, it has been used to recruit through force or coercion. ISIS in Iraq used trafficked people into forced labour and sexual exploitation (Schantz 2018). Additionally, several reports from the UN have also revealed children recruitment through trafficking and abductions by terrorist groups, particularly in conflict areas. According to the 2016 UN Secretary General Report, Lord's Resistance Army in Central African Republic, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional in Colombia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Moro National

Liberation Front in the Philippines, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and ISIS in Syria have recruited and exploited boys and girls not only for combat purposes (e.g. to be child army, suicide bombers, and human shields), but also for supporting purposes (e.g. logistic support, forced labour in organised begging rings).

The second way in which violent extremist groups use human trafficking is as a method of recruitment and exploitation through deception and promises of rewards. Violent extremist groups have been reported to adopt methods similar to human trafficking in deceiving new recruits and exploit them for various purposes such as logistics support, sexual slave, wife, fighters, suicide bombers, and labours (Gonzalez 2013; GFI 2017; Binetti 2017). Al-Shabaab, for example, was reported to promise employment and better life opportunities to exploit its recruits sexually or use them as forced labours (Schantz 2018). ISIS recruitment also used deception, threat, promises of rewards, and abuse of a position of vulnerability as they targeted boys, young men, and women by describing the propaganda of a better life opportunity under their leadership (resolution A/72/164; Binetti 2017). Terrorist groups, ISIS in particular, are reported to have used social media and other online media to distribute deceptive recruitment propaganda (GFI 2017).

Some violent extremist groups use their ideology to justify the many forms of human trafficking used in their operations, particularly for exploitation and recruitment. Ideology, particularly interpretation of religious scripture, has been used to justify a systematic campaign of exploitation, including forced marriage, forced labour, sexual slavery, and mass rape, not only as

a form of worship, but also as a legitimate punishment for the enemy, a reward for fighters as well as to attract new recruits (Binetti 2017; Welch 2017; Murad 2018). Ideology is also reported to be used for recruitment purposes. Whilst human traffickers commonly base their deception on the promises of better economic opportunities, violent extremist groups' deception also rests on ideology or religious doctrine. They make promises of a better life, including a better social welfare and justice system, under their leadership, and they have also claimed to offer a better afterlife for their followers (Botelho 2014; Welch 2017). Ideology framed in the interpretation of scripture is not only used to approve the recruitment, and sometimes abductions, of women and children to be fighters, suicide bombers, or slaves, but it is also used as a justification to threaten and execute those who refuse their command, to maintain power relations or control (Lynch 2014, Botelho 2014, Schantz 2018). ISIS is not the only group that has used ideology to justify human trafficking as its modus operandi. Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and the Lord's Resistance Army have also been known to use ideology in justifying human trafficking as its modus operandi (UNSC 2017, UNSC 2018).

Lastly, a nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism has also been identified in terms of operations. The most notable nexus has been the use of trafficking routes and facilitators. Some terrorist groups have used human trafficking routes for transportation or logistics (Traugher 2007). Terrorist groups have also been found to use human trafficking networks to obtain entry to the US (Anderson in Gonzalez 2013). There have been some indications which revealed

that terrorist organisations have cultivated relationships and share the same facilitator or network with human trafficking groups (Shelley 2014; UN News 2018).

Despite evidence from conflict contexts that show, complex links between terrorism and organised crime, they are still treated and framed differently as they are perceived to have inherently different aims. Terrorism and organised crime often use similar methods or organisational systems. They both, to some extent, rely on crime to fund their operations, and on networks, they use violence and utilise communication technology, and they also blend legitimate and illegitimate activities (Shelley and Picarelli 2002). These two crimes, however, sometimes differ in their ends. Transnational criminal activities are commonly economically driven. Terrorism is usually ideologically driven and rooted in politics. (Shelley and Picarelli 2002). Furthermore, Arasli (2007) has also argued that whilst transnational organised criminals are clandestine by nature, terrorist groups usually prefer to gain exposure in executing their actions in public because they want to gain attention to spread their political or ideological messages. Terrorist acts are also designed to spread fear and provoke a reaction from the state. However, terror groups can often revert into criminality, for example sections of Abu Sayyaf appear little more than criminal in nature. And similarly, criminal gangs in, for example, in Mexico deploy public acts of terror to control local populations.

Nevertheless, the overarching review of existing research findings have shown two valuable insights in understanding the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism, which are:

1. The condition of conflict, instability, including weak law enforcement, poverty and reduced economic opportunities, weak social welfare system, as well as forced migration or displacement, have enabled the nexus between violent extremism and human trafficking. In most of the reported cases, conflict or instability driven by violent extremism have intensified the circumstances that make people vulnerable to human trafficking. Accordingly, it was also easier for violent extremist groups to use human trafficking as part of their operations in those areas.
2. Human trafficking has been used as a modus operandi of violent extremist activities, particularly for the purposes of funding, systematic means of terror, recruitment and exploitation, as well as operational mechanism. Some violent extremist groups – most notably ISIS – have used ideology through the interpretation of religious scriptures to justify the use of human trafficking methods in their operations.

As these findings mostly came from research with specific focus on conflict areas, there is a gap in research on the potential nexus in a more peaceful setting where both crimes exist. Indonesia presents an interesting case study as the country is a peaceful democratic context where the issues of human trafficking and violent extremism are still considered a threat.

1.3 Research Design and Relevance of the Study in Indonesia

This research is an exploratory study to examine whether there is any potential

nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. As one of the countries in Southeast Asia with the most experience dealing with terrorism or violent extremism, Indonesia is also no stranger to human trafficking. The country is one of the source countries for victims of human trafficking, and it has dealt with various cases of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, and trafficking of migrant workers. Additionally, Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim majority state and it has an extensive history and experience in dealing with various types of violent extremist attacks, including suicide bombing, gunfire attack, kidnapping, and airplane hijacking.

A large body of works research on terrorism and violent extremism in Indonesia has been carried out across many disciplines, including general trend of terrorism and de-radicalization (e.g. Alvara Research Center, 2018; Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, 2017; Thomas Koruth Samuel Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2018), causes of radicalism and terrorism (e.g. Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, 2017; Bamualim, et al., 2018; Indonesian Muslim Crisis Center, 2018; Jerard 2015; Solahudin 2018; Azca, 2013), policies and practices of the government (e.g. The Habibie Center 2017), rehabilitation and de-radicalization (e.g. Pusat Studi Timur Tengah dan Perdamaian Global, 2018; Habibullah, 2014), approaches to counter terrorism (Kirana, 2017; Ansori, 2017; Indonesia Muslim Crisis Center, 2017), and many others. Much of the research has focused on the social-political characteristics of terrorism and violent extremism, radicalism, approaches to counter terrorism, policies and practices of the government, general trend of terrorism and de-radicalization. However, almost no

Table 1. The Number of Indonesian Citizens Joining ISIS

Year	Number	Data Source	Notes
2015	500	BNPT	-
2016	200	Densus 88	53 people returning from Syria
2017	671	Densus 88/Polri	524 (Male) and 147 (Female)

research has examined the link between terrorism and violent extremism with human trafficking.

There has similarly been extensive research into human trafficking in Indonesia by focusing on diverse aspect and points of views, including the relation between human trafficking and fishery industry (e.g. IOM, 2016), the role of international organizations in combating human trafficking in Indonesia (e.g. Arif, 2016), causing factors human trafficking (e.g. Andari 2011; Niko 2016), policies and legal framework (e.g. Satriani & Muis, 2013; Laki, 2013). Similarly, there is almost no attempt has been made to further examine the presence of link between human trafficking and terrorism in Indonesia.

This issue of the existence of trans-national terrorist network is of particular interest in Indonesia, and the Southeast Asia in general, where ISIS-affiliated terrorist groups pose a security threat. In Indonesia, ISIS has built extensive network with a number of groups, particularly the *Jamaah Ansharud Daulah* (JAD) and *Jamaah Islamiyah* (JI). The most recent terrorist attacks in Indonesia were carried out by perpetrators affiliated with JAD. The most recent bombings in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, for instance, were carried out by the alleged members of the JAD that had been involved in the broader cell of JAD in East Java Province.

In addition to that, the threat posed by returning and deported “foreign fighters” in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries is also real. Amidst the losses ISIS is suffering in the Middle East, Indonesian citizens that went to fight in Syria and Iraq might come back home bringing in the ideology and capacity to carry out attacks (see table 1).

To make matter worse, some countries where ISIS is trying to recruit have porous borders and very weak customs controls (Kurlantzick 2016). The porous and ungoverned borders will continue to present a major problem virtue of the ease of movement for militants and terrorist across borders (Liow 2016). In addition, as far as the relationship between human trafficking and terrorism is concerned, the discussion has been largely dominated by the issue of radicalization of Indonesian overseas women migrant workers (e.g. Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict 2017) and refugees or asylum seekers stranded in Indonesia.

Whilst links between human trafficking and violent extremism or terrorism in Indonesia are suspected, the existence of a nexus between the two remains unclear and understudied. The nature of the nexus is, at best, ambiguous. Human trafficking and terrorism in Indonesia have been largely treated as two mutually exclusive problems. However, the emergence of cases involving the

radicalisation of overseas migrant workers, people migrating to Iraq and Syria to support of ISIS, children recruited as suicide bombers, as well as abductions of fishermen by a violent extremist group, has prompted questions a potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism. Is there any link between the operation of human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia? Is there any particular vulnerability that might affect the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia? What are the similarities or differences between cases in Indonesia and cases in conflict areas? Research to explore such nexus has not been done before. Therefore, this exploratory research is crucial to establish a frame of reference for future research and investigation on the issue.

Accordingly, the stated problem for this research is *“Is there any link between violent extremism and human trafficking in Indonesia?”* If the evidence indicates a link between both issues, some follow-up research questions are further formulated:

1. To what extent is human trafficking linked with violent extremism in Indonesia?
2. In what ways can human trafficking be linked to violent extremism in Indonesia?
3. Which part of the population may be vulnerable to human trafficking as a result of the expansion of ISIS in Indonesia?
4. What are the conditions that increases vulnerability to human trafficking as a result of violent extremism in Indonesia?

Based on the existing findings and the research questions, the hypotheses for this research are as follows:

1. As violent extremism has not succeeded

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in gaining significant control or creating instability in Indonesia, a direct nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism does not exist in Indonesia;

2. The nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia only exists in terms of potential; and
3. The potential of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia might be found in two ways: (a) similarities in the method of recruitment and exploitation; and (b) similarities in the characteristics of vulnerable population.

1.4. Methodology

This in-depth qualitative study primarily employs open-ended interviews with diverse relevant stakeholders, either being concerned with terrorism or human trafficking. They include human trafficking victims, former terrorist prisoners, relevant ministries, local and international NGOs/ organizations, scholars, and security officers. About 20 informants have been interviewed within November and December 2018.

Finally, two focus group discussions (FGDs) have been conducted at The Habibie Center on January 9th and 10th, 2019 to bolster the data by inviting relevant and strategic stakeholders. Secondary sources are relied on, including academic publications, public records, governmental documents, and local and national newspapers and magazines. Combining the secondary analysis of research data with the primary one provides additional comparative or collateral evidence using different sources of data and/ or could be used for cross-validation or data triangulation.





2

Key
Research
Findings

Key Research Findings

2.1 Key Trends of Human Trafficking in Indonesia

This part of the research aims to understand how human trafficking is understood in Indonesia, how it occurs, and what were the characteristics of the victims. The answers to these questions are useful in identifying a general understanding of human trafficking in Indonesia and the possible intersections between human trafficking and violent extremism. The information is also important to provide an introduction to human trafficking for stakeholders working on violent extremism in Indonesia and who may not have a comprehensive understanding of human trafficking.

All experts and policymakers on human trafficking who participated in this research referred to the Palermo Protocol definition of human trafficking which was adopted as Indonesian law. They all emphasised that

human trafficking must be defined strictly in terms of the Protocol. This means migration can only be considered human trafficking if it meets all three elements that define human trafficking, namely the process, the means, and the purpose of exploitation. Careful investigation and analysis are needed to avoid misinterpretation of a case.

An expert on migrant workers trafficking noted that:

“(Human) trafficking is actually a set of connected crimes (done) through three elements, which are process, means, and purpose. All of these three elements must be proven. Sometimes police officer only considered one element and did not take into account the other elements. They defined the case as a fraud, but they did not check for the recruitment process, or whether exploitation had happened.”¹

In Indonesia, the most common means for

¹ Interview with an officer from INFEST Indonesia, a non-profit institution working on, among others, management of information and knowledge about Indonesian migrant workers.

human trafficking recruitment was deception and abuse of a position of vulnerability. The research revealed that deceptions through promises of better income, document fraud, persuasion, and debt bondage were amongst the most common means of human trafficking recruitment in Indonesia. These were commonly found in human trafficking cases involving Indonesian migrant workers. They were recruited with the promise of higher income, then they were transferred and received by their employer, but they were not given what was promised to them.² Abuse of a position of vulnerability, or abuse of power, was also quite common in human trafficking cases in Indonesia, particularly in cases involving migrant or domestic workers. In such cases, the workers were often forced to be in a disadvantageous position as their unequal position of power was further exacerbated through various means of scam or debt bondage situations. For example, recruitment agency would issue fraudulent documents for the workers or lend them money to fund their initial journey, thus putting the workers in a debt bondage situation, which enabled the agency or the employer to maintain their control over the victims and exploit their income.³ Other than migrant or domestic workers, abuse of a position of vulnerability was also found in cases of children trafficking in Indonesia, in which the parents of the children used their power to exploit their children for various purposes, including forced labour or prostitution.⁴

Information from the interviews also revealed exploitation is the principal distinctive feature of human trafficking. They highlighted that regardless of the recruitment and transfer process, whether it was done through legal or illegal channels, or whether the victims were forced or voluntarily recruited, human trafficking could still happen as long as there were abuses of power and an intention of exploitation during the whole process.⁵ As an illustration, an expert from the IOM in Indonesia explained that:

“Human trafficking could be done through legal or illegal means. We do not see it based on whether the document is original or not, or whether they migrated through the government’s (legal) channels, or through unknown underground channels. As long as the three elements are fulfilled, for example, there was recruitment, transportation, transfer, and there was also the means, which include document fraud, or maybe there was no document fraud but there was an abuse of power instead, which indicate an element of exploitation. These could be investigated, and we can call this a (human) trafficking case. This is also one of the mistakes from the government side because they think that human trafficking case must be illegal, however this is not always the case.”⁶

She further elaborated that in some cases, even a registered agency would still exploit

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia’s counter-trafficking and labour migration unit, and an officer from INFEST Indonesia.

6 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia

the workers by reducing their income, not paying their income, or exploit them sexually.⁷ The intention to exploit is sufficient for a legal case to be initiated.⁸ Commenting on the intention of exploitation in human trafficking cases, an expert explained that:

“Even if the exploitation has not occurred, but the criminal intention is there, then we can say that *mens rea* has occurred. This could actually be prosecuted with the human trafficking law.”⁹

Still on understanding the definition of human trafficking, some experts further elaborated that human trafficking should not be confused with people smuggling because, unlike human trafficking, people smuggling offense only involves illegal transfer or transportation process, without deception or exploitation. For instance, one expert from the IOM in Indonesia explained that:

“The business of smuggling is done after the passengers reached their destination

country or area; whilst human trafficking will continue. Usually, the perpetrators of human smuggling would only take advantage of the process of smuggling people to a certain country. That is it. Human trafficking, however, involves smuggling, maybe legal departure, and constant process of control mechanism until the victims provide the traffickers with profits, which could be material or non-material. That is the difference. Smuggler does not need exploitation. They were paid only for the service to transfer people.”¹⁰

In answering the second question, all experts generally shared the same account, which is that sexual trafficking and forced labour involving migrant workers are the most common cases of human trafficking reported in Indonesia. This account is also consistent with several reports publications on human trafficking in the country. For example, according to the US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report

7 *Ibid.*

8 Interview an officer from INFEST Indonesia.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia.



Photo:
Guilherme Cunha/Unsplash

(2018), Indonesia is mainly a source country for human trafficking. The most prevalent cases of human trafficking in the country are forced labour and sexual exploitation. Whilst, forced labour was reported to be commonly found amongst Indonesian migrant workers who worked in domestic sector, factory, construction, and manufacturing in Asia and Middle East as well as in palm oil plantation in Malaysia and fisheries sector in the Indian and Pacific ocean, sexual exploitation was reported to be commonly found amongst women and girls who worked in Malaysia, Taiwan, and Middle East (US Dept. of State 2018).

To a lesser extent, Indonesia is also a destination country for human trafficking. An expert from IOM Indonesia explained that most of the victims came from East Europe and Mongolia, and there were sexually exploited in prostitution businesses, mostly in Jakarta.¹¹ Furthermore, she also mentioned that in 2015 there were some cases of forced labour in fisheries on the northern border

near China.¹² However, she further clarified that Indonesia is still primarily a source country for victims of human trafficking, and that around 70 to 80 percent of human trafficking cases are cross-border in nature occurring outside the Indonesian territory.¹³

As far as recruitment is concerned, participants commonly identified the means of deception through employment and/or income or profit offers as the most frequently used method of recruitment. These deceptions were advertised through various channels, including personal network, poster, leaflet, banner, and even social media platforms on the internet.¹⁴ A report from the Indonesian Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (GT PP-TPPO) (2016), similarly emphasised that promises of better employment opportunity and income were common in recruitment of domestic workers, migrant workers, sexual workers, forced labour workers, children trafficking, as well as organ trafficking. Recruitment of human trafficking in Indonesia is mostly

11 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 Interview an officer from INFEST Indonesia.

carried out by trusted network of social circle and agencies, such as migrant workers recruitment agency, family members, neighbours, friends, and to some extent also irresponsible government officers (KPPA 2016). However, most of Indonesians who are involved in the recruitment of human trafficking claimed that they are not aware that what they are offering is considered human trafficking, and they also maintain that their intention is innocent because they are only trying to help their children, relatives, or friends.¹⁵

Participants highlighted that women, girls, and migrant workers are the most vulnerable populations in Indonesia. Trafficking of women and girls are usually done for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and they are mostly exploited in the prostitution business inside the country.¹⁶ According to a government social worker, some of these victims are recruited voluntarily. They are interested to join because of economic reasons, particularly to support their family and to buy tertiary goods such as a mobile phone, without necessarily being aware of the risks.¹⁷

As far as exploitation of migrant workers is concerned, participants in the research highlighted that Indonesian migrant workers are mostly vulnerable to forced labour. Domestic workers, mostly women, are particularly vulnerable because of their relative isolation with lesser contact

with their peers and even less access for communication so it would be relatively harder for them to report any abuse or exploitation.¹⁸ Male migrant workers, on the other hand, are more vulnerable to forced labour, particularly in the palm oil and fisheries industries.¹⁹

Vulnerability of Indonesian migrant workers to human trafficking is also influenced by education background, skills attainment, and law enforcement at the provincial level. Essentially, a shift in education levels and skills attainment within the general population in a certain area can have a considerable influence in shifting the dynamics of source and destination areas. Lack of regulation and weak government protection are also considered as part of the enabling factors that influence vulnerability.²⁰ An expert from IOM Indonesia noted:

“Before, West Java, East Java, and basically the Java island, that were the main source areas of Indonesian migrant workers. Now it has shifted. Now, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) has a high number (of migrant workers), and so is West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), then followed by Java. This shift is probably because for the domestic workers sector, the workers in West Java and other provinces in Java, mostly have improved their skills, so their level is also higher, they have acquired some experiences, so their bargaining position is also improved. Meanwhile

15 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia.

16 Interview with an officer from PSMP Indonesia, a unit under the Ministry of Social Affairs working on, among others, sheltering and rehabilitation of women and children returning from Syria.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Interview an officer from INFEST Indonesia.

19 Interview with an official from the Indonesian Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and an official from the National Commission for Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) Indonesia.

20 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia.

in the Eastern part, when we talk about the situation in NTT, it is like Java twenty years ago. There is no clear regulation, response from the government is weak, and in NTT, people were interested to leave their hometown only with a promise of one million (rupiah) salary.”²¹

Additionally, poverty and the lack of availability of economic opportunities are also mentioned as factors that make people more vulnerable to human trafficking. According to an expert from IOM Indonesia, autonomous regional development at the provincial level could influence the availability of better employment opportunities with competitive salary, for example through the opening of new manufacturing factories or new businesses, which could make the migrant work less attractive.²² Putting it simply, the condition of poverty and structural condition of economic development at provincial level could influence the incentive for the people in that area to join the recruitment for migrant workers or stay with the available job offer and income. In places where there is high level of poverty and less attractive employment opportunities, people tend to be more vulnerable to human trafficking.

Unsafe migration is also identified as one of the conditions that has increased vulnerability to trafficking. The lack of law enforcement and monitoring mechanism, particularly at the village level where the process of recruitment usually takes place, enables unsafe migration for migrant workers, thus

making them more vulnerable to human trafficking.²³ One participant also highlighted that migrant workers who go through illegal means of transfer such as migrant smuggling, tend to be more vulnerable to human trafficking because not only that they have violated the law, they also lack the capacity and network to get proper employment and protection.²⁴ In short, migrant workers who go through unsafe migration process are more vulnerable to exploitation because they could not get proper legal protection.

Participants in the interviews also identified two other vulnerable groups, which are people who work in the border areas and refugees or displaced people such as the Rohingya refugees. People who work in border areas are thought to be particularly vulnerable to human trafficking because border areas can have less effective law enforcement capacity.²⁵ Refugees and displaced populations are identified as being highly vulnerable to human trafficking.²⁶

2.2 Key Trends of Violent Extremism in Indonesia

This part of the research seeks to understand how violent extremism is understood in Indonesia, in what ways it has occurred in the country, and examine vulnerable populations. The aim is to provide an understanding of the phenomenon and the nexus with human trafficking. The information is also important as a background understanding of violent extremism because, as also evident from this research, stakeholders who work in the

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 Interview with an official from Komnas Perempuan Indonesia.

24 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia.

25 Interview with an official from Indonesian Representative to AICHR

26 *Ibid.*

Terrorism threat in Indonesia is especially challenging because we deal with religion-inspired terrorism. When terrorist groups use religion as their shield, they will appear sacred, they represent faith.

issues of human trafficking in Indonesia are not necessarily equipped with complete understanding of violent extremism.

Participants in the interviews referred to violent extremism as another term for terrorism. Accordingly, they shared the view that violent extremism should be understood in terms of terrorism as defined in the Law No. 5/2018. Trans-national groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, and local groups such as Indonesian Islamic State (NII), JI, and JAD were mentioned a great deal in the interviews. They shared the same perception that violent extremism in Indonesia is dominated by extreme Islamist inspired groups, which use religion to justify violence in pursuit of political ends.

This was also highlighted by one of the experts of violent extremism in Indonesia,

who said that:

“Terrorism threat in Indonesia is especially challenging because we deal with religion-inspired terrorism. When terrorist groups use religion as their shield, they will appear sacred, they represent faith.”²⁷

He further explained that the dominance of religious influence has made it especially challenging to counter violent extremism in Indonesia because any attack against them have been reframed as an attack on sacred faith, and this narrative is used not only to refuel the sense of injustice or victimisation amongst them, but also as a justification to launch revenge attacks against the state.²⁸

The research underlines that violent extremism has been part of Indonesia’s

27 Interview with a researcher/officer from Indonesia Muslim Crisis Center (IMC2), a non-governmental organization focusing on the eradication of religious violence in Indonesia.

28 *Ibid.*

history since before independence. In addition to the persistence of Islamist ideology, the ups and downs of violent extremism threat in Indonesia are a function of changing domestic socio-political conditions and international developments. In the past when the nation was in the process of state-building and the legitimacy of the political system was contested, the weapon of terror was used by militant jihadi movements as part of full-scale insurgency. After the defeat of the rebels, terror acts continued to be used by the extremists who had transformed themselves into a clandestine network. During this period, Indonesian jihadists network expanded internationally when the activists started to attract support from some Middle Eastern countries. The 1979's Iranian Revolution also strengthened the cause of Indonesian jihadists to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. Most importantly, during the 1980s, hundreds of Indonesian *mujahideen*, or fighters, engaged in military training in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A number of Afghanistan veterans returned to play an active role in subsequent terror activities in late 1990s and early 2000s, including the Bali bombing in 2002.

In terms of ideology, the *Salafi* jihadism that drove Darul Islam insurgency in 1950s and 1960s has inspired subsequent generations of extremists. The ideology considers any government that does not implement Islamic law to be apostate and for war against it is obligatory. However, unlike in the past when terror acts were mostly used as part of the larger open separatist campaigns, the contemporary violent extremism threat in Indonesia is characterized by activities of separate closed cells with less hierarchy and decentralized organizational structure. These cells often do not even communicate

with each other.

According to Deteksi Indonesia, an in-house database of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism measures developed by The Habibie Center, there were 19 terrorist incidents across Indonesia between 2017 and 2018. These attacks caused at least 52 deaths and 69 people injured. The majority of these attacks (70%) took place in Java, Indonesia's most populated island and economic and political centre. Outside of Java, terrorism continues to be employed by the East Indonesia Mujahideen (*Mujahidin Indonesia Timur*/MIT) that has been waging a low-scale insurgency in Central Sulawesi. Most of these attacks were carried out by individuals or groups affiliated with or inspired by ISIS. The rise of ISIS has provided new impetus to the violent extremist agenda in Indonesia. It provides a common cause for different violent extremist organizations operating in the country.

Deteksi Indonesia also records that state's symbols and infrastructure, especially the police, are the main targets of violent extremist attacks. This trend is a departure from the previous period when the terrorist attacks were mainly targeted towards symbols of Western interests in the country. In addition to the long-standing belief that non-Islamic government must be replaced, the difficulty to join ISIS in Syria due to police's strengthened surveillance has driven Indonesian ISIS sympathizers to wage *jihad* at home. Finally, the recent wave of terrorist attacks in Indonesia also reveals a new modus operandi in which women are now taking an active role as attackers. The perpetrators are also now willing to use children as suicide bombers. In Surabaya last year, a family, including the mother and

four children, carried out three attacks on churches. Before, in 2017, Dian Yulia Novita, a former migrant worker, was charged 7.5 years in prison for trying to attack the State Palace. Dian was persuaded by a fellow migrant worker, Tutin Sugiarti. Women were also active in providing support roles. In 2014 Nurul Azmi Tibyani was charged four years in prison for her involvement in financing the Santoso-led terrorist group in Poso. When JI was still active, Ingrid Wahyu Cahyaningsih, Munfiatun and Putri Munowaroh were charged for hiding terrorist convicts.

Meanwhile, ISIS propaganda has attracted Indonesian sympathizers to join the organization in Syria. In 2017, 671 Indonesian citizens attempted to go to Syria, 99 of them were children.²⁹ Most of them have returned to Indonesia, either voluntarily (returnee) or deported after failing to enter Syria (deportee). There were also a number of Indonesian citizens who had managed to join and fight with ISIS before captured and deported (*foreign terrorist fighters*).

Indonesian returnees interviewed for this research cited ideological reasons as their main motivation to try to join ISIS in Syria. Most of these people had already had certain interpretation of religious scripture about the obligation to migrate (*hijrah*) to the promised land and live in a society upholding Islamic law. The content of ISIS propaganda is intentionally designed to fit into this interpretation. Some also believe in the promise of heaven after dying in the armed struggle (*jihad fisabilillah*). Still others, especially women, like the idea of marrying

one of the jihadists and live in a *khilafah*.

In addition to the ideological deception, this research also suggests that recruitment of violent extremist groups in Indonesia often exploit economic vulnerabilities of the potential targets. One of the returnees, for instance, told the research team that people from ISIS promised her a better health and education facility if she agreed to move to Syria. She was also promised that her debts would be paid off by ISIS. Another returnee went to Syria after the recruiter promised him a better job and income. Instead of short-term, legitimate job as he was promised, ISIS forced him to put up arms.

2.3 Stakeholders' Perception on the Possible Nexus between Human Trafficking and Violent Extremism in Indonesia

Interview results suggest that there is almost a universal perception that a nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism does not exist in Indonesia. Participants, particularly government stakeholders, emphasised that the nexus does not exist because a direct intersection between human trafficking and violent extremism has never been found in Indonesia. They also maintained that human trafficking and violent extremism tend to operate separately in Indonesia, and there has never been any convicted case of violent extremism that has elements of human trafficking, and vice versa.³⁰ This was also highlighted during one of the focus group discussions, in which participants concluded that Indonesia has not experienced any clear nexus between

29 "Sebanyak 6 WNI Eks Anggota ISIS Pulang ke Indonesia", *CNN*, retrieved from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20170926204507-12-244223/sebanyak-6-wni-eks-anggota-isis-pulang-ke-indonesia>

30 Interview with National Police Officers from Detachment 88, special counter-terrorism unit, and the Special Anti-Trafficking Unit.

human trafficking and violent extremism as underlined by the absence of reported cases.³¹

In explaining their views on this, interviewees mostly referred to the case of ISIS supporters' migration to Syria and the radicalisation of Indonesian migrant workers abroad. Commenting on the case of Indonesian ISIS supporters who migrated to Syria to join ISIS's leadership, all the experts shared the view that they were not human trafficking victims because they migrated voluntarily. Whilst acknowledging that there were some elements of deceptions through the promises of better job opportunity, better income, and better life quality, all the experts maintained that the people who returned from their attempt to migrate and join ISIS in Syria were not victims of human trafficking because they did so voluntarily, and there was no element of force during the recruitment.³² For instance, an expert of violent extremism in Indonesia from the State Islamic University Jakarta explained that:

“Most of the people (who returned or deported back to Indonesia) that I interviewed had not experience any of those cases (trafficked, exploited, or deceived)... They used their own travel agent, and whether or not they were involved in human trafficking, we do not know. They migrated voluntarily.”³³

Additionally, participants also emphasised that different from human trafficking victims who were mostly recruited because of the offer of economic profit, people who migrated to join ISIS in Syria were mainly recruited because of ideological reason, particularly to do *jihad* or fight to defend their faith.³⁴ Some participants also mentioned that unlike victims of human trafficking, some of the people who were recruited to join ISIS in Syria came from middle to upper economic class, who were able to fund their own journey and were mostly recruited because of ideological reasons.³⁵ Putting it simply, the intersection between human trafficking and violent extremism in the case of people who migrated to join ISIS in Syria is not clear because their motivations differ. Different from the victims of human trafficking, people who migrated to join ISIS did so voluntarily, and their primary motivation is ideological or faith.

In explaining the case of Indonesian migrant workers radicalisation abroad, participants also shared the view that the case does not necessarily represent a clear nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. Similarly, participants also noted that there has not been any case of radicalisation amongst victims of human trafficking, refugees, or displaced population in Indonesia. Whilst acknowledging that victims of human trafficking, refugees, and displaced population are generally more


31 Result from FGD 1 and FGD 2.

32 Based on interviews with a researcher/officer from Indonesia Muslim Crisis Center (IMC2), Society against Radicalism & Violent Extremism (SeRVE) Indonesia, and Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian/Institute for International Peace Building. SeRVE Indonesia focuses on issues related to radicalism and violent extremism while IIPB focuses on promoting peace through dialogue to reduce the level of threat coming from violent extremism in Indonesia.

33 Interview with a researcher/officer from IMC2.

34 Based on interviews with an official from PSMP Handayani, an officer from SeRVE Indonesia, and a terrorism expert from the University of Indonesia.

35 Based on Interviews with an official from PSMP Handayani and an officer from SeRVE Indonesia.



vulnerable position to radicalisation there is no evidence of this in the context of Indonesia.³⁶

However, it is interesting to note that an expert of human rights protection in Southeast Asia mentioned that at the regional level, there have been some cases of human trafficking involving refugees from Myanmar's Rakhine State conflict, which indicates an connection between violent extremism and human trafficking because violent extremism is part of the factors that drove the conflict in Rakhine State.³⁷ Thus in such context, it might be concluded that in the cases where violent extremism has resulted in conflict and instability, which then causes irregular migration and displacement that make people more vulnerable to human trafficking. Fortunately, Indonesia has not experienced any case similar to that because the country has managed to maintain its stability and contain violent extremist movement from gaining significant control within its border.

Overall, in explaining how cases might be considered to show a clear nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism, key stakeholders in Indonesia used the agreed upon framing of the two crimes in concluding that there has not been any single case in the country with a clear indication of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism. According to their accounts, there are two main differences that separate the case of human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. First, unlike human trafficking cases that are usually characterised by the use of violence,

36 Based on interviews with an officer from IOM Indonesia, PSMP Handayani, and Komnas Perempuan.

37 Interview with an official from Indonesian Representative to AICHR.

force, and coercion, people join violent extremist groups voluntarily. With a common understanding that human trafficking recruitment is usually non-consensual and non-voluntary, they concluded that violent extremism recruitment could not be defined as human trafficking because members of violent extremist groups usually share affinity to the teaching of the groups and joined them voluntarily. Secondly, human trafficking and violent extremism are viewed to have two different and mutually exclusive purposes. Whilst the former is usually for material benefit, the latter is for ideological or political purposes.

These accounts underline that stakeholders in Indonesia generally share a rigid understanding of violent extremism and human trafficking, which might miss out key nuances. Human trafficking and violent extremism are mostly framed as a separate and mutually exclusive subject in the country and overseas. Whilst violent extremism is more loosely defined as there is no universally agreed-upon definition, human trafficking has been ascribed with a specific definition and three detailed elements (i.e. the process, the means, and the purpose). All experts agreed that to show a nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism has happened, investigator must prove that violent extremism case also satisfies the three elements of human trafficking. This rigid understanding and the lack of critical thinking underlines the tendency of key stakeholders to conclude that there is no nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia.

Accounts from the participants during interviews and focus groups discussion confirmed the first hypothesis of this

Photo:
Mitch Lensink/Unsplash

research: extremism has not succeeded in gaining a significant momentum to create instability in Indonesia. A direct nexus does not exist in Indonesia. Unlike other regions where violent extremism has taken substantial control and created the condition that have made people more vulnerable to human trafficking, Indonesia has managed to maintain its resilient in containing as well as preventing violent extremist groups from inciting open conflict and create instability. Putting it simply, in the context of Indonesia, violent extremism has not succeeded in creating a turbulent condition that might amplify people's vulnerability to human trafficking. Thus far, despite the fact that violent extremism and human trafficking continue to pose a significant security challenge in Indonesia, they are still treated as two separate and mutually exclusive cases.

Whilst acknowledging that there has not been a single documented case with a direct intersection the research concludes that a more nuanced understanding the issues might open up the possibility to explore a potential nexus in Indonesia.

2.4 Potential Nexus between Human Trafficking and Violent Extremism in Indonesia – Four Case Studies

Generally, the potential of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia is indicated by the utilisation of human trafficking activities as part of violent extremist groups' modus operandi. In this regard, several cases of violent extremism radicalisation in Indonesia have shown potential of the nexus, in which violent extremist groups in Indonesia shared similar methods of recruitment and

exploitation with human trafficking network. This section explores the suspected case studies and elaborates in what ways human trafficking and violent extremism might be interconnected in Indonesia.

Interview results suggest four cases that suggest potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. The first is the case of Indonesians who migrated to Syria to join ISIS and the case of recruitment and exploitation of supporters of the NII group. Confessions and stories from Indonesians who returned or were deported from Syria revealed that violent extremist groups used methods similar to human trafficking in the recruitment process. ISIS supporters were recruited with promises of material and immaterial benefits, such as better income, occupation, welfare system, and even a better afterlife condition. However, in reality, they were in fact used as labours or fighters. Similarly, stories of the recruitment process of the supporters of NII also indicated similarities with methods used to recruit and exploit victims of human trafficking. The NII group used ideology to recruit their supporters as well as to justify the exploitation of their members for the benefit of the group. These stories also revealed that in some cases, violent extremist groups have abused of position of vulnerability or power to maintain their control over the exploited members. One of the most common method they use to maintain their control is through debt bondage, which is also a common method in human trafficking. Further elaboration of the indication of nexus in the method of recruitment and exploitation is summarised in table 2.

Table 2. Potential Nexus in the Recruitment and Exploitation of Members of Violent Extremist Groups in Indonesia

Case Profile	Recruitment Process	Indication of Exploitation
<p>Recruitment of Ahmad Junaidi, a meatball soup seller who were recruited by Abu Jandal to join ISIS in Syria.³⁸</p>	<p>Ahmad Junaidi was recruited through direct contact with Abu Jandal, and the radicalisation was suspected to happen in the circle of religious study (<i>pengajian</i>) led by Abu Jandal. He was promised to work as a religious teacher in Syria with better income to pay-off his debt. He also claimed to have signed a work-contract document offered by Abu Jandal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With humble income from selling meatball soup, Ahmad Junaidi had to take some loans from his neighbours and sell all of his belongings to finance his journey. • He claimed to have been deceived and exploited because he did not receive what was promised in the beginning. He did not work as a religious teacher, but rather was forced to join military training and fight for ISIS. He also did not receive the income as promised in the recruitment. • He was also put in a debt bondage situation. The group threatened him not to pay off his debt if he returned to Indonesia. With this bondage, he was forced to stay in the military camp in Syria.
<p>Recruitment of Difa and her family. They migrated to Syria but managed to escape and returned to Indonesia.³⁹</p>	<p>Economic incentives of better income and job opportunity as teachers, accountants, and IT officers were used in the recruitment of Difa and her family. She claimed that there were also</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was put in a debt bondage situation because she had to sell her house and her family’s properties to fund their journey to Syria. She was threatened that if she decided to leave, they would be required to pay the debt. • They did not receive any of the promises, and in reality, they were

38. Based on interview with an officer from SeRVE Indonesia, who has maintained a close contact with Ahmad Junaidi.

39. From interview with Difa herself.

Case Profile	Recruitment Process	Indication of Exploitation
	<p>promises of better social welfare, better education opportunities, and better health insurance system. There was also a promise to pay-off her family's debt if they join ISIS in Syria.</p>	<p>forced to join military training as combatant and join the fight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At one point, Difa and her sister were also put in a situation where they were forced to be married with one of the ISIS fighters. They were threatened with punishment if they refuse to accept the offer.⁴⁰
<p>Recruitment and exploitation of NII Commandement Area IX (NII KW-9) in the year 2000s.⁴¹</p>	<p>Ideological motivations of the establishment of Islamic state and redemption was commonly used to attract and recruit supporters from the middle to upper social-economic class. To recruit people from lower social-economic class, the group offered the promises of economic incentives such as better occupation and better livelihood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are required to pay various kind of fees, including application fee to be officially inaugurated (or <i>bai'at</i>) as members (or <i>jema'ah</i>), personal monthly fee framed as a religious donation known as <i>infaq</i>, and collective <i>infaq</i> with specific quota that needs to be fulfilled by each community. If the members failed to fulfil the requirements, they will be punished (i.e. fine payment or physical abuse). Members were often involved in criminal activities, including robbery, fraud, and even prostitution in order to fulfil the requirements. There was strong indication that the funding from all the membership fees were used for the leaders' personal benefits. There was also an indication of forced labour practice in the building of an Islamic boarding

40. From interview with a director from YPP.

41. From interview with an ex-member of NII KW-9.

Case Profile	Recruitment Process	Indication of Exploitation
		<p>school (<i>pesantren</i>) in Indramayu, West Java. About 3,000 <i>jemaah</i>, mostly came from East Java, were transferred to the building site to build the <i>pesantren</i> day and night without being properly paid. They were only allowed to go home one day in a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group maintained their control by forcing their <i>jemaah</i> to cut the ties with their families or friends who were not <i>jemaah</i>. They also indoctrinated the <i>jemaah</i> through constant education and surveillance mechanism. <i>Jemaah</i> who decided to cancel their membership were threatened with terror.

Secondly, the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism potentially exists in the case of radicalisation of Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Indonesian migrant workers, particularly female migrant workers, represent a unique case of double vulnerability as they are perceived to be more likely to become victim of human trafficking and radicalisation. Experts in the interviews revealed that migrant workers are one of the most vulnerable population in Indonesia in regards to human trafficking recruitment, particularly due to their desperation in finding better job opportunities and their lack of education as well as limited awareness of safe migration procedures.⁴² In the destination country they are also isolated

where it was hard for them to communicate with their friends or to develop a meaningful connection with others. In this case, the condition of isolation might amplify the sense of loneliness and grievances, which might drive them to join violent extremist groups as a sense of comfort.⁴³ Indeed, this was known to be the main driver of radicalisation of Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, there has not been any convincing evidence to show that these radicalised migrant workers were also victims of human trafficking.

Interviews with officers from Densus 88 anti-terror unit revealed one interesting case study. According to their accounts, there was a case of radicalisation involving

42 Interview with an officer from IOM Indonesia, a human rights activist and co-founder of Migrant Care, and an official from Komnas Perempuan. Migrant Care focuses on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers.

43 Interview with an official from Komnas Perempuan.

Indonesian migrant workers who worked as forced labours in palm oil plantation in the rural area of Malaysia.⁴⁴ They mentioned that as these labours were isolated and trapped in a bondage situation because they were undocumented migrant workers, it was relatively easier for the violent extremist group to come to the plantation and offer them promises of redemption and better life opportunity during the recruitment process.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, it was challenging to further confirm and investigate the case as it was an old case with limited access of information. Further study is still needed to assess whether this case presents clear evidence of nexus.

Thirdly, the abductions of Indonesians boat crews, by Abu Sayyaf group in the sea border areas between Indonesia and the Philippines also may point to a nexus. During interview an expert of violent extremism in Indonesia recalled that he once encountered fishermen involved in transferring a number of Indonesian boat crews who were subsequently abducted by the Abu Sayyaf group.⁴⁶ However, for this last case, further investigation. Again, it was an old case with limited information, and it remains unclear what actually happened to the victims (i.e. whether they were exploited or released upon a ransom being paid). Potential of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism might be confirmed if future research could provide convincing evidences that the Indonesian boat crews who were abducted by Abu Sayyaf group was indeed exploited by the group.

44 Interview with officers from Densus 88 anti-terror unit.

45 *Ibid.*

46 Based on interview with a director YPP.

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The fourth and last case involves the new wave of recruitment and the use of women and children as active combatants of violent extremist groups in Indonesia. So far, Indonesia has experienced one failed attempt of suicide bombing attack perpetrated by a female, and two successful suicide bombing attacks committed by a family, including the mothers and the children. During the interview, experts emphasised that women and children were vulnerable to be recruited to join violent extremist groups through an abuse of position of vulnerability because they were mostly recruited to follow their husband or father's order.⁴⁷ Children were particularly vulnerable because of the unequal power relations between them and their parents. Accordingly, during the focus group discussions, experts expressed the view that the children were actually victims of exploitation in their status as children and their obvious obedience to their parents⁴⁸. The recruitment and the use of women as combatant, on the other hand, present an interesting case to discuss their position in the spectrum of perpetrators and victimhood, which might influence the consideration whether their recruitment could be considered as part of human trafficking. Further study is needed to investigate women's involvement in violent extremism, whether they could be considered victims of exploitation or, instead, as acting with agency and the perpetrator of criminal acts.

Analysis of the four aforementioned cases revealed three potential nexuses between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia. First, human trafficking and violent extremism share similar methods of recruitment and means of exploitation.

47 Interview with an official from PSMP Handayani.

48 Based on FGD 1 at The Habibie Center.

Just like human trafficking organisations, violent extremist groups in Indonesia used deception, promises of rewards, and abuse of position of vulnerability to attract and control people. Propaganda was used to recruit their supporters. Supporters of ISIS, who returned from Syria, and former member of NII, a domestic violent extremist group, revealed that they received none of the promises and were, in fact, forced to pay for membership, work, join military training, or, in the case of female recruits, forced to be married. They were also put in a bondage situation (e.g. their personal documents were held by violent extremist groups) and were threatened if they decided to leave. Although the objective of violent extremist groups is still mainly ideological or political, these accounts indicate that violent extremist groups in Indonesia have possibly used the same methods of systematic recruitment and means of exploitation as human trafficking groups.

Secondly, there is also indication that violent extremist groups and human trafficking

networks in Indonesia exploit the same push factors or vulnerabilities. As they generally share the same entry point for their recruitment, which is through deception and promises of better livelihood and higher income, these groups have arguably exploited the same enabler or push factors, which are poverty, unemployment, low level of education, and weak social welfare system. Despite these similarities, violent extremism recruitment remains to be principally different from human trafficking as it also exploited more complex push factors such as social injustice, deprivation, marginalisation, grievance, and social exclusion. Additionally, unlike human trafficking networks that mostly relies on material rewards as the main pull factor, the pull factors of violent extremism radicalisation also included emotional and religious rewards.

Lastly, violent extremism and human trafficking recruitment in Indonesia have also targeted the same demographic profiles. Migrant workers, unemployed and poor individuals with low level of education, as

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well as women and children are reported to be particularly vulnerable to violent extremism and human trafficking. Although only a small portion of Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan were radicalised, their radicalisation could be suspected as an indication of nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism because trafficking of migrant workers is one of the most prevalent cases of human trafficking in Indonesia. Further investigation is still needed to confirm such nexus exist as currently there is no confirmation that Indonesian migrant workers who were radicalised abroad were also victims of human trafficking. Additionally, individuals who are impoverished, unemployed, and underprivileged in terms of education, are also suspected to be more vulnerable to be recruited by human trafficking and violent extremist groups as they are perceived to be less critical and desperate. However, it is also important to note that unlike human trafficking, violent extremist groups in Indonesia have also targeted individuals from middle-class group, with sufficient

income and better education background. On the other side, women and children in Indonesia are also suspected to be vulnerable to be victims of human trafficking and violent extremism radicalisation due to their relatively weaker power position. Children recruitment by violent extremist groups is especially suspected to indicate a potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia as, evidently, children were forced to go to Syria and were used as forced labour and suicide bomber in the country.







3

Conclusion & Consolidated Recommendations

Conclusion & Consolidated Recommendations

Overall, the findings suggest that the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia is not definite and, at best, only in terms of potential. Unlike the cases found in areas of conflict, violent extremist groups have not succeeded in gaining significant control and created instability in Indonesia. Therefore, as also uncovered during the interviews, there has not been any documented case in Indonesia which shows a clear direct nexus in which violent extremist groups used human trafficking as part of their modus operandi for the purposes of funding, terror, or other operational purposes. The findings in this research confirm the first and the second hypothesis in the research design. Furthermore, as Indonesia is a relatively peaceful country where law enforcement is working properly, these findings might suggest that the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in peaceful context is less obvious and mostly indirect.

Beyond just the lack of evidence, it is also interesting to note that the conclusion of the absent of a clear nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia may stem from the lack of critical views towards the limited understanding of

human trafficking and violent extremism. This might explain the tendency of the key stakeholders in Indonesia to conclude that there is no nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in the country.

Noting that limited understanding persists, this research suggests that the potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia could be investigated through a more nuanced understanding of both crimes. According to various accounts from interviews and focus group discussions, the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia potentially exist in four cases: (1) the recruitment and potential exploitation of Indonesian supporters of ISIS who migrated to Syria and the members of NII in the country; (2) radicalisation of Indonesian migrant workers abroad; (3) abduction of Indonesian boat crews by Abu Sayyaf group; and (4) the recruitment and the use of women and children as combatant in Indonesia. These cases indicate three potential nexuses: (1) violent extremist groups used similar methods of recruitment and exploitation as human trafficking; (2) violent extremist groups to some extent exploit the same push factors and vulnerabilities; and (3)

recruitment of violent extremist groups and human trafficking targets populations with the same demographic profiles. The findings from the four case studies confirm the third hypothesis in the research design.

Going forward with research on the nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism, a nuanced understanding of terrorism and human trafficking might broaden the lens to see how the two crimes can intertwine. For instance, a nuanced understanding of ISIS recruitment strategy may have similarities with the operations of human traffickers and may affect how the issues are addressed. To generate this understanding, deeper studies and investigations are needed. Additionally, better collection of evidence and data is also needed to study the extent to which human trafficking could be used by terrorist groups. Access to information as well as sharing of best experiences can also support the process to strengthen the knowledge about the possible nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism. Raising awareness about the potential connection between human trafficking, or more generally organised crimes, with violent extremism is also necessary, not to exaggerate the sense of security threat, but to develop a more robust prevention mechanism to address impunity on the issue.

As far as the national policy implications are concerned, the tendency of government stakeholders to think about human trafficking and violent extremism as two mutually exclusive crimes has resulted in a national human trafficking elimination framework that is not sensitive to violent extremism issues, and *vice versa*. This research suggests that there is a need to

overcome the institutional barrier and strengthen communication between agencies responsible for violent extremism and human trafficking. Ideally, these agencies should be given the opportunity to observe each other's process and responsibilities. This can be done, among other things, by opening channel of communication between BNPT and the GT PP-TPPO.

By identifying the potential nexus between human trafficking and violent extremism in Indonesia, this research also exposes the need to explore the nature of such nexus in non-traditional settings which include relatively peaceful and stable states. In a comparative manner, Indonesian experiences and practices could illuminate a better understanding on the pre-conditions and factors that drive the rise of intersections between human trafficking and violent extremism in general. Such understanding would help in devising programmatic intervention as part of the global collective effort to tackle both issues.



A stack of books is shown on the left side of the page, with a blue gradient overlay covering the entire background. The books are stacked vertically, and their spines are visible. The blue gradient is lighter on the right side and darker on the left side, where the books are located.

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