

# Indonesia Neutralizes JI as Immediate Threat

Publication: Terrorism Focus Volume: 4 Issue: 19

June 19, 2007 12:42 PM Age: 3 yrs

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Last week's capture of top Islamist militants Yusron Mahmudi (known as Abu Dujana) and Zarkasih (known as Nu'aim and Abu Irsyad) by Indonesian authorities has important implications for Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Both men have been involved in militancy since before JI's inception in 1992, and since 2000 they have held various leadership positions. The two were among the organization's most multi-faceted operatives, skilled as Afghan-trained bomb-makers, logisticians and recruiters. Dujana confessed that since 2005 he was the head of JI's military wing known as sariyah and Zarkasih likewise admitted that he acted as the group's "emergency" amir (spiritual leader), in charge of all JI operations in Indonesia, including training, operations and logistics.

The two insurgents' similar backgrounds allowed them to bridge much of the divide between various factions of the organization. Both were Javanese from Darul Islam backgrounds and had been active in fomenting sectarian violence in the outer islands from 1998-2001. At the same time, both men were trained by al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Dujana was involved in the planning of the 2002 Bali attack, and he was consulted by Dr. Azahari bin Husin (killed in November 2005) and Noordin Mohammad Top in the 2003 and 2004 bombings of the JW Marriott and Australian Embassy, respectively (Terrorism Focus, July 25, 2006). While Dujana appears to have become more critical of anti-Western targeting as a tactic because of the crackdown it elicited, he continued to give Noordin sanctuary. Additionally, members of his cell who were arrested in March of this year had an enormous cache of explosives and other bomb-making materials. In short, the pair had been respected by most factions of JI, and they will be difficult to replace. Indonesian police revealed that Zarkasih was the mastermind behind the resurgent violence in Poso: "He sent explosives from Surabaya to Poso. He also sent ulama and mujahideen there" (Jakarta Post, July 17).

Clearly, the loss of two first-generation, al-Qaeda-trained operatives from a dwindling pool of leadership will constitute a major impediment for the terrorist organization. As a result, further factionalism within the organization should be anticipated. The cell led by Noordin Mohammad Top is likely to become even more radical, but not necessarily to the extent that it will be unrestrained by the more mainstream JI command and control, as had been previously thought (Tempo, June 14). Although unable to perpetrate large attacks, bag bombs like those used in Bali in 2005 could still be assembled.

This further raises the question of JI's leadership. Joko Pitono (known as Dulmatin) and Umar Patek are currently embedded with the Abu Sayyaf Group on the Philippine island of Jolo (Terrorism Focus, July 5, 2006). They are constantly on the move owing to the U.S.-backed Philippine offensive, and as such they are unable to maintain leadership roles. Malaysian national Zulkifli bin Hir was last traced to Moro Islamic Liberation Front camps in Mindanao where he continues to conduct training for a small group of JI members (Terrorism Focus, April 3). Another senior leader is Zulkarnaen, who was once described as the head of JI's military operations. As the former head of training at JI's Tarkan camp in Afghanistan, Zulkarnaen is a hardcore militant known well to the al-Qaeda leadership. Two other important financial operatives, Malaysian national Zulkifli Marzuki and Indonesian Aris Munandar, are involved in JI's front companies and charitable works and have been key intermediaries with al-Qaeda. Former leaders, such as Abu Bakar Bashir (whom Dujana implicated) and Mohamad Iqbal Abdurrahman (known as Abu Jibril), who have been released from prison will be involved only in JI's overt activities, propaganda, social welfare and dawa (outreach).

JI's current amir is also undecided. Zarkasih admitted that he was tapped to fill the position in an emergency meeting: "To fill the vacuum, a special body was formed, because it was very difficult to find a true amir. So the others appointed me—actually I didn't know what the amir's role was, but I accepted, while the others sought a true amir" (The Australian, June 16). He continued, "I was chosen in order to find a leader who is good in proselytizing and jihad" (Jakarta Post, July 14). The two clearly implicated Abu Bakar Bashir as the group's amir from 2000-2002, a fact he has always denied. It is unlikely, however, that the Indonesian authorities have the political will to reopen the case against him.

Indonesian authorities allege that JI still exists and continues to recruit members and stockpile weapons and explosives. Yet, reeling from counter-terrorist operations, the group's organization is both simpler and more horizontal, with four wings: dawa, education, logistics and sariyah (the armed wing).

It is evident that the number of first-generation, al-Qaeda trained operatives is dwindling, which will have important ramifications for the strategies that JI embarks on in the coming years. A lesser-known cadre of leaders should be expected to emerge out of the more traditional Darul Islam wings who will be more engaged in fomenting sectarian violence as well as in social welfare and dawa activities to rebuild JI's depleted ranks. Two of its four wings focus on recruitment. Assassinations and kidnappings by fringe groups may also increase (Terrorism Focus, May 1). In the short-term, however, Indonesian counter-terrorism police unit Densus-88 deserves inordinate credit for neutralizing JI as an immediate threat.

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