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# INTERACTIONS BETWEEN QUIETISTS AND JIHADISTS IN INDONESIA: POLEMICS AND BLURRED BOUNDARIES

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**Abstract**

Salafism, which has thrived and exerted its influence among Indonesian Muslims since the second half of the 1980s, is not a monolithic movement. As a reconstituted form of Wahhabism, this movement has fragmented into various camps engaged in debates and competition to establish themselves as true Salafis. Embracing a position of apolitical quietism, the so-called quietists vehemently oppose the jihadists, who advocate the necessity of waging jihad against Islam's enemies. In their perspective, Muslims should concentrate on their primary task of purifying Muslim beliefs and practices to avoid entanglement in political games. In this context, jihad is prohibited if it leads to physical violence among Muslims themselves. This paper aims to scrutinize the political contexts behind the polemics and explore how the contending parties interpret the main doctrines of Salafism, using them to justify their respective political stances. By utilizing primary sources, documentary data, and interviews with the movement's followers, this paper argues that, despite doctrinal and ideological nuances, actors' political interests may play a more decisive role in shaping the polemics, thus blurring their ideological boundaries.

**Keywords:** *Salafism, Wahhabism, Quietists, Jihadists, Polemics*

## A. Introduction

Since the second half of the 1980s, Indonesia has witnessed the expansion of a transnational Islamic movement that strongly advocates principles virtually synonymous with Wahhabism—a movement from the eighteenth century led by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in the Arabian Peninsula, denouncing idolatrous impurities and innovations in Islam (Delong-Bas 2004). Operating under the banner of Salafism, this movement has thrived and exerted its influence among Indonesian Muslims. Rooted in Islam's historical concern with purification, Salafism encompasses several main missions, such as reverting to pristine Islam as practiced in the time of the Prophet, opposing unwarranted innovations (*bid'a*), and advocating a literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunna (Haykel 2009; Commins 2009; Lauziére 2016). Followers, identifying themselves as Salafis, align with the pious ancestors (*al-Salaf al-Salih*) and often distinguish themselves by living in small, exclusive, tight-knit communities, setting them apart from the open society around them.

In contrast to the Tarbiyya movement, which has proliferated in Indonesia since the mid-1970s and is also known for its commitment to the purity of Muslim belief and the return to the Quran and Sunna, the Salafis have adopted an apolitical quietist stance. Following the categorization introduced by Wiktorowicz (2006), the former are referred to as *haraki*s (political Salafis), while the latter are defined as purists or quietists. Generally, these two groups of Salafis reject violent jihad as a means to achieve their political goals, distinguishing themselves from the jihadists, who advocate jihad against Islam's enemies—a third category in

Wiktorowicz's typology. Scholars such as Wagemakers (2016) and Blanc (2023) have criticized this categorization, arguing that it does not always align with reality and fails to account for the fluidity and diverse forms within each category, dependent on surrounding contexts.

The expansion of the quietist faction within the Salafi movement since the mid-1980s has introduced a new trend to the landscape of Salafi activism in Indonesia. Quietist followers actively criticized the *haraki*s within the Tarbiyya movement, particularly their involvement in politics. The Tarbiyya movement organized secret cell systems, *halqa*s, and *daura*s in members' homes and other closed venues called *usrah*, encouraging the dissemination of ideas propagated by Muslim Brotherhood ideologues like Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb (Aziz et al. 1998; Rosyad 2007). The *haraki*s believed that politics requires *ijtihadiyya*, and Muslims should engage in politics as a strategy to restore the *umma*'s victory.

The quietists reserved their harshest critiques for the jihadists, who competed for credentials as the true Salafis by emphasizing the importance of jihad as a manifestation of Salafi ideology. The origins of the jihadists in Indonesia can be traced back to the home-grown S.M. Kartosuwiryo-led Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII) rebellion in 1949. During a period of suppression under Sukarno, it evolved into the Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) movement, echoing Darul Islam's struggle for an Islamic state. With the influence of Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, founders of Al-Mukmin Pesantren in Ngruki, Central Java, the movement expanded in the 1980s, leading to the establishment of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) in January 1993 (Solahudin 2013).

Examining how transnational dimensions and domestic politics have intertwined in the development of Salafism in Indonesia, this paper scrutinizes the extent to which Salafis became more clearly divided between quietists and jihadists due to changing political dynamics in Saudi Arabia, informing their polemics on certain doctrinal issues. The focus will be on how the contending parties interpreted Salafi main doctrines and used them to justify their respective political stances. Despite the polemics, the two camps have aligned on certain issues, such as the necessity to fight jihad when Muslims are under attack by belligerent infidels. In the Indonesian context, this alignment occurred during the bloody communal conflict between Muslims and Christians in Ambon. However, divisions between the two groups resurfaced after 9/11, influenced by the global and national war on terrorism, prompting the quietists to more clearly differentiate themselves from the jihadists.

## B. Salafism in Indonesia

Despite the fact that the call for Islamic purification has been present since the early nineteenth century, notably marked by the eruption of the Padri movement in West Sumatra, the efflorescence of the Salafi movement is a relatively recent phenomenon in Indonesia. Its emergence can be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia's ambition to position itself as the center of the Muslim world, a pursuit that gained momentum following the defeat of a united Arab force led by Egypt in the 1967 war against Israel. Salafism constitutes a form of reconstituted Wahhabism, the official *madhhab* of the kingdom (Hasan 2007).

The quest for the central role in the Muslim world, reinforced by its permanent status as *khadim al-haramayn* (custodian of the two holy cities), was deemed crucial for Saudi Arabia to secure the acquiescence of the Muslim world, enhance its legitimacy domestically, and fulfill Western political projects (Fraser 1997; Kepel 2002; Al-Rasheed 2007; Lacroix 2011). Saudi Arabia believed that exporting Salafism, with its politically conservative doctrines, was the key to achieving this goal. Salafis adhere to the belief that there is no justification for rebelling against a legitimate ruler.

Saudi Arabia reaped significant benefits from the soaring world oil prices during the 1970s. The petrodollars acquired during this period provided the kingdom with the means to sponsor various Salafi *da'wa* activities across the Muslim world. Consequently, Salafism was exported and gained traction (Al-Rasheed 2007; 2008). The push for Salafism intensified notably after the Iranian revolution in 1979, which posed a challenge to Saudi Arabia's dominant geopolitical and geostrategic position in the Muslim world.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia's campaign for Salafism soon encountered setbacks. Activists from the Muslim Brotherhood, seeking political protection from the Saudi government due to Egypt's policy of pursuing and arresting them, utilized the campaign for their own political gains. They actively propagated the Brotherhood's ideology among Saudi activists. Inspired by the revolutionary ideology of the Brotherhood, Juhayman al-Uthaibi led a group in seizing control of Masjid al-Haram in 1979 (Hegghammer and Lacroix 2007). This event prompted Saudi Arabia to swiftly grasp the potential danger of Salafism when infused with

Brotherhood ideology. In response, the kingdom formulated a policy to emphasize its commitment to Islamic purification while suppressing the radical ideology of the Brotherhood. As a result of this policy, a new variant of Salafism emerged, focusing on seemingly trivial and superficial issues such as *jalabiyya*, *niqab*, *lihya* (growing beards long), and *isbal* (hitching trousers above ankles).

Indonesia experienced the impact of Saudi Arabia's campaign as early as the mid-1970s. Collaborating with the Indonesian Council for Islamic Proselytizing (DDII, Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia), an organization established in 1967 by Muhammad Natsir and other former leaders of Masyumi, Indonesia's first Islamic party, Saudi Arabia recruited young Indonesian Muslims to study at Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University in Riyadh. Among them were Hilmi Aminuddin, Abdi Sumaiti, and Rahmat Abdullah who upon returning home promoted Salafism imbued with the Brotherhood ideology among Indonesian students. They were known as the founders of the Tarbiyya movement, which in the aftermath of Suharto's fall in 1998 transformed itself into Party of Justice (and Prosperity) and became involved in electoral politics (Damanik 2001; Furqon 2004; Machmudi 2018).

In an effort to intensify its campaign, Saudi Arabia established the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic (LIPIA, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab) in Jakarta in 1986. This institution played a significant role in recruiting hundreds of pesantren and madrasa graduates, some of whom continued their studies in the Islamic University of Medina (Kovacs 2014; Muhtarom 2019). Upon

returning home, they served as key players in spreading Salafism by actively organizing workshops (*halqa*) and study circles (*daura*) openly in areas around university campuses in Yogyakarta. Notable among these alumni were Abu Nida, Abdul Hakim Abdat, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Aunur Rafiq Ghufron, Yusuf Usman Baisa, and Abdul Qadir Jawwas, among others, who quickly gained a reputation as early proponents of Salafism in Indonesia (Hasan 2006; Machmudi 2018).

In line with the changing Saudi policy of emphasizing quietist aspects of Salafism after Juhayman's affair, the Salafis can be distinguished from their predecessors—older DDII cadres who also had the opportunity to complete their studies in Saudi Arabia—in terms of their commitment to spreading apolitical Salafism. In their view, the struggle to purify Muslim belief and practice took precedence over everything else. They appeared more dedicated to Salafi values and more sympathetic to Saudi rule. In their eyes, the kingdom was not merely a source of educational sponsorship but, more importantly, a source of religious authority and social ideals (Chaplin 2014; Chaplin 2021). Thanks to generous support from Saudi Arabia, Salafi *da'wa* activities proliferated, followed by the establishment of Salafi foundations and madrasas in many parts of Indonesia's provinces.

Despite the flourishing *da'wa* activism among the quietists, internal divisions arose, particularly after the Gulf War triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. These divisions were linked to the arrival of Ja'far Umar Thalib, who had completed his studies at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute in Lahore before joining Jamaat al-Da'wa ila al-Quran wa Ahl al-Hadith, the Salafi faction of Afghan mujahidin led by Jamilur

Rahman, and subsequently studying briefly with Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i of Yemen. Responding to Abu Nida's request, Ja'far Umar Thalib decided to join the Salafi campaign. With his extensive knowledge of Salafi teachings, eloquent oratory skills, and impressive appearance, he quickly gained fame among participants in Salafi *halqa*s and *daura*s. This fame led him to claim the position of the leading authority among Salafis, challenging the leadership of Abu Nida and sparking inevitable rivalry between them (Hasan 2006).

As the rivalry intensified, Ja'far Umar Thalib accused Abu Nida and other quietist leaders, such as Yusuf Usman Baisa, Abdul Qadir Jawwas, and Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, of being Sururis—followers of Muhammad Surur ibn al-Nayef Zayn al-Abidin (Hasan 2009). According to Ja'far Umar Thalib, they were too political for the quietist tastes.Surur was one of the main critics of Saudi Arabia's decision to invite foreign troops onto Saudi soil during the Gulf War. This decision sparked varying opinions among Saudi Salafi clerics, with some, including Salman al-Awda, Safar al-Hawali, Aid al-Qarni, and Surur, strongly criticizing the policy. Others, particularly those close to Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd Allah bin Baz, the head of the Committee of Senior Clerics (Haiat Kibar al-Ulama), defended the Saudi King. They condemned Surur as a proponent of the *takfir* doctrine, which considers a regime apostate if it does not follow Sharia, justifying violence to topple it and replace it with a true Islamic state.

In light of these events, Ja'far Umar Thalib cautioned Indonesian Salafis about the dangers of the so-called Sururiyya *fitna* (affliction ) and urged them to remain consistent with Salafi *da'wa*. He believed that such consistency was essential

to confront the enemies of the Salafi da'wa—his rivals, whom he accused of pretending to be Salafis when, in reality, they believed in takfir. Abu Nida responded to Ja'far Umar Thalib's harsh criticism by emphasizing his commitment to the Salafi main mission of purifying Muslim beliefs and practices. In his view, this commitment should direct all Salafi energies toward persistently struggling for the implementation of the principle of *tawhid*. As a result of this conflict, the quietists split into two groups: "Sururis" and "non-Sururis." Each group aligned with specific networks and circles of Salafi authority, leveraging transnational linkages to compete for membership and support. The former developed alliances with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait through funding agencies, while the latter sought legitimacy and support from Muqbil Ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i of Yemen.

The debate over *takfir* also pitted the quietists against the followers of the NII. The NII's followers were criticized for labeling the Indonesian government as *taghut* (tyrant) for imposing Pancasila as the state ideology. Both groups competed to recruit members, and many NII followers, exhausted from the clandestine movement under close surveillance by intelligence agents, decided to join the quietists. Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Baasyir themselves had to escape to Malaysia in 1985 to avoid arrest. Losing membership at home, they sought to recruit new members, expand networks, and further develop NII's militancy and radicalism. From 1985 to 1990, they successfully dispatched around 200 members to Afghanistan to undergo military training (*i'dad ashkari*) at Harby Pohantum, founded by Sheikh Rasul Sayyaf (Solahudin 2013: 132-134). The purpose

was to acquire military knowledge and skills for jihad against the government. In Afghanistan, these militants became acquainted with jihadi teachings, emphasizing the necessity of aggressive jihad against Islam's enemies (Pavlova 2007; Solahudin 2013, 144-145). Although some prominent figures among the quietists, such as Abu Nida and Ja'far Umar Thalib, also went to Afghanistan, they asserted that their participation in jihad there was primarily for the purpose of *da'wa*, aiming to spread Salafi teachings. They aligned themselves with the Saudi-supported Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Quran wa al-Sunnah faction, led by Jamilurrahman.

It is evident that Salafis have been susceptible to internal divisions and conflicts. Several factors contribute to this, including the necessity for them to adapt to the changing political dynamics in Saudi Arabia and the competition to establish themselves as true Salafis, implying a proximity to and support from the kingdom. This competition inevitably led to doctrinal debates on various issues, shaping the dynamics of the Salafi movement in Indonesia. Intense debates, particularly between the quietists and the jihadists, who both claimed to represent the true and authentic Salafis, were commonplace.

## C. Main Issues in the Debates

Periodicals published by Salafi groups since the early-1990s, including Ihya al-Sunnah, As-Sunnah, Asy-Syariah, An-Nashihah, Elfata, and An-Najah, clearly illustrate the intensity of the polemics between quietists and jihadists. These polemics revolve around certain doctrinal issues, such as *hizbiyya*. According to quietists, the jihadists' adherence

to *hizbiyya* encourages political fanaticism and diverges from the true Salafi system. Quietists emphasize their commitment to the original mission of Salafi da'wa, involving education and the purification of Muslim beliefs and practices. To strengthen this position, they frequently refer to leading Salafi clerics, including Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Muhammad ibn Salih al-Uthaimin, who argued that staying out of politics is crucial for Muslims to focus on education and purification (Olidort 2015).

Moreover, quietists contend that the jihadists' adherence to *hizbiyya* leads to prioritizing political engagement over the purification of individual Muslim beliefs, causing division and promoting exclusivism. As I argued elsewehere (Hasan 2016: 141-142), quietists criticized the jihadists for using Islam as a political weapon, which, in their view, weakened the Muslim community. They argued that *hizbiyya*'s emphasis on *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) may lead to unconditional loyalty, even in the face of a leader's sinful acts, contradicting the principle of *al-wala wa'l-bara*.

According to quietists, *hizbiyya* also contributed to the spread of *takfir*, a doctrine of excommunication, used by jihadists to fulfill their ambition of reviving the caliphate. Quietists believe that *takfir*, coupled with the ideology of *hakimiyya* (God's absolute sovereignty), concentrates Muslim energies on political interests, potentially causing conflicts. They assert that *al-wala wa'l-bara*, emphasizing segregation from infidels and specific codes of conduct, is more crucial for propagating Islam than fostering a revolutionary spirit among Muslims.

Quietists argue that Muslims should obey their rulers, whether just or unjust, as long as they are not commanded to commit sin. They criticize jihadists for considering any ruler's infraction of divine law as a loss of legitimacy that requires removal. Quietists advocate advising rulers to return to the right path as the proper means of resisting errors and cruelty by legitimate rulers. They emphasize a strict application of Shari'a, considering it compulsory due to God's law but reject the jihadists' view that those not applying Shari'a necessarily fall into infidelity.

In the jihadists' opinion, absolute commitment to Islam should be combined with an eagerness to fight jihad, especially when the *umma* is threatened by the American aggressor, perceived as the greatest enemy of the faith (Kepel 2002: 220; Hegghammer 2009: 244-266). They hold that jihad is not just a collective obligation (*fard kifaya*) but an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) as well. Just like ritual prayer and fasting during Ramadan, this obligation must be fulfilled by every able Muslim living in any country, including Indonesia.

In response, jihadists dismiss the quietists' actions as trivial, asserting that the world is currently in a state of total war, requiring Muslims to be involved in politics and engage in jihad. They argue that *hijra* (migration) is necessary until divine order is restored, creating a way of life different from Western models. Jihadists believe that *takfir* is essential to eliminate obstacles to restoring Shari'a and the supremacy of *khilafa*, defending the *umma* against infidels and apostates. They view jihad not only as a collective obligation but also as an individual duty, especially when the *umma* is threatened, emphasizing the defensive character of their offensive jihad.

Quietists criticized jihadists for their offensive jihad, advocating for defensive jihad against attacks by infidels. Referring to classical Salafi clerics such as Ibn Taymiyya, one of the leading quietist figures, Dzulqarnain, categorized jihad into four levels, namely *jihad al-nafs* (jihad against worldly temptations), *jihad al-shaitan* (jihad against devilish influences from inside and outside the self), *jihad al-kuffar wa al-munafiqin* (jihad against unbelievers and hypocrites, which is further divided into *jihad al-talab* (offensive jihad) and *jihad al-mudafa'a* (defensive jihad), and *jihad arbab al-zulm wa'l-bid'a* (jihad against despotism and heresy). For him, the only legitimate jihad today is *jihad al-mudafa'a* which can be initiated when Muslims are under attack by infidels (Hasan 2006:150-151). However, he stressed the importance of avoiding physical violence among Muslims and focusing on propagating their vision of Islam rather than getting involved in political games.

## D. Fighting Jihad in Conflict Areas

Quietists faced a significant challenge to their apolitical stance when conflicts between local Muslims and Christians erupted in Maluku following the fall of the Soeharto regime in May 1998. Ja'far Umar Thalib, in response to the escalating communal conflict, issued a resolution calling on Indonesian Muslims to perform jihad and established Laskar Jihad in December 1999. Under Laskar Jihad, thousands of Salafis joined the frontlines, engaging in jihad against Christians. Ja'far Umar Thalib, along with his main lieutenants, mobilized operations until the disbanding of Laskar Jihad in October 2002, having dispatched over 7,000 fighters to Maluku (Hasan 2006).

Ja'far Umar Thalib emphasized that their jihad was fundamentally different from that of the jihadists. It was framed as a defensive jihad to protect Muslim brothers in Maluku from attacks by belligerent Christians. Additionally, it was positioned as part of Salafi da'wa, primarily aimed at providing a correct understanding of faith, rituals, and social life prescriptions to Muslims in the islands. To legitimize this operation, Ja'far Umar Thalib sought *fatwa*s from Salafi ulama in the Middle East. Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, for instance, stated that there was a reason to fight jihad in Maluku since Muslims were under attack by belligerent Christians (Hasan 2005; 2006).

Moreover, Ja'far Umar Thalib believed that jihad had certain limits and requirements, the most crucial being under the command of a legitimate leader and approval of a legitimate ruler. The approval of a ruler was considered necessary to prevent chaos and catastrophe resulting from jihad (Hasan 2006: 151). Despite President Abdurrahman Wahid's refusal to grant permission, Ja'far Umar Thalib and his followers ventured to the frontlines, arguing that the president's legitimacy had waned when he sided with the enemies of Muslims.

Ja'far Umar Thalib's decision to engage in jihad drew strong criticism from his fellow quietists such as Abu Nida and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, who questioned his commitment to apolitical quietism. Similar critiques came from jihadists, accusing Ja'far Umar Thalib of inconsistency in his Salafi *da'wa*. The jihadists considered Laskar Jihad's presence in Maluku as disruptive to the struggle against Christians, viewing them as more of a target than a threat. In contrast, jihadists established

Laskar Khas, whose operations, although involving fewer fighters, were more effective, playing a significant role in teaching local Muslim militias bomb-making technology.

Jihadists framed their operation in Maluku as a preliminary action in a greater jihad against enemies attacking Muslims globally. This concept of a greater jihad echoed Abdullah Azzam's notion of offensive global jihad during the Afghan war. Azzam contextualized Sayyid Qutb's radical view to obliterate "infidel" regimes into offensive global jihad against Islam's Far Enemy. Ayman al-Zawahiri modified this notion to target the Near Enemy, apostate Muslim governments, making jihadism relevant to domestic struggles against existing regimes. This ideology inspired Osama bin Laden to establish al Qaeda and lead terror operations worldwide.

Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Baasyir responded enthusiastically to Bin Laden's call to join the World's Islamic Front for jihad, shifting JI's priority from local to international jihad targeting America. However, internal debates arose within JI about the focus on the near or far enemy. While Mantiqi II leaders rejected the shift, Mantiqi I leaders supported Sungkar and Ba'asyir's call. The debates subsided when communal conflicts erupted in Maluku. JI's leadership saw these conflicts as a call for Muslims to engage in jihad in the islands.

In retrospect, Mantiqi II leaders' more lenient ideological position may explain the police's decision to collaborate with Abu Rusydan in countering JI's jihadism after his initial detention between 2004 and 2007 for harboring Ali Ghufron, the suspect of the Bali bombing. This JI's consultative

board member was rearrested by the police in 2021 for his continued involvement with terrorist networks in Indonesia, however (Detik 2021).

## F. Polemics on Terorism

The animosity between quietists and jihadists strengthened in the context of the post-9/11 changing global political landscape, which also influenced the Indonesian government's stance in addressing the threats of radicalism and terrorism. Especially in the wake of the Bali bombing in October 2002, Jakarta faced escalating international pressure to swiftly address radical Islamist groups. Initially hesitant due to past repressive security measures, President Megawati Sukarnoputri, traumatized by the New Order's legacy, sought to avoid confrontation with Islamist groups.

However, in response to the threat of Islamist radicalism, the Indonesian government acted promptly. President Megawati asked the parliament to pass two anti-terrorism laws: Law No. 15/2003 provided a legal basis for the police to detain terrorist suspects for up to six months before indictment, and Law No. 16/2003 aimed at retroactively prosecuting the Bali bombers. Significant resources were allocated, and all governmental and societal sectors were mobilized to counter terrorism (Sumpter 2017).

Amid the changing political context post-Bali bombing, polemics emerged between quietists and jihadists regarding the jihad ideology employed in terrorism. The polemics started with claims by Imam Samudra, a key figure behind the Bali bombing, in his book "Aku Melawan Teroris" (I Fight Terrorists!) (2004). Samudra asserted himself as the only

true jihadist committed to defending Islam from belligerent infidels, justifying his actions as legitimate revenge against the US and their Western collaborators.

Ja'far Umar Thalib, who disbanded Laskar Jihad shortly after the bombing, endorsed Nasir Abbas's views in his book "Membongkar JI; Pengakuan Mantan Anggota JI" (Uncovering JI: Confession of a Former JI Member) (2005). He criticized Bin Laden's interpretation of jihad, particularly as a call to kill American and Western civilians. Thalib, like Nasir Abbas, asserted that Bin Laden was not a qualified mufti, and his *fatwa*s should be ignored. Thalib argued that jihad is legitimate only under specific conditions, including approval from legitimate political authority and solely for self-defense.

Lukman Ba'abduh, a key lieutenant of Laskar Jihad in Maluku, took a more assertive stance. He denounced Imam Samudra as a Khariji, someone who undermines Islam by spreading the doctrine of *takfir* and engaging in terrorism. Ba'abduh contended that Imam Samudra's fundamental error lies in his inclination to follow the ideologies of neo-Kharijite activists, whom he identified as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Abul A'la al-Mawdudi, Sa'id Hawwa, and like-minded figures. According to Ba'abduh, these ideologues are radicals who influenced Safar al-Hawali, Salman al-Awda, Osama bin Laden, and other Salafis to propagate extremism among Muslims (Ba'abduh 2005).

Jihadists did not remain passive. Abduh Zulfidar Akaha (2006) countered Ba'abduh, asserting that Ba'abduh not only requires more evidence to link radicalism and terrorism to figures like Banna, Qutb, Mawdudi, and other ideologues of the Brotherhood but also needs to be more cautious in forming

opinions. In response to Akaha's critique, Ba'abduh (2007) maintained that Imam Samudra and similar individuals belong to a deviant group that applies takfir to legitimate rulers and Muslims with differing views. He promptly refuted all of Akaha's criticisms and data, dismissing them as nothing more than lies and libels, particularly against prominent Salafi scholars, including Bin Baz, Al-Albani, al-Uthaimin, al-Madkhali, and al-Wadi'i. In Ba'abduh's view, these scholars are the best guides for Muslims to understand and practice true Islam, as they have never led the umma into extremism and terrorism.

Dzulqarnain M. Sunusi (2011), another leader of Laskar Jihad, argued that Islam is a religion of mercy and peace that opposes extremism and terrorism. He emphasized that jihad is merely a mechanism for Muslims to defend themselves against infidels, with the original ruling being *fard kifaya*, meaning the obligation is fulfilled when one or two community members carry out the duty. It becomes an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*), obligatory for everyone, under the command of a legitimate ruler or when Muslim combatants are in direct confrontation with their enemies on the battlefield. Sunusi further explained that jihad is distinct from terrorism, which is perpetrated for human desires and aims to inflict harm and catastrophe. Referring to *fatwa*s issued by Saudi Arabia's Committee of Senior Ulama, he insisted that terrorism is absolutely forbidden in Islam, and its perpetrators must be brought to trial and punished with death.

Jihadists responded to the quietists' criticism by publishing several books, including "Potret Salafi Sejati: Meneladani Kehidupan Generasi Pilihan" (Portrait of True

Salafis: Following the Lives of Chosen Generation) by Tim Ulin Nuha (2007), "Jamaah, Imamah, Bai'ah: Kajian Syar'i Berdasarkan Al-Qur'an, As-Sunnah, Ijma', dan Qiyas" (Jamaah, Imamah, Bai'ah: Shari'a-based Study on the Basis of the Quran, Prophetic Traditions, Consensus, and Analogy) by Abu Ammar et al. (2010), and "Syubhat Salafi" (Salafi doubts) by Tim Jazeera (2011). These books were published by three main publishing houses based in Solo and linked to the Al-Mukmin Pesantren network, namely al-Qawam, Pustaka Arafah, and Jazeera, owned respectively by Hawim Murtadho, Tri Asmoro Kurniawan, and Bambang Sukirno.

The authors of the books argued that the jihadists' understanding of jihad is entirely correct as it is based on the Quran, the Prophetic Traditions, and the practices of the Prophet's companions and their successors. They provided abundant quotations from Islamic fundamental sources to convince readers about their interpretation of jihad doctrine while delegitimizing that of the quietists. Referring to Muhammad ibn Salih al-Uthaimin, an influential Salafi authority among the quietists, they maintained in one book that those who oppose the righteousness of God's law or prefer to apply man-made law automatically fall into infidelity. They believed the same holds true for those applying democracy as it is diametrically opposed to the Islamic system.

## G. Continued Debates and Rivalry

The quietists intensified their campaign against terrorism after JAT's (Jamaah Anshar al-Tauhid) involvement in multiple terrorist actions in Indonesia was revealed. JAT was a splinter group within JI allegedly responsible for suicide

bombings and terrorist attacks in Cirebon and Solo between 2010 and 2012. Rapidly evolving into a jihadist network, JAT attracted smaller groups, including Laskar Hisbah, Laskar Hizbullah, and Laskar Mujahidin, which were active in various actions in Solo.

The growth of JAT's network prompted its leadership to escalate by openly declaring their affiliation with and support for ISIS in Solo's Baitul Makmur Mosque in 2014. Initiated by ISIS sympathizers in Solo, this declaration acted as a magnet, drawing larger circles of radicals to the network. Openly declared, the network continued to expand, with various Islamic study circles (*majlis ta'lim*), organizations, and community groups joining JAT activities and supporting ISIS. Consequently, ISIS symbols became visible in different locations in Solo, accompanied by pamphlets in main streets declaring messages such as "Muslims Need Khilafah, not Democracy," "Indonesians Support Islamic State," and "Khilafah is Back."

In response to these developments, prominent quietist leaders in Solo, such as Ahmad Faiz Asifudin, Ayip Safrudin, and Khalid Syamhudi, took a stand against ISIS. They published comments in periodicals like *Asy-Syari'ah*, harshly criticizing ISIS and Al-Qaeda, depicting them as destroyers of Islam for adopting the Khawarij's thought. In the quietists' view, ISIS's actions were rooted in the *takfir* doctrine taught by Sayyid Qutb. They urged Muslims to avoid such ideologies and instead follow Salafi clerics like Bin Baz, Ibn Uthaimin, and Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. The quietists argued that what ISIS implemented was not considered jihad but simply as terrorism causing damage and chaos among Muslims.

Similarly, in *As-Sunnah* periodical, published by the Imam Bukhari Foundation led by Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, the quietists strongly condemned all acts of terrorism by jihadists. They asserted that extremism (*ghuluw*) is entirely forbidden, advocating for peaceful and polite da'wa. To distance themselves from jihadists, they adopted nationalistic narratives, celebrating Indonesia's independence day. Importantly, they have collaborated with government agencies in various development programs.

JAT's declaration of support for ISIS faced strong repudiation from quietists, leading to a division within the organization. JAT split into two groups, Jama'at Anshar as-Shariah (JAS) and Jamaah Anshar ad-Daulah (JAD). JAS, led by Muhammad Achwan, took an ambivalent position toward the caliphate, emphasizing peaceful da'wa in their struggle for Islam. They encouraged congregational prayers, promoted positive actions, and prepared Muslims to support and join a righteous caliphate.

Endro Sudarsono, a spokesperson for JAS, outlined the group's agendas, prioritizing the management of vigilante groups to defend Islam peacefully and avoid conflicts. JAS focused on training through study circles, workshops, and Islamic classes. To enhance its presence, JAS developed two media channels, Khabar Shariah and Shariah Broadcasting, addressing social and political issues.

JAS contended that the caliphate founded by ISIS is invalid without *ahl hall wa al-aqd,* the legitimate institution to elect a caliph. They cautioned against hastily supporting groups claiming to struggle for the caliphate and emphasized the strict regulations in Islam for establishing a caliphate.

In contrast, JAD maintained the validity of ISIS's mission, supporting it and establishing the Azam Da'wa Center.

Ongoing tension and polemics between JAS and JAD concerned the quietists due to the division among jihadists, suggesting vulnerability and sustainability of terrorist networks.Quietists asserted that *da'wa* is necessary for faithful Muslims to purify Islam from heresy and reprehensible innovations, considering the purity of beliefs and practices as crucial for regaining the glory of Islam as promised by God.

## H. Conclusion

The divide between quietists and jihadists among Indonesian Salafists began to arise in the late 1980s. This division was closely linked to political dynamics in Saudi Arabia, the primary supporter of the Salafi movement. Especially the 1979 seizure of Masjid al-Haram by Juhayman al-Utaybi's group prompted the kingdom to develop a Salafi quietist version, focusing on individual religiosity and lifestyle while sidelining concerns about the state and politics. The rise of quietist Salafism acted as a catalyst for jihadists to assert themselves, claiming to be the true Salafists, legitimized by their operations in Afghanistan. Conflict between quietists and jihadists became inevitable.

In response to events in Saudi Arabia, Indonesian quietists criticized jihadists' doctrinal positions, particularly those associated with the Darul Islam-inspired NII movement, later transforming into JI. Doctrinal debates were momentarily set aside during the 1999 Maluku skirmishes when both camps mobilized fighters for jihad in the islands, demonstrating fluid doctrinal boundaries. While quietists

justified their jihad operation as self-defence with *fatwa*s from Saudi *mufti*s, jihadists framed their actions as a preliminary step in a broader jihad against global enemies. Under the JI's banner, jihadists actively engaged in terrorism across various Indonesian provinces.

The post-9/11 global war against radicalism and terrorism influenced the dynamics of Indonesia's national politics, especially following the large-scale terrorist attacks in Bali in October 2002. A national campaign against radicalism and terrorism was launched. In response, the quietists intensified their efforts to differentiate themselves from jihadists while critiquing the doctrinal positions of the latter. They actively disseminated their anti-terrorism ideas through books, magazines, pamphlets, and social media, criticized the jihadists' maneuvers to carry out acts of terror and refuted ISIS's international calls for jihad. Continuous criticism by quietists prevented jihadists from establishing a hegemonic discourse in Indonesia.

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