

# Synergy of the National Agency for Counter Terrorism and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Preventing the Threat of Violent Extremism in Indonesia

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**Abstract**— Violent extremism is an asymmetric threat that can have an impact on the country's defense in Indonesia. The Strategy of the National Counterterrorism Agency is one of the efforts to prevent the problem. The purpose of this study is to analyze the strategy of the National Counterterrorism Agency in preventing the threat of violent extremism as well as its synergy with ministries and institutions in Indonesia. The method used in this study is a qualitative method by deepening from various sources on the national action plan to prevent violent extremism by the National Counterterrorism Agency. The theories used are the concept theory of state defense, synergy theory, theory of violent extremism. The results of this study show that acts of violent extremism in Indonesia have threatened the integrity of the nation and state so that it requires handling from BNPT as a body that conducts implementation in counter-terrorism. The purpose of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) in implementing the national action plan is to improve the protection of the right to the security of citizens. Furthermore, the Joint Secretariat was formed as a means to carry out action to prevent violent extremism through cooperation with ministries, institutions, and local governments. Synergy conducted by BNPT with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) through grounding religious moderation on social media, providing training to Islamic Extension (PAI) and supporting deradicalization programs.

**Keywords**— Violent extremism, State Defense, Synergy, Indonesia.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of a dynamic strategic environment due to globalization provides changes on a global to regional scale. In line with the potential threats, challenges, obstacles and disruptions that can at any time threaten the sovereignty of a country, in this case Indonesia. The transition of threats that occur today includes aspects of the pancagatra, namely ideology, politics, socio-culture, and defense and security. (Asymmetric, 2016) The threat from the development of technology and information is the recruitment of violent extremism through social media. According to J.M. Berger, a journalist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), extremism can spread widely with any media either directly or indirectly. Violent extremism will be more influential when done through social contact because it is to create mass movements under its control. Violent extremism in Indonesia threatens the country's national security and defense. (Berger, 2018)

In 2021, as reported by Kompas.com, there has been a suicide bomb incident at the Cathedral Church, Makassar, South Sulawesi. The incident killed 2 dead the perpetrator and 20 people were injured as a result of being hit by debris on some parts of his body. President Joko Widodo in his press statement stated that extremism that leads to terrorism is a crime against

humanity and must be thoroughly traced to its roots. (Ayu, 2021) (Ayu, 2021) According to A.C. Manullang, the background of acts of violent extremism nationally can be sourced from several factors, namely: 1) religious extremism, 2) tribal nationalism that leads to separatism 3) certain interest groups that want to cause chaos. (Manullang, 2006) From some of the above incidents, we can see that this act of violent extremism is a signal to all parties including the government in efforts to prevent and counter violence-based extremism that leads to terrorism in Indonesia.

Chrisnayudhanto (2021) there are two conditions that cause the individual or group to commit acts of extremism based on violence, namely; 1) Pull Factors; 2) Push Factors (Chrisnayudhanto, 2021).

### 1. Pull Factors

Factors that drive a person or group to commit acts of violent extremism include: the background and motivation of the individual, positioning themselves as victims, collective disillusionment and distortion of certain understandings (rooted in beliefs, ideologies, politics, ethnicities and cultural differences, social networks and leadership).

### 2. Push Factors

Trigger factors that can lead to violent extremism that lead to terrorism such as: economic inequality,

marginalization and discrimination against certain groups, poor governance, human rights violations and weak law enforcement, prolonged conflict and radicalization by social institutions.

Furthermore, President Jokowi set policies in the field of defense as an effort to prevent violent extremism through Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021. Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021 regulates the National Action Plan for prevention and countering violent extremism (RAN-PE) that leads to terrorism. This policy is a form of government attention to support the defense of the country in protecting the safety of all nations from the threat of violent extremism.

Furthermore, Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2021 provides duties and responsibilities to the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) as the leading sector. BNPT's task in the Presidential Decree is to be responsible for the implementation of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism in Indonesia. BNPT is required to create a prevention strategy through a national action plan as a derivative of Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021. In addition, BNPT is also expected to synergize with ministries and institutions, local governments and community groups in efforts to prevent violent extremism in Indonesia. (Anggia, 2021)

Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021, explains the general definition that violent extremism is a belief and or action, which uses violent means, or threats of extreme violence, with the aim of supporting or committing terrorism. (Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021, 2021) According to the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), violent extremism defines violent extremism as "encouragement, complicity, preparation, or at least support for violence that is motivated and ideologically justified to achieve social, economic, and political goals." (Weine., Eisenman., Kinsler., Glik., & Polutnik, 2017)

Meanwhile, the Australian government defines violent extremism as "the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious, and political goals." This includes terrorism and other forms of violence that are politically motivated and communal violence." (Australian Government's, 2021)

The National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism is a series of coordinated programs with various ministries in mitigating violent extremism, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Violent extremists today in carrying out their actions are always under the guise of religion. Therefore, researchers formulated the question "How is the synergy of the

National Agency for Counter Terrorism and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in preventing the threat of violent extremism in Indonesia"? The categories used in this study are synergy theory, violent extremism theory, and state defense theory.

According to Graves (2008) synergy is defined as the interaction of two or more agents, resources, or activities in such a way that a product worth greater than the number of components, can be exemplified as  $1+1>2$ . Graves divides synergy into three forms:

1. Organizational synergy is a synergy that is done by two or more different organizations by using assets and their ability to help each other to create something better.
2. Policy synergy is a synergy carried out by two or more different organizations through policy by articulating policy positions by implementing influential strategies in an active way.
3. Operational Synergy is a synergy carried out by two or more different organizations through the operation or implementation of joint activities in accordance with the policy level so that the strategy that has been determined can run. (Graves, 2008)

Synergy is an interaction of two or more agents, resources, or activities so that an product who make more than better and big. Synergy also means cooperation with through collaboration together each party for mutual benefit. In addition, there is four indicators for see synergy idea that is through synergy in the form of organization or institutions, policies and operations or joint actions.

According to the United Nations, Greweth has taken several approaches by extremists and terrorists in recruiting members. Such approaches are:(2006)

### **1. The Net**

Efforts made through propoganda in the form of video clips, or network messages to all populations that are targeted to receive the message or video. In addition, they will choose an environment that tends to be homogeneous in carrying out its actions.

### **2. The Funnel**

The Funnel's efforts are done more specifically than The Net, because this approach is done to individuals gradually. Furthermore, in the implementation of The Funnel they will touch the psychological side of the goal to increase participation and commitment to bond. As for this, they do to some teenagers who are still unstable to understanding related ideologies.

### 3. Infection

Infection approaches will be used against hard-to-reach targets. Furthermore, they will use 'agents' to enter the environment to observe and recruit from within. Infection is done through direct attraction in person, social ties, similarity of fate by complaining about the condition of government lobification and marginalization issues. (Gerwehr et al., 2006)

According to Tippe (2016) defense is a process to or produce a condition that is resilience. (Tippe, 2016) Furthermore, the understanding of the state defense system in Law No. 3 of 2002 is a universal defense system, involving all citizens, regions, and other national resources, and prepared early by the government and organized in a total, integrated, directed, and continued to uphold state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the safety of all nations from all threats. The defense theory used in this study is based on Law No.3 of 2002. Furthermore, this theory is used by researchers to see the synergy of BNPT and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in involving all citizens, regions and national resources through a total, integrated and directed program in preventing violent extremism to realize state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the safety of the entire nation.

## II. METHOD

This study uses qualitative methods with phenomenological attachment. Qualitative research is a type of research that uses methods of interviewing, observation, and document tracing. In addition, this study aims to analyze phenomena, events, social activities, behaviors, beliefs and human perceptions individually or in groups. Furthermore, in managing and analyzing data, qualitative methods are more description-oriented. (Moleong, 2012)

This phenomenological approach was chosen because the phenomenon of violent extremism action is a phenomenon that was lasted from a long time ago and became a threat faced in some countries in particular in Indonesia. According to Creswell there are four techniques of data collection, observation, interview, document study and using audio visual material. This study uses interview techniques, observations, document studies and audio visual materials, using information collected indirectly from various sources that are valid and appropriate, literature studies/literature, journal, Previous research, documents from related agencies, the internet, tronic electronic media, and print media audio and visual material. Next, the researchers used analysis interactive model from Miles and Huberman, which divides the steps in the activity of a data analysis with several parts, namely data

collection, condensation. data, presentation of data, and withdrawal of conclusion. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014)

## III. RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

### *The Threat of Violent Extremism in Indonesia*

The term violent extremism came into use in 2005 when the United States introduced the Struggle Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) as a replacement slogan for Global War on Terror (GWOT). The causes of people engaging in violent extremism can be classified into two: driving factors and attractors. The driving factor means one's search for the meaning and meaning of life. This can be a result of the increasing individualist lifestyle we are experiencing today. It can also be a result of boredom to live a comfortable life. All of this can trigger a person to look for new atmospheres and adventures.

Another factor is the threat of identity that occurs when a person's ethnicity, culture and religion are threatened, both in real terms and perceptions. On a personal level, threats can be insults that lead to hatred and anger. In addition, marginalization in society occurs when a person is not recognized as a member of a community group, including discrimination and marginalization (A. Mudzakkir & I, 2018). Ramanathan and Levesque (1988) explained that acts of extremism can be based on attitudes that feel threatened or the threat that comes. Because extremism is a form of disappointment and also a sense of threatened to conditions that seek solutions independently. (Ramanathan, 1988)

Furthermore, the pull factor for violent extremism one example could be family or tribal ties. In Indonesia, the case of dayak and madura tribes can be an example that tribal ties are a factor attracting extremism. People who support violent extremism are common because they have a kinship. Other attracting factors are promises of a better life or a purposeful life that has appeal to those who seek meaning and purpose in life. Acts of violent extremism in Indonesia in recent years have severely threatened the safety of citizens. Because, the object targeted in this act of violent extremism is a vital object even to the security forces. (A. Mudzakkir & I, 2018)

As reported by kompas.com newspaper, in 2018 there were suicide bombings in 3 churches in Surabaya, East Java, which killed 6 bombers and 15 residents. Furthermore, in Sidoarjo, East Java there was an improvised explosive device explosion at Wonocolo House that resulted in 3 victims of bomb owners killed on the spot. In addition, in mid-May 2018 there was a suicide bombing at the entrance of surabaya police that left 4 perpetrators dead and 10 others injured. In 2019,

Densus 88 arrested suspected terrorist Abu Hamza. During the siege operation, his wife and two children were killed after detonating a suicide bombing. On June 3, 2019, in Sukoharjo, Central Java there was a suicide bombing at a traffic police station so that one victim died on the spot and one person was injured. At the end of 2019, in Medan, North Sumatra there was a suicide bombing at medan police headquarters that left one person dead and 6 other police officers injured. The suicide bombing occurred again in 2021, precisely in makassar cathedral church. The incident left two people dead and injured 20 (Ayu, 2021).

During the period January-March 2021, Densus 88 Antiterror has arrested 228 suspected terrorists and 75 of them are part of terrorism organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Jamaah Anshorut Daulah (JAD) and ISIS Affiliate. Furthermore, there are data related to the number of incidents of violent extremism that occur in Indonesia that can be concluded in Table 1 (Astungkoro & Saputri, 2021).

**Table 1: Number of Violent Extremism Incidents in Indonesia (2016-2020)**

Year	Incident	Fatalities	Injury	Arrest
2016	4	33	31	170
2017	1	3	27	176
2018	18	49	42	396
2019	9	6	17	297
2020	-	-	-	228
<b>Total</b>	32	91	117	1.267

Source: Processed by researchers, 2021

Table 1.1 shows that between 2017-2018, there was an increase in the threat of violent extremism in Indonesia with a very worrying category. Because, with a period of 1 year, there were 19 incidents that resulted in 52 deaths on the spot and 69 people were seriously injured. In addition, some of the incidents show that public facilities, security forces and critical infrastructure are often targeted by extremists. (The Habibie Center Research Team, 2018) One of the incidents of violent extremism that had quite an impact was in 2018 in Surabaya, suicide bomb incidents at three churches that killed 21 people instantly. (Team Republika, 2021)

Some of the above events show that acts of violent extremism can cause an atmosphere of fear. In addition, the akibat caused by violent extremism is insecurity in the community so that it cannot carry out activities as usual. In addition, the data above shows that the threat of violent extremism in Indonesia has threatened the integrity of the nation and state so that it requires handling from BNPT as a body that conducts implementation in counter-terrorism. Upaya is done

with the aim to protect the entire nation and all Indonesian blood.

Synergy of The National Agency for Counter Terrorism with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Preventing Violent Extremism in Indonesia

The Strategy of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) through the national action plan to prevent extremism is a series of programs coordinated with various ministries / institutions. Therefore, BNPT conducts several synergies with several ministries and institutions in implementation efforts in accordance with Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021 in efforts to prevent violent extremism to support the country's defense. BNPT synergy is a good decision, because it meets the demands as the resolution has been set by the United Nations regarding the implementation of the National Action Plan for preventing violent extremism for all member states.

The National Agency for Counter Terrorism (BNPT) has now carried out several synergies, one of which is the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). Violent extremism today is very closely related to social media over the internet. In addition, violent extremism in Indonesia is undeniably always associated with certain religious organizations. Finally, violent extremism in Indonesia is oriented to specific political objectives, lawlessness and security stability disruption.

The first coordination is to align the objectives so that between ministries and institutions have the same goal. Furthermore, after achieving the same goal, the National Counterterrorism Agency together with other ministries / institutions jointly devised appropriate policies to obtain strategies in preventing the threat of violent extremism. After the policy is prepared, the synergy carried out is to arrange the division of roles and duties of each ministry / institution in accordance with the authority, duties, functions and capabilities of each ministry / institution.

Then cooperation is carried out as an effort in anticipation of the threat of violent extremism. Synergy carried out by the National Agency for Counter Terrorism is also carried out by combining the interaction between policies and strategies owned by the National Agency for Counter Terrorism with other ministries / institutions so that planned, systematic and integrated preventive measures can be formed.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, especially the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance Sub Directorate of Islamic Religious Understanding and

Conflict Management, only focuses on improving the understanding of moderate and multicultural religion and the development of religious schools so as to create an atmosphere of community life that is full of tolerance, tolerance, harmony, and has a strong commitment to religion, nation and state. The strategy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in preventing the threat of violent extremism so far is to take steps to survey how the level of religious literacy in Indonesia. The results of this survey will illustrate how the condition of literacy in religion on social media will later become the basis in determining the policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

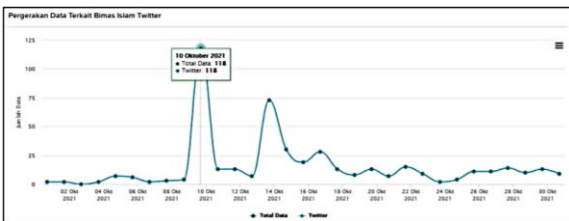


Figure 1: Shifting Exposure of Issues and Spreading Sentiment

Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2021



Figure 2: Number of Sentiment Category Data on Twitter

Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2021.

Figure 1 above describes the distribution of data related to issues that mention @BimasIslam accounts on social media Twitter. Furthermore, the peak of the exposure of the Islamic Milky Way issue is on October 10, 2021. Furthermore, in Figure 2, the tweet in this period reached 237 mentions and retweeted up to 231 times. Sentiment based on mentions entered the @BimasIslam account is dominated by positive sentiment as much as 129, neutral sentiment as much as 98, and 10 negative sentiments.

Furthermore, the Director General of Bimas Islam through several monitoring and self-surveying can see which accounts tend to upload content that invites acts of violent extremism, which are not. The move is an

attempt to prevent or counter violent extremism by grounding religious moderation on social media.



Figure 3: Forms of Infographics from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Funeral of Religious Moderation Sumber: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2021

Figure 3 describes one of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' efforts in preventing violent extremism on social media by grounding religious moderation content.

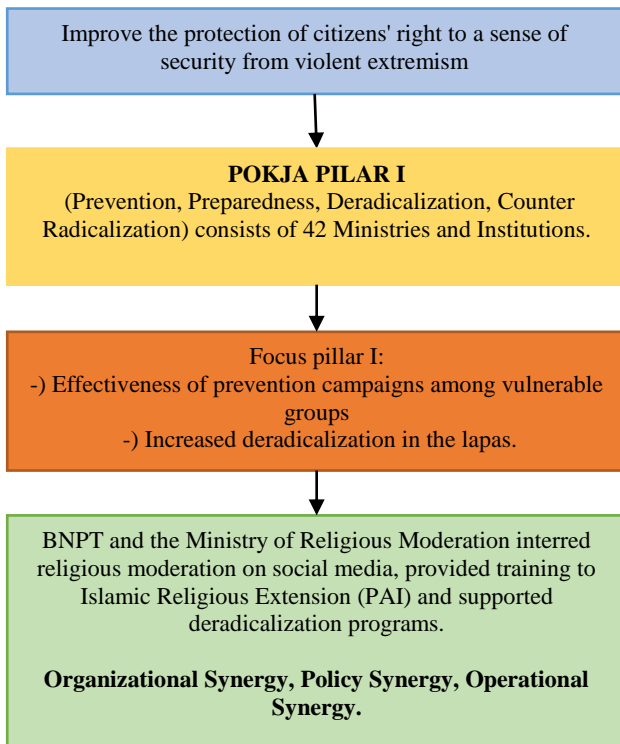
The National Agency for Counter Terrorism synergizes with the Ministry of Religious Affairs which is carried out by combining the capabilities, resources and assets owned by each agency.

BNPT has a social media Center for Peaceful Media as the spearhead of BNPT to prevent violent extremism on social media.

In addition, BNPT cooperates with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to improve understanding of moderate and multicultural religions and foster religious flow through religious moderation programs throughout religious service centers in Indonesia.

Cooperation conducted by the National Agency for Counter Terrorism with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in accordance with Presidential Decree No.7 of 2021 in addition to grounding religious moderation in social media is to conduct deradicalization and counseling programs against speakers or religious leaders.

The synergy of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) can be seen as in Figure 4:



**Figure 4:** Synergy of BNPT with the Ministry of Trade in preventing violent extremism in Indonesia

*Source: Processed by Researchers 2022*

Figure 4 above explains that the main goal of synergy carried out by BNPT and the Ministry of Trade is in accordance with the objectives of RAN-PE which is to increase the protection of the right to the security of citizens from violent extremism, further synergy carried out by BNPT and the Ministry of Religious is included in the aspects of pillar I, namely prevention, preparedness, deradicalization, counter radicalization, one of which is oriented towards the effectiveness of prevention campaigns among vulnerable groups and increased deradicalization in the prison. As for the form through training for speakers spread throughout Indonesia to encourage religious moderation. Furthermore, BNPT and the Ministry of Religious Affairs also provide training to Islamic Religious Extension (PAI) who are specially assigned as preachers in the rutan so that suspects, defendants, convicts, and former convicts can be resuscitated to the true teachings of Islam.

The results of Sugiarto's research, in 2020, entitled "Communication Strategy of the National Agency for Counter Terrorism in The Deradicalization Program in Indonesia" explained that the communication strategy became one of the supporting success of BNPT deradicalization program. In addition, in its implementation BNPT includes credible, and communicative expert speakers to support the success of the program. The experts are religious experts,

academics, practitioners, and non-governmental organizations that are strictly chosen by BNPT. The religious moderation program that has been run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through Bimas Islam has a meeting point with BNPT, namely to create an atmosphere of community life that is full of tolerance, tolerance, harmony, and has a strong commitment to religion, nation and state.

Based on graves theory, the synergy of BNPT and Kemenag entered into the ideal synergy form because it meets the aspects of organizational synergy, policy synergy and operational synergy. Organizational synergy is by combining assets and the ability to help each other, in this case BNPT and the Ministry of Trade together to prevent violent extremism. Furthermore, in policy synergy BNPT and Ministry of Trade is an institution included in Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2021 in Pillar I of the prevention section. Furthermore, at the operational synergy stage, BNPT and the Ministry of Religious Affairs conduct joint activities by grounding religious moderation on social media, providing training to Islamic Extension (PAI), and conducting deradicalization programs.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The suppression of violent extremism in Indonesia has threatened the integrity of the nation and state so that it requires handling from BNPT as a body that conducts implementation in counter-terrorism. Upaya is done with the aim to protect the entire nation and all Indonesian blood.

The strategy of the National Counterterrorism Agency in preventing violent extremism to support the country's defense is to implement Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2021 which aims to improve the protection of the right to the security of citizens from violent extremism. Furthermore, a joint secretariat was formed as a means to achieve such goals.

The joint secretariat's steps are to take action to prevent violent extremism through cooperation with ministries, institutions, and local governments. Synergy with the Ministry of Religious Affairs through combining their respective resources and assets by grounding religious moderation on social media, providing training to Islamic Extension (PAI) and supporting deradicalization programs.

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ISSN: 2582-6832