

# Scenario Planning in Anticipating the Death of Leaders of The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Leader to Mitigate Terrorist Attacks in Indonesia (Case Study: The Death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi)

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## Abstract

The death of a leader in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) organization is often followed by calls for revenge, typically initiated with the renewal of bai'at (pledge of allegiance) against those deemed responsible. ISIS tends to incorporate retaliation as part of its response to various global situations perceived as threats to Muslims. This study aims to elaborate on scenario planning in addressing the aftermath of an ISIS leader's death, to mitigate terrorist attacks in Indonesia. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method using scenario planning analysis based on the framework of Scenario Planning by Brands, Christian, Torsten Wulf, and Philip Meissner. These findings must be implemented in a coordinated and sustainable manner to ensure the effectiveness of anticipating and addressing threats from ISIS networks in Indonesia.

## 1. Introduction

Terrorism is one of the most complex global threats with significant impacts on world stability and security, both in terms of casualties and deep psychological trauma (Bjørøgo, 2004; Enders et al., 2011). Three main characteristics distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence: the use of violence, political motivation, and targeting civilians to instill fear and achieve specific objectives (Prunckun, 2019; Hoffman, 2006; 2017). Operationally, terrorism heavily depends on leadership, where a leader plays a key role in ensuring the continuity, adaptation, and success of the organization (Bacon & Grimm, 2022). Leaders occupy the highest position in the hierarchy, followed by the organization, external support, and the foundational environmental conditions that influence the group (Price, 2019). Effective leadership in terrorist groups significantly contributes to organizational success through strategies, narratives, and adaptability (Hermann & Sakiev, 2011). Leaders utilize charisma and violence to mobilize followers, motivate through ideology, strengthen emotional bonds, and foster loyalty to the group's objectives (Price, 2019). Moreover, leaders bear responsibility for resource management, action planning, and maintaining group cohesion (Milla, Faturrochman, & Ancok, 2013). However, the loss of a leader can greatly impact the organization. Nevertheless, some groups manage to survive by appointing new leaders to carry forward the group's vision (Price, 2019).

Two prominent global terrorist groups, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), employ different approaches. Al-Qaeda, under Osama bin Laden, adopted a long-term strategy with ideological narratives and meticulously planned operations, such as the 9/11 attacks (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015; Lister,

2016; Thomas, 2018). On the other hand, ISIS, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, emphasized extreme violence and the establishment of a caliphate using propaganda and sectarian approaches (Bacon & Grimm, 2022; Gürer, 2017). ISIS emerged as a splinter group of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, exploiting the conflict in Syria to expand its operations. In 2014, ISIS declared a caliphate under al-Baghdadi's leadership, strengthening its ideological legitimacy and challenging Al-Qaeda's authority (Hashim, 2014; Ingram et al., 2020). In Indonesia, ISIS's influence spread through online propaganda and affiliations with local networks, such as Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT). The 2018 Surabaya bombings, involving three families, exemplify the significant impact of ISIS's influence in Indonesia (Tabrani, 2022). ISIS leverages online media to recruit new members and disseminate jihadist propaganda, including calls for local attacks as alternatives for those unable to migrate to Syria (Soufan, 2017; Ingram, Whiteside, & Winter, 2020).

After the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019, ISIS continued its strategy through renewed bai'at (pledges of allegiance) and calls for global jihad. However, the death of terrorist leaders often triggers new radicalization despite weakening group operations in the short term (Alfarisy, 2022). The Indonesian government responded by strengthening anti-terrorism laws and enhancing counterterrorism operations through Special Detachment 88 (Arianti, 2019). Following al-Baghdadi's death on October 26, 2019, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi succeeded him on October 31, 2019, focusing on sustaining strategies accompanied by renewed pledges of allegiance from ISIS supporters in various regions, including Indonesia. On January 27, 2020, ISIS's official media released an audio statement delivered by its spokesperson, Abu Hamzah al-Qurashi, highlighting several key points related to ISIS's new phase of struggle. First, it called on all Muslims worldwide to pledge allegiance and wage jihad against oppression, including fighting against war leaders and the American crusaders as retaliation for al-Baghdadi's death. It also encouraged patience in jihad and continued efforts to establish an Islamic state through war. Second, it advocated for violence targeting Jews as part of its new strategy. Third, al-Qurashi emphasized that ISIS would escalate operations in response to al-Baghdadi's death. Fourth, it called for attacks on Shiites and groups considered apostates. Additionally, al-Qurashi encouraged supporters to migrate to ISIS-controlled territories (Alfarisy, R. M., 2022).

Although targeted killings of terrorist leaders weaken operational capabilities in the short term, they may also foster new radicalization as the deceased leaders are often revered as martyrs. The Indonesian government responded by tightening anti-terrorism laws and strengthening the Special Detachment 88 Anti-Terror Unit. Local groups such as JAD and MIT, loyal to ISIS, play crucial roles in terrorist attacks. The killing of MIT leader Santoso was an attempt by the government to dismantle terror networks, though its long-term impact remains debated. Such targeted killings can heighten radicalization, making ISIS a persistent threat in Indonesia. The spread of ISIS ideology remains a global concern, particularly its impact on security in Southeast Asia, with Indonesia as a potential target (Dina Oktarina & Adhiatma Nanda Wardhana, 2018). Indonesia has several legal instruments to counter ISIS's presence, including Law No. 5 of 2018, Law No. 9 of 2013, and Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021. These laws expand the definition of terrorism offenses, regulate counterterrorism financing, and establish a national action plan to combat violent extremism. ISIS's declaration of Pancasila as an idol and its call for war against it are viewed as extreme statements unsettling to Indonesian society (Muhammad Haidar Assad, 2014). Despite losing territories in Syria and Iraq, ISIS remains a threat through terrorist attacks carried out by foreign fighters and self-radicalized individuals in various countries (Güerer, C., 2017). This underscores that the presence of ISIS ideology and networks in Indonesia will continue to pose a threat in the future. This study will analyze the patterns and threats following the death of ISIS leaders in driving terrorist activities in Indonesia.

## **2. Literature Review**

To analyze this issue from an academic perspective, the study is based on concepts and theories relevant to the topic under investigation, namely Scenario Planning by Brands, Christian, Torsten Wulf, and Philip Meissner, as well as several concepts such as terrorism and bai'at (pledge of allegiance). This research employs a scenario matrix approach, as explained by Brands, Christian, Torsten Wulf, and Philip Meissner. Scenarios are understood as logical descriptions of potential future developments based on coherent assumptions about key factors and drivers of change. Scenarios are not intended as predictions but as learning tools for dealing with uncertainty.

This method produces four scenarios based on two main uncertainty factors, the ideal number for strategic analysis. These two dimensions of uncertainty form the basis for the creation of scenarios, projected on the x-axis and y-axis with positive analysis to generate four possible scenarios. The time projection usually ranges from three to five years but can be adjusted to the agreed timeframe. Each scenario is assigned a name that is relevant and reflects the narrative or causal relationships behind it, not merely its final condition. The scenario matrix can be illustrated as follows.

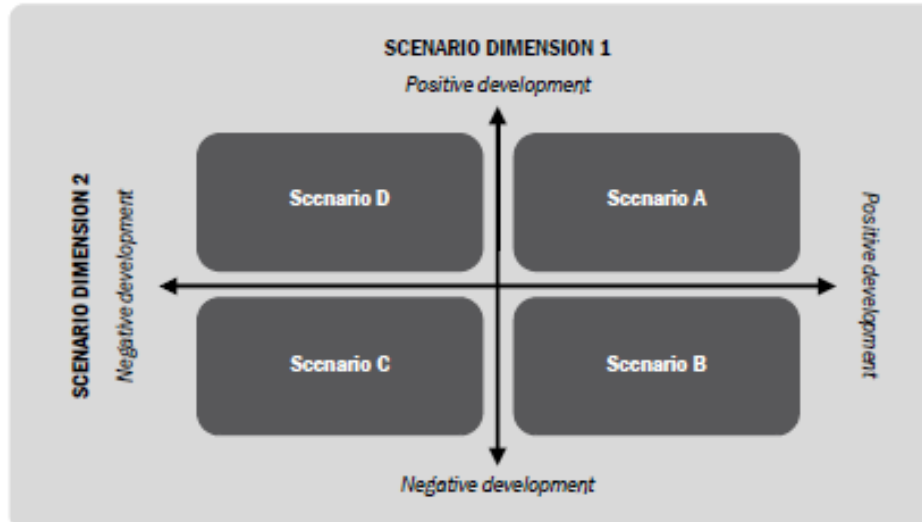


Figure 1. Scenario Matrix

The scenario matrix tool is a well-structured, efficient, and clear method for developing four scenarios supported by influence diagrams and fact sheets. Its main advantage lies in its logical structure and its quickness it facilitates scenario development. Overall, the use of the scenario matrix in analyzing patterns and threats during the critical period following the death of ISIS leaders in driving terrorist activities in Indonesia can provide clear and comprehensive guidance for policymakers and law enforcement in planning the necessary strategic steps to address various potential outcomes. Terrorism is generally defined as the use of violence or the threat of violence by non-state actors to achieve political, economic, religious, or social objectives by creating fear, coercion, or intimidation among the general public. The following key elements characterize this act: it is intentional and planned, involves violence or the threat of violence, and is perpetrated by sub-national actors rather than states. Terrorism is distinguished from insurgency by its focus on targeting civilians, the psychological effects it produces, and the absence of territorial control. As a complex and evolving phenomenon, terrorism requires a comprehensive understanding that considers various perspectives and contexts (Jordan, J., 2019; Coccia, M., 2018).

In the structure of jihadist organizations, the bai'at is a key element in maintaining the leader's authority. In the case of ISIS, following the death of Baghdadi, local commanders and global affiliates of ISIS were most likely summoned to renew their bai'at to the new leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. This was done to preserve ideological unity and the chain of command across ISIS's global network. The renewal of bai'at is crucial to ensuring that the organization remains cohesive despite a change in leadership. In the global jihad system, a new leader not only requires legitimacy within the group but also from global affiliates and sympathizers. The bai'at plays a vital role in creating leadership continuity, where followers are expected to transfer their loyalty from the former leader to the new one (Soufan, 2017).

### 3. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze the patterns and threats associated with the death of ISIS leaders and its impact on terrorist activities in Indonesia. This approach involves data collection through interactions with individuals, an analysis that moves from specific to general, and interpretation by the researcher, with a final report structured flexibly. It emphasizes respect for participants' perspectives, focuses on the meanings they provide, and acknowledges the complexity of the situations being analyzed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher selected the qualitative descriptive method due to its relevance in providing an in-depth understanding of the research issue, considering data availability and field constraints. The research design is structured to identify scenario planning in anticipating the impact of the death of leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) while formulating appropriate strategies to address the issue. In collecting primary and secondary data through interviews, the researcher adopted a flexible and interactive approach to questioning while adhering to established theories and analytical methods.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The researcher conducted the study by utilizing data collection techniques through interviews with several informants. The research data were obtained from the following informants: Brigadier General of Police Rommy Zakarias, S.I.K., Director 3.3 in the Counterterrorism Division of Deputy III BIN; Prof. Dr. Irfan Idris, M.A., Director of Prevention at BNPT; Commissioner of Police Bayu Widjanarko, S.I.K., Head of the Intelligence Sub-Directorate, Enforcement Directorate at BNPT; Colonel Inf. Indra Gunawan, Head of Preparedness and Crisis Management Sub-Directorate, Enforcement Directorate at BNPT; Commissioner of Police Zopfan Aseanata Bayudhita, S.H., S.I.K., M.Si., Unit Head 2, Product Analysis Sub-Directorate, Intelligence Directorate, Densus 88 AT Polri; Dr. Sapto Priyanto, S.H., M.Si., Head of the Research Center for Police Science and Terrorism Studies (PRIK-KT), SKSG UI; M. Syauqillah, S.H.I., M.Si., Ph.D., Head of the Terrorism Studies Program at UI/Head of the Center for Countering Extremism and Terrorism (BPET), MUI; Dr. Noor Huda Ismail, Visiting Fellow at RSIS, NTU Singapore; HF, a former ISIS-linked prisoner in Bekasi; GAM, a former JAD-linked prisoner involved in the Mako Brimob Depok attack; MS, a former JAD-linked prisoner in Semarang; AA, a former ISIS-linked prisoner who migrated to the Philippines; and S, a female member (Ummahat) of the ISIS network in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). In addition to conducting interviews, the researcher also obtained secondary data to support the research findings, including books, journal articles, and organizational records.

### **4.1. The Purpose of Bai'at (Pledge of Allegiance) in Al-Qaeda and ISIS**

The bai'at represents a pledge of allegiance that constitutes a critical element in the structure of jihadist organizations. In the context of ISIS, the bai'at is regarded as a religious obligation binding members to demonstrate complete loyalty to the caliph. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who declared the caliphate in 2014, mandated the bai'at from all ISIS members and affiliates worldwide. The bai'at not only serves as a mechanism to ensure loyalty but also as a tool to expand ISIS's influence and strength globally (Soufan, 2017). The bai'at can be made verbally or internally, aiming to strengthen the bond between members and the leader, ensure unconditional obedience, and integrate local jihadist groups into ISIS's global network. However, in some cases, the bai'at has also been a source of conflict among jihadist factions, such as tensions between ISIS and Al-Qaeda when certain affiliates refused to recognize Baghdadi's authority (Soufan, 2017).

In the context of ISIS, the bai'at serves several primary functions, including first, strengthening loyalty and organizational control: the bai'at ensures members obey leaders' orders without question, thereby reinforcing command structures and organizational discipline (Informant HF). Second, leader legitimization: the bai'at provides religious and political legitimacy to the organization's leader, such as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, solidifying his position as the rightful caliph and maintaining ideological unity amidst external pressures (Director of Counterterrorism, Deputy of Counterintelligence, BIN). Third, a tool for global expansion: the bai'at is used to integrate local affiliates into ISIS's global network, ultimately increasing the organization's strength and threat level (Director of Prevention, BNPT). Fourth, motivation for sacrifice and extreme actions: the bai'at inspires members to fully commit to jihad, including extreme acts such as suicide attacks, by fostering spiritual and moral attachment to the leader (Director of Prevention, BNPT).

Following Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's death, the renewal of bai'at to his successor, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, became a strategic move to maintain loyalty among members and global affiliates. This renewal of bai'at not only granted legitimacy to the new leader but also ensured ideological cohesion and prevented organizational disintegration. In this context, the bai'at acts as a declaration of loyalty with

profound religious and ideological dimensions, remaining a key element in sustaining ISIS's structure and global influence (Soufan, 2017).

## **4.2. The Leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the ISIS Movement**

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, born Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri al-Samarrai in 1971 in Samarra, Iraq, was a scholar and academic before becoming involved in militant activities. He claimed lineage tracing back to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a claim he used to bolster his political and religious legitimacy, as reflected in his title "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Qurashi." This claim aligns with Islamic traditions that often associate leadership legitimacy with lineage from the Prophet (Lacey, 2011; Cook, 2014; Gleave, 2015). Baghdadi began his involvement with militant groups following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, joining Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In 2010, he became the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) after several senior leaders were killed. Under his leadership, ISI evolved into ISIS, a more radical organization with an extreme ideological approach. Baghdadi capitalized on the power vacuum in Iraq post-U.S. invasion and the chaos in Syria following its civil war to strengthen ISIS. He successfully unified local militants, former Iraqi military officials, and foreign jihadists within a cohesive organizational structure (Wright, 2016).

One of Baghdadi's most monumental actions was the declaration of a caliphate in 2014 in Mosul, Iraq. This declaration not only conferred religious legitimacy but also attracted global followers to join ISIS. Baghdadi adopted an extreme takfiri ideology, justifying violence against anyone deemed an enemy, including Muslims who did not align with his teachings. ISIS propaganda was disseminated through social media to expand global influence and recruit foreign jihadists (Soufan, 2017; Wright, 2016). ISIS's military tactics under Baghdadi were characterized by extreme violence, such as mass executions and suicide bombings. Baghdadi also established a de facto governance system in territories controlled by ISIS, including bureaucracy and social services, albeit highly repressive. Bai'at (pledges of allegiance) from followers in various regions, including Indonesia, reinforced Baghdadi's power and allowed ISIS to maintain operational flexibility despite international pressures (Head of the Police Science and Terrorism Studies Research Center (PRIK-KT) SKSG UI; Head of the Terrorism Studies Program UI/Head of the Center for Countering Extremism and Terrorism (BPET) MUI; Visiting Fellow RSIS, NTU Singapore).

Baghdadi's leadership faced significant challenges, including large-scale military operations by international coalitions that resulted in ISIS losing much of its territory. Although Baghdadi was killed in 2019, ISIS's ideology and global network persist, with terrorist attacks continuing in the group's name. The death of a terrorist leader often triggers retaliatory attacks and the emergence of new leaders, ensuring the group's continued existence on a global scale (Soufan, 2017; Wright, 2016).

## **4.3. The Entry of ISIS into Indonesia**

The declaration of the caliphate by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014 inspired many Muslims in various countries, including Indonesia, to pledge allegiance (bai'at) as a demonstration of loyalty to his leadership. In Indonesia, Jamaah Tauhid Wal Jihad (TWJ) played a significant role in supporting ISIS. Through the FAKSI organization led by Bachrumsyah, TWJ organized various activities to strengthen networks, disseminate ideology, and garner support. One such activity was the Multaqod Dawiy event, themed "The Establishment of the Caliphate," held in Tangerang and Banten. In addition, TWJ collaborated with other groups, such as NII Ring Banten and GARIS, to support ISIS. In 2013, the first wave of TWJ members was dispatched to Syria under the leadership of Abu Jandal (Salim at Tamimy) (Informant HF).

By 2014, declarations of support for ISIS had spread further, with activities conducted in major cities across Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Banjarmasin, and Ciputat. This support was reinforced by a bai'at video released by Santoso, the leader of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), pledging loyalty to al-Baghdadi. In 2015, Aman Abdurrahman led an initiative to unify various ISIS-supporting groups in Indonesia by establishing Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). This organization aimed to serve as ISIS's official representative in Southeast Asia and developed structures in various regions of Indonesia, including Greater Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, and other areas. Internationally, JAD related to Katibah Nusantara in Syria, led by Bachrumsyah (Informant GAM).

To support its operations, JAD received funding from ISIS through international networks. These funds were used for various needs, such as weapon procurement, operational expenses, and sending members to

conflict zones. The management of funds was conducted through an organized system to evade detection by security authorities, with funds transferred incrementally through courier networks. Additionally, modern technology was utilized for communication and logistics, including the distribution of weapons to regions like Poso, which became a hub for terrorist activities (Informant HF).

Aman Abdurrahman played a central role in spreading ISIS ideology in Indonesia through religious studies and propaganda. In each session, the Indonesian government was portrayed as infidel for not implementing Islamic law. These doctrines were reinforced by calls to pledge allegiance (*bai'at*) to ISIS leaders as an act of ideological loyalty. Moreover, JAD served as the main executor of terrorist activities in Indonesia, adhering to direct strategic instructions from ISIS in Syria (Informant AA). With its organized structure and network, JAD successfully integrated logistics, funding, and communication to support its operational activities. Weapons were procured through international networks, with distributions directed to conflict zones like Poso. Communication with ISIS in Syria was coordinated to ensure that every strategic decision, including fund allocations and logistics delivery, was carried out according to directives. In this regard, JAD not only represented ISIS in Indonesia but also became an integral part of ISIS's global network (Informants AA and HF).

#### **4.4. The Death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi Fuels Retaliatory Attacks**

The death of a terrorist leader, such as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, on October 27, 2019, does not always lead to the weakening of a terrorist group. In some situations, the death of a leader can instead trigger retaliatory attacks and inspire followers to continue pursuing their ideological struggle. In Indonesia, following Baghdadi's death, several groups, such as Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), renewed their allegiance (*bai'at*) to ISIS's new leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. This renewal of allegiance was carried out to strengthen member loyalty and maintain the continuity of the group's ideology (Informants AA and GAM). Several terrorist attacks occurred in Indonesia after Baghdadi's death, including the suicide bombing at the Medan Police Headquarters in November 2019, the attack on the Daha Selatan Police Station in June 2020, and the suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral in March 2021. These incidents indicate that leadership transitions are often exploited to bolster group morale and reorganize their networks (Director of Counterterrorism, Deputy of Counterintelligence, BIN).

However, the surge in terrorist activities is not entirely caused by the death of a leader. Loyalty to ISIS among its sympathizers is more frequently shaped through processes of identity fusion and connective action. Social media plays a significant role in the dissemination of ideology, enabling sympathizers to act independently without direct orders from a leader. This phenomenon, known as "leaderless jihad," involves individuals taking actions based on deeply embedded ideological understandings (Visiting Fellow RSIS, NTU Singapore). The renewal of allegiance to a new leader is typically communicated through specific channels, such as Telegram, to ensure that sympathizers remain loyal and connected to the group. While the renewal of *bai'at* is not mandatory, most members choose to participate as an expression of loyalty to the new leadership (Informants AA and HF).

#### **4.5. Scenario Planning in Anticipating the Impact of the Death of Leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to Mitigate Terrorist Attacks in Indonesia**

This study employs the indicators of Scenario Planning as explained by Brands, Christian, Torsten Wulf, and Philip Meissner. Scenario Planning is defined as a logical representation of possible future developments designed to understand and manage uncertainty without aiming to predict outcomes. In Indonesia, the dissemination of ISIS networks follows two main channels: offline communities, such as in-person religious study groups, and online media, particularly the Telegram platform, which serves as a primary tool for ideological dissemination and communication. Modern technology has facilitated radicalization, both individually and within groups, making it challenging for security forces to detect (Visiting Fellow RSIS, NTU Singapore; Head of the Terrorism Studies Program UI/Head of the Center for Countering Extremism and Terrorism (BPET) MUI; Deputy of Counterintelligence BIN).

Terrorist attacks in Indonesia tend to mimic patterns of ISIS attacks abroad, such as the use of sharp weapons or simple suicide bombs inspired by calls from ISIS leaders or spokespersons (Director of Prevention BNPT, 2024). Since the enactment of Law No. 5 of 2018, law enforcement has had a legal

framework to arrest individuals suspected of planning terrorist acts before their plans are carried out. This has contributed to a decline in the frequency of terrorist attacks in Indonesia (Densus 88; Head of the Terrorism Studies Program UI/Head of BPET MUI).

The resilience of ISIS networks in Indonesia is supported by two main factors: the existence of global terrorism patrons, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, which provide ideological legitimacy to local affiliates, and the latent spread of radical ideologies, where only a small portion of individuals are directly involved in terrorist acts, while the ideology itself remains widespread. Conflicts in the Middle East and issues related to the global Muslim community often serve as motivations for terrorist acts in Indonesia, expressed as forms of solidarity or retaliation (Director of Prevention BNPT; Head of the Research Center for Police Science and Terrorism Studies (PRIK-KT) SKSG UI). Indonesia's security system, which is perceived as not fully stringent in certain areas, allows foreign terrorists fleeing pressure in their home countries to enter (Director of Prevention BNPT). Furthermore, social media serves as ISIS's primary tool for spreading propaganda and recruiting new members, exacerbating monitoring challenges (Visiting Fellow RSIS, NTU Singapore).

To address these threats, recommended strategies include strengthening social media monitoring, enhancing cooperation between security forces and digital platforms, and modernizing technology to detect threats more quickly and effectively. Deradicalization programs should also be strengthened by involving independent third parties to mediate conflicts between former terrorists and the state, employing an inclusive approach emphasizing reconciliation (Head of the Terrorism Studies Program UI/Head of BPET MUI; Director of Prevention BNPT; Head of PRIK-KT SKSG UI). Monitoring organizations operating under the guise of religious activities, such as foundations and Quran learning centers, should be conducted with social and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is proposed to accelerate threat detection and enhance the effectiveness of intelligence analysis (Visiting Fellow RSIS, NTU Singapore). This study highlights the dynamics of ISIS networks in Indonesia through the Scenario Planning approach developed by Brands, Christian, Torsten Wulf, and Philip Meissner. The analysis encompasses several key aspects:

a. Key Driving Forces

ISIS effectively utilizes digital propaganda through platforms such as An-Naba and Telegram to target the younger generation in Indonesia. Narratives of global jihad and "Islamic justice" are employed to gain public sympathy, particularly in areas with high poverty levels. Moreover, leadership transitions, such as after the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, are often leveraged to renew pledges (bai'at) from local members, including Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), as a symbol of loyalty and organizational continuity.

b. Critical Uncertainties

The effectiveness of ISIS propaganda depends on local contexts, such as the level of digital literacy and religious resistance within communities. Furthermore, the relationship between local networks like JAD and ISIS central leadership is often inconsistent. Some local cells operate independently, while others maintain affiliations to gain legitimacy and financial support. Encrypted communication technologies, such as Telegram and WhatsApp, pose additional challenges for security forces in detecting network activities in real time.

c. Future Scenarios

Future scenario analysis includes two main possibilities: Decline of ISIS Globally: Local networks like JAD experience fragmentation, loss of resources, and decreased recruitment, bolstered by counter-radicalization, deradicalization, and digital literacy programs. The resurgence of ISIS Globally: Local networks exploit digital propaganda and the Indonesian diaspora in the Middle East to strengthen their operations, with the potential for coordinated attacks on strategic infrastructure and crowded public spaces.

d. Strategic Implications

Strengthening counter-narratives relevant to local contexts becomes a priority, involving religious leaders, community leaders, and local influencers to counter ISIS propaganda. Collaboration among security agencies, such as BIN, BNPT, and Densus 88, is essential to enhance real-time coordination and intelligence sharing. Utilizing big data and artificial intelligence (AI)-based technologies is also a crucial strategy for detecting sympathizers' digital activities and mapping their communication networks.

e. Contingency Action

Contingency actions include strict monitoring of digital activities through advanced technology, tracking suspicious financial transactions, and involving local communities in detecting early signs of radicalization. Programs like "Desa Tangguh Terorisme" (Resilient Village Against Terrorism) serve as successful examples of community engagement to raise awareness about terrorism threats.

f. Internal Dynamics

Local networks like JAD exhibit flexibility through a decentralized structure, enabling local cells to operate independently to avoid detection by security forces. However, this high level of autonomy also creates potential internal conflicts between local leaders and the central command regarding the organization's vision and strategy.

g. External Influences

External factors, such as geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East, including the wars in Syria and Iraq, are often exploited by ISIS to garner local sympathy through narratives of Muslim suffering globally. Political and economic instability in Indonesia also provides opportunities for ISIS to recruit sympathizers through narratives about the failure of democracy and the caliphate as an alternative solution. The interaction of key driving forces, critical uncertainties, internal dynamics, and external influences strongly influences the threat posed by ISIS in Indonesia. Addressing this threat requires an integrated and multidimensional strategic approach, including strengthening counter-narratives, implementing advanced technology-based digital surveillance, fostering international cooperation, and addressing underlying socio-economic issues. This approach aligns with the Scenario Planning framework by Brands, Wulf, and Meissner, enabling adaptive responses to the evolving dynamics of terrorism.

The next step undertaken is the development of four scenarios using the following matrix.

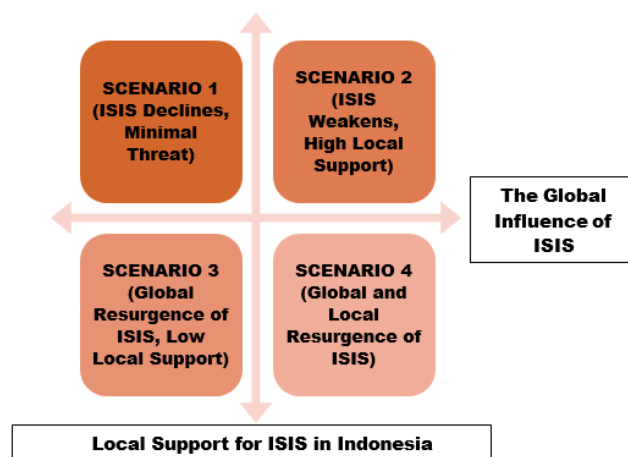


Figure 2. Scenario of Development

#### **4.5.1. Scenario 1: ISIS Declines, Minimal Threat**

- **Description:** In this first scenario, ISIS no longer holds significant influence on an international scale and gradually loses local support in Indonesia. ISIS's organizational structure, both globally and locally, experiences a significant decline, limiting its ability to mobilize terrorist actions. Under this scenario, the threat to Indonesia becomes minimal, providing an opportunity for the government to focus on long-term preventive measures.
- **Driving Factors:** Several driving factors underpin this scenario. First, public support for extremist ideologies in Indonesia has declined due to the effectiveness of various deradicalization programs. Second, successful security operations at both international and national levels have restricted terrorist networks' operational space. Third, consistent community-based deradicalization programs in Indonesia have successfully prevented the spread of radical ideologies.
- **Government Strategy:** Based on these conditions, the government can implement a soft approach strategy focusing on enhancing educational and counter-radicalization programs targeted primarily at youth and vulnerable communities, especially in areas prone to radicalization. The government can also conduct intensive surveillance of extremist cells with an emphasis on early detection through intelligence analysis to ensure that no significant threats reemerge.
- **Challenges:** Despite the minimal threat, the primary challenge for the government is maintaining societal resilience against radical ideologies. Domestic political situations and economic instability could create opportunities for radical ideologies to re-enter certain communities. Therefore, political and social stability becomes crucial to managing.

#### **4.5.2. Scenario 2: ISIS Weakens, High Local Support**

- **Description:** In this second scenario, ISIS experiences a decline in global influence, but local support for the group in Indonesia remains high. Several local extremist groups, such as Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), continue to be active and operate independently, even though their connections to ISIS central leadership have weakened.
- **Driving Factors:** Several factors drive this scenario, including the activities of local networks successfully attracting sympathizers through social media, socio-economic conditions that lead to the marginalization of communities, and the presence of strong local propaganda. This propaganda continues to influence communities vulnerable to radicalization, particularly those who feel marginalized.
- **Government Strategy:** To address this situation, the government intensifies community-based deradicalization programs with an inclusive approach aimed at reaching marginalized groups within society. This involves engaging community leaders and religious figures in outreach efforts. Additionally, stricter monitoring of financial flows to local networks and restrictions on access to resources that extremist groups could use are implemented. The government also expands collaboration with local communities and religious organizations to create stronger counter-radicalization narratives at the grassroots level.
- **Challenges:** The main challenge in this scenario is controlling the spread of localized propaganda, which is diffuse and difficult to monitor, as well as tracking the activities of small groups that tend to operate informally and covertly, making comprehensive detection challenging.

#### **4.5.3. Scenario 3: Global Resurgence of ISIS, Low Local Support**

- **Description:** This scenario describes a situation where ISIS regains strength in the Middle East or other regions and begins actively conducting attacks on an international scale. However, in Indonesia, support for ISIS remains low due to the effectiveness of public education and counter-narrative programs implemented by the government.

- **Driving Factors:** The primary driving factor for this scenario is geopolitical conditions that enable ISIS to regain influence. On the other hand, public education and counter-narrative programs in Indonesia have successfully reduced public support for extremist ideologies, especially among communities previously at risk.
- **Government Strategy:** In this scenario, the government focuses on strengthening counter-narratives through social media and other platforms to counter the increasing propaganda from ISIS abroad. Strict online monitoring is also implemented to prevent the spread of ISIS ideology, particularly on platforms commonly used for recruiting sympathizers. The government collaborates with international organizations to monitor potential cross-border threats that could impact Indonesia.
- **Challenges:** The challenge in this scenario is preventing secondary radicalization that may arise as a response to the increased terrorist actions of ISIS abroad. The government must ensure that the Indonesian public remains critical and vigilant against extremist narratives that may infiltrate through various media channels.

#### **4.5.4. Scenario 4: Global and Local Resurgence of ISIS**

- **Description:** This scenario depicts a situation in which ISIS not only succeeds in regaining its global influence but also establishes significant sway in Indonesia. JAD networks in Indonesia strengthen their operations by recruiting new members and conducting more organized terrorist activities on a national scale.
- **Driving Factors:** Factors driving this scenario include international circumstances that enhance ISIS's image, increased financial and logistical support from foreign sympathizers, and effective propaganda that garners local sympathy. These factors collectively contribute to the rise of ISIS activities in Indonesia.
- **Government Strategy:** The government implements intensive counterterrorism operations, including surveillance and legal action against extremist cells in Indonesia. Collaboration with neighboring countries is also enhanced to address cross-border threats and curb external support. Additionally, the government develops comprehensive rehabilitation programs, including economic support and training for former extremists, to prevent their return to radical groups. An early warning system is established by integrating data from various intelligence and security agencies to detect threats before they escalate into large-scale terrorist acts.
- **Challenges:** The main challenges in this scenario include more complex inter-agency coordination, maintaining domestic political stability amid increasing terrorist threats, and curbing external funding sources that support local groups. The government must ensure that all counterterrorism measures are carried out efficiently and effectively, with full public support.

## **5. Conclusion**

The complex dynamics of ISIS networks in Indonesia analyzed through the Scenario Planning approach, reveal that intricate internal and external dynamics influence the movement of ISIS networks in Indonesia. ISIS leverages digital propaganda to disseminate narratives of global jihad and attract sympathizers, particularly among the younger generation, by exploiting socio-economic disparities. Leadership transitions and the use of encrypted technologies strengthen their networks despite security pressures. Uncertainties such as inconsistent relationships between the central leadership and local networks, as well as the effectiveness of propaganda depending on local contexts, impact the operational patterns of the network.

Two future scenarios have been identified: the weakening of ISIS globally, leading to the fragmentation of local networks, and the resurgence of ISIS, which heightens the threat of coordinated attacks. To counter these threats, a multidimensional strategy is required, including the strengthening of counter-narratives by religious figures and local communities, digital technology surveillance based on big data, international cooperation, and addressing the root causes of socio-economic issues. This approach must be implemented

in a coordinated and sustained manner to ensure effectiveness in addressing the threat of terrorism in Indonesia.

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