

Threat Analysis of The Repatriation of Ex-ISIS FTF Children to Indonesia

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Abstract

After the fall of ISIS, the repatriation of former ISIS members to their home countries has become an important issue. The international community encourages the repatriation of ex-ISIS families, especially children who have suffered in refugee camps in Syria. Likewise, the Indonesian government is still open to repatriating orphans under the age of 10. This study aims to determine the threat of repatriation of former ISIS FTF children to Indonesia, as well as intelligence strategies in anticipating the threat. This research uses a qualitative approach based on an inductive perspective. The results show that the repatriation of ex-ISIS FTF children may pose a moderate threat. The intelligence strategy to anticipate the threat is the use of tools or methods, including regulations and resource support from various institutions, equipped with the right way to achieve the goal of minimizing or eliminating threats, with a focus on early detection and early warning.

1. Introduction

Indonesia has faced a serious threat of terrorism in recent decades that has caused much harm and fear in society. Terrorism fueled by radicalism in Indonesia is a real threat to the entire society. The beginning of radicalism in Indonesia has existed since post-independence, marked by the existence of Darul Islam (DI/TII) in West Java (Hafid, 2020). Radicalism and terrorism continue to develop, and their emergence in Indonesia has become more apparent since the reform era, which opened up space for democracy and freedom (Hafid, 2020). There are at least three forms of terrorism threats: the first is soft power groups originating from intellectuals who carry out actions by influencing people's minds and as funders, the second is hard power groups, which are executors because they carry out actions using violence. The third is lone wolf, which is carried out by individuals equipped with knowledge and indoctrination through online media (Santoso, 2020). Meanwhile, terror groups that have emerged in Indonesia include Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), which have carried out various terror attacks in various places, including churches, police, and the general public.

The threat of terrorism in Indonesia is also related to the development of global terrorism, including the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Some individuals and communities in Indonesia have been influenced by ISIS radical ideology and have been involved in acts of terror. ISIS itself began with the formation of ISI (Islamic State in Iraq) on October 13, 2006, with the role of the Mujahideen Shura Council, whose first leader was Abu (Umar) Bakar Al-Baghdadi, which later developed into ISIS (Nainggolan, 2018). The presence of ISIS as a non-state actor is a new resistance movement against the West that is considered detrimental to society in the Middle East (Nainggolan, 2018).

When ISIS reached the peak of its power, it attracted the attention and influence of many individuals. Poverty and high social inequality in Indonesia are fertile ground for the growth of ISIS terrorist movements and actions (Nainggolan, 2016). On the other hand, ISIS's ability to use social media and online propaganda to spread its ideology has made it faster and more widespread in influencing and recruiting sympathizers. The ISIS propaganda message is a picture of a blissful Islamic State. At the same time, women are promised happiness by marrying ISIS fighters, who become true loves who are also jihad heroes to eradicate infidels (Putri & Department of International Relations, 2019). This has led to the interest of many Indonesians to join ISIS as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). Based on data collected by The Habibie Center (2019), Indonesians who are related or affiliated with ISIS FTFs show a very significant number. The number of male Indonesians associated with FTF ISIS and still in Syria and Iraq is more significant than the number of women, and men dominate the number who died because they were directly involved in the conflict. Most of the citizens who went to conflict-ridden countries, Iraq and Syria, to become ISIS sympathizers, brought children with them (Dodwell et al., 2016). In a Reuters report, according to Kurdish authorities, there are still around 10,000 women and children from various countries displaced in Al-Hol and Roj camps until 2022, including those from Indonesia (Gebeily, 2022).

Repatriation of children is of particular concern, as many children are caught up in the conflict and living in harsh conditions. Several countries have repatriated children of former ISIS FTFs, but Indonesia is still under consideration. BNPT's FTF Task Force confirmed there are 145 Indonesian children in the Syrian camp, among them 13 girls and 18 boys under the age of 10. The Indonesian government does plan to repatriate orphans and children under the age of 10. However, BNPT is still studying the experiences of Sweden, Uzbekistan, and Germany, which have repatriated their citizens (Wardah, 2023). Some have encouraged the repatriation of ex-ISIS children for humanitarian and de-radicalization reasons, but many are concerned about the potential security threats that could arise.

There has been no research specifically related to the threat of repatriation of ex-ISIS children. This study examines the threat from an intelligence perspective. This study aims to provide a more comprehensive insight into the level of threat in the repatriation of ex-ISIS children to Indonesia and identify preventive measures that need to be taken by the government and relevant institutions to minimize the threat in order to maintain national security.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Threat

According to Hank Prunckun, a threat is the desire of an individual or group to cause risk to another group. Threats are not from nature; they cannot just happen, but require intent and capability from someone to make it happen (Prunckun, 2015). In Prunckun's 'threat analysis', there are two essential elements that must be determined for each of the intent and capability factors: in intent, there is desire and expectation, while in capability, there is knowledge and resources (Prunckun, 2015). Prunckun's threat analysis is needed to see how large the threat scale is from the repatriation of ex-ISIS children. Threat analysis cannot stand alone, and vulnerability analysis is needed to explain how much the ability of a target or asset, whether in the form of a person or group or physical entity, to withstand the harm done by the threat actor (Prunckun, 2015). There are three critical factors in vulnerability analysis, namely attractiveness, ease of attack, and impact. These factors can be taken into consideration to minimize losses and anticipate attacks on targets or assets (Prunckun, 2015).

Next, conduct a risk analysis. Risk is the possibility of something unwanted happening, with negative consequences (Prunckun, 2015). Risk can be explained as the combination of probability and consequence. The results of the three analysis processes will be the basis for formulating PPRR policies or Prevention, Preparation, Response, and Recovery Planning (Prunckun, 2015).

2.2. Repatriation

Repatriation is a complex and challenging political process, but it can be the best option for most refugees if conditions in their country of origin allow (Long, 2013). Repatriation facilitates refugees' return to their country of origin (Septa, 2018). It is not just a physical return but also a political process that

involves re-establishing relations between refugees and their countries of origin. This process is essential to ensure the sustainability of repatriation and the fulfillment of refugees' rights (Long, 2013).

2.3. Intelligence Strategy

Arthur F. Lykke formulated a theory of strategy consisting of three main elements, namely means, ways, and ends (Lykke, 1989). Means refer to the tools or methods used in an effort to achieve a goal, ways relate to the approach or means applied to achieve the goal, and ends are the final destination that is targeted. In the context of intelligence, strategy can be defined as an integral part of the intelligence role function, which aims to support more effective decision-making. Its functions include preventing strategic surprise, providing long-term insight, supporting the policy process, and keeping information confidential (Herman, 2001).

2.4. ISIS-Affiliated Children

The children referred to in this study are those under the age of 10, which is in line with the Government of Indonesia's plan to repatriate orphans and children under the age of 10 (Wardah, 2023). Generally, children affiliated with ISIS or armed militant groups can arrive in conflict areas through one of three ways: abduction or violent coercion, joining voluntarily, or being born into conflicts and groups (Capone, 2019). Three forms of IS exploitation of their affiliates reported by the Middle East Institute include serving as human shields and suicide bombers; engaging in IS propaganda; and becoming a long-term strategic investment in the group's ideology (Mulroy et al., 2020).

3. Method

The research design used in this study is a qualitative approach based on an inductive way of thinking or perspective. It involves questions, data collection from interactions with people, analysis from the specific to the general, and interpretation by the researcher. The final report can be structured flexibly. The people involved support a perspective that respects individual thinking, focuses on people's meaning, and recognizes the complexity of a situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher used a qualitative research design to gain a deeper understanding of the threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs to Indonesia.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Threat of Repatriation of Children of Ex-ISIS FTFs to Indonesia

Several factors need attention because they can be an obstacle, and vice versa, can make the repatriation program successful, especially for children of former ISIS FTFs to Indonesia. The first factor is human rights, guaranteeing their rights as citizens. Second, the security factor, starting from the process in Syria to arriving and living in Indonesia, so as to avoid violence. Third, economic factors, providing access to employment and fulfillment of life needs independently. And fourth, social factors, ensuring that they can integrate with society and the environment.

However, another factor that receives a lot of attention in the repatriation process is ideology. In addition, BNPT has an assessment tool to measure the level of radicalism of FTFs, both children and adults. After they return to Indonesia, they will receive deradicalization intervention from the Government. Psychological diagnosis by experts is needed to understand their psychological condition in depth. In addition, exposure to national values and pluralism should be provided, accompanied by concrete actions that reinforce this understanding.

4.1.1. Threat Analysis

Based on data from informants, the results of the assessment of the threat analysis of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs show that the resulting threat coefficient value is 11.02, which, in the threat coefficient scale, as in Table 1, this figure falls into the "Medium" category.

Table 1. Threat Reference Coefficient

No.	Category	Threat Coefficient
1.	Negligible	4-6
2.	Minimum	7-10
3.	Medium	11-15
4.	High	16-18
5.	Acute	19-20

Source: Prunckun, 2015

Thus, the level of threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs is stated as “Medium”, with an explanation of each element as follows:

- 1) The desire level of ex-ISIS FTF children to make threats after repatriation, with an average score of 2.43, falls into the “Minimum” category, because enthusiasm in making threats is almost non-existent. They did not leave for Syria on their own, but the extreme environment formed the moral foundation of these children; if not intervened, the radical ideology would remain embedded.
- 2) As for the expectation of ex-ISIS FTF children to make threats with an average score of 2.3, it falls into the “Minimum” category, because self-confidence is almost non-existent. Children are not yet able to think complexly, but the difficult situation they experience in refugee camps can affect the expectations and confidence of these children.
- 3) Meanwhile, in terms of knowledge of ex-ISIS FTF children to make threats, with an average score of 3.14, it falls into the “Medium” category, because they have little information about ISIS ideology. Children easily adopt values from people who are considered necessary. At the same time, their parents have instilled the doctrine that ISIS believes from an early age, plus ISIS daily provides lessons on aqidah to children.
- 4) Related to the resources of former ISIS FTF children to carry out threats, with an average score of 3.14, falling into the “Moderate” category, because they have few skills and experience. Some children are prepared to become successors and play a role in jihad, so that they are given military training.

4.1.2. Vulnerability Analysis

The results of the assessment of data from informants on the vulnerability analysis of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs show that the resulting vulnerability coefficient value is 7.43, which means it falls into the “Medium” category, but is close to the lower threshold of the High category, this is in accordance with the vulnerability coefficient scale as in Table 2.

Table 2. Vulnerability Reference Coefficient

No.	Category	Vulnerability Coefficient
1.	Negligible	1-3
2.	Minimum	4-6
3.	Medium	7-9
4.	High	10-12
5.	Acute	13-15

Source: Prunckun, 2015

It can be concluded that Indonesia's level of vulnerability in the repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs is “Medium”, with an explanation of each element as follows:

- 1) Indonesia's attractiveness to ISIS, with an average score of 3.43, falls into the “Medium” category because Indonesia has enough attractiveness. Indonesia's large population with a Muslim majority is a promising source of human resources and funding for ISIS, plus Indonesia has established terrorist networks.

- 2) However, the ease of attack with an average score of 2 falls into the “Minimum” category, because there are few opportunities for children of former ISIS FTFs to pose a threat. Indonesia is quite ready in terms of legal instruments and law enforcement officers to anticipate the threat of terrorism.
- 3) Meanwhile, in terms of potential losses (impact) arising from the repatriation of ex-ISIS FTF children to Indonesia, with an average score of 2, it falls into the “Minimum” category because very few potential losses were incurred. The impact of losses is potentially significant in the future when these children are not intervened with deradicalization programs.

4.1.3. Risk Analysis

Based on data from informants related to threats and vulnerabilities, the scale of the tendency or possibility of the threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs falls into the “C” rating or the “Possible” category, meaning that the threat may occur in the future, because the factors or elements of the children's desire, knowledge and resources fall into the “Medium” category, especially if there are no special intervention or handling efforts for repatriated children when returning to Indonesia.

Table 3. Possibility Scale

Rating	Possibility	Description
A	Almost Certain	This situation is expected to occur
B	Probably	This situation may occur
C	Possible	This situation will happen at some point in time
D	Unlikely	Situations may occur at any one time
E	Rare	Situations will only occur in exceptional circumstances.

Source: Prunckun, 2015

On the consequence scale, the threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs falls into the “Moderate” category, or will have an impact that may be considered, given that Indonesia's attraction factor for ISIS falls into the “Acute” category and the impact factor falls into the “Moderate” category, provided that there are no special efforts in handling these children when they return to Indonesia.

Table 4. Consequence Scale

Rating	Consequence	Description
1	Not Significant	It will only have a small impact
2	Minor	Will cause minor impacts
3	Medium	Will cause impacts that may be considered
4	Major	Will cause real impact
5	cccc	Will cause high-impact system and/or operation failures

Source: Prunckun, 2015

Thus, based on the risk rating assessment according to Prunckun in Table 5, the risk rating of the threat of repatriation of ex-ISIS children to Indonesia falls into the “C3” or “High” category; in other words, the threat may occur in the future, with considerable consequences or impacts. Therefore, based on the Risk Evaluation Scale as in Table 6, the recommended action for handling is to create a response plan to the action or create a contingency plan and response plan that is tested annually (Prunckun, 2015).

In facing the threat of repatriation of ex-ISIS FTF children, the following PPRR plan was developed: prevention is carried out before the children are repatriated to Indonesia by conducting screening and verification, and making the Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Berbasis Kekerasan yang Mengarah pada Terorisme (RAN PE) or National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism (NAP PE) as a reference for concrete prevention steps. In the preparation stage, the Decree of the Minister of Menkopolhukam No. 90 of 2023 on the Task Force for Handling Indonesian Citizens Abroad Associated with FTF is the basis for repatriation preparation, on the other hand, coordination with the Syrian Government, Kurdish SDF authorities, and the UN to assist the repatriation process, including in identifying the number and whereabouts of children to be repatriated.

Table 5. Risk Rating Assessment Matrix

Trend	Consequences				
	1 Not Significant	2 Minor	3 Medium	4 Major	5 Catastrophic
A Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
B Probably	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
C Possible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
D Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
E Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High	High

Source: Prunckun, 2015

Table 6. Risk Evaluation Scale

Risk Value	Handling Action
Low	Overcome by using SOP that are already in place
Medium	Outline the actions to be taken.
High	Make a response plan for the action.
Extreme	Emergency measures are taken

Source: Prunckun, 2015

The synergy and experience of Densus 88/AT, BNPT, BIN, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of PPPA in responding to children exposed to radicalism is essential in implementing appropriate deradicalization mechanisms through a practical and detailed approach. In the recovery phase, it is essential to assist in validating the children's thoughts, as well as ensure the fulfillment of their rights as citizens. Although these elements are mentioned sequentially, PPRR can be implemented simultaneously, such as response and recovery, which can be started simultaneously because they are closely interrelated.

4.2. Intelligence Strategy in Anticipating the Threat of Repatriation of ISIS Ex-FTF Children to Indonesia

In conducting early detection and early warning of the threat, the following data from the informants are processed with the strategy theory, according to Arthur F. Lykke, who formulated that strategy consists of three elements: means, ways, and ends (Lykke, 1989).

1) Means

The repatriation process requires the involvement of many parties. In repatriations that have been carried out before, BNPT collaborates with BIN, Densus 88/AT, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of PPPA. The Ministry of Social Affairs, through BRSAMPK (Balai Rehabilitasi Sosial Anak yang Membutuhkan Perlakuan Khusus) Handayani in East Jakarta, became a place for deradicalization intervention. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also involved in the process of returning them to Indonesia.

Regarding regulations, there is a Decree of the Menkopolhukam No. 90 of 2023 on the Task Force for Handling Indonesian Citizens Abroad Associated with FTF, which is being prepared for Indonesia to repatriate former FTF, especially when deportation can no longer be refused, considering that many humanitarian agencies are currently urging the return of children from Syrian refugee camps. Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 2018 tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme is also essential to note in dealing with the threat of terrorism, where the relevant authorities can make arrests before terrorist acts occur.

Meanwhile, Undang-Undang Intelijen No. 17 Tahun 2011 is a legal protection for intelligence to conduct early detection and early warning of all forms of threats, including threats in the repatriation of ex-ISIS FTF children who are not directly involved, where BIN is authorized to extract information, wiretapping, including checking the flow of funds against threats to national

interests and security, including the threat of terrorism, in the repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs.

In addition, the government, through BNPT, has developed a solid concept through the National Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism. Still, the concrete steps have not been fully implemented.

2) Ways

In the repatriation process, the function and role of intelligence are essential in providing accurate information at the stage of assessment and identification of ex-ISIS FTF children who will be repatriated. BNPT itself has assessment tools to measure the level of radicalism of FTFs, both children and adults; then the treatment is carried out in collaboration with BRSAMPK Handayani for deradicalization. Before the children of former ISIS FTFs are repatriated to Indonesia, BNPT, together with Iraqi intelligence, conducts screening. After arriving in Indonesia, screening is again carried out by BNPT, then temporarily placed at BNPT to be given a psychological program.

While the intelligence approach needs to be carried out in analyzing counter-terrorism, so as to produce mitigation measures with the application of appropriate mechanisms, however, psychological diagnostics by psychological therapists are also essential to see their mental conditions in depth, and exposure to national values and pluralism must be accompanied by concrete actions that strengthen this understanding.

In line with this, intelligence must be involved in the verification team of the repatriation process of former ISIS FTF children by utilizing their intelligence network to produce intelligence information to ensure there are no problems and turmoil from the initial process to arriving in Indonesia. In facing the threat of terrorism, intelligence is expected to be more professional and have a tangible impact on policy and society.

A more detailed and practical approach is needed to implement deradicalization, which is indeed very complex and challenging. For example, Zora A Sukabdi, a Forensic Psychologist, has developed a tool called MIKRA (Motivation, Ideology, Capability, Risk Assessment), which can be applied to targets as young as 6 years old and has been used routinely in collaboration with BNPT and Densus 88/AT to identify the level of radicalism in newly arrested people, including FTFs.

3) Ends

The higher the level of radicalization of ex-ISIS children, the greater the threat there will be. Therefore, it is necessary to de-radicalize to eliminate the threat in the process of repatriating ex-ISIS children to Indonesia. Government programs that they undergo after returning from Syria to ensure they are entirely free from radicalism.

Deradicalization of ex-ISIS children is very important because if it fails, it can become a threat in the future. In a long process, slowly but surely, these children will color the future of the nation, if they fail to make deradicalization efforts. On the other hand, the repatriation process for ex-ISIS FTF children must be done correctly; there are conditioning efforts so that there is no threat, and their citizenship rights need to be considered.

In terms of child psychology, it is hoped that there will be a special approach or psychological approach for the repatriated children of former ISIS FTFs, such as assistance to validate the minds of these children, so that the threat of repatriation does not occur in the future.

5. Conclusion

The threat of ex-ISIS FTF children repatriation to Indonesia is categorized as "Medium", because these children have almost no desire and expectation to pose a threat; however, they have some knowledge of ISIS ideology and resources or skills and experience to pose a threat of terrorism, such as learning ISIS *aqidah* and ideology. Some of them are even trained militarily. Meanwhile, Indonesia's level of vulnerability to repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs is also categorized as "Medium", because Indonesia has enough attractiveness for ISIS, but minimal in terms of ease of attack and potential impact. Furthermore, in responding to these threats and vulnerabilities, the PPRR plan is developed, prevention through screening

and verification and making RAN PE as a reference, preparation through coordination with various parties to assist the repatriation process, handling (response) through synergy in the application of appropriate deradicalization mechanisms, and recovery to ensure the fulfillment of their rights as citizens.

Meanwhile, the intelligence strategy to anticipate the threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs is to focus on early detection and early warning to achieve the ends of minimizing or eliminating the threat of repatriation of children of former ISIS FTFs to Indonesia. The ends can be achieved by using tools or methods (means), both regulations and resource support from various institutions, including BNPT, BIN and Densus 88/AT. Then equipped with the right ways, such as the presentation of accurate intelligence information at the assessment and identification stages, the use of assessment tools and psychological diagnostics in the deradicalization process for children of former ISIS FTFs.

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