

# A Brief Analysis of Suicide Bombings That Have Involved Children

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Keywords: Terrorism, Suicide Bombers, Children, Family Bomb.

Abstract: The issue of terrorism is spreading again. This time it happened in Surabaya City. Precisely on Sunday at 07.30 am in the morning (13/05/2018). These suicide bombers have exploded in three different churches. First, first bomb attack was at the Santa Maria Tak Bercela Church, the second attack was at the Central Pentecostal Church and the third attack was at the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI). These attacks had caused casualties. The perpetrators consist of one family. Which the results of investigation said there were six perpetrators. But this time, the public concern is that suicide bombings have involved children. Both boys and girls. How is the chronology of suicide bombing action? What is the general information about the daily lives of children who have been involved in this terrorist attack? What is the initial analysis of suicide bombings that have involved children? This study describes several findings. Firstly, the chronology of suicide bombing action is very well planned. Secondly, general information about the daily activities of children involved in acts of terror seems normal. Thirdly, the answer why should children be included be involved in suicide bombing by their parents is still mystery. This study reinforces the concept of Paul Gill (2007) about the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to analyzing suicide bombings.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Incidents of suicide bombings have resumed in Indonesia. This time it has happened at Surabaya, East Java (13/5/2018). Based on the news, the number of victims who have died reached 18 people. Including the suicide bombers. The suicide bombers exploded in three different places. First, suicide bombing happened at the Santa Maria Tak Bercela Church has caused seven deaths. Secondly, at the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI), which has caused death of three people. Three people died and everything from the offenders, 1 adult female and 2 daughters. Third, in the Pentecostal Church and eight people died, including one perpetrator. Head of Public Relations of East Java Police Commissioner Frans Barung Mangera explained "...the number of people who have died in the terrorist attacks of churches has become eighteen people including the victims in Bhayangkara Hospital. This is the data I received when was updated at 15:45..." (A. Ika, 2018).

Analysis from the police, has called this suicide bombing a "family bomb". This is because it involves the family leader (father), the mother and her children. All of them live in one house at Wisma

Indah Permai. The mass media has written the names of family leaders with different titles, such as Dita Oepriyanto, Dita Supriyanto, Dita Oprianto, and Dita Opriarto.

This terrible event had caused serious concerns about the involvement of children in acts of terror. This case is the first suicide bombing by children, especially successful actions. Similarly, for the case of suicide bombing acts committed by girls. This is also a new case. According to the statement "suicide bombing looks like suicide, but in important aspects it is incomparable with suicide" (Grimland, 2006). Base on that background, there are three main aim of this study. First, explore the brief chronology of suicide bombing action. Second, describe the general information about children's daily life. Thirdly, explain initial analyzes of the phenomenon in which children are involved in suicide bombing.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using qualitative method. Methods data for this research was collected through online documents. The news collected from trusted or official online mass media in May 2018. The

information in online news has been filtered and compared to get the most accurate and factual news. Then the data was described qualitatively.

### **3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION: THE CHRONOLOGY OF SUICIDE BOMBING**

On May 13, 2018, a shocking event took place. Three bombs exploded in three churches with different addresses at Surabaya, East Java. Head of Public Relations Police Commissioner of East Java Police Frans Barung explained "three explosions took place respectively at the Pentecostal Church of Athens Street, Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) on Diponegoro Street, and Santa Maria Church," (Hafil, 2018). The explosion happened almost simultaneously.

The first bomb was blown up in the Church of the Santa Maria Tak Bercelain Ngagel Madya Street Number 1, Baratajaya Village, and Gubeng District. The bomb exploded in the morning at 06.30am - 7.00am. Two perpetrators is involved and they used a motorcycle. They also carried a backpack (R. Fadillah, 2018). The perpetrators have been identified as two teenage boys, Yusuf Padil (18) Years and Firman Halim (16 years) (S. Malau, 2018).

The second bomb exploded at Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) in Diponegoro Street, Surabaya. Bombs have exploded in the morning at 07.15 am (R. Fadillah, 2018). There were three people involved in this suicide bombing. An adult woman (Puji Kuswati) with two 12-year-old daughters (Fadila Sari) and 9 years (Pemela Rizkita) (S. Malau, 2018). They showed mother-child relationship. Deputy Chief of Surabaya Police (Wakapolrestabes Surabaya), Adjunct Senior Commissioner Benny Pramono explained that "mother and her two children who attempted to enter the worship service were driven by a security at the entrance of Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) in Diponegoro Street, Surabaya, before that they (three perpetrators) blew themselves up in the church yard," (bbc.com, 2018). Anthony (security) witnessed that they (mother and two children) "...blew herself in front of the yard ... and I saw two children and their mother came with two bags ... Suddenly the mother hugged the officer ... Suddenly (bomb) it explodes" (bbc.com, 2018).

The third bomb exploded at 7:53 am at Central Pentecostal Church on Arjuno Street, Surabaya (R.

Fadillah, 2018). The explosion occurred in the parking lot. The adult perpetrator named Dita Oepriyanto. He used a vanza car (S. Malau, 2018). Investigation confirmed that Dita's suicide bombing has been linked to two previous explosions. The first explosion was carried out by two of his boys. The second blast has been done by his wife and involves his two daughters. Dita is the father of the children / husband of suicide bombers in different places in Surabaya.

### **4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION: THE ULTIMATE MYSTERY, WHY INVOLVED CHILDREN?**

(Gill, 2007) in his article entitled *A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing* explain that "understanding suicide bombing entails studying the phenomenon on three different dimensions: the suicide bomber, the terrorist organization, and the community from which suicide bombings emerge" (Gill, 2007). The case of suicide bombing in Surabaya is a case that has a special characteristics. First, this is a family bombing case. One family committed suicide bombings together at different places. Second, families who involved in suicide bombings are sufficiently economic, but involved all of their children. Third, the children look normal and socialized.

The general view that children who are exposed to extremism will not want to socialize is a view that is not entirely true. The view has been corrected in this case. Furthermore, this phenomenon shows that children who have nationalistic values are not immune to the influence of radical ideology.

Schooling children have been involved in suicide bombings at Surabaya. They lived with their parent named Dita Oepriyanto at Wisma Indah Permai Block K No. 22, Wonorejo, Rungkut Surabaya. Dita's family was proven had involved in a suicide bombing, included one of the youngest children who did not attend school.

The first child, Yusuf Padil, was very active in the flag ceremony. Indeed, he also served as the flag-raisers team in the flag ceremonies. He always follows lesson on nationalism in school. Especially on the subject of Pancasila Education and Citizenship. The school teacher named Suwardi said "...he always participated in the flag ceremony, furthermore during his 10th grade he joined Paskibra, and including the lessons of Pancasila Education and Citizenship (PPKN) he diligently

entered the classroom" (Khairunnisa, 2018). The second child, Firman Halim, almost has the same habit as his brother, such being active in flag ceremonial activities, and active in the organization. He is the leader of the student organization. Suwardisaid "...he's the head of student organization (OSIS) in his junior high school, had been the leader of the flag ceremony on education day (2nd May 2018) ..." (Khairunnisa, 2018).

Has this child been exposed to extremist ideology in a short time? Is it during bomb blast preparation? Currently, there is no accurate information about this. The fact is Dita Oepriyanto (the perpetrator) feels it is very necessary to involve his children as bombers, and it worked. This happened because his children not to refuse. This indication can be seen from the status of his child found on Facebook. His first child has written "So much ... will not leave it" (Khairunnisa, 2018). The existence of this message illustrates that these children have experienced a phase of dilemma. But eventually stuck in the bomb explosion scenario. In addition, one thing that needs further analysis is the fact that the bomb blast plan has been successful because it was a family secret.

Parents involving their children in suicide bombing have become a common pattern these days? In fact, not all terrorists assume that children need to be involved in acts of terror. For example Umar Patek considers that the involvement of children is unacceptable. This is why he never commits acts of terror involving children. Umar Patek said "If it is about that, from the beginning I do not want (involve small children)" (N. Purnamasari, 2018). Umar Patek considers it to be against his ideology. Here is Umar Patek's statement "... unacceptable in Islamic teachings in any *"madzhab"* (school), because it involves little children and women (tribunnews.com, 2018).

Sidney Jones has also analysed that a family bomb case is a stand-alone case. Mainly because it involves children, because he thinks very rare cases where extremists involve their children as suicide bomber. He also added that acts of terror could be perpetrated by people who never went to Syria. Sidney Jones has said "extremists do not want to sacrifice their children, it's a single incident, I hope it will not happen again where the children themselves are given the role of suicide bombers ... The more dangerous are the local people who never been to Syria but still have an illusion, that Daulah Islamiah is the most important thing. They still have the spirit ... Well now, almost nobody [Indonesian citizens] wants to immigrate to Syria. They will no longer go

abroad, just do their actions here [Indonesia]]" (Mamduh, 2018).

This analysis is more interesting because there are also cases where people do not want to be terrorists because they love their children. Or release the terrorist ideology, this is because their actions will cause those losing their children future. The case happened to Khairul Ghazali was the last case Khairul Ghazali repented in jail for being aware that his wife and children were displaced. In addition they also experience negative stigma in society. Did Dita Oepriyanto's decision involving his main family in the case of "family bomb" been motivated by this reason? This question is less relevant because Dita is not poor. So his children will not be displaced. Except, if he does not want his children treated negatively in society as a child terrorist. However, there is no definite answer to this latest analysis. In essence, the single most consistent analysis is ideological motivation, but involving children in suicide bombings over ideological motivations still requires further analysis.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The case of terrorism at Surabaya is a new case that needs to be learned. Especially for the case of suicide bombing in Indonesia. There are three things that have been described in this study. Firstly, the chronology of suicide bombing action is very well planned. The perpetrator divides the three targets and their roles. Then each blow up a predetermined target. Secondly, general information about the daily activities of children involved in acts of terror seems normal. It does not show extremist views or behavior. Thirdly, based on the initial analysis the question why should children be included be involved in suicide bombing by their parents is still not answerable.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The publication of this paper was funded by the Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) in accordance with the Talenta Research Contract Universitas Sumatera Utara (2018).

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