

The First Bali Bombing 2002: ‘Why did they do it to our Bali?’

Zifirdaus Adnan and Zulfi Mubarak

ABSTRACT: This paper constitutes some original research into a tragedy for many Westerners, with the instant deaths of nearly 90 Australians; as yet a largely neglected and so misunderstood example of a more localized jihad; and the musings of two Indonesian scholars long domiciled outside their native land who were able to conduct the most scholarly research into the event leading up to the bombing in Bali, Indonesian 2002. It presents a clarification of events leading to this tragedy and it seeks to explain to outside readers a brutal atrocity which was both shocking and bewildering.

Introduction

For many Australians (and Indonesians, too) the first series of huge bomb explosions in Bali in October 2002, was a barbaric and inhumane terror attack, because it was one directed at innocent individuals. One common question was: ‘Why did they do it to our Bali?’, thus showing the world’s total disbelief and the almost universal inability to understand the dimensions of the event, or why it should have occurred. However, for the individuals who perpetrated the crime, it had, and still has, a completely different meaning. For them, pleasing Allah (the respectful name of God for Islam) is more important than life itself. Their credo is—either to live honorably (in the eyes of Allah), or to die as a martyr (to please Allah). For them to go to war meant/means to conquer the enemy of Allah, or to die as a martyr. The notorious Bombing in Bali was believed by them to be a form of war against the enemy of the Diety, i.e. appropriate for such soldiers to conquer the enemy or force them change their beliefs. After failing to do so, they had accepted all the consequences of their acts, including possible death, which they believe to would be as a ‘martyrs’. This is/was because for them, such a death means that they have submitted their lives totally to fighting for Allah, and that they believe that the reward for fighting for Him is better than any worldly reward offered by mere mortals. [This reward, they said, would also include being served by seventy-two virgin girls in heaven.]

Such a belief system defies secular logic, which puts more emphasis on the worldly life than on the life hereafter. It is also different from the logic that puts a greater emphasis on humanity than on God. For such Islamists, humanity is secondary to the service of God, so that the search

for the pleasure of God is through fighting rather than being happy as human beings. Therefore, killing others whom they believe to reject God's teaching, and whom they call 'infidels', is not a crime, when they believe that the infidels have attacked and killed many Muslims, and now occupy their land. Killing fellow believers (Muslims) is always a crime, and so they had then apologized to the families of those who died in Bali.¹ According to Amrozi, they also see the deaths of other Muslims in Bali as martyrdom.

This present reflective paper is an attempt to remove the need for any confusion as to the motives for the bombing by looking closely at the perpetrators, at their interpretations of the scriptures, the holy Al Quran and Sunnah (i.e. the sayings, actions, and approvals of actions given by Prophet Muhammad), in short, at the key factors which led them to such interpretations, and also looking at the larger motivation for their actions—their education and life experiences. The focus will be on the education and on the social environments from which they gained their religious beliefs and on their core life experiences. Before doing that, let us look briefly at the event itself.

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Figure 1 Map of Bali <https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=map+of+bali>

The First Bali Bombing

On 12 October 2002, three bombs were detonated in Bali, a vest bomb and a car bomb exploded near Paddy's Pub and the Sari Club at Kuta Beach, on the southern coast of Bali, and another one at the USA

¹ Interview with Ali Ghufon alias Mukhlas, at Nusakambangan Prison, 2008. See CNN (2008) 'Inside the Mind of a Terrorist'.

Consul General's Office, several kilometers away from those places. In the history of Indonesia, this was the biggest bomb attack up to that time. Over two hundred people were killed, eighty-eight of them were Australians, the rest coming from various countries including Indonesia (Number 'eighty eight' was later used to refer to the Indonesian Anti Terror Squad-'Densus 88'). Up to the present, some eleven years later, many of the victims and their relatives are still suffering from the impact, in one way or another.

Before addressing the persisting question, let us give some basic background information about the main perpetrators. Figure 2 an aerial image of the impact of the bombing at the Sari Club and Paddy's Club.



Figure 2 An aerial image of the impact of the bombing at the Sari Club and Paddy's Club.

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=bali+bombing+2002+photos&rlz=1C5CHFA_enAU542AU553&oq=Bali+Bombing+2002&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0l5.11670j0j4&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=91&ie=UTF-8. Accessed 21 May 2014.

The well known perpetrators were: Ali Ghufron alias Mukhlas, (henceforth: Mukhlas, the overall leader), Abdul Aziz alias Imam Samudra (the field commander), and Amrozi (to provide the explosive materials), and to be dubbed as 'the smiling assassin', and Ali Imron (one of bomb makers, and driver of the car which carried the bomb to the Sari Club and Paddy's Pub. These are the three main perpetrators who were captured during the period of three months after the event. Mukhlas, Imam Samudra and Amrozi were to be executed by an Indonesian firing squad at 00.15 local time on Sunday, 9 November 2008, as they had been found guilty and then were formally sentenced to death.



Figure 3 Ali Ghufron alias Mukhlas

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2385323.stm>; accessed 21/5/14



Figure 4 Imam Samudra executed in 2008.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2385323.stm>; accessed 21/5/14

Ali Imron, a younger brother of Amrozi was, however, to be spared and given a life sentence because he had cooperated with the authorities and revealed the full details of the plot and of the perpetrators.

As for Mukhlas, Imam Samudra and Amrozi, they believed there was no doubt at all that they had done an excellent act, so that, if they were killed, they would be martyrs.



Figure 5 Amrozi executed in 2008

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2385323.stm>; accessed 21/5/14

But why did Ali Imrom ‘betray’ his revered brother Mukhlas, who had sent him abroad to study?

Several other terrorists were actually involved in the preparation, but some escaped, these including Dr. Azahari, Dul Matin and Umar Patek, and two suicide bombers, Arnasan and Jimmi. Dr. Azahari, a bomb making expert, was a Malaysian national who escaped to Indonesia to avoid arrest in Malaysia and was later, in 2012 to be killed in Malang in a shootout with the Indonesian anti terror squad named ‘Densus 88’. Dul Matin was a jihadist who escaped to the Southern Philippines but was shot dead in a police raid in Pamulang, south of Jakarta in March 2010, after he had tried to rejuvenate and train Indonesian terrorist groups in the country. Umar Patek escaped overseas and was arrested in Pakistan in 2012, and is now imprisoned in Jakarta. In short, most of the perpetrators have been put to death, or imprisoned.

Meetings with Bombers

The authors of this article are grateful to have been granted a recent interview with Ali Imron and his colleagues at his ‘jail’ at the Jakarta Police Headquarters, and others in the prisons where the other three perpetrators were detained awaiting for their execution, i. e. at Krobokan Gaol in Bali and at Nusakambangan prison. The information now given is unique, but quite reliable, because it came directly from the mouths of the perpetrators in an atmosphere relatively free from external pressures such as from the authorities or the media, and it can offer some answers to the lingering question: ‘Why did they do it?’ and what were their

reasons? Were these 'justifications' warranted?' The following information is complemented and cross-checked from information from other sources including other relevant prisoners and those who have been released.

Trying to understand the actions of the terrorists runs the risk of being accused of agreeing with them or justifying their action. However, we will try to be as objective as we can to find the real answer to our questions. Before trying to answer these questions, let us look closely at these main bombers. We will focus on their respective styles of education and on their formative religious experiences.

A Closer Look at the Perpetrators

The chief perpetrators were Mukhlas alias Ali Ghufron, Imam Samudera, Amrozi and Ali Imron. Mukhlas, Amrozi and Ali Imron are brothers, Mukhlas being the eldest and Ali Imron being the youngest amongst them. All these actors (apart from Amrozi) had been trained in an Afghanistan Mujahidin Military Academy at Pibbi, Sadda, a federally administered tribal areas of Pakistan (Figure 6), near the border with Afghanistan, and then, later, at different military camps within Afghanistan.



Figure 6 Map of Federally administered tribal areas (FATA) between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/03/GAO-USAID_Map_of_Pakistan_and_Afghanistan.PNG

And initially they had joined the fight against the communist government backed up by Russia during its occupation of Afghanistan. So, at that time they had sided with the USA and its allies in fighting the Russians, in revenge for the defeat of the USA and its ally, the South Vietnamese regime.

They might well have been trained by the USA military or intelligent officers too. But, after the defeat of the Russians, the relationship between the mujahidin or jihadists and the Americans had turned sour, for several reasons including the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia after the first U.S.A. attacks on Iraq following Iraqi's invasion to Kuwait, and the continued support by the U.S.A for Israeli's occupation of the Palestinian lands. The frequent and indiscriminate military attacks on their own land, which caused much misery amongst Palestinian Muslims had made many jihadists furious, so that they began to retaliate. The first major retaliation was to be the bomb attack on the U.S.A Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. This was followed by more attacks, the biggest of which to date was the September 11th 2001 attack on the Twin Towers Trade Centre in New York.

The leading perpetrators had been sent to Afghanistan, along with some five hundred other young Muslims from different parts of Indonesia, in order to learn military skills and to fight the Russian troops, and, later on, to achieve their similar religious purposes at home. They were sent there by two prominent figures of the Daarul Islam (the House of Islam) movement, one which had been fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia, but it was crushed by the Indonesian military after it declared the establishment of 'Negara Islam Indonesia' (The Islamic State of Indonesia), shortened as NII in 1948.

The NII collapsed after all of its chief leaders were arrested in 1960, and its head, Karto Suwiryo, was sentenced to death, but many of the other leaders were then granted amnesty and had managed to build up their businesses, thanks to the support given by some officials in the Soeharto regime such as Ali Murtopo, an army general and intelligent officer turned Minister for Information. In the early seventies, those top NII leaders had secretly revived their movement. Two figures, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Baa'syir, both of Yemeni decent, who were strict followers of the ideology of this organization, had joined the 'new' movement. But, due to their anti-Indonesian state attitude and for their criticisms of the Soeharto regime, they were sentenced to imprisonment on charges of subversion. After their release in 1985, they had fled to Malaysia fearing a further imprisonment by the Soeharto New Order regime (one running from 1966-1998). From Malaysia, they had recruited young Muslims from Southeast Asian countries, mainly from Indonesia. Their secret purpose was to return to Indonesia to achieve their longstanding aspiration, to fight the Indonesian government and to

re-establish an Islamic state in Indonesia (and even one in South East Asia).

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Mukhlas and Ali Imron

Mukhlas was initially educated in a *pesantren* (rural Islamic boarding school) in Lamongan, but later he was sent to do his high school stage of education at Pesantren Ngruki, where Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Baasyir used to teach.² After finishing his schooling at Al Mukmin pesantren, Mukhlas had also taught there. Then, several years later, he was granted a scholarship to study in Pakistan, but he had ended up studying at the Afghanistan Mujahidin Military Academy where he was taught military skills and jihadist ideology. He had an opportunity to meet Osama Bin Laden and joined him in the Afghan war against the Russians. He became a staunch fan and supporter of Osama and his Al-Qaida organization. He described his loyalty to him as follows:

Osama bin Laden is my best friend. I have known him since 1986. We fought together in the caves of Afghanistan. The Bali operation (bombing) had nothing to do with JI. It has to do with global jihad because Afghanistan was under attack at that time, and so is Iraq. Muslims were under attack. And that is why we have no option but to retaliate against these people aligned to the United States.³

In this interview he had also admitted that he was an indirect member of Al Qaida, instead of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), which is known as the underground terrorist organization in Southeast Asia, although he was also one of the core figures of the JI organization.

After the Afghanistan war against the Russians was over, the Russians had been forced to withdraw in 1986, and Mukhlas went to Malaysia. Mukhlas ended up being the head of a rural Islamic boarding school, one known as Pesantren Luqmanul Hakim in Johor Bahari, a Southern city of Malaysia, across the boarder from Singapore. Reportedly, this *pesantren* was established by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who had also established the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) in 1993. Mukhlas was the overall leader of the group which planned, prepared and executed the Bali bombing.

Ali Imron and Amrozi

Ali Imron was a well-behaved younger brother of Mukhlas, and he had developed a strong feeling for jihad when he was at the high school level of education, known as *pesantren*, in Lamongan, East Java, after he

² Sungkar passed away in 2008 and Ba'asyir is currently imprisoned in Nusakambangan jail, an island north of Java island, where Mukhlas, Imam Samudra and Amrozi were kept before they were executed.

³ 'Inside the Mind of a Terrorist' (CNN, 2008).

was exposed to video scenes of recent unjust treatment of Muslims in some parts of the world including in Palestine and Bosnia. After completing his *pesantren* education, he was very happy to be offered by his oldest brother Mukhlas a chance to go and study overseas. So, he travelled to Mukhlas' *pesantren* (in Johor Baharu). Shortly after his arrival there, Mukhlas had managed to find him an opportunity to study in Pakistan. However, when he arrived in Pakistan, he was also taken on to Afghanistan to study at a military academy there.

At this academy he had been exposed not only to military skills, but also to a radical interpretation of Islam with strong emphasis on *Jihad* as meaning one's fighting in war (*qital*). He was rather unhappy in the end, because he could not join the fighting in Afghanistan, since the war was already ended and so he had to come back to Malaysia, and then was told to return to his home town, Lamongan, to help his family *pesantren* (Pesantren Al Islam), and to wait for further orders from his sponsor. He was later to be involved in preparing and carrying out several bombings including attacks on churches and on the residence of the Ambassador for the Phillipines.⁴ Imron was soon involved in setting up the detonation devices on these bombs, and he had placed a bomb at the U.S.A Consulate, and drove the car containing the bombs and the suicide bombers to Paddy's Pub and Sari's Club, and then left the others there to do the detonation.

Amrozi, however, was known for being 'naughty', as he liked to speed on his motorbike around his village in Tenggulun, Lamongan, East Java. He was to be involved in dismantling a shrine on a grave where some of his villagers would pray and give offerings, which, in his view, was against the true Islamic faith. He did not finish his high school course, and so could not get a job in his village. He had tried his luck in Malaysia, working as a painter. But, he could not stay very long, and so he returned to his hometown, Lamongan and got married twice in quick succession, but the second marriage also ended in divorce.

He went to Malaysia again in 1996, but this time he wanted to join his brother Mukhlas at the Luqmanul Hakim *pesantren* in Johor Baharu, but the big brother had refused him initially because of his poor behaviour. Nevertheless, for some reason, he had managed to convince his big brother Mukhlas to let him stay as a general assistant at his *pesantren*, promising that he would learn the Islam religion diligently and change his attitude and behaviour. Eventually his brother accepted him and he proved the truth of his words. So, gradually, he developed his religious knowledge and attitude from the *pesantren* and eventually pledged full loyalty to Mukhlas. He joined the Bali Bombing which was led by

⁴ Imron, Ali (2008) *Ali Imron Sang Pengebom*. Jakarta: Penerbit Republika, 61-68.

Mukhlas, although the responsible field commander was to be Imam Samudra.

Imam Samudra

Imam Samudra was a bright student at his home in Serang, Banten (a recently established province on the Western-most part of Java island), known for being an Islamically strong region. He was educated first in a general public school, then as well, at religious schools called Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Junior High School) and, later, at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN, i.e. equivalent to a Senior High School). These schools teach both general and religious (Islamic) subjects and both are public schools. One difference is that MAN is controlled and managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (DEPAG), while the general public schools are sponsored and managed by the Ministry of Education (MENDIKNAS). The significant difference between these schools and their general high schools is that the madrasah schools offered more Islamic-based subjects than the general high schools. Samudra showed a great talent, topped the class and won scholarships. He was also a highly religious young man. When he had finished his MAN, he had won a scholarship to study religion in Pakistan, but then he ended up studying at the Afghanistani Military Academy where Ali Imron had studied. So, he too was exposed to key military skills and to strong jihadist ideology. Beside being bright, he was also known for being a firm, well-spoken, somewhat temperamental and flamboyant individual. So, he was assigned to be the commander of the Bali Bombing operation by Mukhlas.⁵

Why Did They Perform This Ideology-driven Bombing?

To understand this question, we need to examine the ideology to which all the perpetrators so wholeheartedly had committed themselves. The core ideology of all the perpetrators is *jihad*. The following section discusses what *jihad* is.

Quite literally, *jihad* means 'to do things seriously' because the actions are commanded by Allah. For example, to study seriously is a *jihad* because Allah commands men to study; and each to work hard to earn money to feed oneself and one's family is a *jihad* because it is commanded by Allah. But, this term has been interpreted in many other ways. In addition to the above meaning, another interpretation is 'to fight in war', or 'qital' in Arabic. In this case the meaning is to kill or be killed to defend Islam and all other Muslims and their land. For Muslims are obliged to wage *jihad* (war) against people who attack them or invade their land, or their country.

⁵ Interview with Mukhlas. See 'Inside the mind of a terrorist' (CNN, 2008).

Historically, murderous attacks against the prophet and his followers had occurred during his lifetime, both in Mecca and at Medina, in the country now known as Saudi Arabia. The leader could not defend himself and his followers against the much stronger attackers when the number of his followers in his hometown of Mecca was still small. So, when his attackers planned to kill him and his followers, they all escaped to Medina, another town about 338 kilometers north of Mecca. In Medina he was to be welcomed and so he developed his new community there. However, his attackers at Mecca were not happy, and so they decided to attack his community in Medina too. This time he had no choice but to fight to defend himself and his community. With around three hundred followers he confronted the seven hundred Meccan attackers at a town called Badar, outside Medina.

The prophet motivated his followers with the teaching of *jihad*, which was defined as a holy war against the Meccan infidels. Such a holy war was (and still is) believed to be splendidly rewarded his followers should they die in the battle, they would be martyrs, and they would go straight to heaven. In heaven they would live with utmost luxury and happiness granted by Allah for their *jihad* and sacrifice. With such motivation, they did not fear death; instead, they raged forward and killed very many of the attackers. Eventually, they beat the much stronger enemy. The attackers who were left withdrew and return to Mecca.

The lessons to be drawn from this war have given a strong confidence for Muslim jihadists throughout history, but not all Muslims have such a total commitment to practising *jihad*. This is due to different interpretations and levels of their belief in Islam, as developed by education through training (formal or informal) and from reading and one's life experiences. Muslims who go through strict and radical education, read books by radical writers, and so they experience radical living environments, and would often tend to be radical and produce radical interpretation of the scriptures, i.e. the holy book Al Quran and Sunnah (the prophet's sayings, practices, and acceptance of attitudes and behaviours of his companions known as *hadiths*).

In contrast, those who are educated and experience living in a flexible and tolerant setting and are mainly exposed to readings by moderate writers, would tend to interpret the scriptures in a moderate and flexible manner. For example, one hadith says that when the prophet returned from the Badr war, he said "We have just returned from a small *jihad*. The biggest *jihad* is jihad against our temptation."

Extremes

Those who are trained in and experience a calm religious environment, have used this *hadith* to justify a moderate interpretation of the scriptures, and so they deem those who insist on using violence as misguided. For example, most Indonesian main stream clerics use this *hadith* to publically denounce the use of violence by Indonesian terrorists, this including that shown in the Bali bombing. Contrastingly, Abu Bakar Baasyir and Abdullah Sungkar would say that this *hadith* is weak, and, instead, refer to selected articles in the Quran to put *jihad* as the highest level of service to Allah (God), higher than even the five times prayers a day.

For example, one of my own interviewees, a former military commander of Jamaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, for example, said that that *hadith* is considered false. In short, those who are radically educated and also experience a moderate environment would not be inclined to make a radical interpretation and so need to carry out *jihad* in the sense of going to war, or using violence. On the other hand, those who have been trained and live in a radical environment would emphasize strongly the need to conduct *jihad* in its sense of going to war and the use of violence. Those who strongly adhere to this ideology have been called by researchers on terrorism 'jihadists' (Jones).

As shown earlier, all the perpetrators of the first Bali Bombing were educated by supporters of jihadist ideology. Mukhlas was taught by extreme jihadists, including Osama bin Ladin, at a jihadist military academy in the tribal area at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan (See Figure 6). Imam Samudra and Ali Imron were taught there too, but there is no evidence suggesting Imam Samudra was taught by Osama bin Ladin, but he strongly supported his struggle and the struggle of his colleagues in Al Qaeda including the late Abdullah Azzam and Aiman Al Zawahiri to defend Islam and the oppressed Muslims. Amrozi was taught by his elder brother Mukhlas. Nevertheless, *jihad* is 'the word' that the three jihadist pronounced repeatedly whenever they appeared in public.

The following section discusses the views of these perpetrators regarding *jihad*.

Jihad According to the Perpetrators of the First Bali Bombing

According to Mukhlas, *jihad* has two ways of being defined, the lexical and the religious. Lexically, *jihad* in Arabic comes from the word *jahada* (root, past form of verb), *yujahidu* (verb, present form), *jihadan* (noun) means 'struggle' which is carried out full-heartedly, or seriously to employ all the energy and ability to achieve something that one wishes to achieve, or to avoid something they hate. In other words, it means to

employ all one's verbal and physical strength in a war. The word *jahd* or *juhd* means 'strength, power, or ability. It also means *masyaqqah* (hardship or difficulty). The word *jahd* is the same as the word *taqah* and *wus* (strength or ability). The words *jahada*, *yajhadu*, *jahdan* and *ijtahada* have the same meaning as *jadda* ('to be serious in doing something').

In the religious sense, *jihad* means fighting the unbelievers, who are not in a peace agreement with Muslims and who attack or invade their countries, so that they then unite in an attempt to defend the religion. He said,

Religiously, the word 'jihad', which is connected with 'fi sabilillah' (in line with Allah's command), means to fight the infidels, who have no agreement with Muslims and who attack Muslims, with an intention to uphold Allah's words (religion).⁶

So, in his view, *jihad* is none other than fighting the enemy of Muslims and Islam in all out war and, for him, this definition is very clear. He said,

Jihad is war; there is no other meaning. My teacher might know more than I do about jihad, but for me the command to do jihad is already very clear.⁷

For Mukhlas, to fight an enemy in war gave him a higher degree of enjoyment than having sexual relations with his wife. He was not afraid to be called a terrorist, but, rather, he was proud to be called so. He said,

Other people are afraid to be called 'terrorists' but I am proud (to be called) like that. When I was trialed in court, I already apologised to all those whose family members were killed (in the bomb explosions). I pray that they died as martyrs, and hopefully when they shoot me later I will also die as a martyr.⁸

So, for him, bombing Bali gave him satisfaction rather than regret, and an expectation of gaining a greater life enjoyment and happiness in heaven than any worldly life can offer. Therefore, he had no remorse except for the death of some Muslims.

⁶ Mukhlas (2005) *Interview*, Kerobokan Prison, Denpasar, Bali, 5 September 2005; Mukhlas (2005) *Interview*, Nusakambangan Prison, Cilacap, Central Java, 12 April 2006; 29 Oktober 2007.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

For Imam Samudra, *jihad* was defined in three ways: as a lexicon item, as a term, and in terms of Islamic law. Lexically, his definition of *jihad* is the same as that of Mukhlas, that is to be really serious in doing something. In Imam Samudra's view *jihad* that is conducted according to the command of Allah is the greatest deed in Islam. Although the five times a day prayers and pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca are two of the five pillars of Islam, for him *jihad* is a deed that has a higher status, and he even said that *jihad* is the highest deed in Islam, and no other deed is equal or higher than *jihad*. So, for him, there is no doubt that the top duty Muslims have to do is *jihad*. He said,

As a *shar'i* (religious) term, *jihad* is mean to fight against the infidels who wage war against Islam and Muslims. This definition is often known as *jihad fi sabilillah* (conducting jihad in accordance with the guidance of Allah. As I recall it, these three definitions have been accepted by many pious early generation Islamic scholars, especially the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Shafi'i, Hambali, Maliki, Hanafi). So, there is no dispute regarding definition of *jihad*.⁹

Target of Jihad

Against whom should *jihad* be waged? According to the three perpetrators, it should be waged against any unbelievers who attack Muslims and their supporters, and this is a fixed position so it should not be questioned any further.

The next crucial question is: 'Why did you kill civilians in Bali?' for Islam prohibits the killing of innocent people as one of the articles in the Holy Quran says,

On that account: We ordained for the children of Israel that if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of whole people...(*Al Quran*, Article 32, translated by Yusuf Ali: p. 257).¹⁰

So, no one should kill anyone without a justified reason, that is either the person has killed another person or the person has spread mischief on earth. But why did they kill innocent people who were enjoying their life in Bali on 12 October 2002? The perpetrators then adopted an interpretation that they were part of the group of nations, which had attacked and killed many Muslims in various parts of the world including

⁹ Imam Samudra, *Interview*, Kerobokan Prison, Denpasar Bali, 5 September 2005; Idem, *Interview*, Nusakambangan Prison, Cilacap, Jawa Tengah, 12 April 2006; 29 Oktober 2007.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

in Palestine. Imam Samudra said that the USA under the leadership of George Bush had killed many Muslims in parts of the world including in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹¹

For Imam Samudra *jihād* is the most significant form of worship, especially the *jihad* arising from the command of Allah (*jihād fī sabil Allāh*). Prayer and pilgrimage to Mecca are not the most important form of worship, only *jihad*. No form of worship is more significant than *jihad*. *Jihad* is fighting against the infidels who fight Muslims. This meaning is set and cannot be negotiated or modified any further.

Amrozi has a simpler view that Islam is following the commands of Allah, and *jihad* is one of them. So, *jihad* is just a matter of following what Allah has commanded. Nonetheless, Amrozi was basically following the ideology of his brother Mukhlas and his order to join the bombing group.



Figure 7 Map of Indonesia.

<http://www.ezilon.com/maps/asia/indonesian-physical-maps.html>

Ali Imron would have the same ideology and he was also following orders. But, why did he he abandon his comrades? He even revealed everything planned, prepared and conducted by all the perpetrators in considerable detail and he went on to the extent that he blamed them. On the other hand, Mukhlas saw Ali Imron as having lost his real ideology due to worldly pressures. In his last message to his children about Ali Imron, Mukhlas had advised them to pray for their uncle (Ali Imron), that Allah restore to him his commitment to Islam. According to Ali Imron, he was still committed to *jihad*, but he disagreed with the method of *jihad* in using bombs in Indonesia, as the *jihadists* have no secured

¹¹ Mukhlas, in his 'Inside the Mind of a Terrorist', Last Interview with CNN, 2008.

territory to escape to after doing such prescribed bombing. In other words, some conditions for waging *jihad* were not then applicable. He claimed he joined the Bali bombing due to his respect for the big brother Mukhlas. He also claimed that the *jihad* they did in Bali—the one which led to their arrest—must have been wrong, since Allah let them to fall into their enemy.

However, looking at Ali Imron's life story and his writing, it seems that the pressures he was under and the suffering he endured after the bombing were unbearable for him. After his brother Amrozi was captured, he fled from one place to another, in order to avoid arrest. He ran from his hometown in Lamongan in East Java, and took a wooden boat early in the morning to escape to Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur (East Kalimantan), and then to a small island on the Mahakam river. (See Figure 7 for the route taken by Ali Imron from East Java to Samarinda, East Kalimantan).

In East Kalimantan he moved from one place to another with assistance from his former students and friends, and, eventually ended up on a small island in the middle of the estuary of the Mahakam River. After he was informed as to how all of those who helped him escaped had been arrested, he felt deeply guilty. Thus he wrote,

After arriving in Balikpapan, I discovered that the friends who met (helped) me in Kalimantan had been arrested including Mr Muhajid, the owner of the fish pond (his hiding hut). It was this discovery that made me confused. I cried in my heart feeling guilty because those friends who had nothing to do with the Bali bombing had to suffer from its aftermath (Imron, 2007).¹²

When his other seniors in Jamaah Islamiyah, who were not involved (in the bombing), he also cried full of remorse. He wrote,

Likewise, ... knowing Ustadz (Teacher) Abu Rusdan was arrested at the time, I cried nearly the whole night... and similarly, when discovering that the other teachers or friends who were arrested after further investigation (by the police).¹³

His mental suffering increased significantly when he saw his two brothers were arrested hand-cuffed and imprisoned.¹⁴ Actually his mental pressure had begun to affect him when the anti terror squad found his hiding place and came with speed boats. At the time, he had been sick. When his companion, Mubarak, another bomber, told him in the hut that

¹² Ali Imron (2007), pp. 175-176

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

it was police, he hopelessly replied, ‘What can we do? Let them arrest us. It is alright because it is impossible to escape.’¹⁵ (They did not have a boat to flee the island). When the police had approached the hut, one of the policemen yelled, ‘Where is Ali Imron?’ Ali Imron answered, ‘I am Ali Imron, Sir’. Then one of the policemen asked angrily ‘Ali Imron, where have you been?’ Ali imron described how he was like at that time. He wrote, ‘At that time maybe the police was surprised when they saw my condition. I was thin, weak, and powerless.’¹⁶ So, mentally he had already been beaten. Figure 8 is the hut where Ali Imron and Mubarak had been hiding and arrested.



Figure 8 The hiding place of Ali Imron and his comrade Mubarak.

<http://m.liputan6.com/news/read/48146/jejak-ali-imron-di-pulau-tanjung-berukang>

After his arrest, it is highly likely that he was threatened with much intimidation and torture, if he had not confessed and revealed information. Such brutal treatment is a common story told by our informants. Accordingly, it seems that Imron could not endure his mental and physical suffering, this making him ‘sacrifice’ his commitment to jihad and falter in his loyalty to his brothers and comrades.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Analysis and Cultural Explanation of the Bombing

The Bali bombing was committed by a small group of individuals emerging from the vastly and complex, but deep-seated, nationalistic society of Indonesia. These individuals were strongly influenced by a jihadist ideology which they had learned through formal and informal training and experience. For Mukhlas, it was learned at high school and in Afghanistan, while, for Imam Samudra and Ali Imron, it was acquired in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, and for Amrozi this was experienced at Luqmanul Hakim Pesantren, in Malaysia. These leading perpetrators of the bombing had no doubts about truth of this ideology.

That campaign was one based on a particular interpretation of *jihad*, a sacred command for all in Islam. This interpretation prioritized *jihad as qital* (war) and so ranked it as the highest deed in Islam, higher than the commonly known and practiced pillars of Islam such as: the five times a day prayer, fasting and *hajj* (pilgrimage), which is contradictory to the definition understood by the large majority of Muslims around the world. For them *jihad* is a *fardhu ain* (an obligation on each and every individual Muslim) rather than *fardhu kifayah* (a collective obligation) as understood by main stream Muslims. This interpretation has its root in early Islam, but it was originally used by the prophet in self-defence, when the survival of his community in Madinah was under threat of annihilation when their people were attacked by a much larger enemy from Mecca.

With this interpretation fully expected, the perpetrators valued total commitment to the command of Allah, with their reward coming in the life hereafter more than in the worldly life itself. Therefore, even though many people considered them to be guilty of committing crimes against humanity, they showed no remorse. Even when forgiveness was offered to be traded for their own lives, they did not resile.

However, having such a strong commitment would not always make a jihadist commit such a crime since there are many who do not do it. A trigger is necessary. There were then two factors, which formed the 'trigger'. One was the attacks by the USA and its allies on Afghanistan and Iraq, causing so many deaths and the suffering of Muslims, especially women and children in those countries. This assault then caused anger, especially in Mukhlas and Imam Samudra, as is shown in many of these Muslims' public statements and writings.¹⁷ Another trigger was the instruction and the money coming from their idol, Usama bin Laden, which had directed them to retaliate against the people of USA and all of its allies.

¹⁷ An example is, Samudra, Imam (2004) *Aku Melawan Teroris*. Solo: Al-Jazeera.

Jihadist ideology is only one of various interpretations of *jihad*, and these can be classified into two categories. One is those who firmly interpret it as a doctrine of holy war and of enjoying sacred violence. Such an interpretation is based on selected verses in the Holy *Al Quran*, but they fail take into account the more universal message of the religion that is showing ‘mercy’ for the whole universe as stated in the purpose of sending Prophet Muhammad. ‘We did not send you, except as a mercy for the whole universe’.¹⁸ The other interpretation believes that *jihad* is a fight against oneself, i.e. fighting the desire or temptation (*nafs*) to do evil or to follow excessively certain emotion such as anger and hatred. This moderate interpretation is that adopted by the large majority of Indonesian Muslims.

These two different interpretations tend to produce different styles behavior in this world. Those who adopt the orthodox interpretation of *jihad*, like the jihadists, interpret *jihad* mainly as a ‘holy war’, one where much violence is used including shootings, and bombings, with the intention to kill or subjugate those whom they consider as enemies of Islam and of Muslims. They strongly believe that Islam justifies their violence, deeming that unbelievers or infidels will attack Muslims and invade their countries. Contrastively, those who believe in the interpretation that the greatest jihad is a jihad against one’s identity, and so are more likely resort to peaceful methods. They emphasise the messages that Islam is a peaceful religion and that it is a calming force for all humanity. Killing an innocent person is like killing the whole human race. They do not allow the use of such violence as to kill people, except in war zones or as a necessary punishment when a court has found that someone or a Muslim has killed another human being. Indonesia is not considered as a war zone, and so Muslims should not carry out violent actions in that country.

The three perpetrators of the Bali Bombing, however, had adopted the firm or radical interpretation of jihad, due to their own personal education and life experiences. They were educated, main stream schools when they were children, except Mukhlas. He was to be introduced into and educated for six years in a *pesantren*, one which tended to adopt a firm interpretation of *jihad*, namely Ngruki, at Solo, in Central Java. This early exposure was boosted by further education and by his experience in real fighting against Russian troops in Afghanistan, this last making him a supreme believer in such an extreme interpretation of *jihad*. On the other hand, Imam Samudra’s and Amrozi’s education in *jihad* was mostly gained during their young adult phase. Although Imam Samudra had enjoyed studying Islam at primary and high schools, he was not

¹⁸ ‘Ali, Abdullah Yusuf (Translator) (1989), *The Holy Qur’an, Text, Translation and Commentary*, Brentwood, Maryland, the U.S.A: Amana Corporation. Chapter 21 Al-Anbiyaa, Verse 107, p. 818.

much exposed to *jihād*. His exposure and education in *jihād* was experienced after he completed his high school, and when he had studied in Afghanistan. Amrozi had no early exposure to *jihād* at all, in fact he was known for being a wilful and naughty boy whom the Mukhlas despised. However, he had become a strong believer in firm *jihād*, after he was educated by his older brother Mukhlas.

Why Did They Bomb Bali?

The Bali Bombing one was considered a legitimate *jihād* action by its perpetrators, because they believed that many people from the USA and its allies had visited Bali regularly, and that these people were part of their respective governments, which they believed to have already attacked, killed, and injured many Muslims and invaded several of their countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Their strong belief was galvanized by a *fatwa* (religious decree) issued by Usama bin Laden in 1998, one announcing that it was legitimate to kill the citizens, civilian and military, of the USA and of its allies, because of its continued occupation of the Holy Al Aqsa mosque and the Arab peninsula. This *fatwa* says,

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.¹⁹

For them, Bali Bombing was a legitimate and sacred act—as a retaliation against the USA and its allies, as has been reflected on by David C. Rapoport (2003).²⁰ The perpetrators had also often cited another reason for the bombing in Bali, that is that many *maksiat* [evil acts] had been committed in Bali, such as alcohol and drug consumption and free sex. But this last justification was only a secondary reason. However, their action was condemned by many of those who adopt the moderate interpretation for a variety of reasons including the killing of innocent people, or Muslims, are strictly forbidden by Islam, and they rebuke them for having too strong an urge to commit *jihād* but to have had insufficient knowledge of Islam; ‘Bali is not a war zone or being occupied by the USA and its allies’. Nevertheless, the two camps were firmly in two

¹⁹ Bin Laden, Usama (1998) ‘Fatwa’. <http://www.representativepress.org/1998Fatwa.html>. Accessed 27 April 2014.

²⁰ Rapoport, D (2003) “Teror Suci: Contoh Terkini dari Islam”, in *Origins Terrorism: Tinjauan Psikologi, Ideologi, teologi, dan Sikap Mental*, ed. by Walter Reich (Jakarta: Grafindo, 2003), p. 132.

different worlds, one in a world where jihad is significant above all else, while the others believed that they had lost the greatest war, that is the war against their own self that is their (uncontrollable) anger, and what they did in Bali might not necessarily be regarded as a legitimate *jihad* .

The three perpetrators, however, saw life differently. They refused an offer to confess that they were guilty in order to escape the death penalty, since for them, what they did was not wrong, but for a 'more worthwhile cause', that is to obey the command of God, the which they believe would attract a nobler reward, that is 'a better life in heaven'. However, they had ignored the fact that Islam has a more universal message from Allah, that is the Prophet Muhammad was sent by Allah for nothing but as a mercy for the whole universe. If the prophet gave mercy to ants by forbidding his followers to urinate on any hole on the ground (a *hadith*, or saying of the prophet), or, from the way he kept coming to feed an old Jewish blind person although he/she kept saying bad words about him and his religion every time he came to feed him/her. Thus quite certainly, he would have told the perpetrators to treat the innocent people including women, who happened to be at the Paddy's pub and Sari's club at night on 12 October 2002, in a merciful way too, because they were not at a war zone fighting Muslims. Even at a war zone, Muslim troops are forbidden to kill woman and children.²¹

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²¹ There are six hadiths containing this prohibition) (See this site: <http://ahmadsudardi.blogspot.com.au/2013/04/larangan-sengaja-membunuh-wanita-anak.html>).

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