DISENGAGEMENT AND DE-RADICALISATION PROGRAMMES IN INDONESIA, SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

A decade of peace followed Sri Lanka's long war with Tamil separatists, but the country faced new and unanticipated Muslim extremist threats with 2019's Easter bombings. Muslim majority and minority countries in South Asia have faced similar security problems with foreign fighters from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, as well as domestic recruits. These common challenges warranted exploration of the extent to which these countries' de-radicalisation efforts might inform adaptations of Sri Lanka's existing programmes of rehabilitation. Accordingly, this study closely examined literature on terrorist disengagement and de-radicalisation and derived criteria by which to assess programmes implemented in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. The analysis suggests that despite some successes, disconnects between programme goals, delivery, and evaluation often limit these programmes. Although the literature on disengagement argues for multiple paths, many unrelated to ideology, the selected Southeast Asian programmes heavily emphasise correcting wrong interpretations of Islam possibly overweighting this component over other dimensions relevant to de-radicalisation. A majority of programme participants credit factors such as family, financial incentives, and realisation of harm to civilians for their change of heart over the programmes. Certain programmes, particularly those that used community engagement to articulate interpretations of Islam that bolster non-violence, may offer valuable models for Sri Lanka. However, Sri Lanka's existing rehabilitation programmes are in many ways more comprehensively developed. Sri Lanka's way forward might consider its local context and individualise the programme with the help and guidance of psychologists, social service and civil society.

Keywords: Disengagement, De-radicalisation, Rehabilitation, Extreme Islamists, Terrorist Detainees

INTRODUCTION

This article analyses the de-radicalisation programmes in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia for strengths and weaknesses in effecting change and recommends how to best neutralise the threat to the Sri Lankan nation. In the past decade, Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries have faced veteran fighters returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, as well as those who have been educated abroad and might have become radicalised there. As of 2016, ISIS had recruited fewer than 100

youth to fight in Iraq and Syria, but the Easter Sunday bombings demonstrated that a small number of people can successfully plan and carry out a devastating attack (Nanjappa, 2016; Al Jazeera, 2019). According to the United States 2015 Country Report on Terrorism, "countries in the East Asia and Pacific Region faced the threat of terrorist attacks, flows of foreign freedom fighters to and from Iraq and Syria, and groups and individuals espousing support for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)" (U.S. State Department, 2015, p.3). If border control systems are slow to adopt new technologies, it may mean that such individuals will continue to enter the country and will be difficult to distinguish without community help (Sayakkarage, 2016).

Programmes to change behaviour and attitudes of those identified as extremists represent a promising way to address this problem. Neither an intelligence push nor an armed effort alone will ever completely eradicate extremist ideas, as Sri Lanka is aware from fighting a 30-year separatist war with the Tamils. As a result of this conflict, Sri Lanka developed programmes and approaches for de-radicalisation and rehabilitation and in facing emerging threats it will be able to draw from the best of its own experiences with the rehabilitation of 11,664 Tamil fighters in 2009 (Hettiarachchi, 2013, p.4). However, the rehabilitation of Muslim extremists may pose a unique set of defence challenges that Sri Lanka has not faced before.

Thus, this research explored the extent to which Sri Lanka may benefit from the experiences of neighbours that have instituted different types of de-radicalisation programmes: Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. This study closely examined literature on terrorist disengagement and de-radicalisation to derive criteria by which to assess programmes implemented in these three countries. These countries serve as appropriate comparisons to Sri Lanka based on three criteria. First, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia all represent multicultural societies in Southeast Asia, similar to Sri Lanka. Second, all three countries face domestic terrorism as a consequence of citizens returning as trained fighters from Muslim conflicts in the Middle East. Third, these three countries had established disengagement/de-radicalisation programmes described in enough detail for analysis. However, it is worth noting some divergences. Unlike Sri Lanka, these countries have multiple Muslim extremist groups competing for dominance against one another as well as the state. And unlike Sri Lanka, all three share a Pan-Asian terrorist group that strives toward a regional caliphate in addition to ISIS-inspired actions, if not branches. But, in perhaps the most striking similarity with Sri Lanka, these insurgent conflicts have been characterised by massive bombings and other violence targeted at the civilian population, as much or more than the state itself.

The results of this analysis suggest that, despite some successes, the disconnects between programme goals, delivery, and evaluation often limit programme success. Although the literature on disengagement argues for multiple paths, many unrelated to ideology, the selected South Asian programmes overemphasise

correcting wrong interpretations of Islam at the expense of equally important dimensions relevant to de-radicalisation. A majority of programme participants credit factors such as family, financial incentives, and realization of harm against civilians for their change of heart over the programmes. Certain programmes do offer valuable models, particularly Singapore's use of community engagement to articulate interpretations of Islam that condemn the use of violence. However, Sri Lanka's existing rehabilitation programmes are, in many ways, more systematic and thorough in design and delivery. Based on the findings, Sri Lanka might consider a disengagement/de-radicalisation programme that separates the terrorists from prison, tailors the religious component to local and individual needs, and reintegrates ex-terrorists into the community with the help of psychologists, social services, and civil society.

DISENGAGEMENT, REHABILITATION OR DE-RADICALISATION?

In assessing programmes designed to reintegrate former terrorists into society, the first step is to distinguish whether a programme constitutes an effort towards rehabilitation or de-radicalisation. If terrorism in many scholars' judgement encompasses the pursuit of religious, political, or social goals through violence, then this goal in the case of Muslim extremists is to set up an Islamic state (Aslam, 2018, pp.90-91). De-radicalisation has been variously defined as "persuading extremists to abandon the use of violence," to restore a former terrorist to society as a holistic individual both mentally, emotionally, economically, and socially," through individual or group efforts across human resources, economic, social, psychology, or education endeavours (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.1). De-radicalisation describes the process of re-engaging an ex- or detained terrorist with mainstream society and its religious beliefs, including men, children, women and supporters of terrorism (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.96). In this way, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes pursue "hearts and minds" campaigns to change specific behaviours and patterns of thought.

Rehabilitation encompasses not only cognitive reappraisal of religious beliefs and ideology but also psychological change, as well as community and social involvement including the family (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.96). Furthermore, according to some sources, the rehabilitation process consists of "continuous monitoring" of released prisoners to prevent re-radicalisation (Jani, 2017, p.8). For the purposes of this paper, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation refer only to an individual's, not a group's change in thinking and behaving. "Disengagement" is another useful term and concept used in the literature to describe a distancing of the individual from the group and its goals. This distancing of disengagement is not necessarily a complete renunciation of violence in all contexts; for example, violence in the perceived self-defence of Muslims from hostile groups in other countries might still be seen as legitimate.

APPROACHES TO DISENGAGEMENT AND DE-RADICALISATION

Despite multiple approaches to disengagement and de-radicalisation, all programmes to socially reintegrate former terrorists assume the possibility of individual change. Voluntarily leaving terrorism behind entails many different motives for individuals (Barrelle, 2015, p.132). In this context, Bjørgo (1997, p.31) identified push and pull factors that make detachment more likely, with the "push" of motivators to split with the organization, such as disillusionment, and the "pull" of attractions outside the group. Altier, et al. (2017, p.305) asserted that not pull but push factors, especially dissatisfaction, disagreements, and disillusion, more strongly influence leaving. Building on this concept, Hwang (2017, p.278) outlined the specific factors driving disengagement with reinforcement loops that lead either to disengagement or reradicalisation. In turn, Chalmers (2017, p.132) built on Hwang to further delineate the disengagement-to-de-radicalisation process. By the same token, Silke (2017, p.2) argued that stopping violent behaviour should trump any attempts to de-radicalise or change the world view.

Horgan and Braddock (2010, p.286) reflect this practical school of disengagement, and Bjørgo and Horgan (2009, p.3) asserted that the assumed attitude to behaviour (changing attitudes automatically shapes behaviour) link greatly oversimplify the true patterns. In the same way, Porta and LaFree (2011, p.6) contended that de-radicalisation and disengagement need to consider the micro (individual), the meso (group level), and the macro (political opportunity structures), and how these levels interact. Dalgaard-Nelson (2013, p.1) went further than others by prescribing that intervention programmes should use behaviour change to influence attitudes, use narratives as indirect influence, and employ the terrorists' own motives to exert subtle influence.

Other scholars have argued about the centrality of ideology and delved into the psychological processes involved in such ideology as Rabasa et al., (2010, p.27). Similarly, Guranatna (2011, p.68) echoed this view and the necessity to restore such detainees to a more moderate version of Islam before releasing detainees back to the community. Kruglanski et al., (2011, p.203) argued that a search for individual meaning in the face of meaninglessness becomes transformed into the adoption of a collective cause that causes sacrifice up to and including suicide bombing. Thus, rehabilitation requires extensive reframing to reduce the threat to society posed by violent goals. Based on the thorough review of the literature, the three cases have been examined for the approach to behaviour change, the attention paid to pull and push factors, and the level of disengagement achieved.

INDONESIA'S PROGRAMME OF DE-RADICALISATION

Despite being the most populous Muslim nation on Earth, as a secular state, Indonesia champions unity of its racially and ethnically diverse peoples. Its population is 87% Muslim, 7% Protestant, 3% Roman Catholic, and 2% Hindu, and includes (among others) Javanese, Sundanese, and Malay ethnic groups (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Likewise, several terrorist groups flourished in the country, including local Pan-Asian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiah, along with al Qaeda and an ISIS affiliate. All of these groups have committed terrorist acts on the nation's soil. Accordingly, Indonesia has the deepest experience in de-radicalising extremists responsible for the Bali bombings that killed a few hundred civilians and a series of Jakarta suicide bombings (in 2003, 2009, 2016, and 2018) that targeted Western hotels, killing civilians, acts on the same scale and ferocity as the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka in 2019.

Ten years after the Bali bombings, Indonesia had detained 900 terrorists, who were responsible for killing more than 200 people (Sukabdi, 2015, p.36). Of those detained, less than 200 represented Jemaah Islamiah's Jihadi prisoners (some from smaller terrorist groups), and a few were veterans of the Soviet-Afghanistan conflict (Schulze, 2008, p.2). In 2013, 110 Indonesians joined al-Nusra, a group linked to al Qaeda, and some trained with ISIS in Syria (Jones, 2015, p.2). In 2014, the presence of these hardened fighters on Indonesian soil worried the government as did an ISIS YouTube challenge by a particular fighter, Bahrum Syah (Jones, 2015, p.2). Since only a few of the prisons and detention centres across Indonesia had a core constituency of terrorists, the government focused its de-radicalisation efforts on key prisons and on Jemaah Islamiah, which represented half of these detainees (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.2).

Purpose and Scope

Indonesia employs both a hard and a soft approach to counterterrorism. The soft approach includes de-radicalisation efforts. After the Bali bombings in 2002, Indonesia set up a police counterterrorism unit, Detachment 88 to acquire intelligence and prosecute terrorists (Allard, 2016). Allard's 2016 reporting praised the unit for breaking up 54 plots as of 2010, but pilloried its flagrant violations of human rights. The country neutralised immediate threats by detaining terrorists. The police made arrests in Indonesia, but the military took over the de-radicalisation programme in prisons in 2010 as a wing of the National Counter Terrorism Agency (Indonesian: Badan National Penaggulangan Terorisme abbreviated as BNPT) (Jones, 2015, p.3). The police initially aimed to acquire intelligence, to leverage Jemaah Islamiah's conflicts over the legitimacy of using violence to obtain its goals and decapitate the organisation by removing its leaders from prison (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.12; Schulze, 2008, p.1; Rabasa et al., 2010, p.92).

The BNPT defined de-radicalisation as "any effort to transform radical beliefs or ideology to non-radical ones," and mapped out four stages: "identification, rehabilitation, re-education and resocialization" (2013, p.7). This document laid out Indonesia's "soft approach" to de-radicalisation: a "person-to-person" effort to challenge Jihadi beliefs toward government as thought (anti-Islamic) by establishing a respectful, trusting relationship with the prisoner. According to Sumpter (2017, p.119), another overriding goal of the BNPT was to replace Muslim extremist ideas with Indonesian nationalist principles of Pancasila (one God, one nation, one humanity, justice for all, and government by the people). To Sumpter and several other scholars, this programme presumed that ideology drives terrorism and misguided ideas needed to be replaced or altered to disengage these individuals from violence. Furthermore, the programme also assumed that demonstrating the personal warmth of government officials toward Muslims through a kindness offensive would create greater trust in the state (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.13). The disengagement approach in prison becomes one of engaging the detainee in a process of personal change.

Programme Components: Relationships, Cultural Approach, and Incentives

In the Indonesian programme, staff became the key agents of change. The Indonesian Army's efforts with Darul Islam, the precursor to the Jemaah Islamiah, had achieved mixed results using "compassion, conciliation and business concessions" to change attitudes (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.14). With Jemaah Islamiah, police acted as change agents and if the detainee showed a willingness to change, the next phase employed Islamic scholars to engage in debates and dialogues to "correct" Jihadis' understanding of Islam (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.12). Eventually, the programme used staff exclusively, dropping the Islamic clerics, who were not respected by the fundamentalist terrorists (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.107). In this way, programme staff exclusively, not representatives from civil society, administered this programme.

In the education and rehabilitation phases, staff worked one-on-one with prisoners, establishing trusting relationships and using a variety of incentives to shape attitudes and behaviour. That is, detainees showed greater respect and inclination to listen to those who knew the group through arrest and detention (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.107). Originally administered by Detachment 88 to acquire intelligence, this function later fell to BNPT in 2010 as a part of its prevention of terrorism (Suratman, 2017, p.141). Before and after the Jakarta bombings in 2009, the programme depended largely on personal relationships, private rather than government monies, and the use of financial, familial, and social incentives to turn the detainees away from violence (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.94,97,108). Such incentives included things like paying school fees for children, paying medical bills for spouses, paying travel to allow family to visit, providing food, extending

privileges such as furlough, and identity cards and papers upon release from prison (Schulze, 2008, p.1). In the assessment of one senior officer, these economic tools always trumped ideology, a view echoed by an ex-terrorist interviewed who mentioned the need for an "economic Jihad;" however, the majority of programme participants credited their transformation to an awakening to the consequences of their actions (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.13; Sukabdi, 2015, p.42). The success of such incentives seems to support the position that disengagement follows different paths in cascades of awakening, not a single one.

In the re-education phase, which is not made clearly distinct from rehabilitation in the BNPT document, staff engaged with the inmates in a "cultural interrogation" approach to subtly engage in dialogue about Islam to change ideas. The outcome or effectiveness of such an approach depends on the staff's knowledge of Islam, not to mention that of the detainee. Unfortunately, neither the BNPT Blueprint nor the documents written about the programme detail what "cultural interrogation" as opposed to religious dialogue consists of. On the one hand, Police Brigadier General Surya Dharma, former commander of the Bali Bombing Task Force, championed returning these detainees to the "true Islam", yet on the other, the BNPT documents emphasised achieving greater loyalty to Indonesian nationalism (National Center Terrorism Agency, 2013, p.35). In the view of the International Crisis Group (2007, p.15), rehabilitation efforts should avoid religious challenges to Jihad and should instead encourage rethinking the costs/benefits of specific actions. Furthermore, "structured discussions" achieve better results than "informal conversations" (International Crisis Group, 2007). The same document goes on to detail how religious dialogue outside of prison between traditionalists and salafis, or more extreme Islamists, on Radio Hang worsened tensions between the two groups, rather than providing insight. Despite achieving some success, this re-education phase, too, seems ad hoc rather than systematic and opaque given the lack of detailed outlines or protocols for such interrogations.

Using Ex-Terrorists to Disengage Others

Finally, an additional element of the Indonesian de-radicalisation programme was the use of ex-terrorists to convince detainees to give up violence. The programme approached Malaysian Nair Abas and Ali Imron, two key Jemaah Islamiah leaders, and gave them a set of special privileges, then sent them out to talk with other prisoners (Rabasa et al., 2010, pp.111–113). Abas had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets, returning to Malaysia when Muslims began fighting each other and served in a variety of roles in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. He denied involvement in the Bali bombing. Abas claimed to be conflicted about the civilian loss of lives in the Christmas 2000 bombing and questioned its effectiveness in advancing the cause (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.111). The same account documents the surprise Abas felt at the kindness showed to him in his first meeting with a Christian interviewer, and a similar impression of a task force commander who met

with him alone in a cell without handcuffs. Furthermore, the fact that he was not tortured played a role in his attitude change (Horgan and Braddock, 2010, p.288). He urged current Jemaah Islamiah members to make a "return to the right path of Islamic teaching" (Taylor, 2006). Additionally, he readily agreed to assist the police to prevent what he deemed sins against unarmed people and went on to participate in interrogations and attend police raids of former comrades. Although difficult to believe, Martin Abbugao (cited in Abuza, 2000, p.198) reported that a week before police could interview captured Jemaah Islamiah members, Bin Abas engaged them in personal conversations about violence against civilians. Furthermore, he has helped police at many levels from investigations to arrests, to rehabilitation, and larger engagement with society. He claims to have worked with 150–200 detainees with mixed success (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.113).

Ali Imron, one of the Bali bombers, also chose to help the police. Although originally denying his involvement in the event, he eventually confessed to making the bombs, training the suicide bombers, and delivering them to their destination, planting a bomb at the U.S. Consulate, and escaping by motorbike (Counter Extremism Project, 2020). In September 2007, he shared these thoughts in a radio interview in Jakarta:

> I help the police because I know what the terrorists think. I know how they will try to get their weapons and explosives. I know what kind of place they will target for what kind of action and I know how they would carry that out. I know how to hide from the police on the run, how the terrorists recruit new members and who is most vulnerable to the radical message. I am giving all this information to [the] police so I can help stop violence and terrorism (Martin, 2007).

Although this quotation seems to reject violence, other sources interpret Imron's rationale as more instrumental than moral. According to the International Crisis Group (2007), he did not attribute his change to rethinking Islam, but to the public's disapproval of Jemaah Islamiah's violent tactics. Furthermore, Imron believed that Indonesia's "immorality" made it a legitimate target of attacks (International Crisis Group, 2007). At the trial, he testified that the West had been the target of the attacks because of its treatment of Muslims (Counter Extremism Project, 2020). Yet Imron sought forgiveness from victims of the bombings in face-to-face meetings in 2016, fourteen years after the attacks (O'Brien, 2007). In these meetings, he attributed his previous violent behavior to "obeying his leaders" (Cockburn, 2016). In a meeting with a son who lost his father, he asked for forgiveness and said that Jemaah Islamiah leaders had assured him that killing Americans was in keeping with Islam (Henschke and Nurdin, 2020). Reportedly, Ali Imron's mentee Arif contended that while bombing civilians was improper, violence could still be a legitimate tactic (Hwang, 2017, p.279), but it is unclear whether this was an opinion that Imron shared. Whatever Imron's level of disengagement, in his rehabilitation efforts he intervened directly and indirectly: working with detainees, pleading with family and friends,

and creating cassettes and books to influence others (Horgan and Braddock, 2010, p.273). Interestingly enough, an NGO featured him in a book, When Conscience Speaks, as a comic book character advising young people (Murphy and Sari, 2010). Indonesian officials hailed his efforts as evidence of successful de-radicalisation. However, his conflicting statements suggest that successful disengagement from violence against the state may not require a complete repudiation of ideology.

Programme Evaluation

Despite certain successes, external evaluations of Indonesia's Detachment 88 disengagement programme pinpoint more weaknesses than strengths. First, terrorists had to be held apart from the general population, either in prison detention centres or in police prison wings with privileges, because including them with the general population was expected to breed more terrorist activity (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.7). Second, the presence of gangs and pervasive corruption in the prisons made it difficult to administer the programme without undue influence. Third, originally members of the Detachment 88 counterterrorism unit worked with the terrorists, but as the numbers grew, programme staff took over. Unfortunately, the most well-trained graduates of the Corrections Science Academy chose not to work in prisons, and few guards had the social science background to work with terrorists (International Crisis Group, 2007, p.6). Furthermore, numerous articles have described the Indonesian approach as ad hoc because it does not follow a set of systematic steps, does not include a pre- or post-assessment, and lacks either an objective set of measures to gauge change or a long-term follow-up with graduates of the programme (Schultz, 2008, p.2; Rabasa et al., 2010, p.8; International Crisis Group, 2007, p.16). Sumpter goes even further to say: "If programmes are to have any chance of success, they need to be structured, persistent, and highly personalized" (2017, pp. 129–30). Such an approach seems hard to replicate across prisoners and prisons, let alone countries.

Likewise, the Indonesian programme never systematically evaluated how many ex-Jihadis were integrated into the community, or with what results. The absence of high-profile terrorist events in Indonesia since the programme's inception has been used as the only metric for success, but the lack of such events may be the result of many other factors (Jones, 2015, p.3). To critics, the programme merely identified and incentivised those already rethinking violence, not the most committed jihadis (Schulze, 2008, p.1). Sukabdi's prisoner interviews (2015, p.43) confirmed this finding: prisoners attributed change not to the programme but life events. Of those interviewed, 97% credited an awakening to war, the impact on family, being arrested, or meeting bombing victims. Only 19% credited the programme. Unfortunately, these interviews were not taped or documented in written form. Only detainee questionnaires remain, with no opportunity for deep engagement or detailed notes; this self-report lacks in-depth qualitative analysis and the validation of follow up post-release. Likewise, Hwang's interviews with 50 prisoners were also

all self-reported and could not be triangulated with subsequent arrest records or measures of community acceptance to verify the changes that the prisoners claimed. The highly personalised, ad hoc nature of this programme seems quite puzzling, given the large number of subjects, the military involvement, and the high stakes of releasing bombers back into the population.

SINGAPORE'S DE-RADICALISATION PROGRAMME

Singapore represents a multi-ethnic state with 74% Chinese, 13% Malays (including Indonesians), 9% Indians and Sri Lankans; the country is 14% Muslim (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). In its pursuit of a Pan-Asian state, Jemaah Islamiah has launched attacks on Singaporean soil, and ISIS has established affiliates that threaten state security (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). The country has disrupted terrorist plots made up of professionals, both scientists and businessmen, some of whom had been trained in Afghanistan by al-Qaeda, possessing advanced training in bomb-making, sniper tactics, and assassination (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.110). By the same token, in its pursuit of a Pan-Asian state, Jemaah Islamiah has launched attacks on its soil, and ISIS has established affiliates that threaten state security (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Singapore's detention of an adherent of Zahan Hashim, whom Sri Lanka identified as the imam plotter of the Easter bombings, link the county most closely to Sri Lanka's extremist violence (U.S. Department of State, 2019, p.1). Likewise, Singapore's emphasis on preventing and disrupting terrorist plots might bear the closest analogue for Sri Lanka at this time.

Like the Indonesian programme, Singapore's programme uses close relationships with case officers to help prisoners process their own attitudes and feelings. This stage of trust-building aims to let detainees move through a process akin to grief: denial, anger, and finally acceptance of their situation, perhaps questioning the tactics and goals of the terrorist group (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.97). But since Singapore's law supports "preventive detention," people who pose a threat may be detained without charges indefinitely (Rabasa et al., 2010, p.96). Thus, those who are resistant to change can be held away from society.

Unlike Indonesia, the government of Singapore partnered with the Religious Rehabilitation Group, composed of volunteers, university scholars, and Muslim leaders to design an approach to changing the thinking of terrorist detainees, requiring these staff members to undergo additional training (Ramakrishna, 2009, p.2). Assuming wrong ideas about Islam needed to be corrected, the programme staff reviewed the Jemaah Islamiah Jihad Manual to better understand the ideological challenge. Ultimately, some hard-core adherents proved too difficult to rehabilitate even as others embraced a second chance.

In Singapore's programme, social service agencies, not guards, delivered social welfare to families: paying utility bills, finding them jobs, arranging education for the children (Ramakrishan, 2009, p.3; Rabasa et al., 2010, p.99). As with Indonesia, the programme established no metrics with which to analyse its success other than a lack of attacks as an indicator. Furthermore, academics contend the lack of coordination between the police and the military puts them at cross purposes: suppressing crime vs. protecting territory (Suratman, 2017, p.150). With only a handful of terrorists ever detained, the ability to hold detainees indefinitely, and the strong civil society engagement, it seems the most successful of the three.

MALAYSIAN DE-RADICALISATION PROGRAMME

Although Malaysia is a diverse society, ethnic Malays possess greater citizenship rights than residents who are ethnic Chinese or Indonesians. One can only be a citizen if born to a Malaysian and "by law, all Malays are Muslim" (Lockhard et al., 2020). Yet despite this privileged position, 116 Malaysians left for Syria and Iraq (Hanschke and Nurdin, 2020). Like Indonesia and Singapore, Malaysia is challenged by the Pan-Asian group, Jemaah Islamiah, as well as ISIS branches or affiliates, and the population has been a source of support for al Qaeda (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Since 2001, the country claims a success rate of 97% in rehabilitating terrorists, based only on whether those released conducted terrorist plots (Hanschke and Nurdin, 2020).

Malaysia's programme diverges from and echoes some of the elements in the Indonesian and Singaporean cases. As a Muslim-majority state with a dual civil and shariah court judiciary, an NGO leads prisoners in monthly religious training in conjunction with psychologists and the Islamic Affairs department (Rabasa, 2010, p.105). Those prisoners who express sympathies with programme-approved interpretations of Islam progress to a second phase of religious dialogue (Aslam, 2018, p.95). As shariah law already governs parts of Malaysia, the state underscores its status as an Islamic state (Rabasa et al, 2010, p.105). Since detainees eventually re-join families, the programme involves spouses, too. As with Indonesia and Singapore, Malaysia also provides financial assistance to detainees and families, including a stipend upon release (Kamaruddin et al., 2017, p.45).

Of those scholars who have attempted to evaluate the programme, some found the task of assessing the programme's effectiveness to be difficult, while another suggested specific tweaks. In 2010, prisoners could not be interviewed, but by 2017, ex-terrorists' answers reflected a range of responses on a hard vs. a soft approach: some recommended punishment, others more humanitarian efforts, and yet others a tailor-made approach. As with Hwang's study, Kamaruddin et al. (2017) depend on self-report, with no comparison to later behaviour or measures of community acceptance. Disentangling whether the lack of new terrorist plots

in Malaysia stems from good intelligence, people's natural disengagement, or the effectiveness of its programme is difficult to ascertain. Malaysia's status as a Muslim-majority state represents a decided strength because it understands the differing interpretations of religious texts and how to talk about them.

DISCUSSION

Sri Lanka's own rehabilitation and disengagement programme with LTTE soldiers in 2009 contained far more systematic elements than the Indonesian, Singaporean, and Malaysian programmes reviewed above. It benefited from a detailed programme design based on psychologist input, clearly spelled out levels of programming, and extensive education and rehabilitation elements. In my view, Sri Lanka stands to learn more from its own past efforts than it does from these three programmes from abroad.

This paper's survey of programmes provides several insights for rehabilitation efforts in Sri Lanka's current context. First, the analysis of the Indonesian, Singaporean, and Malaysian programmes suggests that programme goals should emphasise disengagement from violence, rather than de-radicalisation that may take decades to complete. Additionally, the empirical studies of terrorist attitudes in Indonesia and Malaysia suggest that people disengaged from terrorism for multiple, multi-layered reasons, beyond purely ideological ones. This latter point suggests that future programmes should focus on engagement in society, and not overemphasise ideology. Programme design should also address attitudes toward war, individual responsibility to others, and one's place within the family. Sri Lanka might take all of these lessons into account in the future.

Although all three programmes have had some successes in "disengaging" terrorists, pinpointing exactly which aspects of the programme work best, and how to replicate them proves difficult, given the highly personal nature of the Indonesian programme and its use of ex-terrorists, the extensive use of the Religious Rehabilitation Group in Singapore, and the use of multiple players of civil society in Malaysia's programme.

Despite the conflicting scholarship about the variety of "push" and "pull" factors and their role in disengagement/de-radicalisation, all three countries put ideology at the centre of their programmes. Indonesia aimed to disengage terrorists from violence and replace their extremist ideology with a renewed belief in the secular values of the nation. The documents suggest that the nation did not demand rejection of all extremist beliefs, but instead emphasised rejection of extremist behaviours. Singapore presumed that replacing or correcting the wrong ideas about Islam would disengage terrorists from violence (Rabasa, 2010, p. 96). Likewise, Malaysia also focused on the re-education of prisoners to alter their religious interpretations

and political ideas (Aslam, 2018, p. 94). Yet the interviews by Hwang in Indonesia and by Sukabdi in Singapore suggest many different drivers and an individualised process of disengagement that may or may not reach full de-radicalisation, supporting a more tailored approach that pays attention to many aspects.

Indonesia's experience demonstrates that engaging a change in ideology demands identifying a credible messenger that the terrorists can respect, someone with in-depth knowledge of the religion. Following from this, in the context of a mixed society such as Sri Lanka that has not completely reconciled its three communities Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim it may be valuable to consider incorporating and involving the local Muslim community and civil society in any formal programme. Identifying credible messengers and civil society organisations would require those who know the community well to work in conjunction with professionals skilled in assessment and evaluation. A professionally designed programme that employs civil society and social service staff could assure the choice of a credible messenger regarding Islam within Sri Lankan society.

In programme delivery, Indonesia used strong personal relationships just as Singapore did. Whereas, in Indonesia, this relationship remained in force up to and including release, in Singapore, this relationship was an entry point before exposing the detainee to different people and ideas in dialogue. For both, a "kindness offensive" was applied with the goal of changing detainee attitudes toward government, and it seemed quite successful for both. Singapore's Religious Rehabilitation Group and its civil society components systematically engage the detainee in ways not done in Indonesia. Singapore delivers far more training for these volunteers than Indonesia does for its staff. Sri Lanka might consider combining elements of both of these models: use a key case officer throughout the process, and vigorous civil society engagement. The officer would establish continuity and help the client feel supported throughout the process, while the local community involvement would ensure greater integration and validation within the community itself.

Indonesia's use of ex-terrorists to dissuade prisoners from violence bears examination for Sri Lanka. Although its two stars, Abbas and Imron, did not abandon all of their extremist beliefs, judging from contradictory statements in the record, they successfully disengaged a number of terrorists in custody and within society. Indonesia employed this strategy because these leaders had greater credibility with terrorists than moderate Islamic scholars in Indonesia, but the strategy may be time-limited and selectively rather than universally applied. Imron's meetings with victims seemed successful for both sides, but such experiences were not universal.

In Indonesia, these two former terrorists had been leaders for decades and inspired a following for their high-profile bombings. Sri Lanka might evaluate the potential of using disengaged or rehabilitated individuals, even those without such influential backgrounds, as candidates to educate youth who might be attracted to the cause.

Following Indonesia's model, such people should first meet their victims face-to-face for professionals to judge their depth of regret. With this experience and other evaluations, the professional psychologists could identify likely "influencers," and the local civil society organization would need to approve them. More tangible hope for a place in Sri Lankan society would also be required to dissuade at-risk youth from extremism.

All three Southeast Asian programmes offered financial assistance and different levels of job skills and job placement to these former terrorists. Singapore offers the best model of this programme element because it was done more systematically and involved continuous communication between civil society organisations and the social service staff instead of dependence on a single individual as in Indonesia. Paying ex-terrorist's expenses is difficult to justify to the broader public, given the harm done, so a serious evaluation of how to offer and evaluate such assistance would seem well-advised for Sri Lanka. By the same token, adopting Malaysia's "continuous monitoring" with both formal and informal check-ins would support successful reintegration and dissuade reengagement with terrorism.

Evaluation seems lacking in all three programmes. The Indonesian programme does not clearly distinguish education from rehabilitation, have any formal intake or release evaluations or metrics with which to measure success. Singapore does not fare much better on this score either, although its programme is more systematic, with a phase 1 and a phase 2 for re-education in Islam, depending on an evaluation (not specified) of the prisoner's progress. Malaysia has one aspect in its favour and that is "continuous monitoring" once detainees have been released back into the community. In this way, Sri Lanka needs to adhere to its own best practices for evaluation for success because its systematic approach exceeds those used by its neighbours.

Considering all of these elements, the findings of Hwang, Horgan, and others who interviewed ex-terrorists in Indonesia demonstrate that the "change of heart" must balance justice for the victims with restoring these ex-terrorists to the community. Detaining most of them indefinitely creates resentment and breeds greater resistance, but letting them out without creating job skills, and preparing the community to accept them would guarantee a repeated cycle of violence. The high stakes for society demand that any future rehabilitation programme be carefully designed and recorded, properly weighting push and pull factors beyond ideology alone, triangulating formal and informal evaluations that are documented, and conducting continuing surveillance and support post-release.

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