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Darul Islam 1949–62

Executive Summary

In 1948, toward the end of the Indonesian National Revolution, radical Islamic politician Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo established the state of Darul Islam and initiated a revolution against the newly formed Republic of Indonesia. Darul Islam emerged from pro-independence Islamic militias that had fought against Dutch occupation alongside other nationalist factions.[1] Such militias broke ties with the Republic of Indonesia following the Renville Agreement of January 1948. The Renville Agreement between the Republic and the Netherlands recognized several regions behind the negotiated van Mook Line as being under Dutch control. Most significantly, the agreement ceded West Java, which was the headquarters of the preeminent Islamic group Hezbollah.[2] Feeling the Republic of Indonesia had both betrayed the militias and failed diplomatically, Kartosoewirjo created the insurgent Darul Islam in May 1948 to establish an independent Islamic theocracy in Indonesia.[3]

When the Republic of Indonesia was officially recognized by the Dutch in December 1949, Darul Islam refused to disband, and Kartosoewirjo established the Islamic State of Indonesia on August 7, 1949. With support from rebel groups, including the governor of Aceh, elements of the Indonesian Army, and the Legion of the Just Ruler, Darul Islam initiated a 13-year-long armed insurgency.[4] Darul Islam had some initial success due to the instability present within the new central government of Indonesia during the early 1950s. By 1957, Darul Islam controlled some of West Java and much of the countryside of South Sulawesi and Aceh provinces.[5] Throughout the conflict, Darul Islam conducted several unsuccessful assassination attempts on President Sukarno.

In 1956, the government began an offensive campaign against Darul Islam that killed or captured much of the leadership.[6] Sukarno also implemented martial law in 1957 and implemented a policy of "Guided Democracy," which further weakened Darul Islam.[7] The diverse forces within Darul Islam soon began surrendering. Between 1954 and 1957, Darul Islam bands in Central Java were defeated by the Banteng Raiders. In 1959, Darul Islam insurgents in South Kalimantan under Ibnu Hadjar surrendered. Forces in Aceh submitted to a peace agreement in 1962 that gave the province an autonomous status.[8] Finally, in June 1962, Indonesian soldiers captured Kartosoewirjo and executed him three months later. Darul Islam quickly crumbled, and the last band surrendered in 1965.[9]

Assessing the Five Factors

1. **Was the country at the time of the conflict a nation?**

   Yes. During the Japanese occupation in World War II, notions of Indonesian nationalism proliferated and resulted in an independence movement in 1940.[10] Indonesia received independence in 1949 after a violent struggle with Dutch forces. While the Republic of Indonesia had some difficulty in uniting the diverse ethnicities and regions of Indonesia, nationalist sentiment was widespread.[11]

2. **Was the government perceived as legitimate by 85 percent of the population?**

   Yes. During the early years of the Republic of Indonesia, the diverse regions of Indonesia largely saw Jakarta as the legitimate seat of government. In the late 1950s and 1960s, however, Indonesia witnessed several insurgent movements challenging the central government. Analysis of the 1961 Indonesian census (Sensus Penduduk) reveals that the regions where such insurgencies operated held approximately 15 percent of the population, thus, it can be inferred that around 85 percent or more of the population still regarded the government as legitimate.[12] In addition, three of the four insurgent groups (Permesta, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia [PRR], and the Communist Party of Indonesia [PK]) initially accepted the central government and sought reform before turning to violence. Darul Islam was the insurgent group that did not accept the central government, as the movement sought the creation of an Islamic state.

3. **Did the government maintain or achieve security control over roughly 85 percent of the country's overall population?**

   Yes. While the Indonesian National Armed Forces (or the TNI) dealt with several insurgencies in various regions during the late 1950s and early 1960s, population data from the 1961 census shows that only around 15 percent of the population were in areas that saw conflict. In the case of Darul Islam, factoring in the insurgency's area of operation, approximately 13 million people (13.2 percent of the Indonesian population) lived in the impacted regions of West Java, South Sulawesi, Aceh, and South Kalimantan.[13] It should be noted that the government had firm control over urban areas in affected regions and that the analysis likely overstates the numbers affected.[14]

4. **Did the rebel movement have persistent access to external sanctuary in a neighboring country to a militarily significant degree?**

   No. The insurgents did not maintain an external sanctuary, as the conflict occurred only in the Indonesian archipelago.

5. **Was there a government army or armed constabulary force in existence at the start of the conflict?**

   Yes. The newly formed Indonesian Republic maintained the Indonesian National Armed Forces. Although the armed forces were stretched thin during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the army was reasonably competent.[15]

DARUL ISLAM 1949–62	
NATIONAL IDENTITY	YES
GOVERNMENT LEGITIMACY	YES
POPULATION SECURITY	YES
EXTERNAL SANCTUARY	NO
EXISTING SECURITY FORCES	YES

Outcome

Government victory. Despite the persistence of some underground Islamic terrorist networks, including the Komando Jihad of the 1970s and 1980s, Darul Islam was defeated in 1962. When Kartosoewirjo was captured in June 1962, he ordered the remaining forces to surrender. The last band of fighters surrendered in South Sulawesi in 1965.[16] The case of Darul Islam supports the Five Factors theory, though national identity and government legitimacy are quite complex with regard to Indonesia.

Endnotes

1. C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1981)

2. "The Renville Agreement, January 1948," Carolina Asia Center (website), n.d., accessed February 26, 2024, https://carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu/fpg-and-indonesia/fpg-and-indonesia7/; and *April 5, 1949 Vol. 95, Part 3 — Bound Edition*, 81st Congress – 1st Session, https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1949/04/05/senate-section.

3. Dijk, *Rebellion*.

4. Dijk, *Rebellion*.

5. Christopher Paul et al., eds., "Indonesia (Darul Islam), 1958–1962," in *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013), 118–24.

6. Paul et al., "Indonesia (Darul Islam)."

7. Megan Brankley Abbas, "Battling Over the Bureaucracy: The 10 October Incident and Intra-Muslim Conflict under Sukarno's Guided Democracy," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 43, no. 126 (April 2015): 207–25, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2015.1029343.

8. Dijk, *Rebellion*.

9. Paul et al., "Indonesia (Darul Islam)."

10. Shigeru Sato, *War, Nationalism and Peasants: Java under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–45* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

11. Jennifer Lindsay, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950–1965*, ed. M. H. T. Sutedja-Llem (Boston: Brill, 2012).

12. "Sensus Penduduk 1961 Republik Indonesia," Badan Pusat Statistik – Statistics Indonesia (website), accessed November 25, 2023, https://www.bps.go.id/en/publication/1962/06/06/ba0319372bf4767645160a8c/sensus-penduduk-1961-republik-indonesia.html.

13. "Sensus Penduduk."

14. Paul et al., "Indonesia (Darul Islam)."

15. Damien Kingsbury, "The Reform of the Indonesian Armed Forces," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22, no. 2 (August 2000): 302–21, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25798494.

16. Khudzaifah Dimyati, Mohammad Busjro Muqoddas, and Kelik Wardiono, "Radikalisme Islam dan Peradilan: Pola-pola Intervensi Kekuasaan dalam Kasus Komando Jihad di Indonesia," *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum* 13, no. 3 (September 2013), https://dinamikahukum.fh.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/JDH/article/view/244/248; and Dijk, *Rebellion*.

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