

**Weekly Country Report
Indonesia
25 August – 31 August 2008**

Terrorism

Amrozi, Imam Samudra, and Ali Ghufron, the three convicted Bali bombers, have been isolated from other inmates at Batu penitentiary on Nusakambangan prison island, Cilacap in Central Java, ahead of their execution. The isolation is a security measure in preparation for the execution, along with a general increase in security in the Cilacap regency, including the waters surrounding the island.¹

The Attorney General's Office (AGO) has officially postponed the executions of the convicted Bali bombers until after Ramadan. Assistant attorney general for general crimes Abdul Hakim Ritonga on Wednesday said the decision was made to allow the convicts to experience what would be their last Ramadan.² Previously, Attorney General Hendarman Supandji had said that the executions would be carried out before the start of the fasting month on 1 September or in early September, but now the execution would be carried out after Ramadan ends on 30 September, and should be some time this year.³ ⁴ The Australian Ambassador to Indonesia has stated that his government accepts and respects the AGO's decision to delay the execution.⁵

After the announcement of the execution delay, families of the prisoners were allowed to visit them. The families were accompanied by the bombers' team of lawyers, the Muslim Defenders Team, and were escorted to the prison by the police's special mobile brigade. Each visitor was examined thoroughly for dangerous substances or other unwanted materials before they were allowed to cross to the island from Cilacap port.⁶

The police are still awaiting instructions from the prosecution office on the execution, and the location remains undecided.⁷ As for the public, Hendarman has stated that the AGO would not publicly announce the time and place of the executions until they had been carried out.⁸

Political Developments

The Indonesian government has announced that it would not issue a Presidential regulation to disband Ahmadiyah. A joint-ministerial decree has been issued, which bans Ahmadis from spreading their teaching, but does not demand the dissolution of the group. Minister of Religious

¹ "Prison isolates Bali bombing convicts ahead of execution", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/26/prison-isolates-bali-bombing-convicts-ahead-execution.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 26 Aug. 2008.

² "Bali bombers execution postponed until after holy month", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/27/bali-bombers-execution-postponed-until-after-holy-month.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 27 Aug. 2008.

³ "AGO Seeking Right Time to Execute Bali Bombers", <http://www.tempointeractive.com/hg/nasional/2008/08/26/brk.20080826-132454.uk.html>. Tempo Interaktif, 26 Aug. 2008.

⁴ "AGO delays execution of Bali bombers", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/28/ago-delays-execution-bali-bombers.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 28 Aug. 2008.

⁵ "Australia respects Bali bombers execution delay", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/28/australia-respects-bali-bombers-execution-delay.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 28 Aug. 2008.

⁶ "Families visit Bali bombers after execution delay", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/30/families-visit-bali-bombers-after-execution-delay.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 30 Aug. 2008.

⁷ "Police awaiting instruction on execution of Amrozi et al", <http://antara.co.id/en/arc/2008/8/27/police-awaiting-instruction-on-execution-of-amrozi-et-al/>. *Antara News*, 27 Aug. 2008.

⁸ "AGO Seeking Right Time to Execute Bali Bombers", <http://www.tempointeractive.com/hg/nasional/2008/08/26/brk.20080826-132454.uk.html>. Tempo Interaktif, 26 Aug. 2008.

Affairs M Maftuh Basyuni said that the government had no legal ground to disband the religious sect.⁹

On 25 August, thousands of members and supporters of the Islam Defender Front (FPI) staged a demonstration in front of the State Palace in Central Jakarta protesting against Ahmadiyah. Several FPI members made speeches demanding that the government release FPI leader Rizieq Shihab, who is currently on trial for his involvement in FPI's violent surprise attack in June on a peace rally in support of pluralism and Ahmadiyah.¹⁰ Shihab faces five-and-a-half years in jail over the attack that injured over 70 activists. Another self-described commander of the group, Munarman, also went to court Friday, 29 August, for involvement in the same attack. Prosecutors have demanded for up to seven years' jail for Munarman who purportedly led the attack.¹¹

Din Syamsuddin, the chairman of Muhammadiyah, the second largest Islamic organization in Indonesia after Nahdatul Ulama, has announced that he was prepared to run for president or vice president for the election next year if a political party nominated him, and his organization allowed it. He has stated that informal discussions with a certain political party about an offer to nominate him are currently underway. This announcement was made after a dialog with Muhammadiyah youth on 24 August 2008, and Syamsuddin also asked the youth to allow and support him to run in the presidential election.¹²

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono officially opened the Ninth Congress of Alkhairaat Muslim organization, at Madinatul Ilmi Islamic boarding school, Dolo, around 12 km south of Palu, Central Sulawesi Province, on Tuesday, 26 August. He commended the organization for its contribution to the development of Islamic propagation, education and social services. There are around 1,500 Alkhairaat members from 12 provinces participating in the three-day congress. During the congress, the participants will discuss the organization's plan of action for the years 2008 to 2013, revise the organization's statute, and elect new members of the organization's executive board.¹³

⁹ "Minister: Government will not disband Ahmadiyah", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/24/minister-government-will-not-disband-ahmadiyah.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 24 Aug. 2008.

¹⁰ "Thousands FPI members swarm the State Palace", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/27/thousands-fpi-members-swarm-state-palace.html>. *The Jakarta Post*, 27 Aug. 2008.

¹¹ "Indonesian Islamist 'commander' charged", <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,24263178-23109,00.html>. AFP as cited on news.com.au, 29 Aug. 2008.

¹² "Din Syamsuddin prepared to run for presidency", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/25/muhammadiyah-chairman-run-presidency.html>. *Antara News*, 25 Aug. 2008.

¹³ "Yudhoyono opens Al-Khairaat congress in Central Sulawesi", <http://antara.co.id/en/arc/2008/8/26/yudhoyono-opens-al-khairaat-congress-in-central-sulawesi/>. *Antara News*, 26 Aug. 2008.