

No. 171

**Reviving the Caliphate in the *Nusantara*:
Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's Mobilization
Strategy and Its Impact in Indonesia**

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Singapore**

9 February 2009

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ABSTRACT

HT is a transnational Islamic movement operating in over forty-five countries. Literature on HT has focused mainly on its activities in the Central Asia and Europe. As such, when the HT chapter in Indonesia organized the largest ever-political gathering staged by HT, many observers were caught by surprise. Yet despite the importance of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), little is known about the organization in the English-speaking world. This paper is an attempt to present empirical data on this group. The paper argues that HTI's usage of different mobilization strategies have resulted in its ability to effect policy changes in Indonesia

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Reviving the Caliphate in the *Nusantara*: Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's Mobilization Strategy and Its Impact in Indonesia

HT is a transnational Islamic movement. It is currently operating in over forty-five countries in the continents of Europe, Middle East, Africa and more recently Asia. Literature on HT has focused mainly on its activities in the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. As such, when the HT chapter in Indonesia organized the largest ever-political gathering staged by HT, many observers were caught by surprise. Yet despite the importance of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), little is known about the organization in the English-speaking world. This paper is an attempt to present empirical data on this group.¹ The paper argues that HTI's usage of different mobilization strategies have resulted in its ability to effect policy changes in Indonesia. The first part of the paper will provide a brief introduction to the history of HTI. The second part of the paper will highlight the mobilization strategies adopted by HTI to revive the Islamic Caliphate in Indonesia. The last part of the paper will analyze how these strategies have in fact resulted in HTI's ability to effect policy change within the Indonesian state.²

Hizb ut-Tahrir: History and Founder

HTI is a chapter of the larger HT organization. HT itself was founded by Sheikh Taqiuddin An-Nabhani, a Palestinian Islamic jurist in 1953 with the aim of reviving the Islamic Caliphate. Hizb-ut-Tahrir was formed with the stated objectives that

¹ The common spelling use for the organization is Hizb ut-Tahrir but in the case of Indonesia and Malaysia, the spelling preferred by the local chapters is Hizbut Tahrir. As such the author will use the first spelling to describe the larger organization and the later spelling when writing about HT in Indonesia and Malaysia.

² The author utilized interviews and personal communications with members of the HTI in 2007 for the purposes of this paper. He also attended several seminars and a conference conducted by HTI in Jakarta and Bogor.

included the revival of the Muslim World from its perceived current decline, the liberation of Muslims from the thoughts, systems and laws of unbelievers, and the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate.³ An-Nabhani preached that the party emulated the method of action proposed by Prophet Muhammad to take over the helm of leadership in Madinah. An-Nabhani argued that the Prophet had taken over control of Madinah through a three-stage process. In the first stage, known as the stage of culturing (*tatsqif*), HT aimed to produce people who believed in its ideas. These are the people who will form the core leadership of the party. At the second stage, known as the stage of interaction (*tafa'ul*), the party sought to let the Muslims embrace and carry Islam, so that they can take up its issues, and thus work to establish it in their affairs of life. At the third stage known as the stage of the assumption of power and ruling (*istilamu al-hukmi*), the party intended to work towards establishing a government, implementing Islam comprehensively, and carrying it as a message to the world.⁴ Nabhani had argued that to accelerate the third stage, leaders could seek *nusrah* (assistance to gain power) from important members of the country such as military leaders, judges and politicians.⁵ An-Nabhani's call for the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate is not unique to that of other Muslim thinkers such as Maulana Abul A'la Maududi and Hassan Al-Banna. However, Maududi and Al-Banna were more practical in their approach of reviving the Caliphate. Maududi believed that Muslims should first try to establish an Islamic state within their territorial boundaries.⁶ He saw the state as a temporary entity that would be replaced by the

³ Accessed on the 8th of May 2008. http://www.mykhilafah.com/hizbut_tahrir/index.htm

⁴ Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, *The Method to Re-Establish the Khilafah and Resume the Islamic Way of Life* (London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 2000), 88-110.

⁵ For a comprehensive explanation of the concept of *nusrah* see Asif Khan, 'The Search for the Nusrah'. In *Khilafah Magazine* 16, no. 1 (Jan 2003): 18-21 and see Sisters of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Britain, *The Responsibility of Muslim Sisters in Britain* (London: Al-Khilafah, 2003), 41 for a list of people from whom the *nusrah* should be seek from.

⁶ Abul A'la Maududi, *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1980), 158

Caliphate. Maududi stressed that the implementation of the political principles laid down in the Quran required a state structure. This Islamic state will be a precursor to the Caliphate. Similar to Maududi, Al-Banna also believed that a state could first be formed before the revival of the Caliphate. In a way, An-Nabhani advocates for a more direct and radical change compared to the more gradual approach of most Muslim reformers in reviving the Caliphate.

An-Nabhani did not limit his activities to Palestine. He travelled widely around the Middle East and personally set up chapters of HT in Iraq, Jordan and Syria. Owing to attempted coups by HT members in several Middle Eastern countries, party members were targeted by several Arab regimes. This led to a mass exodus of HT leaders to Western countries such as UK, US, Australia and Germany.⁷ Following the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1991, party members from the UK travelled to the Muslim republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus to spread its ideology.⁸ It was also the Western chapters of the party that were responsible for the spread of its ideology to Southeast Asia.⁹

History of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)

The emergence of Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia is indeed interesting and fascinating. Greg Fealy noted that the HTI is probably the only Islamic organization, which is controlled by a foreign leadership, which draws its ideology strictly from a Middle Eastern source, and whose agenda is fundamentally transnational.¹⁰ Interestingly, the

⁷ Interview with Burhan Haniff, member of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 18 June 2007, London.

⁸ The movement activities in Central Asia were captured in Zeyno Baran, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency* (Washington: Nixon Center Monograph, December 2004) and Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad : The rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 115-137.

⁹ Interview with Maajid Nawaz, former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 28 Oct 2007, London.

¹⁰ Greg Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia: Seeking a 'Total' Islamic Identity in *Islam, Xenophobia and Pluralism*' Conference, 1.

origins of HT Indonesia could be traced back to Australia. Two religious figures, Mama Abdullah Bin Nuh and Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi were instrumental in the growth and expansion of HT in Indonesia. Abdullah Bin Nuh was a prominent scholar of Islam with a large following. He runs his own *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in the city of Bogor where a large number of his students became undergraduates at the *Institut Pertanian Bogor* (Bogor Agricultural Institute).¹¹ In the late 1970s, Abdullah Bin Nuh chanced upon members of HT in Australia when he visited his son who was studying in Sydney.¹² HT members in Australia were mainly migrants from the Middle East who had migrated to Australia in order to escape the persecution from the authoritarian Arab regimes. Bin Nuh was thoroughly impressed with the methodology of HT, which to his mind offered a sustainable and practical solution to the problems of the Muslim World. In 1982, he invited one of the HT leaders in Australia, Baghdadi to teach in his *pesantren*, Al-Ghazali. This marked the beginnings of HTI.

The history of HTI could be divided into two main periods. The first period is during the New Order regime of Suharto when Indonesia was basically a strong authoritarian state. The second period is during the post New Order period in which Indonesia began its transition to democracy. During the New Order period, HTI maintained a low profile and used informal networks to spread its influence. This is not entirely surprising. Social movements often utilise informal networks to recruit and propound their case in countries where the political system is less open. In explaining these informal networks, Wiktorowicz argued that the use of informal networks displaces

¹¹ Agus Salim, The Rise of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (1982-2004): Its Political Opportunity Structure, Resource Mobilization, And Collective Action Frames, *Unpublished Masters Thesis*, Syarif Hidaytullah University (2005), 40.

¹² Interview with Muhammad al-Khaththath, Former Chairman of HTI, 20 March 2008, Jakarta.

Islamist movements from the contentious politics frame.¹³ As such, these movements are often rendered less of a threat to the regime. At its infancy stage, HTI utilized various Muslim student bodies to expand its network and support. However, even at this stage, a shadow organizational structure operated behind the scenes of the informal networks. One of the first such bodies was the Badan Kerohanian Islam Mahasiswa or BKIM (Muslim Student Spiritual Body) at the Bogor Agricultural Institute. Many of the subsequent leaders of HTI did not even know that they were part of HTI. Baghdadi simply introduced the ideas of HTI via religious classes that were held in several mosques in Bogor. It was not until 1987 that these leaders were told about the existence of HTI. To expand HTI's following beyond Bogor, HTI activists began pioneering the formation of another student grouping known as the *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus* (LDK) at various universities in Bandung, Surabaya and Makassar.¹⁴ Many of the future leaders of HTI were recruited through these networks. Often their involvement with HTI had begun by way of informal networks (through a friend, family member and teachers).¹⁵ Upon their graduation, HTI leaders formed the *Kelompok Studi Islam Standard Chartered* (Standard Chartered Islamic Study Circle, KSICC). The KSICC was an Islamic study circle held at the Wisma Standard Chartered (Standard Chartered Building) in Jakarta. The KSICC also started training programs (*dauroh*) for key participants, held about once a month at the famous Indonesian hill station in Puncak.¹⁶ The KSICC allowed HTI to expose their ideas to participants from a different background, namely mature mid-career professionals.

¹³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Agus Salim, (see note 11 above), 40.

¹⁵ David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher, Jr and Sheldon Ekland-Olson demonstrated this in their seminal work on the importance of social networks in recruitment process, See David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher, Jr and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment." *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 5 (Oct 1980): 787-801.

¹⁶ Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, Chairman of HTI, 19 March 2007, Masjid Al-Hidayah, Bogor.

HTI also began organizing holiday training programs for youths known as “Dirasah Islam untuk Anak Muda”.¹⁷ Perhaps the most important contribution of the KSICC was the production of the Buletin Al-Islam (Al-Islam Buletin). This publication was first produced in 1994 and distributed at mosques in Jakarta. The Al-Islam bulletin exposed the Muslim community in Jakarta to the ideas of HTI. Building on this exposure, HTI began organizing sessions known as *Temu Pembaca Al-Islam* (Al-Islam Gathering Sessions). These sessions were used to expose the Al-Islam audience to the KSICC and HTI. Subsequently, it was used as a recruiting mechanism for HTI.¹⁸ An article written by Muhammad al-Khaththath, one of the key HTI activists criticizing the Central Bank of Indonesia led to HTI coming under pressure from the authorities to cease their activities at the Standard Chartered building.¹⁹ HTI activists were forced to shift their strategy. They began utilizing the Badan Wakaf As-Salam (The As-Salam Wakaf Association, BWAS) for their activities. The formation of the BWAS coincided with the renaming of the Al-Islam bulletin to As-Salam bulletin. The body was used to manage funds gathered during the study sessions as well as *zakat* and donations given to HTI. At this point HTI began to move into mosques in Jakarta and its surrounding areas to conduct reading sessions, deliver Friday sermons and involve themselves in mosque activities. It was not until year 2000 that HTI decided to use their official name.

The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 led to a period of democratization and easing of political control. Yet, it took about two years for HTI to react to this change. This is due to the fact that HTI leaders themselves were unsure about how best to react to this new dynamics. Baghdadi differed with other HTI leaders about forming a formal organization to propound its ideas. Finally, in July 2000, HTI decided to

¹⁷ “Dirasah Islam Untuk Anak Muda”, *Bulletin Al Islam*, no. 185 (7-11 July 1997).

¹⁸ Agus Salim, (see note 11 above), 124

¹⁹ Interview with Muhammad al-Khaththath, 18th March 2008, Jakarta.

officially launch itself as a formal organization. This is mainly due to the sentiment of HTI leaders that the organization was strong enough to launch itself officially.²⁰ As part of this renewal step, HTI re-launched the *Al-Islam Bulletin* in July 2000.²¹ For the first time in its history HTI actually printed the name *Syabab Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (The Brotherhood of Hizbut Tahrir) as the publisher of the bulletin. In August 2000, HTI organized the first international *Khilafah* conference to officially propel the organization into the public domain. The conference was held at the Senayan Indoor Stadium. About five thousand HTI activists attended the event.²² The event received extensive coverage by the media and transformed HTI from an elite based quietist movement to a broad based mass organization with a dynamic outlook. Speakers featured at the functions included Sheikh Ismail al-Wahwah (Hizbut Tahrir Australia), Ustaz Sharifuddin Md Zain (Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia) and Muhammad al-Khaththath. Subsequently, HTI began organizing activities openly and started campaigning fervently for the implementation of Shariah laws in Indonesia and the revival of the Caliphate.

Structure and Membership

Prior to discussing the mobilization strategies engaged by HTI, the paper will examine the organizational structure of HTI. This organizational structure of HTI determines some of the strategies deployed by HTI. As noted earlier in the paper HTI is part of the larger HT. Although, HT is a transnational movement with a cohesive leadership, the basic organizational feature of HT is its federated structure of authority. The structure of the HTI leadership is similar to that in other countries. HT

²⁰ Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, March 19, 2008, Al-Hidayah Mosque, Bogor

²¹ The first issue of the republished *Al-Islam* featured an article about Hijrah Towards the Islamic Caliphate. The article highlighted the importance of reviving the Islamic Caliphate. See “Hijrah Menuju Khilafah Islamiyah” no. 1, (July 2000), 1-2.

²² Interview with Dr Sharifuddin Md Zain, Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia leader, 2nd August 2006, Malacca.

divides the Muslim World into different provinces known as *wilayahs*. These *wilayahs* are demarcated along the lines of how the future Caliphate will be divided.²³ At the top of the country leadership, is the *wilayah* committee. The *wilayah* committee is headed by a Mu' tamad. Under the provinces are the local level urban centres managed by a local committee headed by a local head known as *Naqib*.²⁴

While the Mu'tamad of HTI is expected to take orders from the Amir and central leadership of HT, they exercise a high degree of independence. The *Naqib* is essentially in-charge of various study circles within the locality. The fact that the central leadership of HT is not in Indonesia also means that there is some degree of fluidity in its leadership structure. In the event that the leadership of a particular chapter of HT is suppressed, its operations can be managed by the Mu'tamad of HT in another chapter. As HTI began to expand, *naqibs* were appointed at the provincial level. As such each of the Indonesian provinces where HTI had a presence, there was a local *naqib* reporting to the HTI Mu' tamad. In the Indonesian context, a *wilayah* committee known as the *Dewan Pimpinan Pusat* (Central Executive Committee, DPP) was formed under the leadership of al-Baghdadi in early 1990s.²⁵ At the regional level, committees known as the *Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah* (Provincial Executive Committee, DPW) were formed and at the district level the *Dewan Pimpinan Daerah* (District Executive Committee, DPD) were established. Within each district, party members are further divided into smaller groups known as *halaqah*. Each *halaqah* comprises five to seven HTI activists and sympathizers. At the top of

²³ For more on the leadership structure of HT, see ²³ Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest, Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996), 116

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

this hierarchy is the Chairman of the DPP, Hafidz Abdurrahman but Abdurrahman is unlikely to be the *Mu'tamad* of HTI since this is often kept a secret. Similar to the chapters of HT in other countries, HTI closely guards the hierarchy of its leadership. While members of the DPP are known, they are careful not to disclose who amongst these members are the Mu' tamad and naqib. Only members of the DPP will know who the actual Mu' tamad is. Several departments known as *lajnah* also exist within the DPP, DPW and DPD. These departments include the political, economic and student departments. The student department later went on to form the *Gerakan Pembebasan Mahasiswa* (The Undergraduate Emancipation Movement, GEMA) in 2001.²⁶ Today, HTI has a presence in all 31 Indonesian provinces and more than 200 districts.

HT and HTI also maintain a three level membership structure. The levels divide the party by degrees of commitment to the party and the passion for the revival of the Caliphate. At the first level, are activists who are deemed as sympathizers of HT and HTI. These activists often belong to a halaqah and are viewed as students of the party but not adequately indoctrinated to become full members. At the second level are members who have demonstrated knowledge of the party through in-depth study of HT's texts and who have performed an oath of allegiance. This oath of allegiance here is similar to the bai'ah adopted by many Islamist movements. Bai'ah is an important component of HTI's ideology. These members vow to be loyal to HT's constitution and its leadership. Bai'ah serves an important function as a binding agent. The practice of bai'ah can be traced back to the Prophet himself. It was believed that Prophet Muhammad had received bai'ah from the Muslims of Madinah. Bai'ah is a social

²⁶ Interview with Agung Wisnuwardana, 24 March 2008, Jakarta.

contract between the leader of an Islamic state and the people wherein the leader promises to obey Islamic law and the people, in exchange, promise their allegiance. This practice in essence forced members to hold their allegiance to HT, failing which they will be seen to contravene Islamic laws. However, unlike many other Islamist organizations, HTI and HT fall short of declaring ex-members infidels. The third level of membership is one whereby members begin to take up positions within the party. The three-level structure allows the party to screen and assess its members to ensure that only the most committed are appointed to lead the party. At the same time, these sympathizers often provide important resources for HTI, such as increasing participation at mass public events or even by way of financial support. It is pertinent to note that these different levels of membership within HTI inevitably lead to a diversity of ideas and ideology within HTI. As will be demonstrated in the next section, HTI's organizational structure is an important determinant to HTI's recruitment strategies.

Resource Mobilization Strategies

HTI is a semi-populist movement. This means that it aims to influence the masses to accept its goals but it does not necessarily mean that they must become members of HTI. One of the HTI leaders said that "It is not important for us to recruit every single person. Only a few chosen people would be enough to effect change. However, the masses must be educated about the Caliphate so that when the time comes, they will support it".²⁷ In attempting to change the mindset of Muslims, HTI utilizes both the media, by way of its publications, online resources, intellectual programs, as well as public demonstrations. These twin channels are utilized by HTI to spearhead its

²⁷ Interview with Ismail Yusanto, 24 March 2008, Jakarta.

movement and propagate its ideas to the masses. Recruitment remains an important resource mobilization strategy of HTI. Without a doubt, the key target groups for recruitment are professionals and students. HTI itself was born out of a student movement and feels that students could make a significant change to their country in the future. Another important group that is targeted by HTI are Muslim women. In their efforts to educate the masses and recruit activists, HTI also utilizes formal organizations in most cases. Perhaps the most important resource mobilization strategy of HTI is to effect change within important segments of the Indonesian society. As alluded to earlier, in its methodology, HT and HTI believe that it is important for the party to seek *nusrah* from important individuals and groups within the Indonesian society. In particular, HTI aims to influence as many Muslim scholars, government leaders and military leaders to support its cause. This is often done through utilizing informal networks as will be shown later in the paper.

Disseminating the Ideas: Changing the ‘Fikrah’ of the Masses

In their efforts to publicize and educate the Muslim public in Indonesia about HT and the need to revive the Islamic Caliphate, HTI utilizes various methods. This is also in line with the first stage of its strategy of engaging the Muslim public. This is often done through formal means such as publications,

Publications

The most important way for HTI to disseminate its ideas is through its publications. HTI produces a weekly pamphlet, the Al-Islam bulletin. The Al-Islam Bulletin is circulated to the Indonesian masses. HTI activists throughout the country circulate the bulletin every Friday after the weekly Friday prayers. Copies of the Al-Islam are often

left beside donation boxes placed at the mosque.²⁸ During the initial publication of the bulletin in 1993, HTI published and disseminated about five thousand copies of the bulletin.²⁹ *Al-Islam* features HTI's views about contemporary issues affecting Muslims in Indonesia and other parts of the world and publicizes upcoming events and activities organized by HTI. *Al-Islam* is meant for the larger Indonesian masses and its language is simple and is extremely readable. HTI sees this as a form of culturing process to introduce the Indonesian public to its ideas.

Besides, *Al-Islam*, HTI also publishes a monthly journal, *Al-Wai'e*. *Al-Wai'e* was first *Al-Wai'e* published in 2000 just before the 2000 conference and was launched at the conference.³⁰ Unlike *Al-Islam*, *Al-Wai'e* has a more intellectual content. The journal is structured and often included several columns such as Analisis Utama (Main Analysis), Muhasabah (Reflection), Fokus Utama (Main Focus), Wawancara Khusus (Special Interview). In each of these columns are articles by HTI members or special coverage of domestic or international issues relating to the Muslim World. It is obvious that the journal is meant for the more intellectual groups within Indonesian society primarily young professionals and students. The fact that about a hundred thousand copies of *Al-Wai'e* are sold today reflects its popularity and reach. Today, the journal is distributed to more than ninety agents in all the Indonesian provinces as well as in Sydney Australia.³¹

In September 2005, HTI began translating *Khilafah* magazine produced by HT Britain from English to Indonesia. Often the magazine featured similar articles to that of the English version. However, the Indonesian *Khilafah* magazine has a special segment,

²⁸ Personal Observation of author in several mosques in Jakarta and Bogor.

²⁹ Interview with Ismail Yusanto, 24 March 2008, Jakarta.

³⁰ Interview with Muhammad al-Khaththath, 18th March 2008, Jakarta.

³¹ For the list of distributing agents, see *Al Wa'ie*, No. 91, Year 8, 1-31 March 2008, Back Cover Page.

Reportase (Reporting) written by a HTI member covering issues affecting Muslims in neighboring countries. Issues have been written about the condition of Muslims in Thailand, Burma and Singapore.³²

Beyond magazines, HTI also translates many books produced by HTI into Bahasa Indonesia. HTI members own several publishing houses in Bogor, a town in the outskirts of Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. These publishing houses include *Pustaka Thariqul Izzah, Al-Izzah Press*.³³ These translated books are known as *Mutabannat* (Basic Text) and are often used in the reading sessions of the HTI.³⁴ HTI leaders claim that about fifty thousand copies of these books have been published.³⁵ These publishing houses also publish books authored by HTI leaders and activists since the 1990s. The earliest book published by the Al-Izzah Press is Ismail Yusanto's *Islam Ideologi* (Ideological Islam). One of the latest books written by a HTI leader is Hafidz Abdurrahman's *Islam Politik dan Spritual* (Political and Spiritual Islam).³⁶ About five thousand copies of these books have been published. Since 2006, HTI has set up the HTI Press, which focuses on translating HT books into Indonesian. All the publications printed by the publishing houses are written by HT ideologue, HT and HTI leaders. HTI also publishes small booklets to address issues specific to the Indonesian context.³⁷ These booklets are meant for mass circulation and generally about a hundred thousand copies of these booklets are published for the purpose.

³² See *Khilafah Magazine*, Year 1, No. 6, March 2006; *Khilafah Magazine*, Year 1, No. 8, May 2006 and *Khilafah Magazine*, Year 2, No. 6, March 2007.

³³ The author personally visited these publishing houses in Bogor in March 2008.

³⁴ For instance, An-Nabhani's books, the *System of Islam*, *Islamic State* and HTI's *The Structure of the Khilafah State* were published by HTI Press.

³⁵ Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, 21 Mar 2008, Bogor.

³⁶ Hafidz Abdurrahman, *Islam Politik dan Spritual* (Jakarta: Wadi Press, 2007)

³⁷ These booklets include *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, Aceh, Nusantara dan Khilafah Islamiyah* (n.p, 2005) and *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, Jejak Syariah & Khilafah di Indonesia* (Bogor: HTI Press, 2007).

Online Resources and Digital Sources

The party also utilizes its website, <http://www.hizbut-tahrir.or.id/> to spread the party's message. The website features a daily reporting of various types of domestic and international news relating to the Muslim World. These articles are often followed by commentaries about the articles from members of HTI. At the same time, visitors to the website can download issues of the Al-Islam bulletin and Al-Wa'ie for the last one year. A section called "From the Spokesman's Office" features all press statements issued by HTI. Some of the key texts of HT which have been translated can also be found on the website. The website also provides links to the website of other chapters of HT as well as features photographs and videos about developments within HT worldwide. Visitors to the website can also provide feedback and comments to HTI and inform their friends about the website through an automated online system. Interestingly, the party also has sections within the website featuring articles in Arabic and English. HTI also often utilizes videos to spread their message. They employ a team of professionally trained video-men to videotape their functions. The most important of these videos is the video of the International Khilafah Conference organized by HTI in 2007. This video was professionally done, with comments by forum participants, organizers and excerpts from speeches given by HT leaders in other parts of the world about the conference. The HTI video crew is responsible for capturing the HTI events including seminars, demonstrations and conferences on video.

Beyond utilizing formal means, members of HTI also utilize informal online sources to spread its goals. Many HTI members are also active contributors to various Muslim

online forums, often utilizing these platforms to introduce HT ideas and promote events organized by HTI. These forums include the Ummah Online Forum and Melayu.com.³⁸ Another online platform utilized by HTI is the You Tube website. HTI members have posted snippets of their seminars and talks.³⁹ These videos are often videos produced by HT Britain, inserted with Indonesian translation or a voiceover in Indonesian. In addition, several HTI members are also beginning to utilize the increasingly popular networking site, Face Book, to encourage their friends to attend HTI functions. Some of HTI members are also part of various groups which form part of the Face Book Online groups such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir group, the Revival of the Khilafah group and the International Khilafah Conference 2007 group.⁴⁰

Seminars, Talks and Conferences

HTI also engages the Muslim public in Indonesia through seminars, talks and conferences. The seminars and talks are held daily in different parts of the country. However, the larger seminars tend to be organized in Jakarta. In such seminars, HTI leaders would speak in a panel consisting of two to three speakers. The other speakers could be from a variety of backgrounds including figures from liberal Islamic groups, ministers, academics and important figures from within Indonesian society. Amongst the figures that HTI has engaged in the past are, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (alleged spiritual leader of the Jemaah Islamiyah terror network), Sidney Jones (renowned terrorist expert) and Siti Fadilah Supari (Indonesian Health Minister). HTI uses the fora or seminars to get the invited speakers to support their position for the implementation of

³⁸ For examples of these postings, see <http://www.geocities.com/ummahonline/suratpembaca/suratpembaca05.htm> and <http://www.melayu.com/v2/seimbang2/mesej.php?thread=15184>, Accessed on 30 December 2007.

³⁹ For examples of these clips, see <http://youtube.com/user/tedungselar> Accessed on 30th December 2007.

⁴⁰ Personal Observation of Author on the Face Book website.

Shariah and the revival of the Caliphate in Indonesia.⁴¹ HTI also invites political or religious figures that disagree with their views on religion and politics to debate with them on these issues.⁴² The purpose of these seminars and talks are to introduce the more educated segment of the Indonesian society to the ideas of HTI and win them over. HTI also organize seminars where foreign HT members are invited to speak. These seminars tend to be only for members and sympathizers of HTI and are often held behind closed doors. Such seminars are targeted to boost the members' confidence in HTI and strengthen their bonding within the HT movement.⁴³

Public Demonstrations

Since 2000, HTI has been actively involved in using demonstrations and rallies to galvanize support from Indonesians and create awareness about their ideology. HTI's demonstrations are carefully planned and often centred on issues relating to Indonesian politics or politics of Muslim countries. For instance, in February 2002, HTI organized a demonstration in front of the Singapore Embassy after the then Singaporean Senior Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, accused Indonesia of being a nest for terrorism.⁴⁴ HTI also tends to demonstrate against government policies they deem as affecting the lives of Indonesians negatively. In March 2005, HTI organized a demonstration against a proposed hike in fuel prices.⁴⁵ They also organized demonstrations in a show of solidarity with Muslims in conflict ridden areas of the world. This could be seen in protests that were held by HTI against the invasion of

⁴¹ Personal Observation of Author at the Forum on Societal Research titled "Siti Fadila Supari Melawan: Saatnya Indonesia berubah!" at the YTKI Building, Jalan Gatot Pembicara, The speakers at the forum were Siti Fadilah Supari, Jose Rizal Jornalis (Chairman of MER-C Indonesia) and Farid Wajdi(HTI).

⁴² Personal Conversation with Dr Syafii Anwar, Director of the International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP). Syafii Anwar was invited to speak at a HTI seminar but was publicly criticized.

⁴³ Personal Observation of Author at seminar organized by HTI at the Sahid Jaya Hotel, Jakarta on the 13th of August 2007 where speakers from HT Britain and Sudan spoke.

⁴⁴ Soal Lee Kuan Yew: RI Harus Punya Posisi," *Kompas*, 27 February 2002.

⁴⁵ *Republika*, 2 March 2005

Iraq.⁴⁶ The issues chosen by HTI demonstrations were organized in a bid by HTI to galvanize support from the Indonesian Muslims to its cause. HTI activists also use rallies to educate the Indonesian masses about the importance of the Islamic Caliphate. This is in part due to the lack of awareness among many Indonesian Muslims about the Caliphate. In March 2006, HTI held public marches around the country marking the fall of the last caliphate in Turkey. More than twenty thousand members rallied in the cities of Jakarta, Surabaya, Solo, Semarang and Makassar.⁴⁷ These demonstrations are important as HTI gains access to Indonesian Muslims who might not be predisposed to their ideas but might be supportive of some of the issues propounded by HTI in these demonstrations. These Muslims could potentially be recruited to become members of HTI. Most importantly, these demonstrations help to propel HTI as an organization that champions issues close to the hearts of Muslims in Indonesia. Furthermore, public demonstrations are used as a platform by HTI leaders to create an aura of strength and power surrounding the party and project their power.

Mosques

Mosques are amongst the most important communication channels used by HTI to propagate its ideas and expand its membership base. HTI's usage of mosques is a good example of its utilization of informal networks for its purposes. Unlike the larger Muslim organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah that are essentially involved in the building and preservation mosques, HTI focuses on infiltrating mosque committees to subsequently dominate their activities. HTI activists have used the mosques located near various campuses since the 1980s.⁴⁸ Since 2000, HTI has begun to utilize larger mosques for its purposes. HTI activists are

⁴⁶ See *Kompas*, 3 April, 2002; *Jakarta Post*, 7 April 2003

⁴⁷ Agence France Presse March 5, 2006

⁴⁸ Agus Salam, (see note 3 above), 170.

encouraged to perform their prayers at the local mosques near to their homes and involve themselves with mosque activities. This is due to the fact that mosques form an important recruiting ground for HTI, as people from all segments of society go to the mosque. This means that HTI can recruit beyond their traditional supporters - the professionals and students. While HTI leaders deny any attempt on their part to gain control of the *Dewan Kerja Mesjid* (Mosque Management Committee, DKM), other sources within the party have confirmed that HTI activists systematically try to either control the DKM or at the very least ensure that a HTI activist sits in the DKM. This is extremely important for the HTI as the local chapter of HTI can then freely organize activities in the mosques without any opposition from the DKM. HTI leaders such as Hafidz Abdurrahman and Muhammad al-Khaththath are often invited to deliver sermons during the weekly Friday prayers and conduct lectures at various mosques. Hafidz Abdurrahman conducts weekly talks every Sunday morning at the Al-Hidayah mosque near to his house in Bogor.⁴⁹ Special talks commemorating important Islamic events such as the birthday of the Prophet (Maulidur Rasul) are also organized.⁵⁰ These talks give HTI leaders an aura of respectability and morality. At the same time, they tie the organization to Islam, thus legitimizing the group's oppositional message.⁵¹ This is especially important given that most HTI leaders are never trained as religious scholars in the formal sense. HTI activists also use the mosque to organize activities such as the *Pesantren Ramadhan* (Ramadhan Religious School), a program that targets youths within the community. These youths are encouraged to come to the mosques for various religious activities, which allow HTI

⁴⁹ Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, 20th March 2008, Bogor

⁵⁰ The author attended a talk conducted by Muhammad al-Khaththath at the Darul Hidayah Mosque in Ciputat, a rural area close to Jakarta. The attendees at the talk were mostly villagers who are blue collared workers, a group that is not the traditional supporters of HTI.

⁵¹ Billings, Dwight B & Shaunna L. Scott.. "Religion and Political Legitimation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 20 (1994): 173.

activists to also introduce their ideas. Similar to the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, mosques assist HTI in creating and maintaining a public space for the party in the ideological sense that they give the party a borrowed religious virtuousness, while also insulating discussion from alternative beliefs.⁵² Another key reason for HTI's successful employment of the mosque as a recruiting ground could be due to the fact that HTI is often seen through a neutral lens in Indonesia. The fact that HTI has never been directly or indirectly involved in electoral politics seems to assure many DKM members that HTI activists are sincere in their efforts to propagate Islam.⁵³

Recruiting the Hizbiyyahs: Targeted Formal Approaches

Beyond the mass base strategies, HTI also devises what could be termed as targeted strategies in propagating its ideas. It does so by using innovative ways to recruit certain groups within the society to their cause. Amongst the groups that HTI targets are students and women.

Student Organizations

During its formative year, HTI focused its activities on recruiting students. They utilized the Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LDK) for these purposes. However, in 1994, it decided to leave LDK due to the problems with the Muslim Brotherhood inspired groups within the LDK. However, HTI never totally strained its ties with the LDK. Some HTI members remain in LDK in certain universities. Within HTI, a student

⁵² Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Author(s): Ziad Munson Source: The Sociological Quarterly, 42, no. 4, (Autumn, 2001): 487-510

⁵³ The author spoke to a member of the DKM at the Darul Hidayah mosque who was not a member of HTI and was told that he had confidence in HTI activists, as they are not trying to use the mosque to garner votes during elections.

committee was created to look into propagating its message to students. However, this student committee is an extra-campus group and thus could not effectively penetrate the Muslims student body in various campuses. In 2001, HTI made a decision to once again involve itself in student activities within campus. It did so by forming GEMA. GEMA was used by HTI to expose students in various campuses to its ideas. At its formative stages, GEMA was active in several campuses in Malang, Bogor and Jakarta. Later it expanded its presence to other Indonesian provinces including Makassar, Aceh, Kalimantan and Papua. In August 2004, after gaining significant strength, GEMA was officially launched at the Japanese Study Center in the University of Indonesia. At the same time, its website at <http://www.gemapembebasan.or.id> and a monthly bulletin, *Bulletin Gema Pembebasan* were also launched. As in the case of HTI, GEMA also organized seminars, talks and demonstrations. During some of the talks and seminars, GEMA invited HTI leaders to address the student communities in the campuses. The slight difference between some of its activities and that of HTI's was that GEMA also championed issues that specifically affected students, such as fee hikes.⁵⁴ GEMA is basically a student front for HTI to recruit from amongst the students. Members of GEMA often attend study circles, similar to the HTI study circles, and often read the same materials advocated by HTI. Subsequently, members who are seen to be committed are then invited to join HTI's study circles. As such, it must be noted that not all members of GEMA are members or even sympathizers of HTI. One of the main activities of GEMA is the formation of academic study groups. These study groups are formed based on areas of research interest and expertise. For instance, at the IKB, one of the main areas of research is global warming. In Mar 2008, GEMA

⁵⁴ Interview with Sect-Gen of Gema Pembebasan, Erwin Al-Jundi, 24 March 2008, Jakarta.

members invited several environmental engineers, environment activists and members of HTI to address the issue of global warming. Speakers at the event blamed global warming on the capitalist economic structure dominated by huge Western MNCs. These organizations, they felt, are largely responsible for all the major forms of pollution around the world, resulting in global warming. GEMA was also behind the formation of Forum Mahasiswa Islam (The Muslim Undergraduate Forum) in 2007. This forum consisted of the main Islamic undergraduate organizations such as KAMMI and HMI. The aim of this forum was to unite the Muslim undergraduates to work for the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia. However, privately, GEMA leaders admitted that the forum was a platform for them to introduce their ideas to the other student activists, whom they failed to convince in joining the HTI.

Women

Unlike many Islamist movements that shun female participation in politics, women are welcomed into the ranks of party membership, albeit in different roles from those of men.⁵⁵ The importance of women in HTI's struggle is underscored by the existence of a women's chapter of HTI called Perempuan Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Women Activist of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia). The creation of this division has occurred due to a strong demand by female members of HTI for the creation of an avenue for active participation of women to carry out special activities targeted at women.⁵⁶ This wing is currently headed by Zulia Ilmawati, wife of Ismail Yusanto. While, the real number of women in HTI cannot be ascertained, the large number of women attending HTI's functions and demonstrations is reflective of their important position. As a form of recognition for its contribution, Ilmawati sits in the DPP of HTI. HTI's position on

⁵⁵ Zeyno Baran, (see note 8 above), 32.

⁵⁶ Interview with Ismail Yusanto

women is summed up in a special booklet produced by the group titled *Perempuan dan Politik Dalam Perspektif Islam* (Women and Politics from an Islamic Perspective). Here HTI clearly states that both men and women have an equal responsibility to revive the Caliphate.⁵⁷ HTI goes on further to explain that women have the right to give bai'ah to the Caliph and can also be elected into a political post, as long as the post is not that of the Caliph, Provincial Governor or District Head.⁵⁸ HTI also accord a special section of its website to discuss issues relating to women. Amongst the topics that are addressed include women and violence, gender equality and other women's rights issues. Another booklet, *Syariah Islam: Menjamin Kesejahteraan Ibu dan Anak* (The Shariah Guarantees the Well-Being of Mothers and Children) is clearly aimed at mothers and argues that the current social ills are a result of the absence of the Caliphate. HTI goes on to urge mothers to carry out da'awah to ensure the future well-being of their children. The success of the HTI women's wing could be measured by their role in supporting the Anti-Pornography laws in Indonesia.

It can be argued that the HTI has won some women over to their cause by means of a strikingly original and effective approach. This is through a women's magazine that it has published, titled the Female Reader, which has received wide popularity since its inception on November 2006. While the magazine cannot be said to be a HTI publication, it is to be noted that about 80% of the contributors are members of HTI.⁵⁹ Just like any other ladies magazine, the Female Reader features articles related to fashion, women's health, child rearing, cooking and articles related

⁵⁷ Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, *Perempuan dan Politik Dalam Perspektif Islam* (Jakarta: Hizbut Tahrir, 2003), 8-9.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 23-25

⁵⁹ See samples of Female Reader in 2007 and 2008. For instance Female Reader, 2, no. 5 (September-Oktober 2007).

to Women and Islam. The cover page of the magazine always features a stylist, good looking Muslim lady, dressed in fashionable Islamic attire. The tag line that the magazine uses is *Be Smart and Sharii* (Shariah Compliant). At the same time, every issue would feature several articles on HTI's concepts and notion of the Caliphate. Yet the name Hizbut Tahrir is hardly mentioned to ensure that readers do not link the magazine to HTI. It is clear that the magazine targets urban, better-educated women, who may be attracted to the fresh approach of the magazine. It is currently published every two months and has a circulation of about 20, 000.

HTI's strategy of recruiting women is indeed unique for an Islamist group. It is indeed rare to see women playing such an active role in other chapters of HT. This approach is indeed important and has borne fruits for HTI. At the International Khilafah Conference, there were more women than men present. The number of young women present is also larger than what is seen in most Islamist functions in Indonesia. Support from women will be very important for the HTI, given the larger women's population in Indonesia.

Non-Muslims

Perhaps the oddest group that HTI had attempted to recruit are the non-Muslim. More recently, HTI members in certain parts of Indonesia have attempted to convert non-Muslims and influence them with HTI's ideas. The best example of this is HTI's recruitment strategy in the province of Papua. Papua is a province with a history of secessionist problem. While the people of Papua subscribe to indigenous beliefs, there has been increased attempt at converting these people. HTI teachings took hold in Papua due to the recruitment of Mohamed Fadzlan Garamatan, a native Papuan who

had converted to Islam.⁶⁰ Fadzlan had established an Islamic charity called Al Fatih Kaafah Nusantara (AFKN). The AFKN's primary role is to proselytize to the indigenous populace.⁶¹ Fadzlan himself often leads these efforts. Often the leaders of Papuan tribes are targeted for conversion. Conversion of tribal leaders will lead to the mass conversion of the other members of his tribe.⁶² To achieve this aim, AFKN also offers scholarships to Muslim converts to further their studies.⁶³ HTI's ability to convert and recruit indigenous Papuans have to do more with the fact that Fadzlan is an indigenous Papuan and as such was trusted by many of the Papuan people. At the same time, HTI is the only Muslim organization that had fought for a more equitable distribution of economic resources (Copper and Gold) for the Papuan, an issue that had drawn a wedge between the Indonesian state and the Papuan people.⁶⁴ It is indeed difficult to assess the extend of HTI's influence in the area. However, more than three hundred Papuan Muslims led by Fadzlan had attended the HTI conference held in 2007.⁶⁵

Building the *Nusrah* Network

As far as HTI is concerned, the most important aspect of its strategy is its strategy of building the *nusrah*. As part of its *nusrah* agenda, HTI has been cultivating a number of public figures. These figures include Muslim leaders, politicians, military leaders, journalists and civil servants. This is done through the forming of informal networks.

The use of such informal networks is important for several reasons. Firstly, HTI

⁶⁰ Conversation with Fadzlan Garematan at the HTI Khilafah Conference 2007. Also see ICG Indonesia: Communal Tensions in Papua, Asia Report no. 154 (16 June 2008), 17.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² See AFKN video, Testimoni Dakwah Menembus Rimba di Pendalaman Irian Jaya which showcased Fadzlan Garematan's efforts to convert people in Papua. This video was made as part of Fadzlan's efforts to seek assistance from Indonesian Muslims. A copy of the video was given to the author by Ustaz Muhammad al-Khatthath, one of the HTI leaders.

⁶³ ICG, *Papua*, 18.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Conversation with Fadzlan Garematan.

leaders feel that their use would allow HTI leaders to connect to important figures by relating to events within Indonesian society. At the same time, being involved in some of these informal structures would allow HTI leaders to influence certain important Muslim groups. Most importantly, these informal structures would allow HTI leaders to pursue their agenda without facing repression.

Muslim Networks

One of HTI's vital strategies is to push for the formation of networks of Muslim organizations. HTI feels that due to the long history of many Muslim organizations in the country, it is difficult for a relatively newer organization such as HTI to make its mark or to call for these organizations to adopt HTI's plans. Instead, there is a need for some neutral platform to be formed that would allow HTI to push its agenda forward in a more acceptable manner to these organizations. As stated earlier, HTI played a major role at the *Kongres Solidarity Umat Islam Indonesia*. This congress was mooted by the Indonesian Ulama Council and had met several times to discuss issues affecting Muslims in Indonesia. The first such congress was held in 2001. The fourth congress held from 19th to the 21st of April 2005 at the Sahid Jaya Hotel became one of HTI's crucial victories.⁶⁶ The HTI not only dominated the congress but was also able to convince representatives from forty-five Muslim organizations to be signatories to the "Jakarta Declaration".⁶⁷ The declaration called for the implementation of Islamic laws in Indonesia. The Congress also decided to form a loose network of Muslim organizations, FUI. The fact that Muhammad al-Khaththath was appointed the Secretary-General of FUI shows the disproportionate influence HTI

⁶⁶ Interview with Mursalin, Committee Member of Forum Ummat Islam, 25th March 2008

⁶⁷ Strangely enough, HTI did not keep a copy of the declaration and claimed that the American embassy had devised a plan to ensure that the declaration was destroyed. Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, 18 August 2007, Jakarta.

held in FUI. Since its formation FUI had successfully pushed for stricter Islamic norms to be implemented. This included the introduction of an anti-pornography bill, which bans pornography including acts such as kissing in public (categorized as pornography) in 2006.⁶⁸ FUI was also behind massive demonstrations against the involvement of the US in Indonesian affairs. The latest target of the HTI is the Ahmadiyyah community in Indonesia. HTI is utilizing FUI to push for the Ahmadiyyah to be banned in the country. On the 20th of June 2008, FUI staged a huge demonstration of one hundred thousand people in front of the presidential palace to pressure the government to ban the Ahmadiyah.⁶⁹

Building Networks of Politicians and Bureaucrats

Often, HTI leaders will invite politicians to speak at their events or attend some of the social functions that the group has organized. After these initial contacts, HTI leaders will organize regular meetings with these politicians and begin preaching the ideology of HT to them. To date, HTI has spoken to nearly all-major political figures in Indonesia including President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (he is popularly known by the acronym SBY). Ismail Yusanto recalled that the meeting had occurred prior to SBY becoming president and the president had even hugged HTI leaders to convey a strong sense of brotherhood the president felt for them.⁷⁰ The politicians that seem to have come under HTI ideas include Adyaksa Dault, Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs. He was supposed to inaugurate the International Khilafah Conference held last year but did not attend after receiving stern warning from the Indonesian Cabinet from doing so. Yet, he still attended a dinner organized by HTI, a day after the

⁶⁸ LBKN Antara, 19 March 2006.

⁶⁹ Muhammad al-Khathath made this announcement at a talk held at the Al-Istiqomah Mosque, Cijantung, Jakarta on the 23rd of March 2008.

⁷⁰ Interview with Ismail Yusanto, 24 Mar 2008, Jakarta.

conference held at the Sahid Jaya Hotel and expressed support for the idea of reviving the Islamic Caliphate.⁷¹ He also hosted HT leaders from the UK and Sudan at his ministry and organized a dialogue session between them and the largest youth organization in the country.⁷² Sources within HTI noted that Adyaksa, who is a member of the main Indonesian Islamist party the Prosperity Justice Party (PKS), had studied in HTI study circles and is thus familiar with its ideas. Adyaksa's close relationship with HTI led one PKS leader to remark that his ideological orientation is closer to HTI than PKS. Other important politicians that have grown close to HTI in more recent times include Amien Rais (leader of the National Mandate Party, PAN and chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly) and Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari.⁷³

HTI's influential supporters are not limited to politicians. HTI has gone out of its way to forge ties with key figures in the Indonesian military, such as former army generals. These include ex-head of army staff General Tyasno Sudarto who had demonstrated alongside the HTI during the Danish cartoon caricature controversy.⁷⁴ Another powerful former general and politician, General Wiranto was also known to have met and privately sympathetic to the group's cause.⁷⁵ These strong relationships have led to the HTI gaining access to the Indonesian military. HTI leaders are often featured as speakers at religious talks and sermons organized at various military institutions. HTI leaders also admit that they are in constant contact with army

⁷¹ The author was present at the event held at the Sahid Jaya Hotel, Jakarta on the 13th of August 2007.

⁷² The author was present at the event held at the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Jakarta on the 14th of August 2007. The dialogue was with the Indonesian Youth Council.

⁷³ See ICG Asia, *Briefing Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree* no.78 Jakarta/Brussels (7 July 2008).

⁷⁴ The former general adorned a white Arabic robe during the demonstration and demanded that the Indonesian government acted more strongly against the Danish government. See Tempo Interaktif, 11 February 2006

⁷⁵ A HTI leader made this claim. Apparently Adayaksa Dault is the one who is responsible for linking Wiranto to HTI leaders.

generals and officers from Indonesia's National Intelligence Services (BIN). This is a way for the HTI to present their ideas and hopefully assisting in reviving the Caliphate. Their intention to seek assistance from the military has even publicly admitted by Muhammad al-Khatthath in a rally held at the Al-Azhar Mosque in Jakarta on 2nd September 2005. He had called upon the military to assist the HTI in reviving the Caliphate.⁷⁶ The close relationship between HTI and the military has brought immense benefit to HTI. In the region of Papua, a province that is seeking independence from Indonesia and thus is technically run by the Indonesian military, HTI is given a free reign to preach its ideas. For the Indonesian military, HTI's ideal of trying to unite all Muslims is useful in ensuring that Papua remains part of Indonesia.

Another group that HTI has been focusing on is the government officials at both the district and regional levels. Since the 1990s, HTI had been actively propagating its ideas at the Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN, The Institute of Local Governance), an institution focusing on the training of future bureaucrats. The institute based in attracts students from the different Indonesian provinces and has been a fertile ground for recruitment for HTI.⁷⁷ Often, graduates of these institutions will return back to their provinces and districts to serve as government bureaucrats. At the same time, they will start local chapters of HTI in these areas. The fact that these HTI members are locals give added advantage to HTI. The official backing of HTI has led to the group's strong presence in the provinces of Aceh and South Sulawesi where most of the high level officials are members of HTI. The building of this *nusrah* network is one of the most important strategies of HTI and

⁷⁶ Republika, 3 September 2005.

⁷⁷ Interview with Hafidz Abdurrahman, 21st March 2008, Bogor

may eventually turn out to be instrumental in its efforts to revive the Caliphate in Indonesia.

Understanding HTI's Mobilizing Strategies

As mentioned earlier in the paper, HT sets out a three-stage program for creating a caliphate. To achieve its third stage, HTI similar to the parent HT, rejects the use of violence. Hafidz Abdurrahman asserts that the Caliphate can be revived when an attitudinal change occurs within the Muslim community. This can only be brought about through preaching, education and the development of a comprehensive Muslim self.⁷⁸

It is obvious that HTI is trying to change the attitudes of Muslims in Indonesia towards Shariah and the Caliphate. HTI believes that a Caliphate can be established only if the idea is supported by Muslims. HTI is fully aware of its limited influence compared to other major Islamic organizations in Indonesia. In a survey conducted in 2005, it was shown that only 3.3% of Indonesian Muslims supported HTI compared to 71.7% for Nahdatul Ulama, 54.6% for Muhammadiyah and 59.5% for MUI.⁷⁹ This survey was conducted prior to the formation of FUI (which saw HTI working more closely with MUI) and the International Khilafah Conference in 2007 and it is probable that support for HTI may have increased over the last few years. However, it is unlikely that its support has suddenly surged immensely.

HTI is also aware of the lack of concerted efforts by Islamist groups in Indonesia at trying to recruit certain segments of Indonesian society such as educated women into their fold. These women are not only influential as they are seen as role models by other women and can thus easily influence other Muslim women. Another

⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁹ Koran Tempo, 17 March 2005.

segment of people who are often ignored by Islamist movements are potential converts to Islam. HTI is also sensitive to the fact that converts tend to be more over-zealous in their religious belief. This makes it easier for HTI to indoctrinate these new Muslims as they are often more sensitive to perceived discrimination of Muslims and Islam-bashing.⁸⁰

HTI's strategies of building important relationships with key members of the Indonesian community through strong ties with the military, police, intelligence, government officials and politicians are also closely linked to its need to increase its limited influence in Indonesia. Likewise, it has utilized the FUI and its relations with other major Muslim organizations to strengthen its presence. HTI leaders are practical enough to accept the reality that a Caliphate can be formed in Indonesia only if it receives a broad based support from the Indonesian elite. There is little doubt that HTI has grown quickly to become an important group within the Indonesian political system. HTI leaders claim that its members today dominate important positions within the military and government bureaucracy in provinces such as Papua and Aceh.⁸¹ These informal links with key members of the Indonesian elite ensure the survival of the organization. Inevitably, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the authorities to clamp down on HTI, due to its strong links with some of these elements within Indonesian society.

Growing Influence of HTI

HTI's mobilization strategies have seen the group strengthening its influence in Indonesian society. Despite the fact that HTI is still a small group in Indonesia, its

⁸⁰ Richard Elia, "Al-Qaeda's White Army" *Scotsman*, 13 January 2008.

⁸¹ Some former member of HTI in Aceh reported this.

real influence far outweigh its size. HTI is currently utilizing the FUI as a platform for its fight for issues that are popular with Muslims in Indonesia. FUI has become synonymous with anti-Western and pro-Islamic demonstrations. This will not only strengthen FUI but HTI indirectly. In the campuses, *Gema* its student wing is also now an important player within the circles of Indonesian student movement. It plays an important role in student politics in several universities such as the University of Indonesia and the Bandung Technical Institute (Institute Teknikal Bandung). In some of these campuses, *Gema* had surpassed many of the more traditional, Islamic student movements such as the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI, Assembly of Muslim Undergraduates) and the Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (KAMMI, Indonesian Muslim Undergraduates Action Association).⁸²

Another indication of HTI's growing influence is its ability to influence government decisions. Its mobilization strategy has seen HTI becoming one of the most influential lobbying group in Indonesian Islamist circles. Often, HTI will use different platforms to strive for its cause. In 2006, utilizing the FUI, HTI through its former chairman, Muhammad al-Khatthath organized the One Million Muslim march calling for the enactment of anti-pornography laws.⁸³ While the laws were never officially enacted or passed in the Indonesian parliament, the march organized by FUI and HTI placed tremendous pressure on the Indonesian government to enact the laws. Perhaps an even clearer example of HTI's lobbying is over the issue of the banning of Ahmadiyyahs.

The issue of Ahmadiyyah is important to HTI as it needed to prop its position and expand support for its causes. HTI was also responsible for amplifying the

⁸² Interview with a former chairman of the HMI.

⁸³ "Minggu, Aksi Sejuta Umat", *Kompas*, 20 May 2006. Al-Khatthath confirmed his involvement in organizing the march in an interview with author in Mar 2008.

Ahmadiyyah issue and making it known to the laymen in Indonesia.⁸⁴ It has also manipulate not only the government but also other Islamic groups such as the MUI and the *Badan Koordinasi Penganut Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat* (Bakorpakem, Coordinating Agency For the Overseeing of People's Beliefs) to push for the banning of the Ahmadiyahs. HTI's dual strategy of galvanizing support for its cause at the masses level and utilizing other Muslim organizations to do its bidding are effective in ensuring that HTI's position is strengthened within Indonesian society. As such, while HTI remains small in real number, its ability to impact policy change far outweigh its real strength.

Perhaps, the most important influence of the HTI is the fact that it has successfully mainstreamed the issue of the Caliphate. Besides being closely associated with the concept, HTI has also encouraged other Islamists such as the former spiritual head of the Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and the leader of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI, Front Pembela Islam), Habib Rizieq to adopt as a key platform of their respective organizations. More recently, Ba'asyir left the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia) due his disagreement with leaders of the MMI for adopting a democratic system in choosing its leaders. Ba'asyir's contention with this is due to the fact that he believes that democracy is un-Islamic.⁸⁵ Some observers as well as HTI leaders noted that his intense rejection of democracy is due to him being influence by HTI ideas.

The growth of HTI must not be assessed from the perspective of its strength. Equally important to this discussion is to assess the growth of HTI by observing the

⁸⁴ ICG, *Ahmadiyyah*, 12.

⁸⁵ Ba'ayir Quits Jihad Fighter Group MMI, Jakarta Post, 8 May 2008.

failure of mainstream Muslim organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.⁸⁶ For some younger members of organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah, these organizations have become too closely entangled in the corrupt politics of Indonesia. As such, these organizations have lost credibility in the eyes of many young Indonesians. One author noted that the current youths within NU have become nonchalant to the threat from Islamist movements such as HTI.⁸⁷ Disunity within NU has also seen HTI gaining more support. A case in point of this disunity is the presence a NU leader at the 2007 Khilafah conference. This is despite the fact that the chairman of NU, Hasyim Muzadi stated clearly that NU is against HTI's vision of reviving the Islamic Caliphate. While many younger members of NU and Muhammadiyah had long left the two organizations for Islamist groups and parties such as the PKS, in recent years, HTI seems to have poached PKS members too. It seems that PKS' decision to join the coalition government of President Bambang Yudhoyono had angered many of its members. These PKS members feel that the Indonesian government is not sufficiently Islamic enough. Many of these disgruntled PKS members often leave for HTI.

Conclusion

Today, HTI is growing in influence and popularity. Its ability to effect change despite its small size will have long-term effect on Indonesian politics. It is likely that the emergence of more issues related to role of Islam in Indonesia will result in the strengthening of HTI. Likewise, the current global financial crisis coupled with rising cost of living give credence to HTI's claim that capitalism is un-Islamic and should be

⁸⁶ Conversation with HTI members who were former members of NU and Muhammadiyah.

⁸⁷ Ahmad Baso, *NU Studies: Pergolakan Pemikiran Antara Fundamentalisme Islam dan Fundamentalisme Neo-Liberal* (Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga, 2006)

rejected. Most importantly, its ability to effect change has a large part to do with its ability to recruit Indonesians from different segments of the society. While HTI is not a direct threat to the Indonesian government due to its avowedly non-violent political position, its vision of reviving the Islamic Caliphate is in direct contradiction to the Indonesian state ideology, the Pancasila. HTI is likely to emerge as a key force challenging the state ideology of the Indonesian state. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that HTI's vision can be achieved in the near future. In summing up, it is likely that HTI will increase its influence in the future due its mobilization strategies but it will take several more years before it becomes a serious threat to the Indonesian state.

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