



One Year After Disbandment: What's Next for the JI Community?

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By Adlini Ilma Ghaisany Sjah

SYNOPSIS

A year on from the announcement of Jemaah Islamiyah's disbandment, the JI community has shown a willingness to abandon violence, surrender its assets, and moderate its viewpoint on jihad, all while maintaining its vast social networks. A review of statements made by key JI leaders indicates that this disengagement from violence and the goal of daulah Islamiyah (an Islamic state) is conditional, and JI may still pave the way for continued campaigning for Sharia (Islamic law) in the future. These developments should be monitored for legitimisation of selective violence and the risk of foreign fighter mobilisation.

COMMENTARY

Since the June 2024 declaration of the disbandment of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), JI seniors have demonstrated their commitment by surrendering weapons and assets, providing information on JI fugitives, and permitting government intervention in JI-affiliated *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). While these measures will go some way toward dismantling the structures, chains of command, and secrecy of the JI movement, they do not disrupt one of JI's most significant assets: its social networks. While the JI organisation has gone, the community remains intact.

In [May 2025](#), the Indonesian government released JI's last *amir* (leader), Para Wijayanto, on early parole. JI co-founder and former *amir* [Abu Rusydan](#) is also expected to be given an early release sometime this year. These developments are significant, as the majority of the JI community, many of whom are closely tied to the Islamic Boarding School Communication Forum (FKPP), will be following the guidance of Abu Rusydan and Para Wijayanto for the future as they liaise with the government.

Many former JI members have stated that they will continue to strive for their cause, albeit through above-ground, legal means. While other scholars have discussed JI's continuity as an [ideological movement](#), there has been little analysis of its newly redefined cause. An analysis into statements made by Abu Rusydan and Para Wijayanto in the past year provides insight on how the JI community has recalibrated their movement.

Even as the organisation has disbanded, elements in the JI community will still pose security concerns if it continues to legitimise violence and an exclusivist system of government, which puts parts of the pluralistic Indonesian society at risk.

Conditional Disengagement from Violence

From their recent statements, former JI leaders have largely delegitimised violent jihad in Indonesia, under the condition that the Muslim community is not under attack. In [interviews](#) by police, they pointed to the fact that Muslims in Indonesia can freely practise their faith in everyday life and are provided plenty of social, political, and economic opportunities. As Abu Rusydan [said](#), "The implementation of Islamic Sharia in Indonesia is not blocked by the government".

But while these statements indicate agreement among key leaders on the organisation's disengagement from violence, they also condition this on the protection of Muslim rights in the country. Para Wijayanto has been [quoted](#) as saying, "If we or the Muslim community is attacked, we will not remain silent."

Furthermore, senior JI figures have only emphasised the delegitimation of violence in Indonesia, but not in other parts of the world. Para Wijayanto [argued](#) that violence is not permitted because the Indonesian population has a Muslim majority, which, even if some are members of the military or police, makes them an unlawful target to attack. This is not a new stance; when Para Wijayanto was *amir* in 2020, the organisation had already [disbanded](#) its military training and intelligence divisions in Indonesia.

Concerningly, even during this earlier period of disengagement from violence in Indonesia, JI remained committed to using international jihad to protect Muslims, particularly in Sham (the greater Syria area) and Yemen, which are significant battlegrounds in Islamic prophetic narratives. A [survey](#) held in Central Java in 2022 showed that while only 15 per cent of respondents were supportive of using violence in retaliation for attacks on religion, at least 36 per cent expressed willingness to become foreign fighters to defend the oppressed *ummah* (Muslim community) elsewhere.

The involvement of Indonesians as foreign fighters in international terrorist networks, particularly in key conflict areas where narratives of Muslims being oppressed are strong, is thus a key risk that warrants continuous monitoring. At least 26 JI members remain in Syria and the Philippines, with police planning for their repatriation in [2026-2027](#).

Will the JI Community Continue to Strive for an Islamic State?

A second key concern is whether the JI community will still strive to establish an

Islamic state (*daulah Islamiyah*), not because Islamic Sharia is bad per se, but because the application of such laws may put religious minorities at risk. In the past, JI aspired to implement Islamic law in Indonesia. This stance was partly revised by Para Wijayanto in 2024 in his introspective treatise *At Tatharruf*. He argued that applying man-made law is preferable to applying *hudud* (the Shariah penal code) in a situation where there is a lot of shubhat (uncertainty) and challenges, as long as Muslims understand that man-made laws are not better than Allah's law.

In other words, while the JI community is now more open to accepting the state's laws and governance in the current Indonesian context, the goal of implementing Islamic laws has not been entirely discarded.

Future political engagement from the JI community towards realising this goal of implementing more Islamic laws is thus likely. A senior JI member [said](#) that having "strategic control within government is crucial for protecting Muslim interests". Various JI figures have hinted at this in the past year, discussing JI's transformation into either a [political party](#) or a [mass organisation](#).

Outreach events for communicating JI's disbandment last year revealed that JI's membership base is geographically vast, spanning Aceh to Maluku, with particularly high participation numbers in Central Java (1506 attendees), West Java (871), Lampung (758), and East Java (445). These individuals will form the foundation of the community's future endeavours. Among the wider population, JI's approval rating has also increased.

According to national surveys held by Lembaga Survei Indonesia, while 91 per cent of respondents disapproved of the JI in [2007](#), only 45.7 per cent of respondents disapproved of the organisation in [2022](#). Coupled with the strong networks of pro-JI *pesantrens*, this suggests that JI could garner significant support if it chooses to transition into a political party. For the near future, JI figures have [said](#) that their focus is on strengthening Islamic teachings.

Conclusion

Post-disbandment of the JI organisation, the JI community has shown their sincerity eschewing illegal methods and moderating its stance on the struggle for Islamic Sharia in Indonesia. However, an analysis of public statements expressed by key JI figures, such as Abu Rusydan and Para Wijayanto, indicates that this disengagement from violence and the goal of *daulah Islamiyah* are conditional.

The JI community will likely continue to campaign for Islamic sharia in more legal, above-ground ways, utilising their vast community of supporters, the vast JI-affiliated network of *pesantrens*, and a more sympathetic Indonesian population. Furthermore, the qualified delegitimisation of violent jihad will also open doors for factions, whether inside the JI community or from other organisations, to argue that taking up arms to protect the Muslim community is still permissible, particularly in the context of international conflicts.

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