

# Investigating the Phenomena of Women in Lone Wolf Terrorism in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate The phenomenon of increasing women's involvement in acts of terrorism, especially "lone wolf terrorism" lately needs special attention from policy makers. Women who so far seem far from violent, have in fact been involved in several cases of terrorism, even as "lone wolf terrorism". This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The results showed that the first case of "lone wolf terrorism" in Indonesia occurred in 2021. The motivation of women to become terrorists is based on psychological and sociological aspects. Sociological level aspects include self-selected, self-radicalized and lone wolf terrorism. While the psychological aspects include: economic motives, justice motives, situational motives, social motives, superiority motives, and actualization motives.

**Keywords:** Woman, Terrorism, Lone Wolf Terrorism, Indonesia.

## Introduction

The Indonesian government has a perception of terrorism which is considered a real threat to national security ([Kusuma et al., 2019](#)). Terrorism crimes involve international networks that are carried out in an organized manner, whether carried out individually or as a group, and result in a very extraordinary impact. Based on an analysis from the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK), it is known that sources of funding for terrorism networks in Indonesia come from Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey ([Sarwanto, 2016](#)). Thus, it is no exaggeration if the crime of terrorism is considered an extraordinary crime because. The crime of terrorism has fulfilled the elements of an extraordinary crime, namely endangering the values of absolute human rights, terrorist attacks are random, indiscriminate and non-

selective which allows it to befall innocent people, always contains elements of violence, its association with organizations and even the possibility of using advanced technology such as chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons ([Taskarina, 2018](#)).

The latest news is that a terror act carried out by a woman occurred on October 25, 2022, where in the action the woman single-handedly pointed a FN type pistol at the Presidential Security Force (Paspampres) who were on duty guarding the State Palace ([Dian, 2022](#)). The attack on the State Palace was not the first attempt by women, in 2016 it was recorded that there had been a plan to bomb the State Palace where the bride to be martyred was also a woman ([Putra, 2022](#)). Apart from the State Palace, female terrorists have also attacked the Indonesian National Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri), where in that action a woman identified as Zakiah Aini attacked the National Police Headquarters alone by entering through the back door of the National Police Headquarters and finally pointed a gun at the officers on duty at Police Headquarters. During this incident, police officers took decisive action by shooting the perpetrator dead ([Dirgantara, 2021](#)). According to police investigations, the action carried out by Zakiah Aini was in the category of "lone wolf terrorism" ([Bramasta, 2021](#)). Lone wolf terrorism according to Burton and Stewart is an individual who acts on his own orders regardless of the orders of any network or organization ([Spaaij, 2012](#)).

Many people see women as non-violent, fragile and in fact victims, so that gender roles make women seem powerless and can strengthen women's subordination. In fact, women's feminine characteristics do not hinder women's adaptation to more brutal terrorist roles and activities. The involvement of women in acts of terrorism in Indonesia is both the subject and the object involved in acts of terrorism, the role of women is misused to support and carry out acts of terrorism by their husbands or certain terrorist networks, and that terrorist groups have made women the main actors in acts of terror ([Amelia, et al, 2020](#)).

Stereotypes about women as gentle, supportive of the family, caregivers of children, yielding and far from violence make women neglected in physical examinations, neglected in monitoring, which at one point caught the authorities off guard. Stereotypes towards women can be seen from three aspects, namely biological, psychological and mythological ([Solukhah, 2019](#)). With this stereotype, society places women in that stereotype, they tend not to believe when women commit acts of terrorism, so that women's involvement is often neglected because it relates to their role in the social system and their nature is considered to be impossible to commit acts of violence or terrorism ([Hartana, 2017](#)), so that this is used by terrorists to involve women in their actions. Research results also show that women have a very vital role in terrorist organizations ([Sucahyo, 2021](#)).

The involvement of women in acts of terrorism as the main perpetrators raises its own anxiety for all elements of society, including the government, in this case the BNPT, even according to the Director of Prevention of the BNPT, Akhmad Nurwahid, terror incidents involving women are not new, but the use of women in acts of terrorism is currently becoming a new trend, especially what is done by ISIS, is either done with a network or a lone wolf that is not bound by commands and networks ([Pebrianto, 2022](#)). The echoes of acts of terrorism committed by women are getting bigger because of the influence of the mass media, especially television, where the mass media is a powerful tool for spreading acts of terror. National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) stated that there has been an exploitation of women's strategic role as mothers to transmit radical ideology and prepare children to become martyrs, so that women are involved in brutal acts, even though so far women have always been portrayed as beings who have tenderness and love which suddenly disappear with their involvement in the action ([Qori'ah, 2019](#)).

Previously Indonesian women were always the first and main victims in various acts of terrorism, now their position has shifted sharply. Feminist discourse concludes that women are the most reliable group in terms of loyalty, loyalty and obedience ([Mulia, 2019](#)). In addition, sociologically, women are a vulnerable group, who easily access social media but with low literacy skills so it is not surprising if they receive news and religious lessons through radical sites without critical reasoning. This is what ISIS uses to attract women's interest in participating in acts of terrorism. The presence of ISIS in cyber space has broken down physical boundaries that previously hindered women's participation. Social media in particular, has enabled women to independently build networks and plan attacks without the need for a mahram or male guardian ([Abdul Nasir, 2019](#)) which ultimately becomes one of the driving forces for them to act as lone wolf terrorists. Women are easily provoked in the name of religion so they are reckless and dare to take risks in various acts of terror.

It started in 2010 with the case of Putri Munawaroh, the wife of a friend of Noordin M. Top who was sentenced to eight years in prison. In this case, women are still at the supporter level for harboring a terrorist leader. Then, this level increased in 2016, the DYN case became the talk of the town as a female candidate for the first suicide bombing to be arrested ([Amelia et al, 2020](#)). However, it was all done by women within the framework of groups and networks. The case of women as lone wolf terrorists emerged recently, in 2021 to be precise. So this research is different from previous studies where female terrorists in their actions are still connected to the network. Whereas in this study they acted as lone wolf terrorists whose radicalization process was mostly through social media ([Riyanta, 2022](#)). On this basis, the researcher wants to examine the phenomenon of women becoming "lone wolf terrorism" in

Indonesia with the hope that the results of this study can provide an overview so that women in Indonesia are not trapped in this phenomenon in the future.

## Research Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. In qualitative research methods, researchers ask research questions that are answered through understanding, not with hypotheses, because the essence of qualitative research is understanding a phenomenon, not proving a phenomenon ([Herdiansyah, 2011](#)). Regarding the approach used in this study, Kenneth D. Bailey (2007) defines descriptive research as research that aims to provide a detailed description of a phenomenon (to describe what happened). The data collection technique used is from literature study. In the study of literature, there are at least four main characteristics that the writer needs to pay attention to, including: First, that the writer or researcher deals directly with text or numerical data, not with direct knowledge from the field. Second, library data is "ready to use" meaning that researchers do not go directly to the field because researchers deal directly with data sources in the library. Third, that library data is generally a secondary source, in the sense that researchers obtain materials or data from second hand and not original data from first data in the field. Fourth, that the condition of library data is not limited by space and time ([Zed, 2014](#)). According to Creswell ([Creswell and Poth, 2018](#)), literature study is research conducted by examining qualitative documents such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, reports, and other documents relevant to research. Based on the above, data collection in this study. This is done by reviewing and/or tracing several journals, books and documents (both in print and electronic form) as well as other sources of data and/or information deemed relevant to research or research.

The data analysis technique used in this study consisted of three steps, namely data collection, data presentation, and inference/verification. According to Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) that in data analysis activities there are several steps as follows:

1. Data Collection

Analysis of research data has been carried out from the time the research data collection took place until the data collection was completed.

2. Data Condensation

Data condensation is a simplification carried out through selection, focusing and validation of raw data into meaningful information, making it easier to draw conclusions. Simplification in data condensation is done by coding techniques.

### 3. Data Display

Data display is done by forming brief descriptions, charts, and linking between categories. Presentation of data is usually done in the form of narrative text. This step needs to be done to facilitate researchers in understanding the phenomenon under study.

### 4. Drawing conclusion/verification

Drawing conclusions is the final stage in data analysis which is carried out by looking at the results of data condensation still referring to the formulation of the problem and the goals to be achieved. The data that has been compiled is compared with one another to draw conclusions as an answer to the existing problems.

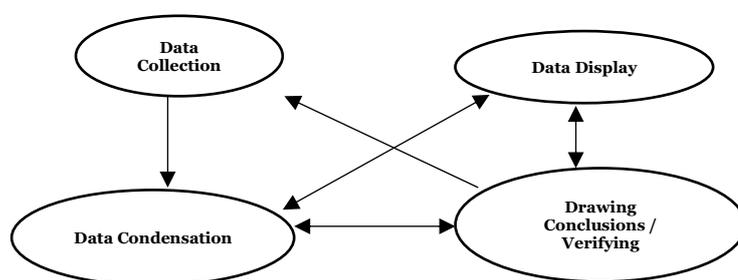


Figure 1. Data Analysis Model (Miles, et al, 2014)

## Result and Discussion

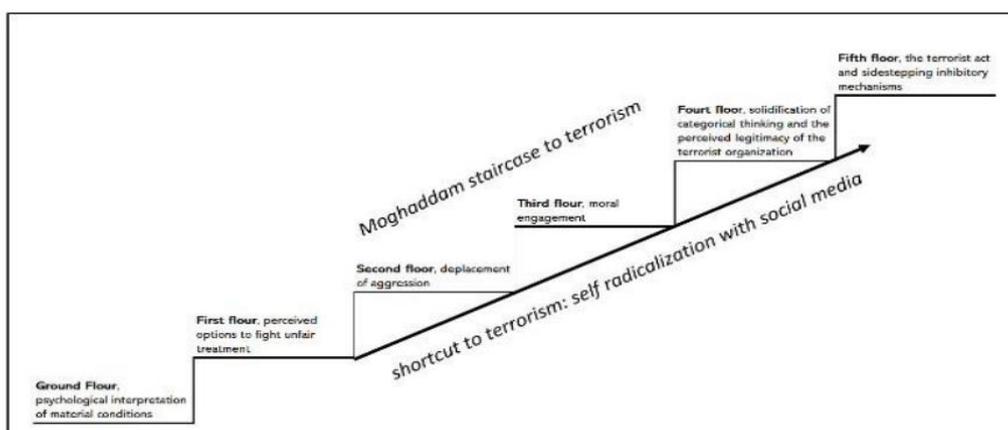
### Lone Wolf Terrorism

Pantucci (Dickson, 2015) categorizes lone wolf terrorism as individuals who pursue terrorist goals alone, either driven by personal reasons or their belief that they are part of an ideological group (meaning a group of individuals who all claim to believe or follow) a similar ideology. Burton and Stewart (Spaaij, 2012) said that a lone wolf is a person who acts on his or her own without orders from—or even connections to—an organization or it can be said that lone wolf terrorism is an individual who acts on his own orders regardless of from any network command or organization. The term lone wolf terrorism has the following characteristics: (1) it is carried out individually; (2) are not part of a terrorist group or network; (3) the modus operandi is understood and regulated by individuals without command. Peter J Phillips (Kuncahyono, 2022) said that in the world of terrorism what is meant by the term lone wolf (lone wolf terrorism) is a terrorist who moves alone, operates alone, without help from any group, and outside the organizational structure or formal terrorist command. This type of lone wolf terrorist, may be more lethal than a terrorist

organization, the causes include, it is difficult to identify, the modus operandi is understood and managed by individuals without any command.

Pantucci (Jafar et al, 2019) suggests that there are four typologies of lone wolf terrorism, namely as follows: (1) Loners are individuals who plan and try to carry out attacks without being affiliated with extremist groups but using the ideology of extremist groups, (2) Lone Wolf, namely individuals who carry out their own actions without external encouragement but still have a relationship with active extremist groups, (3) Lone Wolf Pack, namely individuals who already have ideological motives for a process of self-radicalization, (4) Lone Attackers, namely individuals who operates independently but has strong affiliation and control with active extremist groups.

Harits Abu Ulya, a terrorism observer from the Community of Ideological Islamic Analyst (Yahya, 2021) said that lone wolf terrorism is: 1. An act of attack carried out by someone independently. This independence starts from the preparation until the time for the execution of the action. Besides that, a person who carries out a lone wolf action generally does not have a network with any terrorist group, 2. A lone wolf has personal desires and his actions are also not on behalf of his group, 3. A lone wolf in carrying out his actions cannot be separated from the impulses of his natural mind, and the nature of the mind departs from various information presented by the media, especially information spread on social media. From that mindset, a lone wolf then has an obsession with carrying out acts of terror. In this case, the media is very influential in the occurrence of acts of lone wolf terrorism. This is in line with Riyanta (2022) who said that when individuals experience radicalization through social media, as is often the case for lone wolf terrorism actors, then their stages to become radical, which originally consisted of six according to Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism, change to only three stages, as shown in the picture. below this:



**Figure 2. Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism vs shortcut to terrorism self- radicalization with social media (Riyanta, 2022)**

## The History of Women as the Lone Wolf of Terrorism in Indonesia

Based on data processed by researchers from various sources, it is known that the first case of lone wolf terrorism in Indonesia occurred in 2015, better known as the Alam Sutera Mall bombing which was carried out by the suspect Leopard Wisnu Kumala who is known to have no connection with terrorist networks but assembled a Triacetone Triperoxide type bomb (TATP) and blew it up in a mall ([CNN Indonesia, 2021a](#)). In 2017, a pot bomb exploded at the residence of the assembler named Agus Wiguna in Bandung, West Java. It is known that the bomb exploded by itself when the perpetrator was not at his house. Based on police investigations, it is known that the panic bombs assembled by the perpetrators were planned to be detonated in three places in the city of Bandung, namely the Piggy Bank restaurant, a cafe on Jalan Braga, and a church on Jalan Buah Batu. The police said that the perpetrator was a lone wolf terrorist, working alone from assembling to studying jihad ([Tim Detikcom, 2021](#)).

The next lone wolf act of terrorism occurred in 2019, when a bomb exploded at the Kartasura Police Post, Sukoharjo, Central Java on Monday 3 September 2019 at 23.00 WIB. A man suspected of being the suicide bomber was seriously injured at the scene and has been taken to hospital for treatment. Apart from the perpetrator, there were no other victims. Based on the results of the police investigation, the perpetrator with the initials RA, who works as a fried food seller, has no indication that he is related to any terrorist network, is a lone wolf actor, or acts alone ([Halim, 2019](#)). In the same year, acts of lone wolf terrorism also occurred again in Indonesia, to be precise at the Medan Police Headquarters, North Sumatra. The police released the identity of the suicide bomber known as Rabbial Muslim Nasution, 24 years old. Provisional allegations, the perpetrators carried out terrorist acts alone or lone wolf. From the results of processing the incident location, the police confiscated a battery, metal metal plate, a number of nails in various sizes, pieces of cable, on-off switch buttons. The perpetrator is known to act by wearing an online motorcycle taxi jacket. He infiltrated by taking advantage of the crowd of people who were lining up to make the Police Clearance Certificate (SKCK) at the Medan Police Headquarters. In the Medan bombing incident, six people became victims, namely four members of the police, one civilian, and one casual daily worker. All victims are currently receiving treatment at the Bhayangkara Hospital in North Sumatra ([Rahma, 2019](#)).

Lone wolf terrorism attacks in Indonesia have occurred again in 2021. A woman with the initials ZA, armed with a firearm, broke into the Indonesian National Police Headquarters. The woman then fired six shots while trying to attack the area of the National Police Headquarters before officers finally disabled her.

National Police Chief General Listyo Sigit Prabowo said the perpetrator acted alone without an organized network or lone wolf ([CNN Indonesia, 2021c](#)). Based on data collected by researchers, this attack was the first female lone wolf terrorist attack in Indonesia. According to the Police, the perpetrator was a lone wolf terrorist with ISIS ideology, this was known through the social media of the perpetrator who posted the ISIS flag. In ZA's case, it is known that he became a lone wolf terrorism through being self-radicalized through using the ideologies brought by ISIS which were accessed in written books and narratives spread via the internet. It was these two sources that changed ZA's mindset to be very radical and succeeded in making plans to commit terror. Understanding of these two reading sources, which have ideological content, then influences their mindset and touches their psychological side.

Apart from these two things, the lure of going to heaven is also a motivation for ZA to carry out his actions. Everyone who believes in religion, surely believes in heaven, a place that is described as full of enjoyment and beauty that will never end, but it's a shame that ZA got the wrong doctrine about how easy it is to get heaven by becoming a terrorist so he can die as a martyr. This is according to the will written by ZA. There, apart from writing an apology to his parents, prohibiting him from dealing with banks and the government, which he considers aggressive, he also contains his belief that his suicide is a way to martyrdom which can become his intercessor and a means of gathering in heaven ([Kasanah, 2021](#)). This is because the spread of radicalism and the recruitment of terror groups on social media is still a widespread problem in Indonesia. In fact, this case should serve as a warning to law enforcement officials, not to regard this case as an ordinary case because it does not involve a terrorist network ([CNN Indonesia, 2021b](#)).

Based on the results of the investigation, it was discovered that the person concerned was a sympathizer of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which is an organization that has been banned in Indonesia. Women's actions in carrying out their actions to become "lone wolf terrorism" can be based on several things. According to Ramon Spaaij (2012) there are five things that motivate someone to become a lone wolf terrorist, namely: First, creating their own ideology that combines personal frustration with broader political, social, or religious grievances; secondly, suffering from some form of psychological disorder; third, suffer from social disabilities to varying degrees; fourth, transferring personal frustrations to transgressive "others"; fifth, tend to broadcast his intention to commit violence.



Figure 3 First woman lone wolf terrorist attack in Indonesia ([Handayani, 2021](#))

### Motivation of Women to be a Terrorists

Lies Marcoes ([Qori'ah, 2019](#)) explains that there are two factors behind women's interest in acts of terrorism in Indonesia. First, that women agree and believe in the idea of a caliphate. The Khilafah as a system that is in accordance with Islamic law and as an answer to various socio-economic tensions. The joining of women with terrorist groups is a form of their awareness of issues of injustice, inequality and disappointment over economic weakness. They believe that everything they hate can be resolved by means of violence, namely by acts of terrorism. Second, the patriarchal culture which is rooted in the tradition of Muslim seclusion which always places women in second position after men. According to them, radical groups can accommodate what they want and involve women in acts of terror. This is what they believe is a form of 'equality' that they get so that their position is the same as men who dare to wage jihad in the way of Allah.

According to Hujatulatif and Naim (2021) lone-wolf terrorism shows more that terror arises from motivations that arise from a person. This motivation is then related to the sociological and psychological aspects that surround it. In the sociological aspect, lone-wolf terrorism appears without involving other parties in the indoctrination process and as a source of command for action. While on the psychological aspect, the measure is motivation. Sukabdi (2021) explains that there are six aspects of motivation that are standard in analyzing the motivations of terrorist actors in Indonesia, namely as follows: 1) economic motives, 2)

justice motives, 3) situational motives, 4) Social motives, 5) superiority motives, and 6) Actualization motives.

Women can become perpetrators usually because they were victims before, both victims of hoaxes, flattery, propaganda, etc. As a result, women can switch from victims to perpetrators ([Amelia et al, 2020](#)). Apart from that, there are also internal factors, which are more personal motivations, of course different between men and women. The psychological description of women which is known through motivation can be used as a reference for appropriate treatment in order to avoid resistance or rejection. In addition, women's actions in carrying out their actions to become "lone wolf terrorism" can be motivated by several things. For female terrorists who join the ISIS network in Indonesia, based on research conducted by Quanandi, Kertopati and Timur ([Quanandi et al, 2022](#)) the motivations that underlie them to participate in acts of terrorism so that they become the principles of jihad, include; because of personality such as narcissistic, bigoted, religious, and psychopathology. Then it is also influenced by personal background and the closest people who first joined terrorism. In addition, the social identity they believe to be Muslim encourages them to be further involved in terrorist groups.

## Conclusions

Based on the research that has been done, it is known that the first female lone wolf terrorist action took place in 2021 when a woman with the initials ZA attacked the Indonesian National Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri). ZA carried out the attack alone with a gun so that he was paralyzed by the officers on duty at the time. The second female lone wolf terrorist incident that just happened in October 2022, where a woman armed with an FN type of pistol broke into the State Palace by pointing a gun at the Presidential Guard (Paspampres) who were on duty at that time. The perpetrator was then secured by Paspampres who was then handed over to the Police officers who were on guard around the location. A person's motivation to become lone-wolf terrorism is related to sociological and psychological aspects. They only go through stages (1) self-selected for information that confirms the ideological direction they understand, (2) self-radicalized, where they then believe information from radical ideological sources and the like, and stage (3) lone wolf terrorism where they carry out actions limited to the knowledge obtained from these ideological sources.

The limitation of this research is the use of research methods with a literature study approach, this makes this research unable to dig deeper regarding the motivation of the actors. In addition, the phenomenon of female lone wolf terrorism is relatively new in

Indonesia and has only happened twice, the first occurred in 2021 and the perpetrator himself was shot dead by security forces so that information gathering was also limited, the second was an attempt to hold an FN type pistol by a woman against Presidential Guard (Paspampres) at the State Palace which took place this October 2022. It is hoped that in the future, further researchers can maximize research by digging directly into the perpetrators who are still alive so that the data obtained is more in-depth.

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