



TRENDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHALLENGES IN TACKLING EXTREMISM IN THE INDONESIAN CIVIL SERVICE

A'an Suryana

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FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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Challenges in Tackling Extremism in the Indonesian Civil Service

By A'an Suryana

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In his second term (2019–24), President Joko Widodo remains committed in combating radicalism. Anti-radicalism measures such as the banning of radical organization Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), anti-radicalism policies at schools and universities and the deradicalization of terrorists have been expanded to include the Indonesian civil service that currently employs over 4.2 million people across the archipelago.
- In November 2019, a joint decree was signed by eleven government and state institutions to formalize the new anti-radicalism policy.
- This paper argues that some challenges arose during the process of implementing the policy including the lack of cooperation from Personnel Development Officers (PPK) in imposing disciplinary actions recommended by the task force.
- The spread of COVID-19 further impedes policy coordination and has hampered efforts to effectively implement the policy.

Challenges in Tackling Extremism in the Indonesian Civil Service

By A'an Suryana¹

INTRODUCTION

Tackling religious extremism continues to be a priority for President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) during his second term which began in October 2019. Within a month of his return to the presidency, eleven state and government bodies issued a joint decree to curb radicalism among civil servants (see Table 1 for the list of institutions). The joint decree is the latest anti-radicalism policy implemented by the Joko Widodo administration following the banning of pan-Islamist and Muslim fundamentalist group, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), in 2017 through presidential regulation in lieu of the 2013 Law on Mass Organization. The government argued that HTI was banned mainly because the organization had failed to play a positive role in supporting national objectives. Activities conducted by the group were also seen to go against Pancasila and the Indonesian Constitution and had caused clashes between communities. This threatened security and order and potentially endangered the unity of the Indonesian state (Bambang Prasetyo 2019, p. 259).

This set of anti-radicalism policies ultimately seek to fulfil the President's aspiration to enhance pluralism in Indonesia based on

¹ A'an Suryana is Visiting Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. The author would like to thank Nur Syafiqah Mohd Taufek for her research and editing support. The author also thanks Dr Yanuar Nugroho, Dr Norshahril Saat and Dr Syafiq Hasyim for their important feedback and suggestions towards this article.

Table 1: List of Government and State Institutions Signing the Joint Decree

No.	Government Institutions	No.	State Institutions
1.	Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform	7.	State Intelligence Body (BIN)
2.	Ministry of Communication and Information	8.	National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT)
3.	Ministry of Religious Affairs	9.	Agency for Pancasila Ideology Education (BPIP)
4.	Ministry of Home Affairs	10.	National Civil Service Agency (BKN)
5.	Ministry of Law and Human Rights	11.	State Civilian Bureaucracy Commission (KASN)
6.	Ministry of Education and Culture		

Source: The Ministry of Law and Human Rights, <https://www.kemhumham.go.id/berita/11-kementerian-dan-lembaga-tanda-tangani-skb-penanganan-radikalisme-asn> (accessed 6 October 2020).

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity).² This aspiration was proclaimed in Joko Widodo's campaign when he was running for the 2014 presidential election. His campaign platform, known as *Nawacita*, consisted of nine areas of development that Joko Widodo would realize if elected as president.³ His aspiration for a plural Indonesia has continued into his second term, under another political platform titled Indonesia Maju (Indonesia Moving Forward).⁴

This article examines the part of President Joko Widodo's anti-radicalism policy that targets Indonesian civil servants. It outlines the process and progress in implementing the policy, sheds light on challenges in policy-implementation and evaluates the effectiveness of the policy.⁵ This article argues that the Joko Widodo administration has been facing a daunting task in implementing the policy. The implementation has lost momentum due to the COVID-19 pandemic that altered the government's priorities and subsequently reduced the morale of the joint task force.

² Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform (Kemenpan) website, "Peluncuran Aplikasi ASN No Radikal", <https://menpan.go.id/site/berita-foto/peluncuran-aplikasi-asn-no-radikal> (accessed 24 September 2020).

³ After Joko Widodo was elected president, *Nawacita* was included in the National Medium-Term Development Program that was implemented between 2014 and 2019. *Nawacita* consists of nine development priorities: 1. Human Development; 2. Economic Competitiveness; 3. Development Quality; 4. Sustainable Development; 5. Arts and Culture and National Characteristics; 6. Rule of Law; 7. Security and Defence; 8. Bureaucracy and 9. Central-Regional Government Relations (see *Jakarta Post*, "Here are Jokowi-Ma'ruf's Nine 'Missions' for 2019's Presidential Poll", 5 December 2018, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/12/04/here-are-jokowi-marufs-nine-missions-for-2019s-presidential-poll.html> (accessed 25 October 2020).

⁴ *Jakarta Post*, "Here are Jokowi-Ma'ruf's Nine 'Missions' for 2019's Presidential Poll".

⁵ This study employs primary and secondary data, such as interviews of some members of the joint task force and data from media reports. Due to movement restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were mainly conducted through Zoom, except for one crucial interview that was conducted face-to-face at the interviewee's office.

This article attempts to fill a gap in existing studies on government policies that address Islamic radicalism in Indonesia. The current literature heavily focuses on government policies that tackle Islamic radicalism among members of civil society. These articles discuss government's responses in preventing and curbing threats from Muslim groups such as the HTI (Burhani 2017; Hikam and Riyanta 2018; Hasbi Aswar 2018), supporters of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Azil Maskur, 2018) and former terrorists (Widya 2020; Sumpter, Yuslikha, and Priyanto 2019; Sumarlan, 2016). Other articles discuss how the government, public schools and campus administrations implement strategies to prevent Islamic radicalism among students (Nugraha, and Mohamad Fauzan 2020; Umi Sumbulah 2017). In short, these articles only investigate government policies that have targeted Islamic radicalism within the civil society.

In contrast, scholarly works studying government policies that respond to Islamic radicalism within state institutions—especially among civil servants—remain absent. This article is the first to thoroughly discuss the government policy that addresses radicalism among civil servants which was implemented in November 2019. After a year, its progress has not been adequately reported through scholarly outlets such as academic journals. So far, most reports on the joint decree implementation are found in the mainstream media.⁶

⁶ The mainstream press has reported on the implementation of the joint-decree from time to time. Following are some samples of this:

1. *Jakarta Post*, “Ministries Launch Complaint Portal to Weed out ‘Radical’ Civil Servants”, 12 November 2019, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/11/12/ministries-launch-complaint-portal-to-weed-out-radical-civil-servants.html> (accessed 4 November 2020);
2. *Koran Tempo*, “ASN Terpapar Radikalisme, Menteri Tjahjo Kumolo: Kita Bina dan Nonjob-kan”, 2 September 2020, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1382005/asn-terpapar-radikalisme-menteri-tjahjo-kumolo-kita-bina-dan-nonjob-kan/full&view=ok> (accessed 4 November 2020);
3. *Kontan.co.id*, “Menteri Tjahjo Minta PNS Dipecat Bila Terpapar Tiga Hal Ini”, 26 June 2020, <https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/menteri-tjahjo-minta-pns-dipecat-bila-terpapar-tiga-hal-ini> (accessed 4 November 2020).

Signed on 12 November 2019, the joint decree aims to facilitate coordination between the state and government institutions to establish “a bureaucracy that is free from radicalism”.⁷ It outlines eleven offences that, when committed, deem a civil servant “radical”. In the context of this policy, being “radical” includes, but is not limited to, exhibiting symptoms of religious radicalism. Among others, it includes any instances of hate speech—online or offline—against the Pancasila and the government, producing and spreading fake news on social media, and condemning state symbols via offline or social media platforms (see Table 2).

A task force with representatives from the eleven institutions was formed to handle radicalism among civil servants. A complaint portal, *Aduan ASN* (<https://aduanasn.id/>), was also launched by the Ministry of Communication and Information to help identify civil servants who are radical or support radical ideologies. The portal allows anyone, including members of the public to file a report against a civil servant who meets one or more criteria of the offences stipulated in the joint decree. Reports must be accompanied by evidence to prove the civil servants’ support for radical ideas. Evidence often come in the form of screenshots of the civil servant’s social media postings or pictures of the civil servant participating in activities that are deemed “radical”.

The new government policy was not formulated based on any thorough academic research on incidences of radicalism within the civil service. No government official has cited any academic studies to provide evidence on the severity of Islamic radicalism among civil servants—which could have set the context for the implementation of the policy.⁸

⁷ Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform (Kemenpan) website, “Peluncuran Aplikasi ASN No Radikal”, 2 September 2020, <https://menpan.go.id/site/berita-foto/peluncuran-aplikasi-asn-no-radikal> (accessed 24 September 2020).

⁸ Alvares Research Centre, a private organization, performed a study in 2017 on radicalism among professionals, including civil servants; but government officials never referred to this study to justify their move in formulating anti-radicalism policy targeting civil servants. This study, which was released in

However, in an interview, a state official, who is also a member of the task force, claimed that the policy was formulated due to the government's concerns regarding some incidences of civil servants being involved in Islamic extremism and terrorism—some of whom have migrated to Syria to join ISIS.⁹ The state official, who was part of the Indonesia intelligence community, added that during the civil servant recruitment processes, some applicants had already exhibited “radical” religious behaviours. These behaviours were detected through their messages or postings on WhatsApp groups created by several applicants.¹⁰ However, the number of civil servants who were involved in such cases was marginal as compared to the total number of civil servants across Indonesia which amounts to over 4.2 million people.

Although the number of cases was marginal, the government was resolute in not taking these incidences of radicalism for granted. Minister Tjahjo Kumolo, who comes from the same nationalist party as Joko

October 2017, aims to discover religious orientation of professionals in six big cities in Indonesia. It involves 1,200 respondents comprising civil servants, employees of state-owned enterprises and employees of private companies. The religious orientation of these professionals is considered “radical and intolerant” in this survey if: (1) These respondents believe that leadership in government or private spheres must be allocated only for Muslims; (2) These respondents support Islam-sharia by-laws; (3) These respondents believe that Pancasila is not the right ideology for Indonesia. In short, this survey shows that the number of civil servants who do not support non-Muslim leaders; who support Islam-sharia by-laws; and who believe that instead of Pancasila, Islam is the right ideology for Indonesia are respectively 111, 116 and 36 civil servants (out of total 1,200 respondents). See *Berita Satu*, “Survei Alvara: 29.6% Kalangan Profesional Ingin Perjuangkan Negara Islam”, <https://www.beritasatu.com/asnie-ovier/nasional/459687/survei-alvara-296-kalangan-profesional-ingin-perjuangkan-negara-islam> (accessed 1 September 2020). The survey shows that, just like with other professions, civil servants are also prone to be exposed to “radical and intolerant views” of Islam.

⁹ Interview through Zoom with an official at the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) on 16 September 2020. This official is one of the members of the joint task force.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Table 2: Criteria of “Radical” Civil Servants

No.	Criteria
1.	Having expressed spoken or written opinions in the form of texts, images, audios, or videos, through social media, that contain hate speech against Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> , the Unitary State of Indonesia (NKRI), and the Government
2.	Having spoken or written opinions in the form of texts, pictures, audios, or videos, through social media, that contain hate speech against one ethnicity, religion, race and social group in Indonesia
3.	Disseminating opinions that contain hate speech as mentioned in numbers (1) and (2) through social media (sharing, broadcasting, uploading, retweeting or reposting opinions, and so forth)
4.	Responding or supporting as a sign of agreeing with the opinion referred to in numbers (1) and (2), by giving likes, dislikes, loves, retweets or comments on social media
5.	Publishing misleading news both directly and through social media
6.	Disseminating misleading news both directly and through social media
7.	Organizing activities that lead to acts of insulting, inciting, provoking and hating Pancasila, UUD 1945, <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> , NKRI, and the Government
8.	Participation in activities that are believed to lead to acts of insulting, inciting, provoking and hating Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> , the Unitary State of Indonesia and the Government
9.	Using insignias that are against Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> , the Unitary State of Indonesia and the government
10.	Harassing state symbols either directly or through social media
11.	Actions as referred to in points 1 to 10 that are carried out intentionally by the civil servant

Source: Aduan ASN, <https://aduanasn.id/pertanyaan-umum#> (accessed 8 October 2020).

Widodo and serves as one of the key drivers behind the policy, argues that combating radicalism among civil servants is crucial and necessary because employees in the civil service make up 4.2 million of the total population¹¹ and “are one of the pillars of the Indonesian state, alongside the Indonesian military and police”.¹²

Despite the lack of in-depth studies on the pervasiveness of radicalism within the civil service, the policy has been pursued with much seriousness by the government. This is reflected in the number of state and government institutions involved in the signing of the joint decree. Unlike previous joint decrees, the anti-radicalism policy targeting civil servants is by far the largest collaborative effort that involves eleven state and government institutions.

The government’s enthusiasm in pursuing the policy can also be seen from the preparation leading to the establishment of the joint decree. A total of six meetings between 15 October 2019 and 12 November 2019 were held and attended by high-ranking officials from the eleven government and state institutions. Most of the ministers and the chairmen of state institutions did not attend the meetings, but they had the final say over the final draft of the policy. Eventually, these ministers and heads of state institutions signed the joint decree, showing their consensus and support towards the policy.

HARD-LINE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The main aim of the joint decree is to boost coordination and synergy among the eleven government and state institutions to combat radicalism

¹¹ Interview with a top official at the State Apparatus Commission (KASN) on 11 September 2020. The interview was conducted through Zoom.

¹² Statement from Tjahjo Kumolo when he served as keynote speaker during a webinar, which was held following the launch of a government app, called *ASN No Radikal* (no radical civil servants app) on 2 September 2020 in Jakarta. See *IDNtimes*, “Luncurkan ASN No Radikal, Tjahjo Kumolo Ingin ASN Seperti TNI-Polri”, 2 September 2020, <https://www.idntimes.com/news/indonesia/vanny-rahman/luncurkan-asn-no-radikal-tjahjo-kumolo-ingin-asn-seperti-tni-polri/3> (accessed 3 September 2020).

among civil servants. To realize such a goal, the joint decree requires the establishment of a joint task force for a “more systematic, comprehensive and accurate”¹³ assessment of radical and intolerant cases among civil servants.

The joint decree also aims to discipline civil servants by ensuring that they remain loyal to the government and to prevent them from expressing radical views in various forms and means, including through social media. This second aim is reflected in Article 5 of the joint decree as shown in Table 2. Four provisions in this article (provisions 1, 7, 8 and 9) are dedicated to getting civil servants committed to be loyal to the government and the Indonesian state by forbidding civil servants from making hate speech, as well as organizing and participating in activities that insult the government and the Indonesian state. These provisions are precautionary measures set up by the government to limit civil servant discontent in the public sphere. These provisions also aim to limit the freedom of assembly among civil servants. As stated in provision 8, organizing and participating in “an activity that insults the government” is prohibited by the government.

Another emphasis in this joint decree concerns civil servants participation on social media. Seven provisions in the article are related to offences made through social media platforms. These prevent civil servants from expressing hate speeches, disseminating misleading news (fake news) and harassing state symbols. While these illegal acts must not be tolerated, the provisions provided for stopping them are potentially draconian and can be abused by the government for their own gain due to the lack of clear definitions of some words and phrases, hence, subjecting the provisions to multi-interpretations.

¹³ Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform (Kemenpan) website, “Tangani Radikalisme ASN, Pemerintah Bentuk Task-force dan Portal Aduan ASN”, 12 November 2019, <https://menpan.go.id/site/berita-terkini/tangani-radikalisme-asn-pemerintah-bentuk-task-force-dan-portal-aduan-asn> (accessed 29 August 2020).

Several terms in the provisions lack working parameters and clear definitions. For instance, the term “hate speech” in provisions 1 to 3 of the joint decree encompasses broad meanings and is open to numerous interpretations. Similarly, it remains unclear what kind of activities would be considered “insulting, inciting, provoking and hating Pancasila, UUD 1945, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, NKRI, and the Government” (provisions 6 and 7) and what actions would be classified as harassing state symbols (provision 10).¹⁴

The lack of clear definitions has raised concerns among human rights activists as the decree may be abused by irresponsible parties including the government, to silence civil servants who are critical of government policies.¹⁵ Without clear parameters, the decree may become a tool for the government to clamp down on civil servants when they exhibit the slightest signs of “radicalism”. For example, civil servants may be subjected to disciplinary action for posting memes on social media that government officials consider as harassing state symbols.

Clamping down on critical civil servants will be detrimental to the progress of governance. Civil servants would be reluctant to voice out on matters pertaining to corruption and red tapes if they serve under a repressive regime. As a result, such situation will impede the government’s drive to combat corruption and red tape in bureaucracy. The decree also provides the opportunity for character assassination charges against civil servants.¹⁶ A citizen who has personal problems with a civil servant

¹⁴ *Nusakini*, “Ini 11 Jenis Pelanggaran dalam SKB Penanganan Radikalisme ASN”, 17 November 2019, <https://nusakini.com/news/ini-11-jenis-pelanggaran-dalam-skb-penanganan-radikalisme-asn> (accessed 31 August 2020).

¹⁵ *Kompas*, “SKB Tentang Radikalisme ASN Berpeluang Langgar Kebebasan Berpendapat”, 29 November 2019, <https://amp.kompas.com/nasional/read/2019/11/29/12533891/skb-tentang-radikalisme-asn-berpeluang-langgar-kebebasan-berpendapat> (accessed 31 August 2020).

¹⁶ *Hukum Online*, “Beragam Kritik atas SKB Penanganan Radikalisme ASN”, 26 November 2019, <https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/lt5ddcf7d94281a/beragam-kritik-atas-skb-penanganan-radikalisme-asn?page=2> (accessed 31 August 2020).

can easily file a report against him or her via the complaint portal for allegedly meeting one or more criteria stated in the decree.

For the quasi-state organization National Commission on Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM), the absence of a provision that allows civil servants under investigation to defend themselves is a major concern. As such, KOMNAS HAM has urged the government to set up mechanisms that enable civil servants who have been accused of being “radicals” to clarify, justify and defend themselves against those charges.¹⁷ The organization also demanded the government to not abuse the decree for its own gain.

Meanwhile, opposition parties such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) criticizes the joint decree for appearing to be too draconian. PKS has urged the Joko Widodo government to formulate an alternative policy that is in line with democratic ideals. Sohibul Iman Wiranu, then president of PKS, sees the implementation of the joint decree as a setback to Indonesia’s democracy.¹⁸

Despite initial controversies and backlash from the public and opposition parties, public protests over the implementation of the joint decree did not last long. The lack of strong opposition against the decree was most likely due to the scope of the policy that does not affect the public at large, but mainly targets civil servants. There has also been no resistance coming from civil servants—probably due to the fear of repercussions from the government. The lack of strong opposition forces allows the government to implement the policy without difficulties.

¹⁷ *Hukum Online*, “Beragam Kritik atas SKB Penanganan Radikalisme ASN”, 26 November 2019, <https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/lt5ddcf7d94281a/beragam-kritik-atas-skb-penanganan-radikalisme-asn?page=2> (accessed 31 August 2020).

¹⁸ *Kompas*, “Soal SKB 11 Menteri, Presiden PKS: Tolong Jangan ‘Set Back’”, 26 November 2019, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/11/26/13015941/soal-skb-11-menteri-presiden-pks-tolong-jangan-set-back> (accessed 31 August 2020).

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE PROCESS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The joint task force, comprising representatives from the eleven state and government institutions, was established to smoothen policy coordination. In addition, a complaint portal, *Aduan ASN* (<https://aduanasn.id/>), was launched to allow the public to report civil servants who appear to be “radical” or supportive of “radical” ideas. The portal also allows a person to track the progress of investigation against the civil servant that he or she had reported by keying in their report numbers.

Upon receiving complaints through the portal, the Ministry of Communication and Information first verifies the identity of the complainant and sieve through the complaints. The National Civil Service Agency (BKN) then checks whether the person against whom the complaint is launched is a civil servant. If the person reported is a civil servant, the BKN then alerts the joint task force to carry out investigations against him or her.

Investigations by the task force are initially done through meetings led by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform. Between November 2019 and September 2020, four such meetings were held, two of which were conducted via Zoom during the COVID-19 period. Representatives of all eleven state and government institutions actively participated in the meetings.

These meetings take stock of complaints filed through the portal. The task force will scrutinize the profile of each civil servant reported and verify the attached evidence by scrolling through the civil servant’s social media accounts. If this does not bring up sufficient evidence, the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) and the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency (BIN) will follow up with a thorough offline investigation.¹⁹ A

¹⁹ Interview through Zoom with an official at BNPT. This official is one of the members of the joint task force. Interview was held on 16 September 2020.

senior member of the joint task force claims that the team has been very careful when profiling cases and investigating civil servants who have been reported to exhibit “radical” sentiments. This senior official, who is from the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform, adds that careful implementation of the policy is also essential to ensure the fair treatment of civil servants who are under investigation.²⁰

I have explained the roles of some state and government institutions in handling public reports, such as the Ministry of Communication and Information, the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform, BKN, BNPT and BIN. The role of other institutions involved in implementing the policy is to send their representatives to be part of the task force and contribute their perspective on the investigations.

Once a civil servant is proven to have committed one or more offences stated in the joint decree, the task force will send recommendation letters to the Personnel Development Officers (PPK) in the civil servant’s unit. These officers are usually the Secretary of Regional Governments, or the Head of Personnel Department in the respective government, ministries, and state institutions at the central and regional levels.

The recommendation letter sent to PPK officers outlines disciplinary actions proposed by the task force that may be taken against civil servants. The officers have fourteen days to follow up on the recommended disciplinary actions. They may conduct personal or team investigations to confirm the case and impose disciplinary actions based on their discretion or as recommended by the task force. Upon completion, the officers must report back to the task force on the kind of disciplinary actions meted out on the civil servant.

To improve coordination efforts, efficiency and transparency in implementing the policy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the task force

²⁰ Face-to-face interview with a senior official at the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform on 14 September 2020. This official is one of the members of the joint task force.

launched an internal application, ASN No Radikal²¹ on 2 September 2020. The application allows officials across the archipelago to track the progress of a case. It mainly aims to facilitate communication between the task force and the PPK officers in various ministries, state institutions and regional governments. The task force can upload their recommendation letters in the application. In return, the PPK officers may update the task force on the details of disciplinary action they pursue via the application.

The application also allows state and government officials to discuss the latest development relating to the issue of radicalism among civil servants and share feedbacks to improve the process of handling civil servants who are considered “radical”.²²

STALLED POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Since the launch of *Aduan ASN*, the joint task force has investigated public complaints in three cycles. In the first cycle, it processed ninety-three complaints received by the portal from November 2019 to February 2020. Out of these complaints, twenty-one cases underwent further investigation. In the end, only eleven civil servants were proven guilty and were subjected to disciplinary actions.

In the second cycle, the task force processed forty-nine complaints. Among these, only fifteen of the complaints were directed to civil servants. These cases were undergoing profiling by the Ministry of Communication and Information at the time of writing. Results of the preliminary investigation by the Ministry will be forwarded to the task force to determine whether disciplinary actions should be taken or not.

In the third cycle, only eighteen new complaints were filed to the portal as of 28 September 2020. At the time of writing, the National Civil

²¹ ASN stands for *aparat sipil negara* or civil servants.

²² *Industry.co.id*, “Aplikasi ASN No Radikal Wujudkan Birokrasi Bebas Radikalisme”, 3 September 2020, <https://www.industry.co.id/read/73392/aplikasi-asn-no-radikal-wujudkan-birokrasi-bebas-radikalisme> (accessed 3 September 2020).

Service Agency (BKN) was sieving through the reports to determine the number of complaints that are directed against civil servants. No new complaints were noted as of 7 October 2020.²³

Table 3 summarizes the number of complaints received since the implementation of the joint decree.

The data show that investigations in the first cycle took only three months to complete. By mid-February 2020, recommendation letters were already sent out to PPK. However, the pandemic that began to hit the country by 2 March stalled investigations of newer cases. Due to movement restrictions, the task force had to conduct its meetings online via Zoom. The change in method limited social interactions and reduced the quality and effectiveness of the meetings. For instance, the task force finds it harder to scrutinize the profiles of civil servants and pursue *pendalaman* (the attempt to uncover more details about a suspect's profile) through online meetings.²⁴ In short, the pandemic reduces the morale of the members of the joint task force.

When this fieldwork was being done, the investigation of cases collected during the second and third cycles had been ongoing for over six months, with no significant progress in sight. These cases were stuck at the early stages of investigation.

The data in Table 3 also show the decreasing number of complaints received by the portal, which dropped from ninety-three reports as of February 2020 to eighteen as of September 2020. It is too early as yet to determine whether the policy has had the effect of deterring civil servants from expressing symptoms of radicalism online or offline.

Other intervening factors may have caused the decreasing number of complaints and does not necessarily reflect the decreasing number of

²³ WhatsApp communication with a senior official working for the joint task force on 7 October 2020. This official is a member of the joint task force.

²⁴ Interview through Zoom with an official at BNPT on 16 September 2020. This official is one of the members of the joint task force.

Table 3: Number of Reported Cases

Cycle	Period	Total Complaints	Valid Cases Subjected to Further Investigation	Proven cases
First cycle	Nov 2019 – Feb 2020	93	21	11
Second cycle	March – ...	49	15	Still in process
Third cycle	June – ...	18	Still in process	—

Source: Data received from a senior official serving the joint task force through WhatsApp communication on 7 October 2020.

radical civil servants. These factors may include waning public interest and enthusiasm in the policy. As such, further research needs to be conducted as to whether the policy has really discouraged civil servants from subscribing to or expressing symptoms of radicalism online and offline.

LACK OF DETERRENCE

Disciplinary actions meted out for violations against the joint decree are based on the Presidential Decree No. 53 on Civil Servants Discipline issued in 2010. The Presidential Decree have comprehensively elaborated details on the kinds of disciplinary actions that may be imposed on civil servants. Disciplinary actions typically range from light to medium to severe levels. Light punishments include “oral or written reprimand”; medium punishments include “being demoted to one level below from the current position for one year”, “delaying annual salary’s hike for one year” and “delaying promotion for one year”. Meanwhile, severe punishments include “being demoted to one level below from the current position for three years “, “being released from a structural post”, and “being discharged dishonourably from the civil service”. The last is the severest form of punishment.

Up to 7 October 2020, eleven civil servants have been found guilty of committing one or more offences stated in the joint decree, and they were subjected to disciplinary punishment. Eight of these have received punishments ranging from the lightest in the form of “moral sanction” (public reprimand) to the severest level (employment termination): four received medium level of punishment, three received light punishment, and only one received severe punishment (see Table 4).

These are likely to be the watered-down version of the punishments. The central government, represented by the joint task force, takes radicalism among civil servants seriously, and have since recommended strict disciplinary actions to PPK officers. However, PPK officers have the discretion to choose which levels and types of disciplinary actions they deem fit based on the outcome of their personal or team investigation to confirm the case. The PPK officers tend to hand down more lenient punishment because they found that the guilty civil servants “are not as

Table 4: Punishments Imposed on Civil Servants Found Guilty in the First Cycle

No.	Institutions Employing the Civil Servant	Date When Recommendation Letters Were Sent to PPK Officers in Institutions	Updates on Follow-up by PPK Officers	Level of Disciplinary Action (Light, Medium or Severe)
1.	Kotawaringin Barat (West Kotawaringin) regency	18 February 2020	Regency followed up by 2 March 2020 (<i>within 14 days</i>)	Medium—demoted by one level rank for one year from IVa to IIIa
2.	Jakarta provincial government	13 February 2020	Provincial government followed up by 12 March 2020 (<i>later than 14 days</i>)	Light—no details available
3.	Ministry of Education and Culture	13 February 2020	No response from the ministry's Inspectorate General	—
4.	Ministry of Finance	20 February 2020	The ministry followed up on the recommendation. No date available.	Light—moral sanction: openly slapped in front of staff at the ministry (author: most likely a public reprimand)
5.	Ministry of Manpower	20 February 2020	No follow-up	—

6.	Kalimantan Timur (East Kalimantan) provincial government	18 February 2020	The provincial government followed up on the recommendation. No date available.	Medium—salary hike delay for one year
7.	Supreme Court	20 February 2020	The Supreme Court followed up on the recommendation. No date available.	Medium—demoted by one level rank for one year
8.	Ministry of Religious Affairs	13 February 2020	The ministry followed up on the recommendation. No date available.	Severe—termination of employment with honour
9.	Bandung municipality	14 February 2020	The municipality followed up on the recommendation within 14 days	Light—written reprimand and salary incentive cut for two months
10.	Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology	13 February 2020	The agency followed up on the recommendation. Investigation held through video conference on 19 February 2020—civil servant was pursuing doctorate in Japan.	Medium—promotion delay for one year. Severe action to be taken against him/her if offence repeated within six months
11.	Jawa Timur (East Java) provincial government	18 February 2020	Civil servant passed away	—

Source: The Joint Task Force.

bad as the joint task force had previously thought”.²⁵ This explains why only one severe punishment has been handed down so far. The tendency for PPK officers to hand down lighter sentences undermines deterrence effect of the whole exercise.

The data also show that some PPK officers were not cooperative when approached by the task force. They responded slowly despite having been given fourteen days to follow up with recommendations made by the joint task force. As seen in Table 4, after completing the first cycle of investigation, the joint task force immediately sent out letters of recommendation to respective PPK officers in February 2020. Based on the data, one responded after fourteen days. However, when interviewed, an official from KASN stated that there were more officers who did not adhere to the fourteen-day rule and followed up with the recommendations after the deadline.²⁶ As of 7 October 2020, at least two officers had yet to respond despite being notified in February. When enquired by the task force on the late follow-up or the absence of response, PPK officers argued that the recommendations made by the task force consisted of harsh punishments toward their subordinates and they had opposed it and had been hesitant to follow up, thus slowing the implementation of the disciplinary actions.²⁷

The lack of cooperation from the officers not only impedes coordination efforts but also prevents the policy from producing a deterrence effect. To be sure, the failure of some PPK officers to see the severity of the offences committed by their subordinates and the reluctance to impose appropriate forms of punishments within fourteen days may not alarm other civil servants on the serious consequences of the policy.

The lack of effort by the government to publicize the punishments also affect the efficacy of the policy. To create a deterrence effect, publicizing the information on the disciplinary actions taken against a

²⁵ A Zoom interview with an official at KASN on 14 September 2020. This official is one of the members of the joint task force.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

certain civil servant is important. Such course of action has often been employed by some state and government agencies such as the Indonesian National Police (POLRI). The National Police have regularly publicized disciplinary punishments imposed on their own personnel. Those proven to have violated the code of conduct are exhibited in front of other personnel during morning rollcall, or at events attended by external audience, including journalists.

Such stern punishment and public humiliation serve as effective tools to ensure that other personnel understand the consequences of violating regulations and refrain from committing similar offences. The task force has yet to employ a similar strategy when implementing the anti-radicalism policy within the civil service. While it is harder to employ the strategy on a national scale, the reluctance can also be explained by the sensitivity surrounding the anti-radicalism policy.

The Joko Widodo administration has also been labelled as being “unfriendly” towards the cause of Islam. Hence, any step to strengthen the policy is at risk of becoming a subject of politicization by opposition parties. As such, the task force has chosen to pursue a low-profile approach when implementing the policy. Details on the eleven offences committed and disciplinary actions taken against the perpetrators have not been widely released to the public. Instead, the government gave patchy explanations when updating the public on the progress of the policy. A very brief update, for example, was given by Tjahjo Kumolo during an interview with a small newspaper, *Koran Jakarta*.²⁸

If the government aims to create a deterrence effect, releasing details of the outcomes of the policy to the public is an important move. Holding a major press conference with the presence of major media outlets would send a signal to all civil servants that the government is extraordinarily committed to pursuing the policy.

²⁸ *Koran Jakarta*, “Hingga Juni 2020, Sebanyak 15 ASN Terpapar Radikalisme”, <http://www.koran-jakarta.com/hingga-juni-2020--sebanyak-15-asn-terpapar-radikalisme/> (accessed 1 October 2020).

EFFORTS TO REJUVENATE THE POLICY

The government has therefore faced several challenges in implementing the anti-radicalism policy on civil servants. COVID-19 altered its priorities.²⁹ The pandemic made it difficult to coordinate meetings between members of the task force and slowed down PPK officers' efforts to follow up on recommendations proposed by the task force. The PPK officers' slow response also occurred due to their esprit de corps which causes them to be reluctant in handing down severer punishment to their colleagues. All these problems have hurt the morale of the task force.

Be that as it may, the government has taken some steps to rejuvenate the policy. To counteract the lack of cooperation among PPK officers, the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform is currently formulating a ministerial joint decree to impose sanctions on government and state institutions at the central and regional levels when there is failure to comply to the fourteen-days rule or for disregard of the recommendations made by the task force.³⁰ However, formulating such a joint decree will not be an easy task since it requires all high-ranking officials involved in the anti-radicalism policy to gather and formulate an effective decree that can compel all parties to implement the policy. As such, consultation with all state and government institutions at central and regional levels is also required.

In a separate development, the policy obtained a boost in the form of the President's institutional support. President Joko Widodo issued a Presidential Decree on 20 July 2020 that ordered the restructuring of BIN

²⁹ *Presiden.go.id*. "Tiga Prioritas Kerja Pemerintah Hadapi Tantangan Pandemi Covid-19", 20 March 2020, <https://www.presidentri.go.id/siaran-pers/tiga-prioritas-kerja-pemerintah-hadapi-tantangan-pandemi-covid-19/> (accessed 5 November 2020).

³⁰ Face-to-face interview with an official at the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform on 14 September 2020. This official is one of the members of the joint task force.

to enhance the agency's effectiveness in the early detection of radicalism among civil servants. Through this decree, the President created a new position of Deputy Chief to oversee "the security intelligence" of civil servants. This is to enhance BIN's detection capacity towards the personal or professional affairs of civil servants which include, among others, the formulation of a report on civil servants' security affairs, and a "security clearance" before a civil servant assumes a new post.³¹

While the creation of BIN's new position will most likely to help improve efforts in handling public complaints on civil servants involved in radicalism, formulating a sanction against institutions that fail to comply to the task force's recommendations is going to be an uphill battle. Formulating the sanction will be a major endeavour for the joint task force. Even if the decree that regulates the sanction gets formulated, implementing sanctions could still face major challenges.

Government Regulation No. 12/2017 on the Development and Supervision of Regional Governments states that the central government can impose sanctions on regional governments (at the provincial and mayoralty/regency levels) if the latter fail to comply with, or to implement, "the national strategic program" (Article 36). Although the government has been committed to combating radicalism within the civil service, the anti-radicalism policy has never been named as part of "the national strategic programme". Hence, imposing sanctions on regional government and state institutions might not be justified. As such, the government might either need to publicly declare that the anti-radicalism policy has become part of a national strategic programme or to achieve the same effect through discussions with state and government institutions at central and regional levels so that a common understanding on the scale of the policy can be reached. By making the anti-radicalism policy a national strategic programme, the central government will then

³¹ *Tirto.id*, "Teken Perpres 79/2020, Jokowi Bentuk Deputi Pengamanan Aparatur BIN", 30 July 2020, <https://tirto.id/teken-perpres-792020-jokowi-bentuk-deputi-pengamanan- Aparatur-bin-fUBo> (accessed 5 October 2020).

have the right to impose sanctions on institutions or officers that fail to support the anti-radicalism policy. Consultation with institutions at the central or regional levels is needed to avoid a protracted internal tension that will make the policy counterproductive. Sanctions that the central government might want to impose include delaying or cancelling the regular disbursement of Special Allocation Funds to regions that do not comply with the policy.

CONCLUSION

The Joko Widodo administration has been facing a daunting task in implementing the policy discussed here. Challenges mainly stem from the lack of cooperation from the PPK officers, who due to their esprit de corps appear to have chosen to mete out more lenient punishments than the ones proposed by the task force. Some PPK officers have also been slow at handing down punishments. This reduces the deterrence effect of the policy.

To produce a deterrence effect, which is key to the success of the policy, the government will need to be firm and quick at taking disciplinary action against civil servants who have been proven to have committed offences stipulated in the joint decree. The punishments also need to be severe.

To further enhance the policy's effectiveness, ministers and heads of state institutions need to reaffirm their commitment to the policy. The COVID-19 pandemic has further dampened the morale of the task force and caused the policy to lose its momentum, and changed the priorities of ministries and state institutions alike.

So far, coordination efforts are mostly spearheaded by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reform. To improve the progress of the policy implementation, attention and support from ministers and heads of state institutions are needed.

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