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**20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
ISD'S OPERATIONS  
AGAINST JEMAAH  
ISLAMIYAH IN  
SINGAPORE**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 8 December 2001, ISD launched a security operation against the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network in Singapore. This operation effectively crippled the Singapore JI and thwarted multiple plots by the group to carry out terror attacks in the country. Beyond Singapore, ISD's operation also exposed and sounded the alarm on JI's clandestine networks across Southeast Asia, as well as its connections to Al Qaeda (AQ), which was responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

2 Twenty years on, the **JI and its well-developed attack plots remain Singapore's closest shave with transnational Islamist terrorism to date.** Singapore JI operatives, many of whom received training from terrorists in Afghanistan and/or the southern Philippines, had the skills and technical know-how to conduct devastating attacks here. Some had also received instructions and support from foreign AQ operatives. Had the group succeeded in their plans, there would have been catastrophic consequences, both in terms of physical loss of lives and damage to Singapore's communal harmony and social fabric.

3 ISD's operations against the JI did not cease with the two key phases of local arrests in 2001 and 2002. **ISD continued to work tirelessly behind the scenes over the next decade,** hunting down Singapore JI fugitives who had fled overseas. At the same time, together with its community partners, ISD spearheaded a holistic rehabilitation approach for the JI detainees and their family members, comprising religious, psychological and social rehabilitation, to ease their reintegration into Singapore society.

4 The terrorism landscape has evolved significantly since the operation against the JI in 2001. Most notably, in the mid-2000s, there was an uptick in cases of self-radicalised individuals detected in Singapore. These individuals were not part of any organised terrorist networks, but were influenced by extremist materials and terrorist propaganda online. The threat was further heightened with the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014, amidst the Syrian conflict. **Adapting to the new operating terrain, ISD continues to expand and strengthen its capabilities to keep the threat at bay.**

5 In combating the threat posed by the JI and other forms of transnational terrorism, **ISD works in close partnership with the community and international counterparts.** The amorphous, and often clandestine, nature of the threat necessitates Singapore's whole-of-society approach to counter-terrorism – indeed, ISD's first specific lead on the JI came from a vigilant member of public. Complementing this approach are the strong partnerships that ISD has forged with

foreign security agencies over the years. Intelligence exchanges and operational cooperation with foreign counterparts have been critical towards the disruption of many terror attacks and plots in the region.

6 While the Singapore JI has been effectively dismantled by ISD, the regional JI network is still active. The group has been resilient and adaptable to a more hostile security environment, undertaking measures to evade detection and pursuing outreach efforts to gather more recruits while rebuilding its military capabilities. Given its ambition of establishing a *Daulah Islamiyah* (Islamic state) in Southeast Asia through the use of violence, JI will continue to present a serious long-term security threat to Singapore. In this regard, ISD continues to keep a close watch on developments that could heighten the threat posed by JI and other terrorist groups.



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# Singapore's closest shave with transnational Islamist terrorism

## Tip-off on Mohd Aslam Yar Ali Khan

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, ISD heightened its security posture and intensified community engagement efforts to appeal for public vigilance against suspicious activities and individuals in Singapore. The first specific lead that ISD received which led to the operation against the JI came from a vigilant Singaporean. Just days after the 9/11 attacks, a Singaporean provided information that Mohammad Aslam bin Yar Ali Khan (Aslam), had claimed to know Al-Qaeda (AQ)'s leader Osama bin Laden (Osama) and fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

2 ISD then began to watch Aslam and his associates. On 4 October 2001, Aslam left Singapore on a flight to Pakistan on his way to Afghanistan. In mid-October 2001, his close friend was observed to be in close contact with several foreign terrorist elements and actively trying to procure ammonium nitrate. The close friend had also converted US dollars into local currency which was later discovered to be payment for the reconnaissance of the US and Israeli embassies and other locations in Singapore for attack planning purposes.

3 On 3 December 2001, the media published a report on Aslam following his arrest by the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. As the story was likely to attract further media attention, ISD decided to bring forward its operation against Aslam's associates before they went underground or left the country to escape arrest.

## First two waves of JI arrests in December 2001 & August 2002

4 ISD's operation against Aslam's associates began on 8 December 2001. On 9 December 2001, six Singapore JI members were arrested by ISD, with further arrests made between 15 and 24 December 2001. A total of 23 persons were picked up for questioning. 13 of them were detained after they were found to be active JI members who were involved in the profiling and surveillance of targets for terrorist attacks and in the procurement of logistics for bomb construction. Two others were released on Restriction Orders (ROs).

5 At the height of this first operation against the JI, dozens of teams of investigators, research analysts, engineers and field officers worked round the clock on the case for more than 600 hours. Over 65,000 data records of operational leads were generated.

6           ISD continued its investigation following the initial wave of arrests. Interviews were conducted almost daily with the JI members and their associates. Surveillance and search teams conducted discreet checks for months over many suspected locations to determine if the explosives sought by JI operatives could have been smuggled into Singapore and stashed away. These efforts were complemented by ISD's research analysts and forensic officers, who worked tirelessly to process the staggering amount of evidence seized from the JI members.

7           Findings from ISD's investigations eventually led to the arrests of another 21 persons in August 2002. In September 2002, 17 JI members and one member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were issued with Orders of Detention, while the remaining three persons were released on ROs. Amongst the 17 JI detainees, at least eight of them had conducted reconnaissance and surveillance of strategic targets in Singapore, such as water pipelines and Changi Airport.

8           The operations conducted by ISD officers were not without risk. Investigations revealed that at least one local JI member had considered kidnapping ISD officers to demand the release of JI members who were in detention. According to another JI member, some senior JI members had repeatedly mentioned that they would not hesitate to kill ISD officers if they were prevented from carrying out their plans. Several JI members were also prepared to use deadly force to resist arrest.

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*“Omar” told me that some other JI members had already prepared themselves to resist arrest by the authorities. To this end, he said they had readied their daggers and parangs to attack the arresting officers. Some have planned to hide behind their house doors and pounce on the officers on their arrival to snatch their weapons and shoot them. “Omar” commented that if we murdered and were subsequently killed by the officers, we would be Syahid (martyred). When he asked me whether I was prepared to resist arrest, I said I had no guts. “Omar” then called me a coward.*

***Ji detainee “Daniel” (not his real name),  
15 October 2002***

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9 The Internal Security Act (ISA) was key in enabling ISD to undertake swift pre-emptive action to disrupt and neutralise the JI network. Without the ISA, we would likely only have been able to arrest and charge the JI members after they had conducted their attacks. Apart from the loss of innocent lives, the attacks would have severely damaged our inter-communal relations and trust.

### **JI's plots against targets in Singapore**

10 ISD's investigation into the JI members revealed that their earliest plans to attack targets in Singapore date back to the mid-1990s, long before the events of 9/11. Preparations for attacks intensified after 9/11. For instance, in October 2001, then-senior JI advisor and former leader of the Singapore JI branch, Ibrahim Maidin administered a survey on selected JI members to ascertain their commitment to the group and willingness to engage in various activities, from undertaking sabotage operations to sacrificing their lives in carrying out attacks, for JI's cause.

11 In all, JI had identified close to 80 targets in Singapore for possible attack, with reconnaissance carried out for many of the targets. Some of the more well-developed plots are as follows:

- In 1997, a Singapore JI member conceived a plan to attack a shuttle-bus that conveyed US military personnel and their families in the Sembawang area to Yishun MRT station. The JI members drew up maps of the station and used a video-camera to film the station and its surroundings, paying special attention to areas where explosives could be placed.

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*First plan was to pack explosives in either a stolen motorcycle or using a dustbin and to detonate it when the US personnel's board or alight from the bus. We also considered that a suicide bomber strapped with explosives will board a private shuttle bus meant for US personnel when left unattended, or to board an unattended bus and rig it with explosives.*

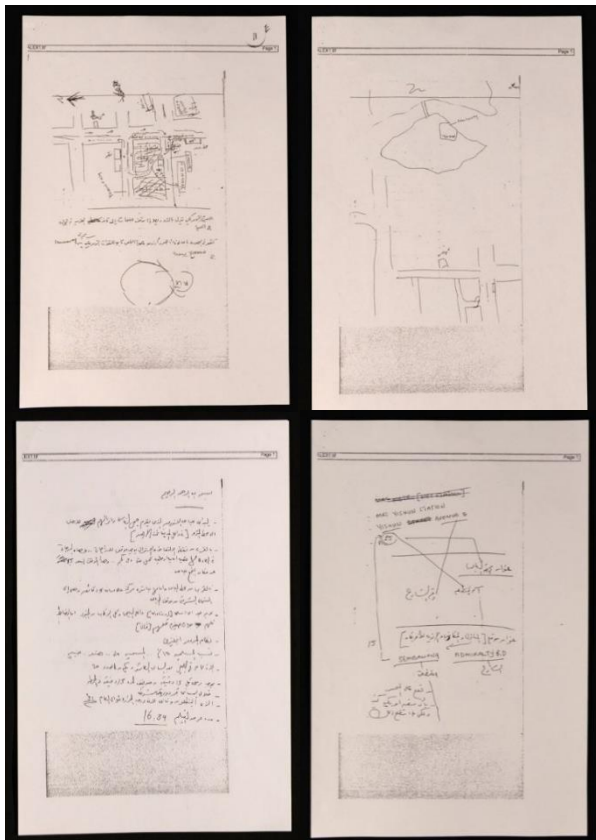
***JI detainee "Jameel" (not his real name),  
5 January 2002***

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The video camera used during the reconnaissance of Yishun MRT station, Sembawang Wharf and the route taken by the shuttle bus that ferried US military personnel.



Four pieces of notes found in Afghanistan. On 14 December 2001, US counterparts informed ISD that a video tape and notes on the Yishun MRT were recovered in Afghanistan, when ISD briefed them on the JI arrests.

The notes included a detailed map of the Yishun MRT station and its surroundings, and the route taken by a shuttle-bus service ferrying US military personnel to the station. The notes, which were in Arabic, also contained information on the frequency of the shuttle-bus service and the traffic system in Singapore. A Singapore JI member drew these notes when briefing Al-Qaeda leaders on the attack plans in Afghanistan in 1999.



- After 9/11, Al-Qaeda operative “Sammy” (identified as Canadian of Arab descent Mohammed Mansour Jabarah) approached Singapore JI members with a plan to use truck bombs to attack targets in Singapore, including the US and Israeli Embassies, the Australian and British High Commissions and commercial buildings housing US firms. The attacks were scheduled to take place as early as December 2001. At the instruction of Indonesian JI bombmaker “Mike” (identified as Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi), Singapore JI members had already taken steps to procure 17 tonnes of ammonium nitrate for the manufacture of the truck bombs when they were arrested in December 2001.

### **Identifying “Mike” and “Sammy”**

Following the first tip-off on Aslam’s AQ links in September 2001, ISD’s close monitoring of Aslam’s close associates surfaced that one of them was in contact with several foreigners, including “Sammy” and “Mike”. Following the first wave of arrests on 9 December 2001, some JI arrestees revealed that “Sammy” held a Canadian passport. ISD managed to identify “Sammy” as a Canadian, Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, who had travelled to Singapore in October 2001, ostensibly for a short holiday.

Several arrestees also mentioned and provided descriptions of “Mike”. ISD’s subsequent investigations uncovered that “Mike” was travelling with a Philippine passport, bearing the alias “Alih Randy”. This information and details of “Mike”’s travel document were conveyed to the Philippine authorities, eventually leading to his arrest in the Philippines in January 2002.

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*He wanted us to get information about Sembawang Naval Base. He also wanted us to videocam the naval base. If we could get the schedule of American warships coming in. From where they would come from? We had to get a videocam recorder. We agreed to share the cost of buying the videocam. We also decided to shave off our beard when we videocam the area for security reasons.*

***Jl detainee “Alif” (not his real name),  
23 December 2001***

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- From the mid-1990s, Singapore JI members had considered attacking US naval vessels in Singapore. These plans were revived in early 2001 when two foreign operatives approached a Malaysian JI leader, who in turn approached Singapore JI members, for information on US military vessels in Singapore.

- One JI member took over 50 photographs of Paya Lebar Airbase where he worked as a technician with Singapore Technology Aerospace Systems. These photographs were meant to support JI's plan for a potential terrorist attack against US aircrafts.
- Between November and December 2001, several JI members were tasked by their cell leader to conduct reconnaissance of the Singapore American School, as well as US and Israeli companies. They were told to mark out observation posts, monitor movement of US security personnel and take photographs and photocopy maps of the buildings of interest for targeting.

12 In addition to these Western targets, JI also considered Singapore targets for attack. Hambali,<sup>1</sup> one of the key JI leaders in the region, was keen to create chaos by carrying out attacks in such a way that they implicated Malaysia. He intended to create animosity between Singapore and Malaysia to provoke war. He believed that the JI could then take advantage of the instability to overthrow the secular governments of Singapore and Malaysia and establish an Islamic state. In this regard, the JI had planned to attack water pipelines between Singapore and Malaysia, including those at the causeway.

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*Over breakfast, "Jameel" told us that we have two things to do. One was to follow the water pipelines and the other, to take photographs of the water tanks in Woodlands and Bukit Panjang...I recall that at some point later in mid-2001, "Jameel" told me the purpose of casing the pipelines was to blow them up in order to cut the water supply between Singapore and Malaysia. "Jameel" did not elaborate further other than saying that it was aimed at causing chaos in both countries.*

***JI detainee "Daniel" (not his real name),  
15 October 2002***

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<sup>1</sup> Indonesia-born Encep Nurjaman, better known as Hambali, was a key JI leader who authorised and orchestrated many of the group's attacks, including the 2002 Bali bombings. He was also AQ's primary link-man in Southeast Asia, with a direct line to AQ leadership. He left Malaysia some time in 2001, and was later caught in Ayutthaya, Thailand in 2003. He is currently in US custody in Guantanamo Bay.



Photographs taken during the reconnaissance of PUB Woodlands Booster Station, Bukit Panjang Service Reservoir and the water pipeline at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve.

13 The JI was highly methodical and operationally strategic in devising these plots against the targets in Singapore. Besides Hambali's intention to seed animosity between Singapore and Malaysia, targets were chosen to cripple Singapore on multiple fronts. Notably, the JI had intended to debilitate Singapore's infrastructure and economy by targeting Changi Airport and the radar station at Biggin Hill, which were surveyed on several occasions between 1999 and 2001. In this vein, the JI was also exploring the idea of sabotaging the MRT system, including the Operations Control Centre, and Jurong Island. Separately, the group had also planned to impair Singapore's military capabilities by targeting the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) Headquarters at Bukit Gombak.

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*I am fully aware that the recces conducted by me and other JI cell members at Changi Airport Control Tower, Biggins Hill radar station... were for the purpose of attack to weaken the economy of Singapore.*

*... Although "Rudin" did not get into specifics, I was fully aware that foreigners would carry out the sabotage attacks. These attacks could be in the form of planting bombs at these places. I was aware that the recces that was conducted by us was important as it provide details of the premises, the detailed layout of the target areas.*

***Jl detainee "Adam" (not his real name),  
23 October 2002***

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### Relying on insider access

Jl had relied on members with insider access to facilitate its terror plans. Between 2000 and 2001, two Jl members who were working for the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and an international courier company were assigned to case Changi Airport. The CAAS employee conducted reconnaissance of secure areas within the airport and surveys of the Control Tower to assess the possibility of placing explosives there. The courier was able to obtain a map of the Changi Airport Cargo Complex, upon which he marked out the fuel tanks as likely targets for sabotage.

### Targeting MINDEF

The MINDEF HQ at Bukit Gombak was cased by Jl members in 2001. Reconnaissance efforts included a survey of the perimeter and exits points, as well as entry into the compound on several occasions under the cover of courier services. One Jl member had also tailed a MINDEF officer from the HQ all the way to Tampines. He had carried out this assignment at the instruction of another senior Jl member who was considering placing explosives in a MINDEF officer's car and detonating them while the car was within MINDEF.

*Personal - Badar & Uthud.*

1000 - Move out by Abu Bilal's lorry to Target.  
 1000 - Leaving in Target van, Bukit Timah Road.  
 Badar shot video at target while Uthud  
 Drive. ~~Human traffic~~ insignificant, white  
 vehicle traffic normal. We reach ~~10th~~ 11th  
 level junction, make a left turn and not  
 Badar shot again, ~~at the time~~ till we  
 reach Hill view and we turn right to  
 Hillview Housing estate. We move up Bk 11  
 on the 15th floor and Uthud shot film. Bus  
 the van is not so good only the top  
 portion of the human building (assume)  
 w/ flag. We saw van 2nd entrance leading  
 to the complex behind gate.

1730 - We enter from Phoenix Avenue and  
 saw 3rd entrance - (all entrance as indicated  
 on map).

REPORT NO: 01  
 DATE: 18 ZULHIJAH 1421 - 14 MARCH 2001  
 PERSONNEL: BADAR & SYHA

REPORT:

1600HRS - Badar & Syha move out in RV to Hudaif (target) by using Abu Bilal's lorry  
 All equipments were prepared before hand.

1630HRS - Closing in hadaf via Upper Bukit Timah Rd. - Badar filmed hadaf while  
 Syha drive. - Human traffic insignificant while vehicular traffic normal.  
 We reach Ten Mile junction and make a U turn and Badar filmed again.  
 This time on the opp. direction (in city) till we reach Hill View Estate junc  
 And turned right to car park and move up to Bk 11 on the 15th floor Syha  
 began filming again. Anyway there is another entrance at the end of Hill  
 View road about. Where right after the gate there is an oversize football  
 field.

1730HRS - We move in film Phoenix Ave via Teck Whye and located the third entrance  
 to the complex. (total there's 3 entrances- see attach map)

Reconnaissance reports of MINDEF HQ written by Jl members.





14 ISD's timely intervention had averted further developments of these plans. However, JI members did not abandon their plans of attacking Singapore following the first wave of arrests in December 2001. On the contrary, they considered launching retaliatory attacks against Singapore for the security operations conducted on the group.

- On 13 December 2001, Hambali met with Singapore and Malaysia JI members in Malaysia and urged them to persist with the attack plans targeting various embassies and High Commissions in Singapore, to retaliate against the JI arrests. "Mike", the Indonesian JI bomb-maker, subsequently ordered six tonnes of TNT, with the intention of smuggling them into Singapore via Malaysia. It was only after ISD shared details of Mike's Philippine passport with the Philippine authorities that the latter was arrested in January 2002, thus preventing his plan from reaching fruition. His capture in the Philippines led to the discovery of 1.2 tonnes of TNT<sup>2</sup>, 300 pieces of detonators, and six rolls of detonating cords, which he said were meant for the attack plans in Singapore.

- Mas Selamat bin Kastari (Mas Selamat) had fled to Johor after the arrest of the JI members in December 2001. However, the arrests had angered Mas Selamat and prompted him to hatch plans to hijack a plane from Bangkok and crash it into Changi Airport Control Tower. Together with four other JI members, they travelled to Thailand and started their attack preparation. The plan was close to fruition as Mas Selamat had purchased five business-class tickets on a flight from Bangkok to Singapore. He was forced to abort the plan after his name was published in the Thai newspapers as a wanted terrorist.

#### **Thwarting Mas Selamat's attack plot**

ISD's investigation into the detained JI members was instrumental in foiling Mas Selamat's plot. On 28 December 2001, it was gathered from two JI detainees that Mas Selamat had planned to hijack a plane from Bangkok and crash it into Changi Airport. ISD immediately met with foreign liaison partners on the same day and sought their assistance to pass the information to FAA. On 29 December 2001, FAA sent out alerts on Mas Selamat's hijack plans through a Civil Aviation Security information circular.

The US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) also issued an alert that Mas

<sup>2</sup> According to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (IEDs) using vans or small sedans usually contain between 220 kg to 1.8 tonnes of TNT. The TNT procured by "Mike" could produce an estimate of up to five vehicle-borne IEDs.



Selamat might be planning to hijack an aircraft from Bangkok, Jakarta or Kuala Lumpur, possibly to target Singapore.

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*Mas Selamat disclosed that we had to make preparation for the hijack. We had no weapons, so Mas Selamat asked for ideas. The team came up with the idea of using alcohol from perfumes, hairspray and liquor to start a fire... We decided to get hand-carry luggage made of fabric, which could be used in lighting the fire. We also considered using balm or medicated oil to attack the eyes of anyone trying to stop us. The team agreed on using cable ties to tie up the staff, pilots and anyone else who may be in our way.*

*Mas Selamat went through the details of the hijacking plan with the team. He made it clear that there will be no surrender once we had hijacked the aeroplane. The plan was to hijack an aeroplane flying from Bangkok to Singapore. Once we have hijacked the aeroplane, we were going to crash the aeroplane into the control tower of Changi Airport. If we could not crash the aeroplane into Changi Airport control tower, we would crash the aeroplane anyway because we did not want to get caught.*

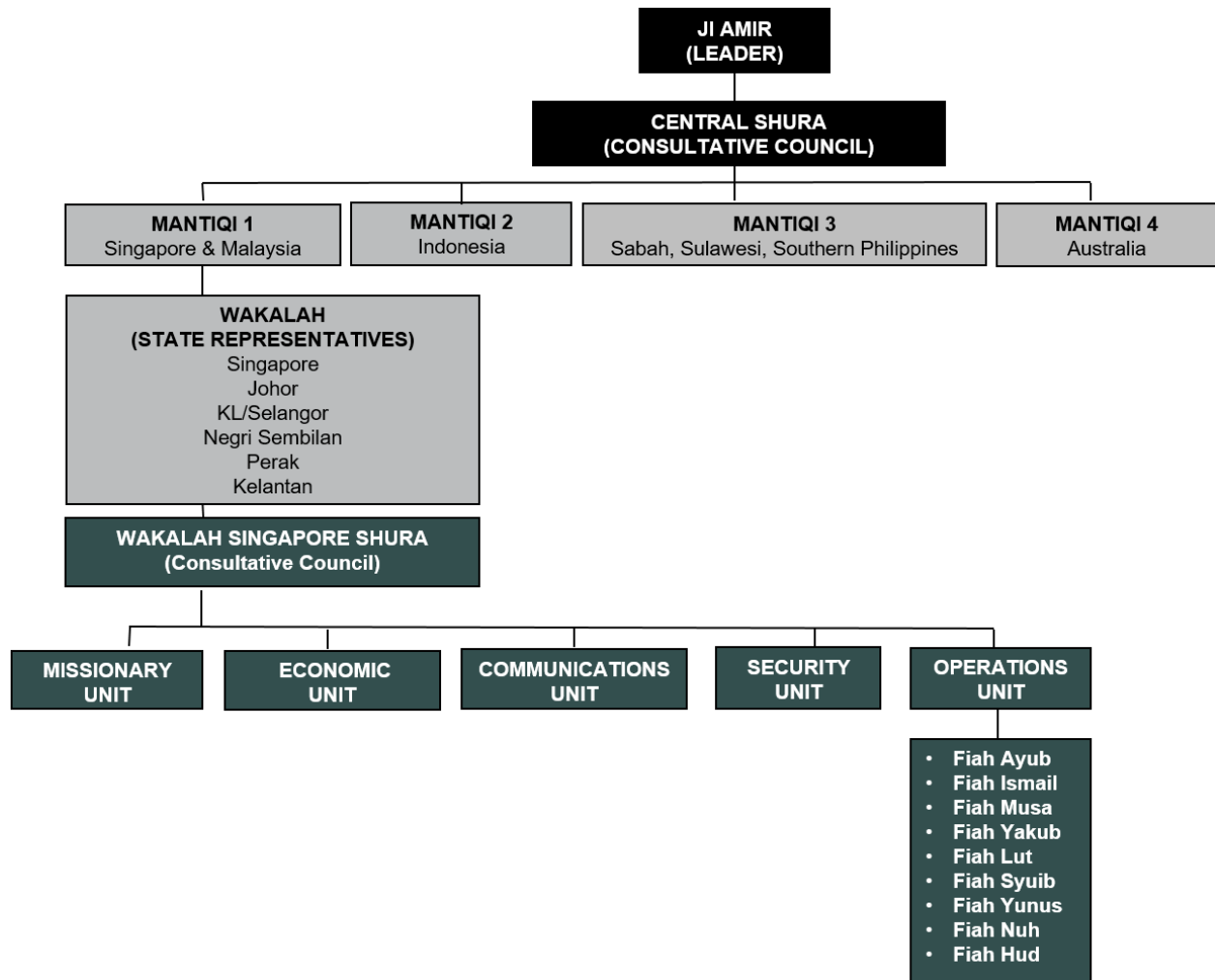
***Jl detainee "Johan" (not his real name), 14 October 2006***

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## **A vital cog in a regional terror machinery**

15 The Singapore JI was situated within the regional JI network, which aimed to establish a *Daulah Islamiyah* (Islamic State) in Southeast Asia through acts of terror and violence. Centred in Indonesia, the JI had envisioned the *Daulah* to include Singapore, Malaysia, the southern Philippines and Brunei. JI was structured based on these territories – Malaysia and Singapore came under *Mantiqi* (division) 1. The Singapore JI leadership reported to the Malaysian JI leadership and took instructions from Hambali, the link-man with AQ. (See Figure 1)

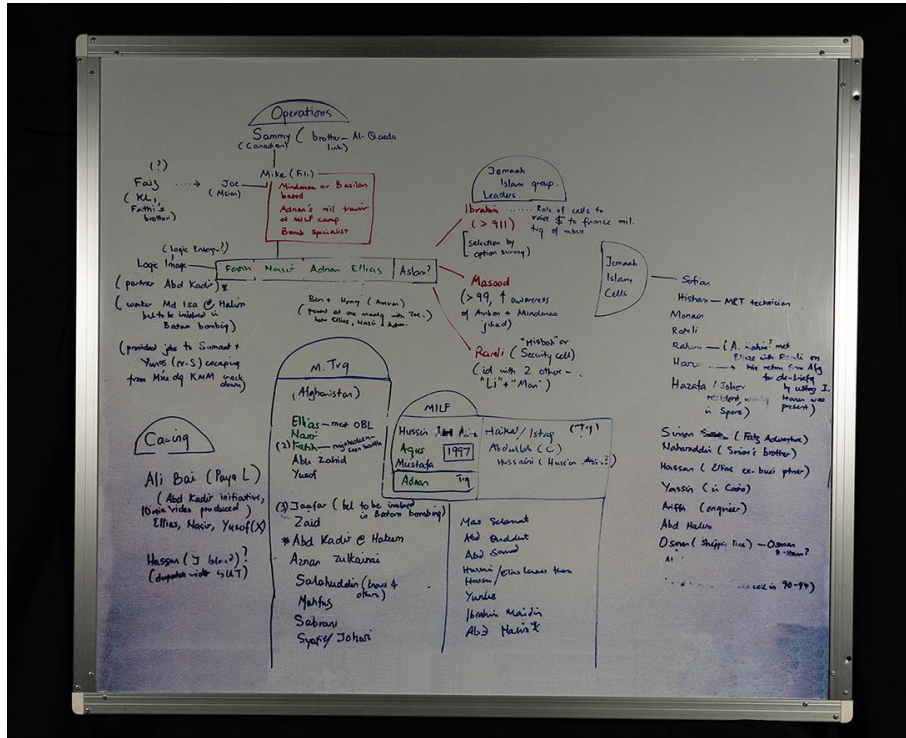




**Figure 1: Singapore JI within the regional network**

### Founding of the Singapore JI

The Singapore JI branch was established and first led by a charismatic religious preacher, Ibrahim Maidin (Ibrahim). In 1988/89, Ibrahim was inducted into the JI and swore an oath of allegiance to Indonesian Abu Bakar Bashir, who was then the JI *amir* (supreme leader). During his leadership tenure in the 1990s, Ibrahim personally recruited many of the Singapore JI members from his religious classes, and was largely responsible for the organisation’s development. He was succeeded by Mas Selamat in 1999.



An operational chart drawn up by ISD officers in December 2001 during the commencement of the investigations into individuals associated with the JI. The operation eventually uncovered the larger JI network in Singapore, and subsequently, the regional terror network.

The chart showed ongoing efforts then, in “mapping” the positions held by different members in the organisation. Actual identities had to be pursued as many were using aliases.

16 The Singapore JI branch also channelled funds overseas to support the activities of the regional JI network. JI-operated businesses in Singapore contributed ten percent of their total earnings towards JI's "jihad fund" (*Infaq Fisabilillah*), controlled by Hambali. The fund, in turn, sponsored the travel of regional JI militants to Afghanistan and southern Philippines for combat training, and enabled the JI to purchase weapons and explosives for its operations. The "jihad fund" also contributed to the JI's religious outreach and education activities, such as the running of its schools in Indonesia and Malaysia.

### Inner workings of the Singapore JI

17 Beyond plotting attacks domestically and contributing to the JI's activities in the region, the Singapore branch also placed great emphasis on organisational development. As a terror group with an eye on the future, the JI established systematic recruitment processes, selected and groomed top-performing students from JI-linked schools for leadership roles, and enforced counter-surveillance protocols to evade detection. It also sent its members for military training, including in explosives and weapons handling, in preparation for armed jihad.

- The Singapore JI instituted a systematic recruitment and religious indoctrination process through religious classes open to both members and non-members. Conducted over a period of 18 months, the JI's radical beliefs, including its views on armed jihad, were gradually introduced during the course. Senior JI members were tasked to talent-spot potential recruits among students. These potential recruits would be further interviewed to assess their readiness and commitment to join the JI, before they were allowed to pledge allegiance to Ibrahim Maidin. Between 1995 and 2000, the JI was known to have recruited around 25 people through these classes.

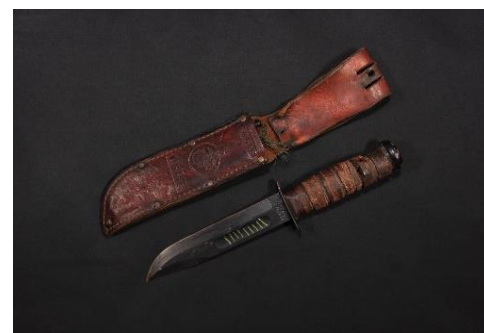
#### **Tamrin Kanak-Kanak: JI-operated holiday camps for children**

From 1995 to 1999, the JI organised adventure camps, "Tamrin Kanak-Kanak", in Singapore for children and youths aged between seven and 17. JI was known to have advertised these camps in the local media, and each participant paid between \$15 and \$20 for the programme that typically ran for three days. Some 300 children were estimated to have participated in the camps, which took place during the June and December school holidays. Besides outdoor activities like trekking, archery and abseiling, the camp programme also included short sermons and Quran recital. Ostensibly marketed as a programme to impart religious values to children, the camps were in fact designed to reach out to youths and their parents. The camp fees also served to raise funds for the JI.

- The Singapore JI also established a military training and security unit, *Tajnid*, to take charge of the security protocols of the group and military training of its members. Members participated in a range of activities such as physical and field training, weapons and explosives handling, guerrilla warfare and survival techniques. Some of the sessions were held overseas to evade detection. Several JI members underwent military training by MILF in Mindanao, southern Philippines, and at least 11 former Singapore JI detainees trained in Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

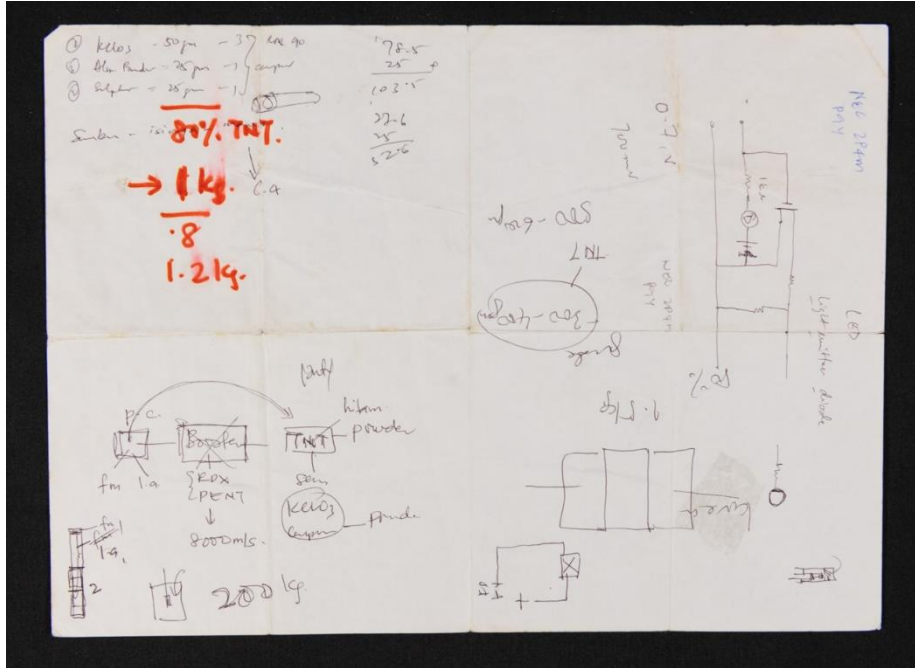


Books on military tactics and strategies which JI members bought to improve their military and survival knowledge.



Weapons seized from JI members. These weapons were used in knife-throwing and fighting sessions, and also during jungle survival training.





Hand-written notes by a JI member detailing the construction of explosives. This included a sketch documenting the circuitry system of a charge and detonator. The notes were recorded during a bomb-making lesson in Malaysia in 2000 conducted by foreign JI bomb maker “Mike”.



A white sports bag with containers of sulphur powder found in the possession of a JI member. Sulphur is one of the major components used to synthesise explosives.



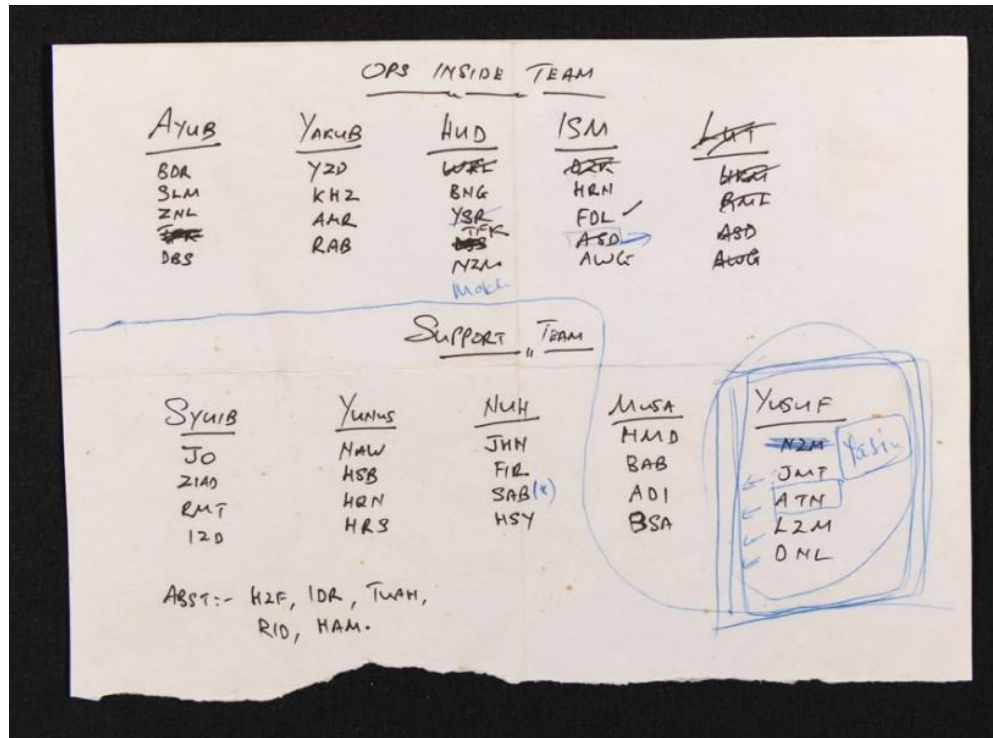
- The regional JI network had set up the Al-Ghuraba cell in Karachi, Pakistan as part of the group's plans to groom the next generation of JI leadership. The cell had connections to AQ operatives and the Taliban in Afghanistan, among other jihadist groups operating in South/Central Asia. It was a critical platform for prospective JI leaders to build operational knowledge and international connections, while hardening their ideological commitment. At least three Singaporean students of the now-defunct JI-operated Madrasah Luqmanul Hakiem in Malaysia were handpicked by senior JI leaders to join the cell in Pakistan. The trio, all sons of JI members, travelled there in February 2000. During their stint in Pakistan, the Al-Ghuraba cell facilitated the Singaporeans' travel to Afghanistan for training with AQ, where they were taught urban warfare and surveillance tactics, as well as weapons and explosives handling. They were also further indoctrinated with AQ's violent ideology.
- The Singapore JI institutionalised sophisticated security protocols and counter-surveillance tradecraft to ensure that their activities remained clandestine. A strict culture of secrecy was ingrained among JI members at the point of recruitment. It was common for members to use multiple aliases, and they regularly communicated using code words. JI members were also prepared to slip overseas in the event of a crackdown. For instance, between 2000 and 2001, often under the guise of fishing trips in Johor, JI cells conducted boating expeditions along the Straits of Johor. Cell members then surveyed the frequency and routes of the Police Coast Guard (PCG)'s patrols and attempted to identify ideal escape routes by sea to Malaysia.

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*I remembered that Osama [bin Laden] visited the camp. After the Asar prayer, Osama delivered a speech which lasted till the Magrib prayer. In his speech, he spoke on jihad, Mujahideen in Palestine, Afghanistan, Philippines and Chechnya... He also encouraged us to be a jihadist... We then waited for our turn to meet Osama. Our meeting with Osama lasted about five to ten minutes. We asked about his well-being, sought his advice in becoming a good jihadist and expressed our wishes to fight alongside with his soldiers. Osama then said that he would look into it and help us.*

***Jl detainee and former Al Ghuraba cell member "Talib" (not his real name),  
23 October 2003***

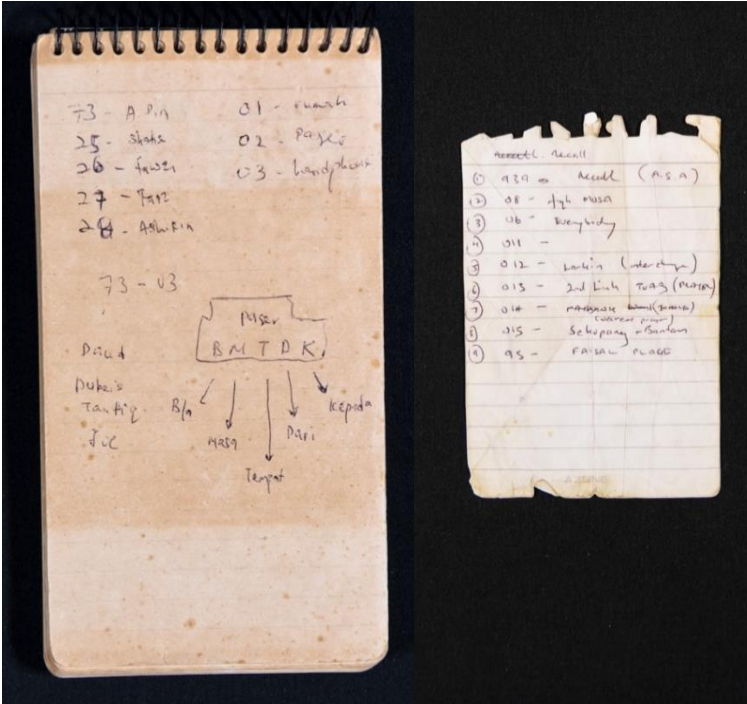
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Structure of *Ji fiah* (cells) written in codes by a *Ji* member.

The BMTDK code system used by the *Ji* to alert members of meetings. It stands for B - "Bila" (When), M - "Masa" (Time), T - "Tempat" (Place), D - "Daripada" (From who), K - "Kepada" (To who).

For example, if the code number of *Ji* member "A" is 41, "B" is 42 and "C" is 43, then 29-20-41-42-43 means that "C" has been activated by "B" to meet at "A"'s place at 2000hrs on the 29<sup>th</sup> (day of the month).





18 JI's emphasis on organisational development and grooming of future leaders were key components that contribute to its long-term survival strategy. Significantly, at that juncture, the JI's strict security protocols had already enabled the group to fly under the security radar for more than a decade. Therefore, ISD saw the need for a clean sweep of the JI network, including fugitives who fled overseas following the first wave of arrests, to ensure that remnant members did not have the opportunity to surreptitiously regroup and rebuild. Concomitantly, to prevent the emergence of a second generation of JI members, holistic rehabilitation efforts were necessary to disengage JI members – and in some instances their family members – from the group's ideologies.

# ISD is committed and adaptable in the fight against terrorism

## Hunt for the Singapore JI fugitives

19 With the JI network in Singapore crippled by the security operations, ISD turned its attention to the JI members who had fled Singapore. The JI members on the run posed a considerable security risk. Several of them were involved in the reconnaissance of installations in Singapore. Notwithstanding that the attack plots were foiled with the first two waves of JI arrests in Singapore, the JI members who had fled Singapore retained operational knowledge which could be used by the regional JI to plan further attacks against Singapore. There was also a real possibility of them working with their regional counterparts to launch retaliatory attacks against Singapore targets or Singapore interests overseas.

20 To neutralise the security threat they posed, ISD was determined to hunt down these Singapore JI fugitives. Multiple investigative leads were generated through interviews with the detained JI members, along with close monitoring of the local associates of the Singapore JI fugitives. ISD also engaged in frequent intelligence exchanges with foreign counterparts to ascertain the whereabouts of some of these JI fugitives. Many of them were subsequently apprehended by foreign counterparts and deported to Singapore after ISD provided intelligence on their likely locations.

21 For some of the JI fugitives, ISD worked with their families and other helpful parties wherever possible, to persuade these individuals to return to Singapore. At least four of the JI fugitives who fled to Malaysia subsequently returned to Singapore after speaking to their family and local contacts. One of them was told off by his family members for being “foolish” and for languishing as a fugitive in Malaysia.

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*[Our families] persuaded us to surrender ourselves to the Singapore authorities. My wife revealed that she had checked with other wives’ of the JI members who had been detained by ISD and that none of them complained of ill-treatment. She added that ISD had assured her that we would be treated well should we surrender... Both “Adam” and myself took one week to come to the decision to surrender.*

**JI detainee “Osman” (not his real name),  
October 2002**

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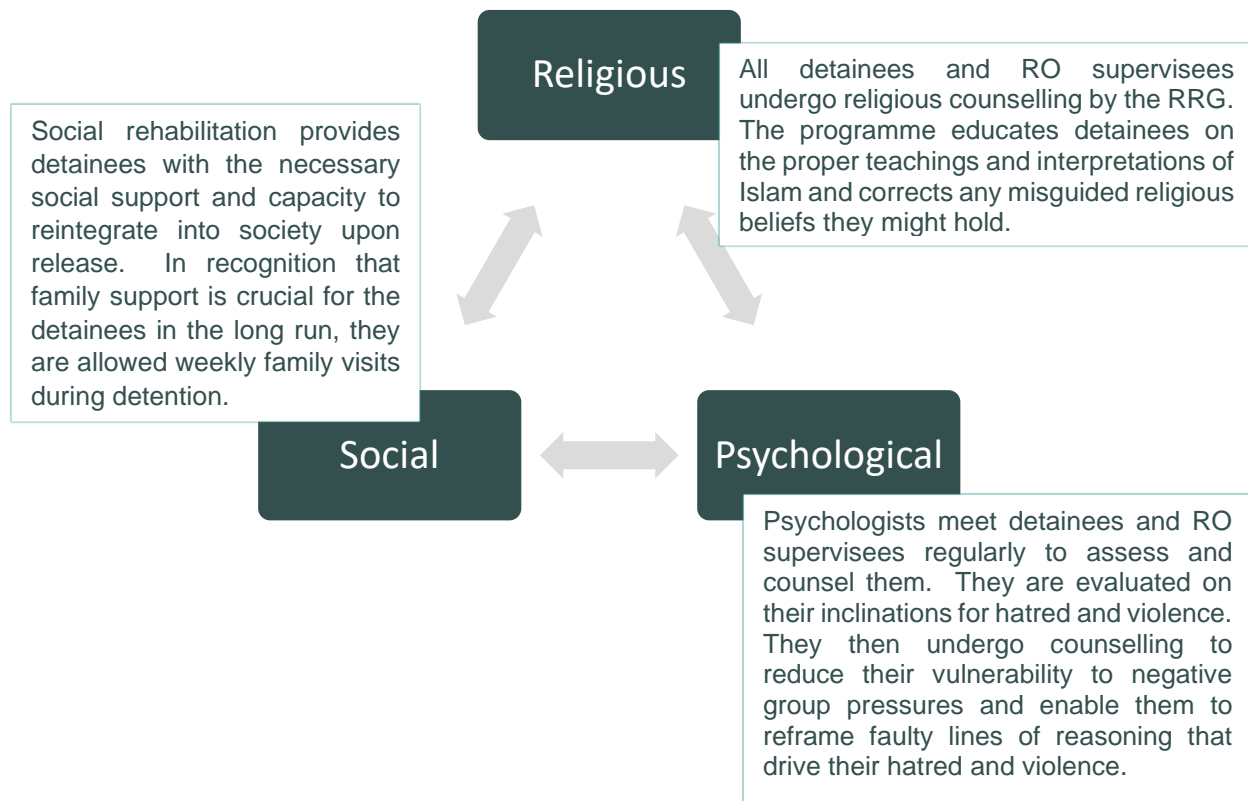
22 ISD’s efforts to hunt down the Singapore JI fugitives have paid off. We have secured the return of almost all the over 20 Singaporeans who had fled in the wake of the JI arrests in 2001. The only exception is JI member Hassan Saynudin



who is presently serving out his jail term in Indonesia for terrorism-related offences.<sup>3</sup>

### A holistic rehabilitation approach involving community partners

23 To neutralise the threat posed by the JI members, it is not sufficient to just detain them or issue them with ROs. Since 2002, ISD has partnered with volunteers from the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) and Inter-Agency Aftercare Group (ACG) to rehabilitate detainees and RO supervisees, so that they do not re-engage in terrorism-related activities. The long-term rehabilitation approach is holistic and intensive, comprising religious, psychological and social rehabilitation.



24 Support is further extended to the family members of the detainees and RO supervisees. For instance, RRG also provides religious counselling to family members of detainees and RO supervisees to correct any radical ideology they may have been exposed to. They also received financial and social support from the ACG. Over time, an eco-system of care and supervision involving multiple stakeholders is built up around each detainees and RO supervisees, as well as

<sup>3</sup> Hassan Saynudin was convicted in April 2009 and sentenced to 18 years in prison for killing a Christian school teacher and planning terrorist attacks against Westerners in Indonesia.



their respective families, to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration into society, and to mitigate against the risk of recidivism.

25 The perseverance by ISD case officers and rehabilitation stakeholders in reaching out to the detainees and RO supervisees is key to their successful rehabilitation. An example is a former JI member who held on to the belief that he was wrongfully detained and victimised for most of his detention, despite his past heavy involvement in JI activities. The ISD case officers and rehabilitation stakeholders continued to reach out to him. Eventually, his attitude changed around the sixth year of his detention and he started showing progress in his rehabilitation. He has since been released.

26 All detainees are treated with dignity and respect. The detainee's religious obligations are observed, and the food served is in accordance with his or her religious requirements. The detainees are also examined by a doctor daily, and they can ask for a doctor anytime. Beyond this, ISD officers regularly engage detainees to provide guidance and support. Even after they are released, they continue to receive personal attention and guidance from ISD officers to facilitate their reintegration into society and reduce their risk of recidivism.

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*All JI members should go back to the right path and return to their own countries. I am sure the authorities will treat them in a dignified way, as I have been treated. I was actually surprised at the treatment I received. They respected me...*

***Jl detainee "Sayfudin" (not his real name), June 2003***

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### **Helping a former JI detainee to secure employment**

Towards the end of his detention, "Halim" told his ISD case officers about his deep passion for cooking, and that he would like to secure employment in a restaurant and work his way up the career ladder from the bottom. After his release from detention, ISD case officers arranged for "Halim" to attend an interview as a kitchen helper with a restaurant. "Halim" secured the job, and has been performing well at work. His case officers also made arrangement for him to attend courses at a learning centre to improve his less-than-fluent English, as "Halim" had spent most of his formative years in another country.



### **Preventing the next generation of JI members**

A key focus of ISD's collaboration with our community partners is the children of JI members. Rendering assistance to the children reduces their vulnerability to negative influences, and also establishes them as a form of positive influence to support the rehabilitation of their parent. Such efforts are crucial to prevent the emergence of a "second generation" of JI members. Thus far, most of the children of the JI members are either gainfully employed or engaged in studies, and remain resilient against radical influence.

### **Effectiveness of ISD's rehabilitation approach**

27 ISD's rehabilitation approach has been effective in dealing with the JI members who were detained or issued with a RO. Most of them were receptive to engagements by rehabilitation stakeholders and had put in effort in correcting their radical ideologies. Their families were generally supportive of their rehabilitation and many of them also appreciated the support given by ISD and the community partners.

28 Of the 56 Singapore JI members who were detained since 2002, only four of them remain in detention, while another six are currently on ROs. The remaining 46 had their ROs lapsed. Of the 13 who were issued directly with ROs, all of their ROs have since been allowed to lapse. The majority of them have reintegrated well into society, and continue to maintain a close rapport with ISD case officers and rehabilitation stakeholders.

29 That said, rehabilitation only works for those who choose to be receptive. The four JI members who remain in detention are still deeply entrenched in their radical beliefs and are assessed to pose an imminent security threat despite extensive efforts by ISD and other rehabilitation stakeholders. ISD will continue to explore ways to reach out to them and encourage them to participate in rehabilitation.

- One of them is openly hostile to ISD officers and rehabilitation stakeholders. He regularly threatens to harm ISD officers and the government. He also said that Singapore would burn in hellfire because of our secular society and that he would destroy Singapore.
- Another still believes in the concept of armed jihad. He expressed admiration for suicide bombers and said that he would not hesitate to engage in suicide attacks if called on by the JI leaders to do so.



## Changing terrorism landscape

30 Despite the disruption of the Singapore JI network in the early 2000s, the threat of terrorism persists and continues to evolve. The mid-2000s saw the rise of a new phenomenon - self-radicalisation. Individuals who were not part of any organised terrorist groups became radicalised by terrorist propaganda and extremist content propagated by groups like AQ or radical ideologues like Anwar al-Awlaki (deceased), often on the Internet. In 2007, ISD dealt with the first self-radicalised Singaporean under the ISA – he had wanted to carry out armed violence overseas after absorbing militant jihad ideas directly from extremist websites and forums. As the internet and the use of social media become ubiquitous, the online platform became a key means through which individuals were radicalised.

### **First case of self-radicalisation – Abdul Basheer Abdul Kadir (Basheer)**

From late 2004, Basheer began developing the mind-set that he had to wage militant jihad overseas where Muslims were under attack. His views were shaped by the radical discourse that he avidly looked up on the Internet. In 2006, he left Singapore for a Middle East country, where he became more deeply influenced by online extremist propaganda. He purchased an air ticket to Pakistan where he intended to make contact with a militant group and cross over into Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban. He was arrested and repatriated before he could embark on his violent agenda. He was subsequently detained under the ISA in February 2007.

Following his release from detention in February 2010, Basheer was detected to have reverted to his earlier interest of undertaking militant jihad abroad. The factors that contributed to his relapse included the surfing of radical websites that propagated virulent extremist ideology. He was subsequently re-detained under the ISA in October 2012.

31 In the mid-2010s, we saw the rise of ISIS amidst the Syrian conflict. The game-changer during this period was the social media. ISIS's savvy use of social media and its ability to produce propaganda videos of high production value led to a new wave of radicalisation cases involving both Singaporeans and foreigners based here. Those radicalised were also getting younger, and for the first time, women were being dealt with under the ISA because of their terrorism involvement. Several of these radicalised individuals had harboured intentions to travel to Syria to fight alongside ISIS or other terrorist groups operating in the conflict zones. A few were even willing to conduct attacks in Singapore or against Singapore interests overseas.

32 To combat the evolving threat, ISD stepped up its monitoring to more proactively detect cases of radicalisation. We also built on our counter-terrorism capabilities developed during the JI arrests. For instance, we continued to leverage on our key community partners, such as the RRG, to disseminate counter-ideological messages to the community. We also expanded our network of partners to reach out to more segments of the community, such as the migrant workers and youths.

### **Self-radicalised Singaporeans abroad**

Since late 2013, at least four self-radicalised Singaporeans have travelled to Syria and Iraq and are believed to have participated in the armed conflict there. Singaporean Megat Shahdan bin Abdul Samad (Shahdan), the first Singaporean to be featured in an ISIS propaganda video, made his way to Syria to join ISIS in September 2014. In one of two ISIS videos in which Shahdan was featured, he called upon fighters to join ISIS, and executed three prisoners with two other Southeast Asian ISIS fighters.

While fighting for ISIS, Shahdan had incited his contacts in Singapore to stage terror attacks in Singapore – he had instigated his local contacts to drive a lorry into a crowd during a Thaipusam procession. None of them was known to have responded to his overtures. Shahdan is believed to have been killed in the conflict zone.

#### ***From Shahdan***

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*Chapter 6:162.... my life and my death are for Allah*

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*For God sake brother..that is the best deed ... the highest places to God*

*To kill and be killed.... Chapter 9 verse 111*

*Do like the one at Nice or at Orlando*

*God willing I will do it here*

*Small lorry also can.. but you have to find the time where there are many people*

*.. such as during festival time like performing prayer like Thaipusam event.*

*Run over them until they die and bring machete along to stab the police or*

*whoever is around*

*Do not be afraid.. do it for God... God will be with you.*

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*Death in God path is just like an ant bite*

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**Message from Shahdan to a local contact (Translated)**

33 While violent Islamist extremism, particularly ISIS's enduring influence, remains Singapore's primary security concern, other emergent threats such as far-right extremism have broadened the terrorism threat to Singapore in recent years. In December 2020, ISD detected the first self-radicalisation case in Singapore who was inspired by far-right extremist ideology. The 16-year-old Singaporean youth was inspired by the Christchurch mosque shooter Brenton Tarrant and wanted to emulate Tarrant's attack. The youth had planned to conduct attacks at two mosques in Singapore on 15 March 2021, the second anniversary of the Christchurch attacks.

34 Shortly after, the serious threat of lone-actor attacks was further underscored by the case of a 20-year-old Singaporean youth who was detained under the ISA in March 2021. Aggrieved by the Israel-Palestine conflict, he had made plans and preparations to conduct a knife attack against members of the Jewish community at the Maghain Aboth Synagogue in Singapore. He also wanted to travel to Gaza in the Palestinian territories to join the military wing of HAMAS to fight against Israel.

35 ISD is committed to taking firm action against any individual in Singapore who undertakes or makes preparations to undertake armed violence, regardless of how the individual rationalises such violence, or where the intended violence is to take place. In this regard, the ISA continues to be the single most important piece of legislation in our fight against terrorism. The preventive use of the ISA allows us to arrest and investigate these individuals at an early point in their radical trajectories, regardless of the actual extent of their terrorist preparations at the point of detection, and to recommend appropriate interventions depending on the seriousness of the cases. Early intervention for less serious cases increases the chances of correcting their radical ideology. As such, ISD remains strongly committed in our mission to neutralise the threat posed by such individuals.

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*We have also been fortunate that ISD has been very effective. It has done extraordinarily good work. Since 2015, they have picked up 53 individuals under the ISA for terrorism-related conduct. 37 were detained, 16 were issued with Restriction Orders. And over the last 20 odd years, they have prevented attacks on our soil, they have stopped radicalised individuals from going overseas to conflict zones to fight. They have disrupted plots by foreigners seeking to carry out attacks, both here and overseas, and many people remember the 40 plus Bangladeshis who have been picked up and deported – some of them were congregating in mosques and learning how to do silent killing without the knowledge of the mosque authorities.*

**Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law,  
28 January 2021**

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# Strong partnerships are critical in the fight against terrorism

## Engaging the community

36 In the wake of the operation against the JI network in Singapore, there were concerns that this episode could result in fear and distrust towards the Muslim community and exacerbate communal fault lines. Hence, ISD took the unprecedented step of bringing community leaders into confidence before news of the JI arrests were made public. A series of closed-door sessions were held with key Muslim community leaders, during which ISD provided briefings on the case and responded to queries. These sessions set the context for Prime Minister's subsequent engagement with an audience of over 1,700 grassroots leaders on two occasions after news of the arrests broke. At the same time, ISD was also working with community leaders to establish understanding of sensitivities, so as to minimise any potential negative fallout that the JI episode could have on Singapore's society.

### **The Prime Minister's speeches to community leaders in 2002**

During his first speech to the community leaders in January 2002, the Prime Minister expressed his worry over the possible impact the JI episode might have on Singapore's cohesion and called upon the community leaders to lead by example and respond to the JI arrests in a level-headed and rational way. In his second speech in October 2002, the Prime Minister expressed appreciation of the efforts made by the community leaders in maintaining racial and religious harmony following the JI arrests, and charted Singapore's path forward as a nation.

37 To their credit, and as a testament to the strong foundation of racial and religious harmony that Singapore has been building since independence, the various communities reacted in a rational and constructive manner. Many non-Muslims instinctively sympathised with Muslim Singaporeans whom they knew would be subjected to stress and scrutiny through no fault of their own. The Muslim community also came forward to denounce the JI's actions and clarified that Islam had nothing to do with terrorism. In a strong show of solidarity and conviction, 122 Muslim organisations led by Habib Syed Hassan of Ba'alwie Mosque issued a joint statement in October 2002 to condemn terrorism unequivocally.

38 At the same time, ISD recognised that intelligence and enforcement actions were not sufficient to counter the radical ideas put forth by terrorist groups, and there was a need to work with the community to comprehensively address the





terrorism threat. Strong partnerships were forged with various community groups such as the RRG and ACG. Both organisations have since established themselves as ISD's key partners in the fight against terrorism, even as the threat evolved following the JI episode.

### **Reaching out to the public**

Shortly after the JI arrests, ISD also launched its own counter-terrorism security outreach programme for the private and public sectors. Through a series of briefings, we sought to reassure the public and business communities that the Government is committed towards ensuring that Singapore remains safe and secure, and sensitise the public to the terrorism threat to Singapore. These security outreach efforts were further complemented by a security education programme centred on the ISD Heritage Centre, which was opened in March 2002.

### **Partnership with the RRG and ACG**

39 Formed in 2001 and 2002 respectively, the RRG and ACG were ground-up programmes initiated by members of the local Muslim communities who recognised that the terrorist threat could not be dealt merely through executive actions, but also by counselling and helping the JI members rehabilitate and reintegrate into society. Over the years, RRG and ACG have also collaborated with other community organisations in their efforts.

### **RRG**

Following the JI arrests, ISD facilitated the meeting of two prominent religious teachers with key JI detainees, for the former to gain a first-hand understanding of how the JI had misinterpreted key religious tenets to justify violence. The religious teachers were subsequently convinced of the vulnerability of the community to this ideology-based threat and volunteered to work together with the authorities to counter JI's radical teachings. This eventually led to the formation of the RRG in 2003.

RRG subsequently stepped up to provide religious counselling to the JI members to correct their radical ideologies and educate them on the proper teachings and interpretations of Islam. Over the years, the RRG has also extended their religious counselling to the families of JI members, as well as self-radicalised individuals. From its initial 11 members, RRG has expanded to 46 members today.

**ACG**

Formed in 2002, the ACG is an informal network of Muslim organisations that sought to provide emotional, social and financial support to the families of detainees and RO supervisees. This helps to motivate the individuals to respond positively to their rehabilitation, knowing their families were being cared for. Over the years, the ACG has collaborated with other community organisations, including the Persatuan Pemuda Islam Singapore (PPIS) and Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society, and more recently, the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA). These organisations actively support the ACG to provide social workers to engage families of the detainees and supervisees.

40 ISD’s partnerships with both agencies have been crucial to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of the JI members (see segment on ISD’s holistic rehabilitation approach). In addition, ISD also works closely with RRG and ACG to sensitise the public to the terrorism threat and strengthen the community’s resilience against extremist ideas. Some of the outreach events organised by both agencies include:

- **Domestic Guardian Webinar 2021 (27 June 2021)**

ISD collaborated with RRG and SPF to organise an online workshop for foreign domestic workers. The workshop discussed various topics including the threat of online radicalisation, and the persistent threat of ISIS and the rise of far-right extremism.



- **Engagement with Youths (4 April 2021)**

Attended by students from the North Mosque Cluster, the event entailed a visit to RRG Resource and Counselling Centre (RCC), a film screening on the “Cubs of the Caliphate” and a presentation by ISD on the current security landscape.



**Cubs of the Caliphate**

“Cubs of the Caliphate” is a documentary produced by RSIS academic Dr Noor Huda Ismail and MHA, in partnership with RRG and ACG. Launched in November 2019, the film traces the journey of two radicalised Indonesian youths who realised the fallacy of ISIS’s “caliphate” after travelling to Syria. The film also highlights two young Singaporeans’ journey into online violence extremism.

- **Harmony Amidst Adversity (10 October 2020)**

A virtual event organised by RRG for tertiary students in Singapore. The event featured dialogues and talks by Islamic religious teachers and the Deputy Mufti of Singapore, Dr Mohammad Hannan Hassan.





- **Seven-part Ramadan series lectures (April – June 2020)**

ISD collaborated with RRG to produce a total of 17 videos between April and June 2020 which featured short talks and lectures on countering violent extremism and other topics such as the importance of social cohesion in light of COVID-19. The videos were uploaded to various social media platforms and disseminated to foreign workers, mosques and youths.

- **#Youth-nified: Guarding Against Radicalism in the Digital Era (30 November 2019)**

A forum organised by ACG to empower youths to play a more active role in guarding against terror and radicalism. It was attended by around 200 students from the five local polytechnics.

41 In addition, both organisations have also actively participated in international programmes and exchanges over the years, in a bid to learn more about other models of rehabilitation and counter-terrorism practices. The knowledge they gained from such programmes and exchanges have contributed to the improvement of Singapore’s rehabilitation and counter-ideology models.

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*We also sought to rehabilitate those led astray by the violent extremist ideology. This relied on close partnership between the Government and the Muslim community. Respected Muslim leaders like Ustaz Ali Haji Mohamed and Ustaz Mohamad Hasbi bin Hassan formed the Religious Rehabilitation Group. They laboured patiently and unremittingly to persuade these individuals of the error of their ways, and guide them back to become good Muslims and citizens. Several Muslim organisations came together to form the Inter-Agency Aftercare Group. They helped these individuals put their lives back on track, and provided social, emotional and financial support to their families. Happily, in most cases, these efforts succeeded.*

*Because we did all this, our racial and religious harmony held, and indeed strengthened. This was vital, as the threat was real and continuing.*

***The lessons from 9/11 for Singapore,  
Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 11 September 2021***

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## International Cooperation

42 Besides working closely with local agencies, including the Singapore Police Force (SPF), Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), cooperation with foreign partners is also critical in ISD's counter-terrorism mission, particularly as groups like the JI pose a transnational threat. ISD was the first security agency in Southeast Asia to sound the alarm on the regional JI network. ISD had shared intelligence gathered from our investigations into the JI with our foreign partners at the onset, alerting our neighbours to the existence of the JI's regional terror network. In turn, this facilitated the regional security agencies' investigations and security actions to disrupt the JI networks in their respective countries.

- ISD provided important intelligence leads that led to the arrest of AQ and JI operatives overseas. For instance, ISD provided the identifying particulars that led to the capture of Al-Qaeda operative "Sammy" in Oman and foreign JI bomb-maker "Mike" in the Philippines in early 2002.
- ISD's investigations into the local JI also uncovered the existence of four tons of ammonium nitrate (meant for attack plots in Singapore) which were stashed in Malaysia. The information was quickly shared with the Malaysian authorities, and the explosive materials were subsequently recovered in a palm oil plantation in Johor.
- ISD supplied critical information to the Indonesian authorities following the Bali bombings in 2002. Based on the disclosures of a JI detainee, ISD provided corroborative intelligence to ascertain the identity of Ali Amrozi bin Haji Nurhasyim (Amrozi) and his involvement in the JI. This information from ISD proved useful during the Indonesian authorities' interrogation of Amrozi, following his arrest over his involvement in the attack.
- ISD granted our foreign partners direct access to Singaporean detainees to facilitate their prosecution of terrorism suspects in court. Several of our former detainees had testified in the trials of 9/11 conspirator Zaccarias Moussaoui in the US and former JI leader Abu Bakar Bashir (ABB) in Indonesia.



**Testifying against Abu Bakar Bashir**

ABB was charged in Indonesia in April 2003 for treason and for conspiring with other JI operatives to plot attacks in the region. In June 2003, three JI detainees in Singapore testified at his trial via video-conferencing. Their testimonies provided insights into ABB's role as the leader of JI. One detainee attested that as JI's leader, ABB would have had to authorise the Christmas Eve bombings in 2000, "just like the military". Another testified that ABB and late JI leader, Abdullah Sungkar, had sent him off at the airport in Kuala Lumpur in 1991, when he was leaving for military training in Afghanistan; indicating that ABB was well-aware of JI's military capabilities and operational ties with AQ. Their incriminating testimonies contributed to ABB's eventual conviction for his involvement in JI's terror plots in September 2003.

43 Continued cooperation and intelligence exchange between ISD and our foreign counterparts have also enabled the arrest and repatriation of more than 20 Singapore JI fugitives over the years. Significantly, close collaboration with the Indonesian and Malaysian security services led to the first arrest of Mas Selamat in Indonesia in 2003. After his escape from detention in 2008, Mas Selamat was re-captured in Malaysia in 2009, based on intelligence leads from ISD.

**Tracking and Apprehending Mas Selamat**

Mas Selamat fled Singapore on 15 December 2001, shortly after the first round of JI arrests. ISD's investigations subsequently located Mas Selamat in the Riau Islands in mid-2002, and the Indonesian authorities were quickly alerted to Mas Selamat's possible whereabouts. He was apprehended on 2 February 2003 in Bintan. Close working relations between Singapore and Indonesia facilitated Mas Selamat's handover to the Singapore authorities on 3 February 2006.

Following Mas Selamat's escape from detention in February 2008, ISD thoroughly and cautiously pursued all credible leads to track his whereabouts. We caught scent of his trail in Malaysia in late 2008 and provided information on his possible associates to the Malaysian Special Branch. He was eventually recaptured in Johor in April 2009, and repatriated to Singapore in September 2010.

44 Despite the evolving terrorism threat landscape, the necessity for international cooperation remains a constant in Singapore's counter-terrorism strategy. ISD's strong working relationships with foreign partners have been critical towards addressing new threats that emerged over the years, such as the ISIS threat in more recent years.



## Threat Prognosis

45 While the Singapore JI has been dismantled by ISD, the regional JI network remains quietly active in Indonesia, where it continues to conduct outreach and recruitment activities. The recent spate of security operations in Indonesia since 2019 against the JI have diminished its operational capability for the time being. However, the group is resilient and adaptable to a more hostile security environment. The JI's operational security measures to evade detection and its outreach strategies to indoctrinate future generations of recruits, will continue to ensure its longevity in the Southeast Asian terror scene.

46 JI's activities in the region have not spilled over into Singapore. At this juncture, there is no indication that Indonesian JI members are rekindling operational ties with their former associates in Singapore. Further, there is currently no specific nor credible intelligence of any JI-linked terror plots targeting Singapore and our interests. Nonetheless, JI presents a serious long-term security threat to Singapore, given its ambition of establishing a *Daulah Islamiyah* in Southeast Asia through the use of violence.

47 ISD continues to keep a close watch on developments that could heighten the threat posed by the JI. Significantly, the Taliban's recent ascendance to power in Afghanistan and the volatile situation there may allow terror groups like AQ to re-establish safe havens. In the longer term, regional JI operatives with ties to AQ and/or Afghanistan could facilitate the transfer of operational resources and travel of militants between Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. Concomitantly, the Taliban's victory after 20 years could also be viewed by the JI as a validation of its long-game strategy, further entrenching the group's aspirations to establish an Islamic state in the region.

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