

The Rise of Darknet: A Call for Understanding Online Communication of Terrorist Groups in Indonesia

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Abstract : A number of studies and reports on terrorism have continuously addressed the role of internet and online activism to support terrorist and extremist groups. In particular, they stress on social media's usage that generally serves for the terrorist's propaganda as well as justification of their causes. While those analyses are important to understand how social media is a vital tool for global network terrorism, they are inadequate to explain the online communication patterns that enable terrorism acts. Beyond apparent online narratives, there is a deep cyber sphere where the very vein of terrorism movement lies. That is a hidden space in the internet called 'darknet'. Recent investigations, particularly in Middle Eastern context, have shed some lights that this invisible space in the internet is fundamental to maintain the terrorist activities. Despite that, limited number of research examines darknet within the issue of terrorist movements in Indonesian context—where the country is considered quite a hotbed for extremist groups. Therefore, this paper attempts to provide an insight of darknet operation in Indonesian cases. By exploring how the darknet is used by the Indonesian-based extremist groups, this paper maps out communication patterns of terrorist groups on the internet which appear as an intermingled network. It shows the usage of internet is differentiated in different level of anonymity for distinctive purposes. This paper further argues that the emerging terrorist communication network calls for a more comprehensive counterterrorism strategy on the Internet.

Keywords : communication pattern, counterterrorism, darknet, extremist groups, terrorism

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