

# I-POST

## *IPCS Program on Suicide Terrorism*

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### **Contents**

<b>SUICIDE ATTACKS IN DECEMBER 2004</b> Dharini Nathwani	01
<b>PROFILE</b> <b>Suicide Attacks in Pakistan: A Chronology</b> Shweta Moorthy	05
<b>ANALYSIS</b> <b>Suicide Terrorism in Indonesia</b> Eric Koo	07

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## **SUICIDE ATTACKS IN DECEMBER 2004**

**DHARINI NATHWANI**

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### **1 December 2004, Baghdad**

An attack was carried out by a suicide bomber destroyed two vehicles on the Baghdad airport highway. The explosion took place at the same spot where another suicide bomber rammed into a US convoy causing several casualties and damaging two military vehicles.

#### **Related links**

'Another suicide attack on Baghdad's killer highway'  
<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=3827962>

'5 perish in suicide attack'  
<http://pakistanimes.net/2004/12/01/top3.htm>

### **1 December 2004, Baghdad**

An attack was carried out at a checkpoint in south of Baghdad in which one civilian was killed and several others injured. The attack took place on the highway that links Baghdad to the Shiite cities of the South. No marines or Iraqi soldiers have been reported killed or injured in the attack.

#### **Related links**

Chris Rees, 'Civilian killed 7 hurt in Iraqi checkpoint suicide attack Weds'  
<http://www.wistv.com/Global/story.asp?S=2634966>

### **3 December 2004, Baghdad**

In an attack carried out on a Shiite mosque in Baghdad, fourteen people were killed. The early morning blast occurred in the Sunni neighborhood of Baghdad. Witnesses reported two blasts. The first occurred at dawn prayers and the second blast took

place as rescue workers attempted to remove the dead and wounded people.

### Related Links

'Suicide bomb goes off at dawn prayers, 14 killed'

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articlehow/945926.cms>

Mussab al Khairalla, 'Violence in Iraq kills at least 25 Iraqis'

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=300797>

### 3 December 2004, Srinagar

In a suicide attack five CRPF soldiers were killed and many security personnel injured. The militant used a self detonated grenade to kill the victims. The terrorist group Al Mansoorian claimed responsibility for the attack.

### Related links

'Sopore suicide attack: 2 militants killed'  
<http://us.rediff.com/news/2004/dec/04jk.htm>

'Two militants in Sopore suicide attack killed'  
<http://www.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=39176>

### 4 December 2004, Baghdad

Two suicide car bombs exploded outside a police station in central Baghdad. The blast killed at least four police men and injured 49 others. Both bombs exploded simultaneously outside a police station in the capital's 'Green zone', which is home to Iraqi government institutions and foreign embassies.

Most of the injured are Iraqi military personnel. US officials have reported no casualties from their side. The attack came after the bombing of a Shiite mosque in which 26 people were killed.

### Related links

Charles Onias, 'Double suicide bombing rocks Baghdad'

<http://iafrica.com/news/worldnews/396913.htm>

### 5 December 2004, Mosul

An attack was launched on a convoy in the city of Mosul killing seventeen Kurdish militiamen. The two vehicles carrying the men were immediately engulfed in flames. Abu Musab al Zarqawi, a staunch supporter of Al Qaeda has claimed responsibility for the act.

### Related links

'Mosul suicide bombings hits Kurdish fighters'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200412/s1258094.htm>

'Suicide bomb in Iraq'

<http://www9.sbs.com.au/theworldnews/reunion.php?id=100392&region=6>

'Suicide attack kills 13 in green zone'

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/World/Suicide-attack->

### 6 December 2004, Baiji

A suicide car bomb in the city of Baiji close to Tikrit killed four people. Among the dead are Commander Mohammed Jassim Rumaied and three of his bodyguards. The bomber detonated his vehicle beside a National Guard convoy in the rebel stronghold of Baiji, north of Tikrit.

### Related links

Andrew Marshall, 'Insurgents kill 23 Iraqi's countryside'

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=304072>

### 6 December 2004, Iraq

A US marine was killed after a suicide bomber in a car approached an American military base near Iraq's border with Jordan.

### **Related links**

William Lamb, 'Young Marine from Millstadt dies in suicide bombing in Iraq'  
<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/metroeast/story/FEEB429C3B92940C86256F63001B9D99?OpenDocument&Headline=Young+Marine+fron+Millstadt+dies+in+suicide+bombing+in+Iraq>

### **13 December 2004, Baghdad**

At least seven Iraqis were killed and nineteen wounded after a suicide car bomb exploded outside a check point in Baghdad's green zone. The area serves as the base for the US led coalition offices.

The bomb exploded close to a hospital in the area killing Iraqi civilians, US military and hospital personnel. The bomber drove his car up to the checkpoint and detonated himself.

### **Related links**

'Suicide bomb kills 7 in Baghdad'  
<http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=13628697>

Katarina Kratovac, 'Suicide bombings kill 13 in Baghdad'  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,1280,-4670053,00.html>

### **20 December 2004, Kerbala**

An attack was carried out in the city of Kerbala killing ten people and injuring thirty. Most of the victims were women and children. The explosion occurred at approximately 1.30 pm outside the entrance of Kerbalas main bus station.

The car bomb also caused much damage to nearby surroundings. Houses and shops were destroyed by the blast and police men had to put out as many as five burning cars and minibuses.

### **Related links**

'Ten killed in Iraq suicide bombing'  
<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=3906615>

Neil Graves, 'Bloody Sunday in Iraq'  
<http://news.scotsman.com/latest>

### **20 December 2004, Najaf**

Fifty two people were killed and over one hundred and forty injured when a car bomb exploded near two of the holiest sites of Shiite Islam. The explosions followed a similar attack in Kerbala that killed ten and wounded forty others.

### **Related links**

'Iraqi' a round up fifty after Najaf suicide bomb'  
<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=7138431>

'About security for military'  
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/12/23/MN-GM3AGB3D1.DTL>

### **21 December 2004, Mosul**

An attack at a base outside Mosul left eighteen US fighters and four Iraqis dead and many more wounded. A statement by joint chief of staff Richard Meyers said that the suicide bomber walked into a dining hall with explosives strapped onto his body. The suicide bomber is said to be an Iraqi national who had been working at the base for two months gathering information about operations at the base. The blast has been described as the deadliest attack against US troops.

### **Related links**

'US base bleeds in Mosul suicide bombing'  
[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1041222/asp/foreign/story\\_4159617.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1041222/asp/foreign/story_4159617.asp)

Elmarie Jack, 'Mosul blast suicide attack'  
[http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,,2-10-1460\\_1639214,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,,2-10-1460_1639214,00.html)

### **23 December 2004, Baghdad**

An attack carried out at an Iraqi forces' checkpoint outside Baghdad leaves nine people dead and many injured. The attacker is alleged to have driven his vehicle into the checkpoint located near the town of Latifya. The area is home to many insurgents and is also known as the, 'triangle of death'.

#### **Related links**

'9 Iraqi's die as suicide attack hits checkpoint'  
<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iraq23dec23.1.4639554.story?coll=la-headlines-world&ctrack=1&cset=true>

### **26 December 2004, Baghdad**

Twelve people were killed and nineteen others wounded when a bomber exploded a fuel truck in the Al-Mansour district of Baghdad. The blast took place close to the Libyan and Jordanian embassies. The suicide driver steered the truck onto a residential street which houses many Christian settlers. Most of the dead were women and children.

#### **Related links**

'Seven killed in Baghdad Christmas eve suicide attack'  
<http://www.turkishpress.com/world/news.asp?id=041225082344.th8izvz6.xml>

Karl Vick, 'Insurgent attacks in Iraq kills 8 on Christmas'  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26142-2004Dec25.html>

### **28 December 2004, Baghdad**

A car bomb exploded outside the residence of Abdul Aziz Hakim, the Shiite party leader. The blast killed fifteen people; around thirty people are believed to be injured. However Mr. Hakim narrowly escaped unscathed.

Mr. Hakim is a prominent figure of Iraq's political scene. He is the first in line to lead the Iraqi united coalition, the party that hopes to win the Shiite majority in next months election.

#### **Related links**

'Abdul Aziz al Hakim escapes suicide attack'  
[http://www.geo.tv/main\\_files/world.aspx?id=56515](http://www.geo.tv/main_files/world.aspx?id=56515)

'Top Iraqi leader escapes suicide attack'  
<http://www.dawn.com/2004/12/28/top9.htm>

## PROFILE

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### SUICIDE ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN: A CHRONOLOGY Shweta Moorthy

#### 17 March 2002

In a grenade attack on a church in the heavily guarded diplomatic enclave in Islamabad, five people, including a US diplomat's wife and daughter, were killed while forty one people were injured. Police suspect that the unidentified person whose body is yet to be claimed by his relatives, could be among the attackers who had been killed.<sup>1</sup>

#### 8 May 2002

An attack was carried out by a suicide bomber on a Pakistan Navy bus in front of Sheraton hotel in Karachi. Fourteen people, including eleven French nationals, were killed and eighteen people, including ten foreigners, were injured, some of them seriously.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4 July 2003

In a suspected suicide attack on an Imambargah at the heart of Quetta during Friday prayers, forty four people were killed and sixty five were injured. The identity or the number of attackers could not be confirmed immediately, although one of them was said to have been killed in an exchange of gunfire.<sup>3</sup>

#### 26 December 2003

A two-pronged suicide attack was carried out on President Musharraf when he was returning to his residence after attending the ministerial meeting of Organisation of

Islamic Conference. A van and a car tried to hit the convoy - one at the front of the motorcade, and the other from the rear - and both exploded without causing much damage to the motorcade.

Sixteen people were killed including six police personnel and four army men, who were on security duty, and as many as fifty people were injured including nine cops.<sup>4</sup>

#### 7 May 2004

Fourteen people were killed and ninety six wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a mosque on the premises of Sindh Madressatul Islam in Karachi.

The blast occurred at about 1:17pm in the sixth row of the faithful, ripping through the 1894-built Hyderi Mosque only moments before the beginning of Zohrain prayers. The death toll later rose to twenty three.<sup>5</sup>

#### 31 May 2004

At least eighteen worshippers were killed and over thirty five people injured in what the police claimed to be a suicide bombing at an Imambargah in Karachi. The intensity of the blast was so severe that the tomb of the mosque developed cracks. The wall on one side of the Imambargah collapsed. A large number of people were trapped under the debris.<sup>6</sup>

#### 28 July 2004

An attack was carried out near the official residence of General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Pakistan Army's 9th division in Kohat. According to official sources an Assistant Director and an Inspector of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) died while two inspectors of the IB and a security guard of the military police were injured.

Police and personnel of secret agencies who had gathered at the place of the first bomb

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<sup>1</sup> "Five die in Islamabad church attack: US diplomat's wife, daughter among victims; 41 hurt," *Dawn*, 18 March 2002.

<sup>2</sup> "Suicide bombing leaves 14 dead: Explosive-laden car blows up near bus outside hotel," *Dawn*, 9 May 2002.

<sup>3</sup> "Attack on Quetta imambargah leaves 44 dead: Suicide bombing suspected; curfew clamped after rioting," *Dawn*, 5 July 2003.

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<sup>4</sup> "President escapes attempt on life," *Dawn*, 25 December 2003.

<sup>5</sup> "14 die in Karachi mosque bombing: 96 injured; inquiry ordered," *Dawn*, 8 May 2004.

<sup>6</sup> "18 die in blast at Karachi Imambargah: Two killed in shooting at blood bank," *Dawn*, 1 June 2004.

explosion had to run for cover as the second blast shook the area.<sup>7</sup>

### **30 July 2004**

An attack was carried out on Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz by a suicide bomber minutes after he addressed a public meeting at Jaffar village in connection with his election campaign for NA-59, Attock III, officials and witnesses said.

Seven people, including the suicide bomber, were killed in the attack. The government officials suspect that terrorists who carried out attacks on President Pervez Musharraf were behind this latest attack.<sup>8</sup>

### **1 October 2004**

Twenty-five people were killed and over fifty were wounded when a suspected suicide attacker detonated an explosive device inside a mosque adjacent to Imambargah Mistri Abdullah on the Raja Road in Sialkot.<sup>9</sup>

### **10 October 2004**

A suicide bomber detonated explosives at the entrance of Jamia Masjid Kashmirian in Mochi Gate in Lahore killing four people, including a 13-year-old boy, and injuring ten.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Three killed in Kohat blasts," *Dawn*, 29 July 2004.

<sup>8</sup> "Aziz survives attempt on life; 7 dead; 70 hurt after Fatehjang rally attack," *Dawn*, 31 July 2004.

<sup>9</sup> "25 killed in Sialkot mosque blast: Army called out after violence," *Dawn*, 2 October 2004.

<sup>10</sup> "4 killed in Lahore mosque blast," *Dawn*, 11 October 2004.

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## **ANALYSIS**

### **SUICIDE TERRORISM IN INDONESIA**

**Eric Koo Peng Kuan**

On Oct 12, 2002, Iqbal walked into Paddy's bar in Kuta, Bali Island in Indonesia, and blew himself up, one out of three simultaneous explosions which contributed to the infamous Bali bombing incident that killed 202 people and injured over 300.<sup>11</sup> Iqbal became the first suicide bomber belonging to a notorious terrorist network operating in South East Asia linked to Al Qaeda, known as the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) or "Islamic Community". The JI went on to launch two other suicide bombings - an explosion that occurred at the Marriott Hotel on August 5, 2003, killing at least 12, and another outside the Australian embassy on Sept 9, 2004, killing at least 9. Both events involved car bombs driven by suicide bombers and took place in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.<sup>12</sup>

Suicide terrorism has become a phenomenon following the rise of Islamic radicalism in South East Asia. There has been a practice of moderate Islam in Indonesia, until the rise of radical groups in 1998 following the fall of President Suharto. These groups ascribe to a more severe and harsh form of Islamic practice, with radical religious influence emanating from Pakistan and the Middle East

JI seeks to oppose western interests particularly that of Australia, as well as the current Indonesian government that it considers as being corrupt and apostate. JI

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<sup>11</sup> "Bali death toll set at 202" BBC News 19/02/2003  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2778923.stm>

<sup>12</sup> "Massive blast at Jakarta embassy" BBC News 09/09/2004  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3639922.stm>

preacher Abu Bakar Bashir, arrested in 2002, and since held in police custody, places much emphasis on the “jihad” element in his teachings, with a stress on the need to defend Islam by an armed conflict against its enemies.

Hence, followers of JI, in imitation of their Middle Eastern brethren, consider ‘martyrdom’ operations, or suicide attacks, as the ultimate act of faith and piety. Bali, Marriott and the Australian embassy bombings are all suicide bombing incidents which reflect this trend. The next possible JI terrorist attacks are also likely to involve suicide bombers. Heri Golun, the Australian embassy bomber, was known to have become more pious just before his impending death on that fateful day.<sup>13</sup>

### **State Response**

The Bali bombing jolted the Indonesian government into action, as Jakarta realized that the JI radicals posed a direct threat to Indonesia’s tourism industry and economic interests. The alarm raised from the possibility of other terrorist attacks from the JI had also galvanized other regional governments into implementing effective police response over the recent years. Since 2001, South East Asian states had responded to the JI threat by enthusiastic crackdowns, arresting scores of suspects, uncovering and confiscation of weapon caches and the elimination of JI training camps. Important cadre like Hambali, Abu Bakar Bashir and a host of other regional cell leaders of the JI web had already been arrested and are held in custody. Indonesia itself had contributed the lion’s share in tracking and arresting terrorist suspects, as the JI network originated and was centered in Indonesia. With so much state attention focused on them, the JI had to lie low for quite some time. The Indonesian authorities certainly think that legal measures alone are definitely enough in dealing with the terrorist problem, and are reasonably justified in thinking so.

<sup>13</sup> “Clerics’ call to terror,” *The Straits Times*, 21 October 2004.

### **Objectives and goals**

However, if the stated goals of this clandestine group are examined closely, the JI’s political ambitions are not confined to Indonesia alone. The White Paper published by the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that the JI seeks to establish a *Daulah Islamiah*, or Islamic state, encompassing Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and Brunei. The JI meant to do so through their “jihad”, or armed struggle against secular enemies.

What if the JI succeeds in its goals? It will spell doom of all the secular governments in South East Asia, with the erasing of national boundaries. Socially, it will also mean the end of the present way of life, with respect and tolerance for different races, cultures, religious practices, and economic freedom. The JI, like its parent organization, the Al Qaeda, subscribes to a narrow interpretation of Islam, which also guides the political and social administration of a country, and with uncompromising and strict application of the Islamic *sharia* law.

### **Failure of the JI**

In spite of much media attention and publicity, the JI ultimately failed to gain a large following in Indonesia or elsewhere. The Bali bombing was the turning point in the Indonesian governments past lenient attitude towards militant forms of political Islam. Tourism and commercial interests were directly threatened resulting in many Indonesians losing their jobs. The Indonesian police acted swiftly to arrest the culprits and accomplices involved in the bomb incidents.

A second factor leading to the JI’s eventual decline lies in the lack of professionalism of its operatives, and the lack of an anarchic environment necessary for a terrorist or guerilla group to thrive in Indonesia. A trail of clues and loose ends enabled Indonesian police to quickly track down and apprehend the perpetrators. The publicized fact of numerous successful arrests of JI cadre led to a diminishing of the stature of these so-

called 'jihadis' among the potential sympathizers. In spite of having built an extensive clandestine network in South East Asia, JI is believed to have garnered little support for its extremist goals among the Indonesian population. In contrast, Islamic militants in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan who engage in terrorism are seldom apprehended, implicated or brought to justice, and many prefer deaths in shoot outs with security forces when cornered. This facet adds to the mystical quality of martyrdom that is the central theme of suicide terrorism. Indonesian JI members however have seldom achieved such iconic status.

The noose on the JI gradually tightened after Bali. As a result, JI members are forced to operate under severe constraints. This is evident by the Marriott Hotel and Australian embassy bombings which produced less than spectacular results than Bali, resulting in a mere 21 deaths in contrast to Bali's 202 casualties. The Indonesian government was also able to cope well in the aftermath of both the crises. JI members implicated in all three incidents were arrested without any delay. This was in addition to the arrest of terrorist suspect, occasional uncovering of secret militant training camps, confiscation of cache of arms and explosives from 2002 onwards. As a result, many probable bomb attacks planned by the JI were prevented or foiled. By September 2004, JI members had been outmaneuvered to the extent that a principal leader, Azahiri bin Husin, a former Malaysian lecturer, would not even admit to his links to the JI.<sup>14</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Terrorism is not merely an act of disruption but a violent act to serve political ends. It also involves activities, such as sympathizing and promotion of radical teachings, financial support, organization and procurement of necessary bomb making materials. Therefore, the resultant violence of a

terrorist act may have much wider political impact and implications.

The Jemaah Islamiah's effectiveness and capacity to strike has indeed declined after Bali. This is due mainly to the policy of crackdowns simultaneously pursued by South East Asian state governments, particularly by Indonesia. The Straits Times reported that the JI was splintering into smaller and more radical subgroups in response to the relentless pressure from the governments of Indonesia and other states. If so, the remnants of the JI would become even more difficult to be completely eradicated.

Nevertheless, the pervasive and self destructive belief of religious martyrdom continues to hold a magical spell in the Muslim world. Such radical deviation from the more moderate, peaceful form of Islam seems to find fertile grounds in Muslim populations or communities with politico-social scenarios of discrimination, poverty or social oppression, giving rise to both individual and communal grievances that can then be easily exploited by clandestine terrorist groups. Indonesia, as a multi ethnic nation with some 170 to 180 million Muslims, remains susceptible to the influence of Islamic radicalism and suicide terrorism.<sup>15</sup> This is likely to continue, if Jakarta does not remain vigilant in watching the activities of its non state religious organizations.

*Eric Koo holds a Master of Science in Strategic Studies from the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies (IDSS). He currently writes commentaries and analysis articles on international affairs, security issues and terrorism for newspapers.*

<sup>14</sup> "Broken JI spawns even more deadly menace," *The Straits Times*, 19 October 2004

<sup>15</sup> "Indonesia and Transnational Terrorism" <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/CIB/2001-02/02cib06.htm>