

The capture of Jemaah Islamiyah, Mantiqi 1 leader of Singapore, Mas Selamat, a month ago in Skudai, Johor Bahru has been a success of the intelligence and information sharing among Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. Mas Selamat succeeded Ibrahim Maidin who formed the Singapore cell in 1988 but was apprehended in 2003 by the Thai authorities.

Mantiqi 1 or M1 is based in Malaysia and covers Malaysia, Singapore, and Southern Thailand. M1 was initially led by Riduan Isamudin and later became JI's head of operations, also known as "Hambali" he was captured in July of 2003 in Thailand. Upon his capture by the authorities, he was subsequently replaced by Muklas who also in December of 2002 was captured by the Indonesian authorities and executed for the 2002 Bali Bombings. Currently M1 is headed by Nordin Top, a Malaysian born and still at large and a leading "bomb expert" for JI.

The Singapore JI leadership is subordinate to the Johor JI leadership. Although the Singapore authorities have crippled JI activities in Singapore, nevertheless the threat still remains. Johor Bharu, a southern state in Malaysia has been "home" to Jemaah Islamiyah since the early 1980s. The Malaysian cell in its quest for recruitment operated and actively recruited Indonesians and Malaysians in the state of Johor Bahru at the Tarbiyah Lugmanul Hakeim School. The school was very much "undercover" for religious education.

The major responsibilities of the school were to conduit between Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, liaison with the Kumpulan Militant Malaysia, establishing front companies that were channeling funds, recruitment and education and were the forerunner in establishing the Australian cell, Mantiqi 4. However the Malaysian authorities together with US intelligence, Singapore, and the Indonesian authorities managed to cripple the cells after the 911 attacks.

Mas Selamat, considered a leading suspect in the Indonesian Bali bombings, was captured three times but made daring escapes from the authorities and the latest escape was in February of 2008 from the Singapore prison. With the arrest of Mas Selamat in Malaysia, the authorities have also seized documents in relations to JI activities. The information gathered will lead the authorities to further investigate future plans of JI operatives in Malaysia and the region as well as the contacts with whom Mas Selamat has been operating with.

The authorities must be vigilant in their investigations, as his one year of hiding in Malaysia could have prompted some documented plans, awaiting "execution" which were probably not in his possession and that may have been passed on to JI operatives in the region. This also relates to email correspondence to the regions Mantiqis, especially to Nordin Top and JI's main operational leadership in Southeast Asia and to what extent was Mas Selamat's travels within Malaysia and Southern Thailand documented. The Southern Thailand insurgency remains a focal point of JI's operatives within Mantiqi 1 and the unrest is not anywhere near to a solution.

The threat of JI in Southeast Asia is re-emerging and countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand remain "hot spots" for the re-emergence to the regions pan- [Islamic](#) control. The transit movement of JI operative's conduits within the Southeast Asia countries in order to move from one country to another. Malaysia is more susceptible to this movement and remains a "non operational" sector of JI. This was so for Singapore and Australia until strict immigration and border controls were enforced after the 911 attacks. Jemaah Islamiyah and its associated regional groups such as the Free Aceh Movement, the Moro

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Liberation Front, Abu Sayyaf Group and the Southern Thailand insurgency are gaining mileage and are in no doubt planning for major attacks. One cannot deter these threats from occurring and the only way is to ensure vigilance preparedness and disaster management.

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