

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Is there a group known as “Laskar Bali”?
2. Is this group part of, or the same as, the “Laskar Jihad” group?
3. I understand that the “Laskar Jihad” group was disbanded in 2002, has it re-formed since then?
4. Does either of these groups operate in Bali or Jakarta in 2006?
5. What is known about their activities in Bali and/or Jakarta?
6. Are Muslims forced to join the group?
7. As Muslims are a minority group in Bali, which is predominantly Hindu, are they subjected to any discrimination, backlash, harassment or mistreatment in Bali?
8. What protection, if any, is available from the Indonesian authorities from the activities of Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad?
9. How difficult would it be for a Muslim, or a person who fears Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad, to relocate to Jakarta or elsewhere in Indonesia?

RESPONSE

1. Is there a group known as “Laskar Bali”?

A search of the sources consulted found information regarding a group called Laskar Bali. The group has been described in different articles as “Bali’s major crime gang”, as “arguably the most powerful group of trained fighters on Bali” and as arguably Bali’s “most powerful youth organization.”

An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* dated 26 August 2006 refers to Laskar Bali as “Bali’s major crime gang” that “holds sway across” Bali’s Kerobokan prison. According to the article, “Drugs inside are half the price of what is sold on the streets of Kuta, and the gang will attack those who cross it” (Forbes, Mark 2006, ‘It’s a matter of appeal’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August – Attachment 1).

Another article dated 7 November 2005 indicates that Bali's Kerobokan jail had "become the Indonesian island's central distribution point for heroin, amphetamines and other drugs." The article also indicates that "Organised crime gangs, under the loose umbrella of the local "Laskar Bali" syndicate, are understood to be responsible for much of the drug traffic, but users and former dealers say some prison guards are also involved" (Fitzpatrick, Stephen 2005, 'Need a heroin hit? Bali jail's the place to go', *The Australian*, 7 November – Attachment 2).

According to an article in *The Jakarta Post* dated 30 June 2005, it was feared that there would be trouble in Denpasar in Bali after Anak Agung Ngurah Gde Widiada lost the election for mayor of Denpasar in June 2005. Widiada's running mate, Suma Widana, was "a respected figure among Laskar Bali, arguably the most powerful group of trained fighters on Bali. In recent years, Laskar Bali has gained a fearsome reputation for its violent tendencies." It is stated in the article that:

"Some of Laskar Bali's members wanted to express their disappointment over the election result by staging a street demonstration on that night but Suma Widana managed to prevent them from doing so," a source said (Juniartha, I Wayan 2005, 'Candidates sportsmanlike to the end', *The Jakarta Post*, 30 June

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20050630.Q02> – Accessed 21 November 2006 – Attachment 3).

Another article in *The Jakarta Post* dated 23 June 2005 refers to Laskar Bali as arguably Bali's "most powerful youth organization. Laskar Bali now provides its security services to a large number of night spots in Legian and Seminyak" (Juniartha, I Wayan 2005, 'Denpasar, a model of political composure', *The Jakarta Post*, 23 June

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20050623.Q04> – Accessed 21 November 2006 – Attachment 4).

2. Is this group part of /or the same as the "Laskar Jihad" group?

A search of the sources consulted found no reference to Laskar Bali being part of /or the same as the Laskar Jihad group.

3. I understand that the "Laskar Jihad" group was disbanded in 2002, has it re-formed since then?

A number of reports indicate that Laskar Jihad disbanded in 2002. From the sources consulted, the group still appears to be formally disbanded, although there are reports of it having a presence in the Indonesian territory of Papua and of its members having joined other groups.

An International Crisis Group report dated 5 September 2006 indicates that Laskar Jihad disbanded in October 2002. It is stated in the report, which is in relation to the Indonesian territory of Papua, that:

The salafi militia Laskar Jihad had a few hundred men in Sorong, in what is now West Irian Jaya, in 2001, but the organisation disbanded in October 2002, and there is little reason to believe it survived in Papua when it collapsed everywhere else.

The report also indicates that “Solidarity groups periodically raise the spectre of hard-line Muslim militias working with the army in Papua, which is predominantly Christian. Little hard evidence exists.” According to the report, “Jemaah Tabligh, a non-political missionary organisation, has had a presence in Papua since 1998, and its members, who often wear long white robes and turbans, are frequently confused with Laskar Jihad... They focus on making Muslims better Muslims, not jihad activity” (International Crisis Group 2006, *Papua: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, Asia Briefing No 53, 5 September – Attachment 5).

Dr Sidney Jones, the South East Asia director of the International Crisis Group, in an interview on the ABC’s *Lateline* programme on 20 April 2006, was asked about “accounts of local informants saying that militia groups are forming in transmigrant communities” in Papua. Dr Jones said that since 2000, “there have been lots of reports of Muslim militias of Laskar jihad forming in Papua and so on. If anybody has any evidence that such groups exist I would like to see it, because there hasn’t been any evidence coming forward that I have seen. And I’ve looked for it in the last two years.” In relation to a question about reports from OPM rebel leaders that it was happening, Dr Jones said that she thought you had “to take reports from OPM rebel leaders with the same scepticism you take reports from TNI leaders. I think both sides have an interest in putting forward what may be a biased perspective” (‘Sidney Jones on South East Asian conflicts’ 2006, *Lateline*, 20 April – Attachment 6).

However, an article dated 15 April 2006 by Damien Kingsbury, who is the director of international and community development at Deakin University and was adviser to the Free Aceh Movement in the 2005 Helsinki peace talks, refers to the Indonesian army’s “proxy militias in Papua – Laskar Jihad and Laskar Tabligh”. The article indicates that “The militias have opposed Papuan activists in the past and there have been recent reports of militia involvement in drive-by shootings” (Kingsbury, Damien 2006, ‘The trouble with territory’s future’, *The Australian*, 15 April – Attachment 7).

A transcript from the SBS programme *Dateline* dated 16 March 2005 includes an interview with a human rights activist who told “of how he infiltrated the West Papuan ranks of the extremist group Laskar Jihad.” According to the report:

After the Bali bombing the Indonesian Government claimed Laskar Jihad had been disbanded, but according to this human rights infiltrator, West Papua already has up to 500 dedicated followers in several training camps. As part of his induction into the Laskar Jihad group in the West Papuan city of Sorong, he was schooled at the local mosque in the group’s objectives and methods (‘West Papua Militia’ 2005, *Dateline*, 16 March – Attachment 8).

In its 2005 annual report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom indicates that Laskar Jihad and a number of other Islamic militant groups were pressured by the Indonesian government “to cease their activities and disband” after the signing of the Malino Peace Accords to end Christian-Muslim violence in the Maluku and Sulawesi in late 2001 and early 2002. The report also indicates that the dissolution of Laskar Jihad “was prompt and extensive”, although “former members” of Laskar Jihad “have reportedly joined other, more militant organizations such as Laskar Jundullah and Mujahidin Kompak.” It is stated in the report that:

After the Malino Accords were signed, the Indonesian government pressured a number of Islamic militant groups responsible for the worst violence, including the Islamic Defenders’ Front and Laskar Jihad, to cease their activities and disband. The dissolution of Laskar Jihad

in particular was prompt and extensive. However, former members have reportedly joined other, more militant organizations such as Laskar Jundullah and Mujahidin Kompak. These groups openly operate training camps in Sulawesi and are reported to be behind much of the recent sectarian violence in that province (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 62 – Attachment 9).

The report also notes that “Jaffar Thalib, the leader of Laskar Jihad, the group responsible for killing thousands of people in the Maluku, was acquitted after standing trial on charges of instigating violence and weapons possession” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 62 – Attachment 9).

In its earlier annual report dated May 2004, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom refers to Laskar Jihad and a number of other “radical Islamist groups” being “pressured to cease their activities and disband” during “the weeks following the October 2002 Bali bombing”. The report refers to the dissolution of Laskar Jihad being “prompt and extensive, though they continue to operate in some areas” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2004, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 34 – Attachment 10).

An article in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004* provides information on the Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah (FKAWJ) and its paramilitary arm, the Laskar Jihad (LJ). According to the article:

On 7 October 2002, the FKAWJ decided to disband itself and the LJ. The reasons are not entirely clear, but several factors appear to have been critical. A number of the previously supportive salafi scholars in the Middle East reportedly criticized the direction of the LJ and there was also mounting criticism of Ja’far’s [LJ leader Ja’far Umar Thalib] leadership within the FKAWJ... Ja’far himself was arrested for incitement in mid-2002 but eventually found not guilty. Finally, the protection which sections of the security services had previously given to the LJ was withdrawn, leading to far greater difficulties in running field operations and raising funds... Despite occasional rumours of continuing LJ activity, most available evidence suggests that it has indeed ceased operations (Fealy, Greg 2004, ‘Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia – The Faltering Revival?’, *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, pp. 115-116 – Attachment 11).

According to the US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2004, Laskar Jihad’s leader Jafar Umar Thalib had threatened to send Laskar Jihad fighters to Ambon after the occurrence of renewed sectarian violence in April/May 2004. However, the report notes that “there were no confirmed reports of fighters traveling to Ambon or of the group reconstituting itself.” The report also refers to Laskar Jihad as “now officially disbanded” (US Department of State 2004, *International Religious Freedom Report 2004 – Indonesia*, September, Sections II & III – Attachment 12).

The US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2003 indicates that Laskar Jihad had disbanded in October 2002. “During that month, around 3,000 Laskar Jihad members left Maluku and Central Sulawesi for their home areas, mainly on Java, without facing arrest or prosecution for their crimes.” The report also indicates that early in the reporting period, there had been NGO reports that Laskar Jihad “was present in Papua in considerable numbers. Some observers speculated that the military had assisted in bringing

them into the province.” The report notes, however, that “by June an exodus of Laskar Jihad members appeared to have occurred and it was not clear how many, if any, remained” (US Department of State 2003, *International Religious Freedom Report 2003 – Indonesia*, December, Sections II & III – Attachment 13).

4. Does either of these groups operate in Bali or Jakarta in 2006?

5. What is known about their activities in Bali and/or Jakarta?

In relation to whether Laskar Bali operates in Bali in 2006, the previously mentioned article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* dated 26 August 2006 refers to Laskar Bali as “Bali’s major crime gang” that “holds sway across” Bali’s Kerobokan prison (Forbes, Mark 2006, ‘It’s a matter of appeal’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August – Attachment 1).

A search of the sources consulted found no information in relation to whether Laskar Bali operates in Jakarta in 2006, or information about the group’s activities in Jakarta in 2006.

A search of the sources consulted found no information in relation to whether Laskar Jihad operates in Bali or Jakarta in 2006, or information about the group’s activities in Bali and/or Jakarta in 2006.

Although dated, an e-mail dated 13 November 2002 from Mr Gerry van Klinken, the Coordinating editor of *Inside Indonesia*, indicates that “Laskar Jihad mainly confined their militant activities to areas outside Java – especially Ambon and North Maluku, but also Poso in Central Sulawesi” and that “The only time LJ became involved in violent conflict in Java was when they beat up and kidnapped supporters of the political party PDIP in Ngawi” (van Klinken, Gerry 2002, Email to RRT Country Research, 13 November – Attachment 14).

A *BBC News* article dated 20 June 2000 notes that Laskar Jihad’s headquarters were “near Yogyakarta, in central Java” at that time (‘Who are the Laskar Jihad?’ 2000, *BBC News*, 20 June <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/770263.stm> – Accessed 20 November 2006 – Attachment 15).

6. Are Muslims forced to join the group?

A search of the sources consulted found no information in relation to whether Muslims are forced to join Laskar Bali and/or Laskar Jihad.

In relation to Laskar Jihad, an article from *Inside Indonesia* dated July-September 2001 includes information on the members of Laskar Jihad. It is stated in the article that:

Regular members of Laskar Jihad and FKAWJ come across as ordinary young people, generally aged between 17-40. Ustadz Jafar Umar Thalib attracts a wide variety of people, bound together by their youth, their religious devotion and their nationalistic fervour. There are students, unemployed graduates and businesspeople. Many are educated with young families. Others are the lost and lonely, the homeless and poverty-stricken. Some members had led the life of a street thug (‘preman’), heavily into drugs, violence and crime, before they were saved by the movement’s disciples.

These people crave for the totalising, all-encompassing identity that Laskar Jihad offers. They are the by-products of the economic and political crisis, the angry rejects of society, isolated and disadvantaged by reformasi. Many speak fluently of globalisation, marginalisation, of Western cultural hegemony and of the way the West demonises Islam and Islamic peoples. They see themselves as losers in the global political order. Their overwhelming violence and anger, the fabric of Laskar Jihad, begins there ('Laskar Jihad' 2001, *Inside Indonesia*, July-September <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit68/laskar.htm> – Accessed 21 November 2006 – Attachment 16).

The previously mentioned *BBC News* article dated 20 June 2000 refers to Laskar Jihad leader Jaffar Umar Thalib, indicating that Laskar Jihad planned “to deploy 10,000 volunteers in the Moluccas” at that time. The article also notes that many Laskar Jihad volunteers had been told that they would be involved in humanitarian work when they travelled to Ambon in May 2000. Fighting between Christians and Muslims in Ambon had increased following the arrival of the group. The article refers to reports that many Laskar Jihad volunteers “were now seeking refuge and asking to be deported from Ambon.” It is stated in the report that:

According to a local official, they felt deceived by their leaders because they had been told they would be conducting humanitarian activities.

“It turns out that they were ordered to join the battle and many have sought help to go home,” the official added ('Who are the Laskar Jihad?' 2000, *BBC News*, 20 June <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/770263.stm> – Accessed 20 November 2006 – Attachment 15).

7. As Muslims are a minority group in Bali, which is predominantly Hindu, are they subjected to any discrimination, backlash, harassment or mistreatment in Bali?

An article dated 29 August 2006 indicates that “while other parts of Indonesia have descended into savage violence,” Bali had “remained mostly peaceful.” The article also notes that after the 2002 Bali bombings, “some Balinese wanted to eject Muslims from the island and close mosques in retaliation, but cooler heads prevailed. Provocations in the wake of the 2005 bombings of a central Kuta restaurant and popular beach cafes at Jimbaran Bay to the south have included the smearing of faeces in temples or the washing areas outside mosques.” The article refers to two men who “exemplify the attitudes that have kept Bali together and relatively peaceful. They are Made Wendra and Bambang Prasetyo, a Balinese and Javanese whose friendship reaches across decades and religious differences, working to keep Kuta Beach, the hardest hit tourism area, together.” The article also refers to concerns among “Bali’s Hindu populace” over “new Islamic assertiveness” by conservative Muslims. It is stated in the article that:

“Kuta is the prime example of Balinese culture strengthening in reaction to large numbers of outsiders in the community,” author Jeremy Allan says. “A Balinese never really feels Balinese unless there is a non-Balinese in the room.” Allan’s book *Bali Blues* tells how Kuta saw off violence between Balinese and Muslims in the wake of the 2002 bombs by Islamic extremists from outside Bali.

“Unfortunately, the two attacks were from the same group and religion and that created a lot of tension between Muslims and Hindus,” says Prasetyo, whose heroics transporting wounded from the October 2002 attacks earned him a medal from Australia, which had 88 citizens die in the bombing.

Immediately after the bombing, some Balinese wanted to eject Muslims and close mosques in retaliation, but cooler heads prevailed. In Kuta, the neighborhood organization, the banjar, open to all residents including outsiders, was a focal point for averting violence. "All religions are welcome at the banjar," Wendra says. "If people have a problem, they go there. People talk things out and resolve them."

"Local leaders in Bali understand that the bombs are from a small group that's not representative of the Muslim community," Prasetyo says. "The leadership created the Inter-Religious Forum that reaches from the regions and cities down to local banjars and mosques. That's been very successful in diffusing tensions." Programs include youth activities that mix all religions and invitations to all for ceremonies, "people to people contact in religious settings," Prasetyo calls it.

"After the bomb, the relationship between Muslims and Hindus became stronger," Wendra, an Inter-Religious Forum member along with Prasetyo, says. That may be so, but it's also true that the differences are almost always on display and noted. With tourist arrivals down 20 percent this year, the third lean year out of the past four, there's a greater chance tensions can erupt. The conflict in Lebanon has brought intensified efforts to preserve harmony and calm Muslims rage. Prasetyo has asked imams to remind the faithful that while the Middle East's tradition is to settle disputes by the sword, "In Indonesia, our tradition is to resolve conflicts by talking and compromise" ('Bali: Trouble in Paradise' 2006, *Asia Sentinel*, 29 August http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=115&Itemid=34 – Accessed 21 November 2006 – Attachment 17)

The US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2006 refers to Muslims routinely reporting "difficulties in establishing mosques in Muslim-minority areas of Papua, North Sulawesi, and elsewhere." However, the report does not specifically mention Bali as an area in which this occurs (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Indonesia*, September, Section III – Attachment 18).

An article dated 26 February 2006 from *The Jakarta Post* website, which refers to relations between different religions in the Balinese village of Banjar Kwanji, notes that "About 90 percent of Bali's estimated 3.5 million population are Hindus, while the remaining 10 percent comprise Muslims, Protestants, Buddhists and Catholics." The article indicates that "Non-Hindu minorities, however, have found no difficulty establishing places of worship on the island of the gods" and refers to the comments of "Halidi, a Muslim leader from the Al-Muawatul Hariyah Mosque in Kampung Bugis, one of the largest Muslim enclaves in Bali," who "said that Muslims had a long history here." The article also mentions the comments of "And Baby, a Catholic priest who lives in the area" who said that "In the last 10 years, Bali set up an interfaith communication forum in which religious leaders work closely to share and solve any problems between groups that might arise". It is also stated in the article that:

Protestant minister and Bandung Churches Association head Wayan Sudira Husada said the people of Bali openly welcomed "guests from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds."

Despite their openness, Bali's "guests" or non-Hindus, still had to respect the culture and religion of their hosts, he said.

The island's provincial government has issued its own regulation on the establishment of places of worship. It requires the approval of at least 100 families in the area before a non-Hindu place of worship can be built.

“Such a regulation may discourage people from constructing a place of worship, but with the right ‘heart-to-heart’ approach, the local people would likely give the plan the nod,” Wayan said.

Regular meetings with Banjar officials and members also eliminated misunderstandings between non-Hindu and Hindu populations, he said.

“We need to set up a bottom-up approach – from the Banjar people to the government. Not the other way around,” Wayan said.

“In the forum, Hindu religious and community leaders together with leaders from other faiths work together to create a peaceful Bali” (Widiadana, Rita 2006, ‘Respect, understanding defer religious conflict’, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 February – Attachment 19).

An article dated 4 October 2005 refers to Hindu and Muslims joining in Bali “to denounce the latest bombings”. It is stated in the article that:

Some 200 Hindu and Muslim Balinese banged drums, recited prayers and threw flowers into the sea in an inter-faith procession to the blast sites on the mainly Hindu island, which was rocked by bombings three years ago.

The mourners – who were joined by Catholics, Protestants and Buddhists – pledged not to let the weekend attacks spark religious division in the world’s largest Muslim-populated nation (‘Hindus and Muslims unite in Bali amid warning of new attacks’ 2005, *Agence France-Presse*, 4 October – Attachment 20).

An earlier article dated July/August/September 2003 on the *Hinduism Today* website refers to increased tension between Hindus and Muslims on Bali following the 2002 Bali bombings. The article also mentions that social and economic ties between the Hindu and Muslim communities in Bali are strong and notes that “Balinese and Muslims frequently marry, and in some villages the local brand of Islam is so mixed with Hinduism that the Muslim farmers make offerings to Dewi Sri, the Goddess of rice. Hindu boys attend their Muslim friend’s circumcision ceremonies, and Muslims in some areas adopt Balinese Hindu first names.” The article also notes that “The two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nadhatul Ulama, preach tolerance towards Balinese Hinduism”. The article also indicates that “In recent years, however, orthodox or revivalist Islam has been on the rise throughout Indonesia, which seems to be polarizing the Hindu and Muslim communities.” It is also stated in the article that:

While the potential for violence in Bali is quite real, there are many other factors that may help prevent large scale violence from erupting. Indonesia’s Military Command centre for the East Nusa Tenggara region is in Bali, and the military, which owns a number of tourist hotels, has a vested interest in keeping a lid on violence. Both Muslims and Hindus have too much to lose if Bali’s tourist industry is further hit. While Balinese Hindus are a majority on Bali, they still represent only two percent of Indonesia’s population, a figure that does not favour confrontation. Still, with the tourist economy in shambles and war in the Gulf in progress, pressure on relations between Muslim and non-Muslim in Indonesia is likely to escalate. For the time being, however, détente remains (McGuire, Daniel 2003, ‘Trouble In Bali Paradise’, *Hinduism Today*, July/August/September http://www.hinduismtoday.com/archives/2003/7-9/28-31_bali.shtml – Accessed 21 November 2006 – Attachment 21).

The US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2003 indicates that there were no reports of confrontations between Hindus and Muslims in Bali following the bombings in Bali on 12 October 2002. According to the report:

In Bali, where some feared that the October 12, 2002, bombings would strain relations between the island's Hindu majority and Muslim minority, no confrontations were reported. A leader of the Muslim community in the Legian area, Haji Agus Bambang Priyanto, received praise for organising the evacuation of survivors of the attack. Later, representatives of almost every religious group active in the country took part in an elaborate cleansing ritual held by Hindu leaders.

However, the report also notes that a school in Bali had banned the use of "Islamic veils and jilbabs". It is stated in the report that:

In Hindu-majority Bali, a school in the capital city banned Islamic veils and jilbabs, prompting some Muslims to complain that their religious freedom was being violated. The school in question, a state-run junior high school, said all 774 of its students, including the 84 who were Muslim, were obliged to follow the school's code of conduct, and that this code forbade the use of veils or headscarves (US Department of State 2003, *International Religious Freedom Report 2003 – Indonesia*, December, Sections II & III – Attachment 13).

There are other reports of some tensions between Muslims and Hindus in Bali. The US Department of State report on human rights in Indonesia for 2005 indicates that:

In March, despite an agreement by Muslim and Hindu leaders in Bali calling on their followers to respect both the Hindu's Nyepi Day (seclusion day) and the Muslim Friday prayer, some villages prohibited Muslims from leaving their homes to perform Friday prayer in mosques, threatening to fine them if they did so. The local MUI in Jimbaran called on Muslims to move out of the villages before Friday so they could perform their Friday prayers (US Department of State 2006, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005 – Indonesia*, March, Section 2(c) – Attachment 22).

An article dated 20 October 2005 indicates that Bali's police chief had "called for calm amid a phone-message campaign urging Balinese Hindus to kill all Muslims on the island in retaliation for the triple suicide bombings by suspected Islamic extremists." During the previous week, another text campaign "urging Balinese to gather together and demand the immediate executions of the original Bali bombers was answered by more than 2,000 people and turned into a violent demonstration that had to be countered by riot police." Bali's police chief General Made Mangku Pastika had "said he planned to meet immediately with senior representatives from all religions in Bali to keep a lid on fresh outbreaks of violence in the emotionally charged atmosphere after the latest attacks, which killed 20 innocent people, among them four Australians." According to the article:

After the 2002 bombings, Bali's government also boosted the powers of village guards, known as pekalang, to search strangers and immigrant workers, angering many Muslim residents.

"Thank God, up to now, we haven't received any reports from Balinese communities which have been provoked," Pastika said.

"This is what we expect and we hope once more Balinese people will not be persuaded with this call" (Taylor, Rob 2005, 'Asia: Bali police chief urges calm following "kill" SMS campaign', *Australian Associated Press General News*, 20 October – Attachment 23).

8. What protection, if any, is available from the Indonesian authorities from the activities of Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad?

A search of the sources consulted found no specific information in relation to what protection, if any, is available from the Indonesian authorities to someone like the applicant against the activities of Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad.

In relation to Laskar Jihad, as previously mentioned, a number of reports indicate that Laskar Jihad disbanded in 2002. From the sources consulted, the group still appears to be formally disbanded, although there are reports of it having a presence in the Indonesian territory of Papua and of its members having joined other groups.

There was reference found to articles that refer to Laskar Jihad as an Islamic militant group that was formed in Indonesia in response to what was seen as persecution of Muslims in Maluku. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in its 2005 annual report indicates that Laskar Jihad was one of “a number of Islamic militant groups” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 62 – Attachment 9). The article in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004* notes that Laskar Jihad “was formed on 30 January 2000 in response to what was seen as the persecution of Muslims in Maluku by Christians” (Fealy, Greg 2004, ‘Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia – The Faltering Revival?’, *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, p. 115 – Attachment 11).

It has been reported that Laskar Jihad was assisted by the Indonesian military during the violence in Central Sulawesi and the Malukus in 2000-2001. It has also been reported that one of the reasons for the disbanding of Laskar Jihad was the withdrawal of protection for the group by sections of the security services.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in its annual report dated May 2005 notes that a report prepared by a panel of experts “on the causes of the 2000-2001 violence in Central Sulawesi and the Malukus”, was reportedly “critical of the role played by the Indonesian armed forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) in fueling sectarian conflict, including allegedly aiding radical militia groups, such as Laskar Jihad” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 62 – Attachment 9).

The article in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004* indicates that Laskar Jihad (LJ) was formed on 30 January 2000 and was disbanded in October 2002. According to the article, there was “strong evidence that sections of the military assisted the LJ, partly because the Maluku conflict generated valuable revenue, and also quite possibly because it was politically useful in keeping pressure on the Abdurrahman Wahid government not to interfere in military affairs.” The article also notes that one of the apparent reasons for the disbanding of LJ was that “the protection which sections of the security services had previously given to the LJ was withdrawn, leading to far greater difficulties in running field operations and raising funds” (Fealy, Greg 2004, ‘Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia – The Faltering Revival?’, *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, pp. 115-116 – Attachment 11).

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in its annual report dated May 2004 notes that the Indonesian government had “taken some important steps to root out domestic terrorist groups, particularly after the bombings in Bali and Jakarta.” The report indicates that Laskar Jihad and a number of other radical Islamist groups “were pressured to cease their activities and disband” during “the weeks following the October 2002 Bali bombing” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2004, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p. 34 – Attachment 10).

A *BBC News* article dated 8 August 2003 refers to Laskar Jihad having “informal ties with some Muslim politicians”. According to the article:

In May 2002 Vice-President Hamzah Haz, who leads Indonesia’s largest Muslim political party, the United Development Party (PPP), controversially visited [Laskar Jihad’s commander] Mr Thalib in prison.

He said he was visiting only on a humanitarian basis and was not interfering in the case. Since then, several Islamic figures have also visited, but not formally on behalf of the parties (‘Indonesia’s Muslim militants’ 2003, *BBC News*, 8 August <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2333085.stm> – Accessed 20 November 2006 – Attachment 24).

9. How difficult would it be for a Muslim, or a person who fears Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad, to relocate to Jakarta or elsewhere in Indonesia?

A search of the sources consulted found no specific information in relation to whether it would be difficult for a person who feared groups such as Laskar Bali or Laskar Jihad to relocate to Jakarta or elsewhere in Indonesia.

There was also no specific information found in relation to whether an Indonesian Muslim from Bali would face difficulty relocating to Jakarta or elsewhere in Indonesia. However, sources indicate that although Muslims are a minority in Bali, they are the majority group in Indonesia overall. According to the US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2006, Indonesia’s Central Statistics Bureau (BPS) report on the 2000 census in Indonesia indicates that “88.2 percent of the population described themselves as Muslim”. Muslims are a minority in Bali, where “Hindus accounted for almost 90 percent of the population” (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Indonesia*, September, Section I – Attachment 18). The US Department of State report on religious freedom in Indonesia for 2004 notes that “Muslims constitute a majority in most regions of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, and North Maluku” (US Department of State 2004, *International Religious Freedom Report 2004 – Indonesia*, September, Section I – Attachment 12).

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UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

United Nations (UN)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd>

Non-Government Organisations

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Region Specific Links

Search Engines

Copernic <http://www.copernic.com/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

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