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The Escalation and Decline of Violent Conflict in Poso, Central Sulawesi, 1998-2007

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February 2008

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University.
This dissertation is the original work of the author except where otherwise acknowledged. It contains no material which has been accepted for the award of a degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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David Gregory McRae
ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a case study of the violent conflict in Poso district, Central Sulawesi province from 1998 to 2007. Poso was one of several areas in eastern Indonesia that became sites of intense inter-religious and inter-ethnic fighting following President Soeharto’s resignation in 1998. An estimated 600-1000 people were killed in violence in Poso that began in December 1998 and had not completely ceased even in early 2007.

Existing studies of the post-Soeharto conflicts have identified a common structural context that many of these conflicts shared. Impending political reforms after Soeharto’s resignation created local uncertainties over how groups could access state employment and contracts; the stakes were particularly high in areas with a relatively even religious demographic and where state resources were unusually important to the local economy. Moreover, these uncertainties arose at a time when the repressive capacity of the state was greatly weakened. This dissertation finds that this structural context is most accurately treated as part of the enabling context for violence in Poso. This context did not cause the violence, nor make it inevitable, nor does it explain the intensity, scale or forms of violence in the district. An over-reliance on structure also excludes agency and contingency from the explanation of violence.

The central question of the dissertation is to identify the process by which violence escalated and declined in Poso and what this can tell us about why the Poso violence occurred. My approach is to explore this question through attention to six elements of analysis: how the violence was organised, the role of identity, the relative importance of national and local contexts, the forms of violence, the effect of previous violence on local actors, and the motivations of perpetrators of violence.

This dissertation finds that violence in Poso was a collective enterprise, mostly perpetrated by local actors, for which individuals bear responsibility but in which no-one was in complete control. The lack of complete control is not to say that the escalation of violence was the result of unimagined consequences – those leading attacks at the times that violence escalated intended to effect an increase in the scale of the conflict – but the motivations of both leaders and rank-and-file derived in part from
their experience of the conflict and not simply from pre-existing interests and intentions.

This conclusion derives from the six elements of analysis outlined above. It is not my contention, on the basis of this dissertation, that this model will also adequately explain the escalation and decline of the other inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts that took place after Soeharto resigned. Nevertheless, the six elements of analysis that I propose in this dissertation are not derived from specific events in Poso, and it should be possible to apply this approach to other conflict settings. Similar histories of the Maluku, North Maluku and possibly the West and Central Kalimantan conflicts, produced by attention to these six elements of analysis, could provide a stronger basis to understand the extent to which these conflicts shared similar reasons for and processes of escalation and decline.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe thanks to a great many people without whom I would never have finished this dissertation. First and foremost I must thank Diane Zhang, without whose support I would have never got to the end. She steered me onto the right path more times than either of us would care to remember, read more drafts than anyone should ever have to, and in fact did just about everything to make this dissertation possible save writing it for me, so thankyou.

Thankyou also to my supervisors, Virginia Hooker, Robert Cribb and Amrih Widodo. Virginia has been there from the beginning to the end and indeed into her retirement, reading and commenting perceptively on each and every draft with unfailing enthusiasm. Constantly encouraging, she always believed that I would make it to the end even when I wasn’t so sure. Robert provided invaluable advice, comments and criticism after agreeing to join my supervisory panel just before the final year. His influence has allowed me to turn disorganised ramblings into a dissertation, and his numerous suggestions of additional interpretations and implications have greatly enriched the chapters. Amrih also was a source of interesting ideas in the earlier stages of research.

Greg Fealy and Ed Aspinall also acted as advisers, and over the years have provided sound advice on academic matters not limited to this dissertation.

I’ve been incredibly fortunate to have so many people help me during my stays in Indonesia. Solahudin could not have done more – he made sure things went smoothly the first time I went to Palu, generously gave me the benefit of his unique insights over and over again, and his information and suggestions introduced me to many new aspects of my topic. I feel I owe him a debt of kindness I can never hope to come close to repaying. In Central Sulawesi, LPSHAM introduced me to the conflict, gave me a place to stay and spent hour after hour introducing me to people and transporting me around Palu and Poso. Naming names runs the risk of forgetting someone, but thankyou Deddy, Alam, Marthen, Buyung, Uken, Suaiib, Idul, Hong, Ateng, Syawal, Ade, Brant, Intan, Walid and the rest. Marthen in particular spent many hours helping me negotiate a path through Palu bureaucracy and also provided great help with some interviews. Buyung subsequently provided very helpful research assistance by attending trials in Palu in
2007 and collecting the documents from the proceedings. Thanks also to Darwis, whose spluttering motorbike and unique “enthusiasm” to learn English along with fellow student Rommy made my first trip to Palu memorable. At YTM, Anto Sangaji has been a tremendous friend during this research. The insights, information, drafts of his work and introductions he has provided have greatly enriched my understanding of Poso. He is at once the leading observer of Poso yet at the same time has worked tirelessly to help bring an end to the violence and stand in the way of those trying to profit from others’ suffering. Yogie has also been a great and very helpful friend during my later trips to Central Sulawesi in particular, and provided introductions, information and insights without thought of his own time. Others too numerous to mention have given generously of their time and insights – Robert, Iskandar, Jemy, Ochan and Darlis among them. In Jakarta, Adhe provided diligent and much appreciated research assistance in attending a number of trials at the South Jakarta District Court in 2007 and collecting the documents from proceedings.

Thanks also to all the people who’ve read drafts of articles peripherally associated with the dissertation, including Marcus Mietzner, Ed Aspinall and Chris Wilson. Chris in particular has been very generous in sending me pre-publication drafts of his fine work on the North Maluku conflict, and he also read drafts of most of the chapters of this dissertation. Thankyou also to the many others who have responded to requests for information, drafts of articles or for other help along the way.

Despite the generous contributions of the individuals mentioned above, all shortcomings and errors in this dissertation remain solely my responsibility.
Except where otherwise acknowledged, all translations from Indonesian to English are my own.

Computer word count: 84,710
(not including front matter, footnotes, glossary, bibliography)
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Following President Soeharto’s May 1998 resignation, several locations in eastern Indonesia became the sites of intense inter-religious and inter-ethnic fighting. The first location affected was Poso district in Central Sulawesi province, approximately 1,700 kilometres east of the national capital, Jakarta. Before the outbreak, Poso was a little-known district populated by approximately 420,000 people, of whom just over half were Muslims and most of the remainder were Christians. Violence in the district began in December 1998, and had not ceased completely even in early 2007. An estimated 600 – 1000 people have been killed in the district, more than half of whom met their deaths in 2000 and 2001.

Soon after the first fighting in Poso, further inter-religious and inter-ethnic fighting quickly followed in Maluku (1999-2005) and North Maluku (1999-2001) provinces, as well as in Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan. While the locations and ferocity of this fighting were a surprise for most, many observers expected some violence during the democratic transition immediately after the 32 years of Soeharto’s authoritarian rule. Accounts of this transition written just before the conflicts started (or only shortly thereafter) also highlighted the rising inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions in the final years of Soeharto’s New Order regime, albeit sometimes with a focus on anti-Chinese rioting and sentiment. Past instances of “regime change” in Indonesia also contributed to pessimism that the post-Soeharto transition would be violent. For instance, 1945-9 was a period both of war against the returning Dutch forces and of widespread social violence in Indonesia, although few specific details of the latter are known. Later, in 1965-6, mass killings of those labelled communists, perpetrated with

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1 This dissertation uses the word “district” to refer to the Indonesian kabupaten, “sub-district” for kecamatan and “ward” for kelurahan. “Village” will refer to both desa and its component dusun, unless this usage creates confusion in which case “sub-village” may also be used.
2 The first fighting in West Kalimantan actually took place in 1997, when Soeharto was still in power.
5 For an initial attempt to outline some of the violence during the period, focussing on East Java, see William H. Frederick, “Shadows of an unseen hand: Some patterns of violence in the Indonesian revolution, 1945-1949” in Roots of violence in Indonesia : contemporary violence in historical
tacit or direct support from the military, followed the 30 September 1965 “coup” that eventually led to Soeharto assuming power.

As was the case with the violent conflicts following Soeharto’s fall, each of these previous two periods of violence involved killings in diverse locations around the country. (One difference though was that Jakarta and Java were key sites of violence in 1945-9 and 1965-6, but not in the post-Soeharto period.) As the precise nature of the violence and its targets differed from region to region (and indeed some regions saw little or no fighting), two of the key texts on these previous periods have adopted a focus on local factors, the better to explain events in each area. For instance, Audrey Kahin’s edited volume on the regional dynamics of the 1945-9 revolution was born out of her observation that “many of the generalisations being drawn on the basis of national-level histories of the revolution and the accounts of leaders in the Republic of Indonesia’s central government .... did not accord with the nature of events in the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra.” Cribb introduces an edited volume on the 1965-6 killings by noting the likelihood that “a host of local factors in each region determined the scope and scale of each bout of killing”, despite also observing that all of the killings were in some sense precipitated by a national event.

As I set out to address the central question of this study - the process by which violence escalated and declined in Poso and what this can tell us about why the Poso violence occurred - it became clear that local factors, agents and contingency were an integral part of the answer. The relevance of the local is perhaps not surprising: if local case studies were judged necessary to explain adequately the violence of 1945-9 and 1965-6, then it follows that individual case studies should also be important to explain the post-Soeharto violence, which superficially appears less closely bound by a unifying theme than either of these two previous periods.

Violence in Poso

Violence in Poso began in December 1998 with several days of small scale disturbances, which started on Christmas eve. (By coincidence, Christmas fell during the Islamic fasting month, Ramadan, in 1998.) The peak of the December disturbances was a riot on 28 December in which rival crowds of Muslim and Christian clashed. No-one was killed during the December rioting, but at least 130 buildings were burned and eighty people were injured. The police arrested several Christian youths who were implicated in the early moments of the violence as well as an older Christian man whose role in the riot police deemed to amount to rebellion. The younger brother of the incumbent district head, a Muslim, was also subsequently taken into police custody on suspicion of engaging in provocation.

Sixteen months passed before a second period of rioting in Poso in April 2000, which again took place within the city limits. This time the riot did not take place on a date of religious significance. Instead, the fighting followed immediately after a provincial-level politician warned via the press that a second riot would occur in Poso if the wrong man were chosen for a senior bureaucratic appointment in the district. This April 2000 riot produced the first fatalities of the Poso conflict, as six people were killed in five days of rioting, three of them shot dead when police opened fire into a crowd. Property damage was also much more severe than in the December violence, with most Christian-owned houses in two city wards being set ablaze and several churches destroyed or damaged.

Although relatively few people were killed in the first two periods of violence, Christians fared worse than Muslims, particularly in terms of damaged and destroyed property. Their losses fed into a pre-existing anxiety among Poso’s Christian community, including members of the indigenous Pamona ethnic group, that they were being marginalized in regional politics and cut off from political positions, civil-service posts, and land ownership by wealthy Muslim migrants, particularly those from South Sulawesi province. As a result, immediately after the April 2000 violence, a sub-section of the Christian community centered around men directly affected by the riot began to plan for an attack on those whom they termed “perusuh” (rioters) and “provokator” (provocateurs). The result was a third period of violence that lasted for two weeks, from late May–June 2000. Although Christian forces had compiled a loose list of Muslim
provocateurs, Christian attacks during this period were directed more broadly at Poso’s Muslim community.

The May–June 2000 violence was on a much larger scale than anything that had occurred previously in Poso. For two weeks there was an almost complete breakdown of law and order in the district, and at least 246 people, mostly Muslims, were killed. Widespread arson destroyed many village and government buildings, and tens of thousands of individuals fled from the district in all directions. During the peak of the unrest, many police and village officials abandoned their posts. A few police and military officers even joined with crowds and took part in the violence themselves.

The single worst incident during the May-June 2000 violence took place at and around the Walisongo Islamic boarding school, about nine kilometers south of the city. After a clash at the boarding school, the Muslim men who remained there were killed. The men, women and children who fled were rounded up over the course of the next few days and the men among these captives were killed. In all, around one hundred Muslims were killed in this massacre; and some of the women taken prisoner appear to have been sexually assaulted before being released.

The May-June 2000 violence marked a shift to protracted violent conflict in Poso district. The violence created a group of angry young Muslim men who had seen family members killed or their houses destroyed, and who later recalled that their only thought after this period of the conflict was of how they could take revenge.⁸ News of the violence, including gruesome photos of the remains of murder victims, also drew in mujahidin from other parts of the country, who trained and fought with local Muslim men.⁹ Sporadic violence gradually escalated to a fourth period of conflict in June–July 2001 and a fifth in October–December 2001. During this time, the death toll in Poso continued to mount, with around 100 people killed in the course of 2001.

⁸ Interviews with Poso men, July 2003.
⁹ Mujahidin, the plural of mujahid, in this context means fighters in a holy war. This was the term of self-reference these fighters used, reflecting their belief that they were engaged in a jihad (holy war) in which, if killed, they would die as holy martyrs in God’s cause. The word is now in common use in the English language, appearing in the Collins dictionary (2003 edition), and as such is not italicised in this dissertation.
Facing a rising death toll (and having received intelligence reports of a terrorist training facility in Poso), the central government then acted to bring representatives of the Muslim and Christian communities to the negotiating table in late December 2001. The resulting deal—called the Malino Agreement—initially brought about some peace and security (in part attributable to a large increase in security force deployment to Poso earlier in December), with clashes between crowds becoming rare by late 2002. Low-intensity violence continued for at least another four years after this, however, and more than 100 people were killed in Poso-related violence between 2003 and 2007.

The Study of Post-Soeharto Violence

The post-Soeharto conflicts, Poso included, have already been the subject of numerous academic and semi-academic studies. Many of these texts are case studies of individual conflicts, and the reader will find Poso-specific examples cited throughout this dissertation. The case studies of the Poso conflict typically do not deal with the conflict overall; the existing literature on the conflict includes studies that present chronologies of certain periods of violence, as well as thematic studies. More recently Bertrand, Sidel and van Klinken have also produced monographs that analyse and explain the post-Soeharto conflicts in Indonesia as a set. Brubaker and Laitin’s characterisation of the country case study of ethnic violence well describes the approach of these three single-author monographs: the authors organise the studies around a core argumentative line to link each conflict as part of a set, but they also

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provide additional contextualising narratives consisting of “intertwined supporting, subsidiary or qualifying arguments”.  

Each of these three authors first maps out a common structural context for the post-Soeharto conflicts, which I outline briefly below. Most individual-conflict case studies also present a similar formulation of this context. In summary, this context is that the impending reform of electoral mechanisms and likely decentralisation of government functions after Soeharto’s resignation created local-level uncertainties over how different groups could seek and secure access to state employment and contracts in post-New Order Indonesia. The stakes were particularly high in parts of eastern Indonesia such as Poso, Maluku and North Maluku, where civil service employment and state contracts were unusually important to the local economy. In addition, each of these three sites was among the eight provinces with the most even ratio of Christians and Muslims (using provincial-level data). With this relatively even religious demographic (35 per cent Christian: 63 per cent Muslim in 1998 in Poso), tensions arose between Christians and Muslims over bureaucratic appointments, as Muslims had generally succeeded in increasing their share of civil service jobs in the last years of Soeharto’s rule. Moreover, at the very moment that it seemed as though there could be big losers in the contest between these rival groups, the repressive capacity of the state was greatly weakened.

The limitations of this structural context as an explanation for the violence are well-known and widely recognised. The structural context “over-predicts” the occurrence of violence, as there are areas of Indonesia that share this structural context but were not violent. Put differently, presented solely with a data-set of these structural factors, one

14 Van Klinken takes this line of analysis furthest, devising a vulnerability index based on rates of deagrarianisation since the 1970s and the proportion of non-agricultural workers employed as civil servants. By this method, Central Sulawesi province ranks third most vulnerable. (Van Klinken’s two most vulnerable provinces, Bengkulu and Southeast Sulawesi, have both been peaceful.) The usefulness of this index for Poso is also somewhat undermined by van Klinken’s use of provincial-level data, as Poso represents only 6 per cent of Central Sulawesi’s population (20 per cent before changes to Poso’s boundaries) and all other districts in the province have been free of comparable post-Soeharto violence. See van Klinken, Small Town Wars, pp. 40-44; BPS Sulteng, Sulawesi Tengah Dalam Angka 2005 (Palu: BPS Sulteng, 2006), p. 82.
could not accurately predict where violence actually occurred; instead, it is possible only to work backwards from a list of sites of violence and identify common features.\(^{15}\)

An over-reliance on structure also excludes agency and contingency from the explanation of violence. I will return to this point in the conclusion of this dissertation; for now let us note that such an exclusion runs counter to our common-sense view of the world (and probably also to that of the actors in the violent conflict that is the topic of this dissertation).\(^{16}\) However much a particular structural context may support violence, in the end it is people who decide to fight. Many observers would also be deeply dissatisfied with the mitigation of individual responsibility for violent acts that can follow from a structural focus. For instance, in the specific context of one of the post-Soeharto conflicts, van Klinken has asserted, “No explanation that ignores agency can do justice to the victims of this war.”\(^{17}\) Similarly, but in a more general account of historiography, Shaw highlights the continuing relevance of agency to “the important business [of historians] .... of assigning blame for the greatest human catastrophes of holocaust, war and enslavement.”\(^{18}\)

Nor can the structural context readily explain the changes in motivations and shifts in the lines of confrontation that take place during protracted violent conflict. The experiences of combatants during the conflict, the entry of new actors or the effects of violence are often important parts of the explanation of such shifts, and the influence of these factors cannot be predicted from the initial circumstances. In view of these limitations, I argue in this study that we can most accurately treat the structural context outlined above as part of the enabling context for violence in Poso. This context did not cause the violence, nor make it inevitable, nor does it explain the intensity, scale or forms of violence in the district.

There is of course more to the analyses of Bertrand, Sidel and van Klinken than simple structural context. Each author also identifies a “core argumentative line” to explain


\(^{16}\) On this point, see David Gary Shaw, “Happy in Our Chains? Agency and Language in the Postmodern Age”, *History and Theory* 40 (December 2001): 2.


\(^{18}\) Shaw, “Happy in Our Chains?”, p. 3.
why violence took place, and to a greater or lesser extent also describe the process by which violence was produced.

Bertrand admittedly does not so much discuss processes as historicise the structuralist context, by way of what he terms an historical institutionalist approach. Bertrand asserts that a nation’s national model – “the principles that define a nation” and which “establish inclusion/exclusion of its members and the terms of inclusion” – is encapsulated in its institutions. Formation of state institutions is preceded by periods of debate over the national model, and institutions embody compromises on the terms of inclusion for different groups. At critical junctures, times of actual or anticipated institutional change, ethnic violence may occur as groups attempt to improve their lot or defend what they have. The third critical juncture in Indonesia’s modern history, Bertrand asserts, came at the end of the Soeharto regime, when new president B. J. Habibie, badly needing democratic credentials, set about reforming political institutions and the electoral mechanism.

For each violent conflict he discusses, Bertrand provides a historical narrative of the place of specific groups within the national model. For Kalimantan, he charts the history of Dayak resentment at their marginalisation under Soeharto after a brief period of institutional representation under the Dutch in the late 1940s. When Soeharto-era institutions began to weaken, the Dayaks attacked the Madurese, “who most vividly represented the changes brought about by the New Order regime.” For the Maluku conflict (the study in Bertrand’s volume of greatest direct relevance to Poso), Bertrand argues that New Order policies had disrupted the balance between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims making significant gains in the 1990s against previous Christian domination of bureaucratic positions and associated patronage. Habibie’s reforms thus made Muslims anxious they might lose their gains, and Christians anxious they might suffer further losses. Violence was the result. In incorporating local histories into his account, Bertrand is able to give some role to local context despite the national scope of the critical juncture he identifies.

19 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, p. 4.
20 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, p. 56.
21 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, pp. 114-115.
Bertrand also describes the violence that occurred in each of the sites he investigates, but only cursorily identifies a few processes that might have contributed to the escalation of violence. He is quite frank in stating that his approach “cannot explain why one form of conflict will erupt rather than another”, nor can it explain “the intensity and scale” of any particular violent conflict. Each time Bertrand addresses these questions and the precise processes by which violence escalates, he emphasises his view that they are of secondary importance to the context that enables violence. This view is well-captured in his approving citation of National Commission for Human Rights (Komnas HAM) member Munawir Sjahdali’s observation, “If leaves are dry, it doesn’t matter how many matches one throws in, they will burn.” As I have stated above, I will argue in this dissertation that the limitations of Bertrand’s approach go further – not only is the institutional context not able to explain what forms violence may take, it cannot explain why violence occurs at all. If we adopt my view, then the study of processes becomes an essential part of understanding the post-Soeharto violence. As a result, it will be precisely these sorts of questions and processes that I wish to address in this dissertation.

Van Klinken describes each of the violent conflicts he analyses as “local politics by other means” and argues that violence resulted when politically-motivated individuals perceived an opportunity to mobilise local constituencies along ethnic and religious lines to win local power for themselves. In van Klinken’s words, “control over the bureaucracy was important enough for the urban middle class in those places to go to war over it”. As a consequence of his conviction that the violence was political, van Klinken turns to social movements literature to analyse the post-Soeharto violence. His method is to study the process by which local elites went to war in terms of five mechanisms derived from the social movements text, *Dynamics of Contention*. The basic argument of *Dynamics of Contention* is that common causal processes producing different outcomes depending on context can be identified in a wide range of phenomena that would otherwise be studied as discrete classes of events (eg. revolutions, ethnic and religious violence, democratisation episodes). For the post-

22 Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 133.
23 Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 111.
24 Gerry van Klinken, “Communal Conflict and Decentralisation in Indonesia”, (Brisbane, Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2007), p.9.
Soeharto violence, van Klinken studies each site of conflict in terms of one of five processes: the formation of a bounded identity in a group (West Kalimantan), the escalation of a conflict to involve many more actors (Poso), the polarisation of actors to opposed extremes (North Maluku), the mobilisation of otherwise apathetic people (Maluku) and the constitution of a previously unorganised or apolitical group into a single political actor (Central Kalimantan).\textsuperscript{26} Throughout, van Klinken’s emphasis is on local actors exploiting available mobilisational resources in the form of patron-client ties and organisations to seize opportunities to pursue political gains.

Van Klinken’s attention to processes by which people mobilised and perpetrated violence is welcome, but his emphasis on the political is a key limitation of his study. I will myself discuss the links with local politics evident in the first two periods of violence in Poso, but I have found two elements of van Klinken’s approach misleading. First, his conviction that the violence was essentially political makes him less sensitive to shifts in the motivations and dynamics of violence during the conflict, and indeed to changes in the make-up of the group of individuals recognised as leaders. As much is apparent in his chapter on Poso, when he first asserts that each of the first four periods of violence in Poso took place at a time of political transition, but then concedes in his description of the third period that neither side had any hope of influencing bureaucratic outcomes.\textsuperscript{27} As I will argue in greater detail in the body of this dissertation, the longer the conflict progressed, the less sense it made to discuss the violence in terms of local politics. To be sure, there were always people seeking political advantage out of developments in Poso, but we grant these people too great a degree of importance if we accept van Klinken’s assertion that “the people who determined the course of the conflict by their key roles in mobilisation and coalition building were politically motivated.”\textsuperscript{28}

The excessive focus on those individuals who were particularly concerned with political outcomes leads to the second point, van Klinken’s depiction of local elites as avowedly rational, cool-headed, wholly politically motivated actors who appear dispassionate in mobilising the rank-and-file for violence. For instance, in his account of the Kalimantan conflicts, in which Dayak and Malay groups fight the Madurese specifically from

\textsuperscript{26} Van Klinken, \textit{Small Town Wars}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{27} Van Klinken, \textit{Small Town Wars}, pp. 76, 83.
\textsuperscript{28} Van Klinken, \textit{Small Town Wars}, p. 138.
among a number of other possible ethnic opponents, van Klinken depicts this choice as essentially arbitrary and detached, motivated by political expediency.\textsuperscript{29} The impression is almost of elites choosing a cleavage to exploit as one would choose a dish from a menu. He writes of the expulsion of the Madurese in Central Kalimantan, "Key protagonists postured with feigned indignation, then moved on to other issues. It seemed as if only the international conflict mediation groups, and of course the victims, took it all seriously."\textsuperscript{30} Van Klinken’s conviction that elites were cool-headed and politically motivated appears in part a reaction to a dominant public discourse in Indonesia that regards the conflicts as the result of social anomie based in supposed cultural traits such as religious intolerance or predisposition to violence.\textsuperscript{31} He is right to observe that this public discourse explains little, but he then goes too far in the opposite direction in the formulation of his own analysis. From my interviews and the information I have gathered, I have not found the leaders of violence in Poso to be so detached, and I will present examples of local figures acting against their own political interests by perpetrating violence or conversely, examples where actors continue to perpetrate violence even after their political interests have been served. Indeed, I will argue during this study that to explain the motivations for violence, we need to take greater account of enmity for their opponents harboured by leaders. We also need to examine the influence of one violent act in motivating subsequent violence or changing the priorities of local actors.

Sidel chooses the position of Islam in Indonesian public life as his key variable, and argues that changes in the position of Islam at national level determined the sets of agents who took part in the Poso conflict and the forms of violence. His study begins with the assertion that there have been three distinct forms of religious violence in Indonesia since the mid-1990s, which have taken place in successive temporal phases. To explain this violence and the shifts in forms, perpetrators and targets, Sidel argues, we must first consider the way religious institutions and identities have become avenues

\textsuperscript{29} In an earlier work on Central Kalimantan, van Klinken is quite explicit about what he perceives as the arbitrariness of the choice: "I am arguing, in other words, that the anti-Madurese campaign was for these ethnic associations only their secondary objective. The primary objective was to dominate provincial politics, informally if not formally. To achieve that, the Madurese could almost have been selected at random from among the other perhaps equally abundant settlers - Javanese, Banjar, Bugis - as a common enemy." See Gerry van Klinken, "Indonesia's New Ethnic Elites", in Indonesia: In search of transition, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt and Irwan Abdullah (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), internet copy not paginated.

\textsuperscript{30} Van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{31} Van Klinken, Small Town Wars, pp. 6, 138.
of access to Indonesia’s political class, the state and its resources. Under these circumstances, shifts in the position of Islam and the basis of claims to represent Islam have similar consequences to the critical junctures that Bertrand identifies.

The first shift of relevance to Poso that Sidel discusses is the ascendency of forces promoting Islamism at national level under the Habibie presidency. Habibie’s rise to power meant that forces promoting Islam had gained central political access, but they now needed to push downward and outward into the democratising and decentralising polity to capture local power.\footnote{Sidel, Riots, Jihad, Pogroms, pp. 133-135, 190.} Once Sidel shifts his attention to local level and the processes by which “religious pogroms” occurred in Poso, Maluku and North Maluku from 1998-2001 his argument becomes very similar to van Klinken’s. The post-Soeharto violence was essentially political, as competing local networks of politicians, businessmen and gangsters mobilised potential voters along religious lines. Whole communities mobilised and fought each other, causing many deaths and destroying entire villages in each attack. The motives of these politicians, businessmen and gangsters were political, namely to develop a local power base to protect or win bureaucratic access that had previously been determined at central level. In this endeavour they had the support of local religious organisations and institutions, which were themselves anxious about their own authority and the bounds of religious identity in the face of competition from other cross-cutting associational ties.\footnote{Sidel, Riots, Jihad, Pogroms, pp. 190-191.} Given the similarity between van Klinken’s and Sidel’s arguments regarding local politics and violence, it is unclear why the additional part of Sidel’s explanation - the national position of Islam - is necessary to explain the occurrence of violence. Sidel himself never sufficiently clarifies this point.

The first phase of violence in Poso (1998-2001) ended, Sidel argues, for two reasons. First, the violence successfully removed local uncertainties over the bounds of religious identities and the sources of access to local power. Second, Indonesia’s new president, Megawati Soekarnoputri, who rose to power in mid-2001, was more intent on intervening in the violence.\footnote{Sidel, Riots, Jihad, Pogroms, pp. 165-167.} Megawati’s rise to power is in fact part of the second structural shift Sidel identifies, namely the eclipse and evisceration at national level of forces promoting Islamism, reversing gains made during the 1990s. Islamist parties did
poorly in the 1999 elections, and the decision of Islamist parties to support the secular-nationalist Megawati marked the end of the possibility of achieving Islamism through national politics. This structural shift led to a second phase of violence in Maluku and Poso from 2000-2004 (but primarily in 2000-2001), perpetrated by full-time jihadist paramilitaries who were mainly recruited from Central Java. Atrocities against local Muslim populations in Poso and Maluku were a powerful symbol of the neglect of the protection and promotion of Islam, and this phase of jihad was intended both to assist vulnerable co-religionists and to “reawaken seemingly lapsed religious sensibilities and solidarities”.

The limitation of Sidel’s argument is his focus on the national. In the body of this dissertation I will take issue with the accuracy of Sidel’s identification of the timing of the shifts in forms and targets of violence, as well as his characterisation of the perpetrators. Once we draw the nature and timing of these shifts into question, the causal relationship that Sidel posits between national trends and developments in Poso must inevitably also become questionable. I should stress at this point that I am not arguing that Poso is a world unto itself (as should be clear from my acknowledgement of the common structural context that Poso shares with the other post-Soeharto conflicts). Rather, I argue that an understanding of the escalation and decline of violence in Poso must be grounded in greater attention to the ways in which the local context, and indeed the actions of local agents, produce developments that run counter to national trends.

Several of the elements of my approach should by now be clear from the above discussion. While acknowledging the structural context that Poso shares with other post-Soeharto violent conflicts, I have chosen to focus on the processes by which the violence escalated and declined. Specifically, I will investigate what we can learn about why the Poso violence occurred and took on particular forms. Six important elements of analysis recur in the study of these processes for each of the periods of violence in Poso:

The first element is to identify who the perpetrators were and to examine how the violence was organised. My primary focus is on leaders, their sources of authority and how they were able to exercise this authority. My focus on leaders derives from my

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35 Sidel, Riots, Jihad, Pogroms, pp. 212, 221.
recognition of their important role in influencing the course of the violence – when leaders forged a path into violence in Poso, more people turned to violence than might otherwise have done, and the violence took place on a broader scale. But my analysis is relational, acknowledging Sewell’s insight that individuals exercise agency with others and in relation to others. Sewell observes that occupancy of particular social positions or positions in collective organisations enable and constrain the degree of agency individuals are able to exercise. More specifically, leaders cannot lead without followers, nor can they lead where the rank-and-file will not follow. These insights suggest ways in which examination of the organisation of violence can shed further light on the agency of leaders. What ties, organisational or otherwise – were leaders able to establish with the rank-and-file and what forms of violence did different types of combatant “organisations” enable? How much of the violence was under leaders’ control and to what extent leaders were able to pursue a particular agenda by promoting or perpetrating violence? I have chosen the word “leaders” rather than the more common “elite” to emphasise that in the context of the Poso violence, this was not a category with fixed membership.

The second element is identity and its salience to the violence. The central questions in this element are, how did combatants define their group identity and its bounds, and who they were fighting against? I do not intend to seek particular insights on the general nature of religious and ethnic identities – this dissertation will occupy the analytical middle ground that sees such identities as neither wholly constructed nor wholly innate. I will devote more attention to exploring the applicability to Poso of a concept frequently encountered in the study of violence, namely the process of totalisation – whereby an individual’s status as friend or foe comes to be wholly defined by one identity marker alone.

37 For a survey of the range of theoretical positions regarding ethnic identity, see Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, pp. 43-56.
The third element is the effect of violent acts on actors in Poso. As mentioned in review of van Klinken, each violent act may shift actors' priorities or motivate further violence. Not all the effects of violence are "productive" (i.e. produce further violence), however, and I will also discuss inhibiting effects. The underlying point is that once violence starts, it is no longer sufficient to analyse events solely in terms of factors that predate the start of the fighting.

A related element is the specific forms of violence at different times during the conflict. A by no means exhaustive list would include confrontations between crowds armed with rocks, machetes, traditional weapons, home-made firearms and even factory-standard firearms; arson; bombings of public transport and public places; attacks by smaller groups who have shot, knifed, hanged or beheaded their victims and sometimes mutilated or burned the corpses. How can we explain the manifestation of violence in specific forms, and can the choice of the form of violence contribute to our understanding of the escalation and decline of fighting in Poso?

A fifth element, which I have already raised in the preceding discussion, is the relative importance of local and national contexts to understanding violence in Poso. In particular, I will seek indications of the awareness of actors in Poso of developments elsewhere in the country, incidences of outside intervention in the Poso violence that result from national dynamics, and how the local context influences the manifestation of specific national trends in Poso.

These categories overlap, and in one way or another each helps us to understand the sixth element, namely the motivations of various actors for perpetrating violence. Through attention to these multiple themes, I have endeavoured to present a nuanced picture of motivations that change over time as different individuals appear as leaders, combatants accumulate experiences of violence, perceptions of friend and foe change, and the prevailing context enables or inhibits violence.

**Terminology**

There is not yet a consensus on terminology in the study of ethnic and religious violence, as is clear from the space devoted in many texts to definitions. Increasingly,
authors call for greater disaggregation of violence into distinct manifestations, such as riots, pogroms, terrorism, state violence and genocide, to name but a few possible subdivisions. Selection of terminology is thus difficult for a case study of the Poso violence, particularly as the closer one looks at an individual case, the less it is likely to fit a set of common features of a class of event developed out of a study of many cases.

In particular, the long duration of the Poso conflict marks it as different from the violent events discussed in some of the texts from other countries that have most influenced the study of violence in Indonesia. For instance, each riot in northern India that Brass studies lasts only days or at most weeks, as is equally true of the riots in Varshney’s pairs of Indian cities. In his study of deadly ethnic riots, Horowitz comments on the difficulty of determining the bounds of an ethnic riot, but nonetheless devotes the majority of his book to short duration single or “two-wave” riots. Similarly, Tambiah identifies short duration as a general feature of the South Asian “ethnic riot”:

> If the ethnic riots and incidents perpetrated by civilian crowds and factions are repetitive, they are also mercifully short-lived, not only because after an initial period of chaos and paralysis, the police and the army can assert their dominance, but also because as human outbursts these riots have a short life cycle of orgasmic violence and spent energies.

In this study, noting this interpretive baggage associated with the term “riot”, I refer only to the first and second periods of violence in Poso as “riots”, and do not use the term for subsequent violence in the district. These two periods of violence were of short duration, with threats to individual safety greatly diminishing after several days. As with most of the violent incidents described in the texts cited above, violence in these two periods took place within city limits. Starting with the third period of violence in Poso, however, the district entered a period of protracted conflict and as a result most comparisons with short-duration riots break down.

Admittedly, each of the authors cited above also identifies situations among the cases they study where riots occur repeatedly in the one location, often many years apart.

39 See Brubaker and Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence”, pp. 446-447; Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, pp. 17-28. A different view comes from McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, who call for the study of common processes which they assert are present in many different forms of violence and contentious action. See McAdam et al, Dynamics of Contention, pp. 32-37.
40 For instance, in the introduction to his 1997 work, Theft of an Idol, Brass explicitly states that the “not sustained” nature of riots (an allusion to social movements terminology) has made them a far more difficulty phenomenon to study than social movements. See Paul Brass, Theft of an Idol, p. 10.
41 Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, p. 57.
42 Tambiah, Levelling Crowds, p. 215.
Brass calls this pattern “persistence”, and identifies two key elements that explain why riots persist. The first is the presence in these cases of what Brass terms an “institutionalised riot system” — a “network of persons who maintain communal, racial and other ethnic tensions in a state of tension, of readiness for riots” and “riot specialists” to convert these tensions into riots at moments of political opportunity. Brass also adopts a functional explanation of riots’ persistence to explain why a universally condemned and eminently preventable phenomenon nevertheless recurs. “[I]t is not possible to produce a broad enough consensus in society to eliminate violent riots from Indian public life,” Brass writes, because these riots “serve the interests of particular individuals, groups, organisations and even society as a whole.” To date, violence in Poso has been protracted rather than persistent in Brass’s sense. There is not a clear history of repeated religious violence, and at this point one can still be cautiously optimistic that future of Poso need not be one of persistent riots.

Varshney calls such cases “riot prone cities”, reflecting his observation that the sites of repeated rioting in India are located exclusively in cities with a population greater than 100,000 (cf Poso town, 40,000). Setting criteria of 50 deaths in at least ten riots over five five-year periods from 1950-1995 for his category of maximum riot-proneness, Varshney identifies eight such cities in India. As with Brass, it is clear from Varshney’s definition that he is seeking cases where riots occur again and again, not situations such as Poso where a single conflict becomes protracted. The urban element of Varshney’s definition is also inappropriate for Poso.

Horowitz calls these cases “recurrent riots”, and suggests that they contrast markedly in their general features from single event and “two-wave” riots. It is Horowitz’s argument that the distinctiveness of the recurrent riot “derives from the cumulative deposits of the earlier events in the series.” Tambiah makes almost the identical point

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43 Brass, Theft of an Idol, pp. 9, 16.
45 Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, pp. 103-104.
46 See Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, p. 57 for Horowitz’s initial differentiation of these two patterns of disturbances. Horowitz notes that recurrent riots are “usually separated by years, sometimes by many years”.
47 Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, p. 412. Additionally, Horowitz also identifies what he calls “recidivist locations, where violence occurs repeatedly. In these sites, there may be more than “one direction” of violence (roughly speaking, the motivations and group identities differ in each riot) or else
in his discussion of general features of South Asian riots: “In many cities and towns, intermittent ethnic riots form a series, with antecedent riots influencing the unfolding of subsequent ones.”

Of the options above, Horowitz’s “recurrent riot” bears most resemblance to the Poso conflict. Indeed, it might be guessed that Horowitz would judge the term appropriate for Poso, as he explicitly cites two other sites of post-Soeharto violence, Maluku and West Kalimantan, as locations of recurrent riots in Indonesia. In a recurrent riot, Horowitz asserts, precipitating events for each episode become more trivial or unnecessary; the targets of violence broaden significantly; the episodic character of the violence becomes less discrete and more incessant; violence becomes more organised and less spontaneous; violence tends to become more severe with greater casualties over time, as experience overcomes rioters’ fear and new weapons are introduced, retaliatory violence becomes the norm (Horowitz elsewhere asserts that violence in most riots is one-sided) and the violence resembles a transition to warfare. There is one difference with warfare, however, Horowitz asserts: the forces in a recurrent riot do not fight each other directly, but instead attack civilian targets:

It would almost be apt to describe a tacit agreement whereby the A paramilitary attacks B civilians, the B paramilitary attacks A civilians, and the A and B paramilitaries do not attack each other.

But Poso differs from these recurrent riots in several important respects. Most will be explained in the body of this study; just a few of the key differences are noted here. Firstly, casualties in Poso did not escalate after the introduction of modern weapons. Instead, the most deadly period of violence (May-June 2000) took place before the use of factory standard firearms was widespread. Retaliation to each incident of violence actually decreased over time, starting from late 2002. While there were rarely sustained direct frontal clashes [after 2002], one of the intentions of much of the violence later in conflict appeared to be precisely to provoke renewed direct fighting. Finally, although Horowitz notes that the boundaries of discrete riots tend to blur in a recurrent riot, many of the cases he describes do in fact appear to involve discrete riots taking place several or many years apart.

one or more group may have developed “habitual aggression”. See Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, pp. 407-411.

48 Tambiah, Levelling Crowds, p. 214.

49 Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, pp. 412, 419.
As such I’ve chosen to refer to violent events in Poso as a “violent conflict”, which I will often shorten for convenience to just “conflict” or the “Poso conflict”. This is not an unusual choice for studies of post-Soeharto violence, but it is also necessary to offload some of the term’s interpretive baggage. In the broader field of study of ethnic and religious violence, a number of recent studies have used “conflict” more broadly to refer to competition between individuals and groups, which these studies stress can be either violent or non-violent.51

Violence has generally been conceptualised – if only tacitly – as a degree of conflict rather than as a form of conflict, or indeed as a form of social and political action in its own right.52

But as I am studying the processes by which violence escalated and then declined, and one of my key arguments is that the intensity of the violence does not simply follow the rise and fall of political competition, I see little risk of such conflation in this dissertation.

The assertion that violence is qualitatively different from conflict then begs the question, what is “violence”? Brubaker and Laitin sum up the complexities of the term:

violence is itself an ambiguous and elastic concept, shading over from the direct use of force to cause bodily harm through the compelling or inducing of actions by direct threat of such force to partly or fully metaphorical notions of cultural or symbolic violence.53

Most authors cited in this study (Brubaker and Laitin included) use the term in a narrow sense, however, similar to the primary Oxford English dictionary definition, “The exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on, or cause damage to, persons or property.”54 I also adopt this usage.

A final point of terminology relates to the choice of an adjective to place before “violence”, “violent conflict” and “conflict”. In the opening sentence of this dissertation, I used the terms “inter-religious” and “inter-ethnic”. Some recent studies would argue that both should be described by the adjective “ethnic”, which these authors use to describe a wide range of ascriptive group identities that would otherwise

be further broken down into categories such as religious, racial, tribal and so forth. I do not use "ethnic" in the broader sense, for two reasons. It is most common for speakers of Indonesian to clearly distinguish between religious conflict (konflik agama) and ethnic conflict (konflik suku or konflik etnis), and I have not encountered use of the word "ethnic" to describe both. Additionally, it will at times be useful in this study to distinguish between “religious” and “ethnic” identities without resorting to an adjective such as “tribal” to describe the latter.

While the focus of this section on terminology has been narrowly academic, I acknowledge the insight of scholars who remind us that choices of terminology can have real-world consequences. For instance, McAdam et al. argue,

the naming and labelling of episodes ... [are] ... consequential political acts in their own right... For participants or their successors to decide that an episode qualifies as a revolution or as a huge riot makes a difference to the identities activated, allies gained or lost, governmental measures the episode triggers, and readiness of other citizens to commit themselves in the course of later political action.

Brass has also argued convincingly that the interpretation of a conflict and its causes is “far from merely a verbal game”. The prevailing interpretation of the conflict provides the basis for the response with tangible consequences for those involved: the government’s interpretation in particular determines what problems it will address, who will be held accountable or even be prosecuted. That said, there are rarely prosecutions in the Indian cases that Brass considers, and he argues that “the wide dispersal of blame [through after the fact interpretation] masks responsibility and diverts the public gaze from the mechanisms that produce riots.”

Considered in this light, a discourse analysis of the Poso conflict or a study of the contested interpretations of violence in the district would be valuable and fascinating. In the interests of maintaining a sharp focus in this dissertation, it has not been possible to treat these issues in depth within this study, and I discuss them only in passing.

56 McAdam et al, Dynamics of Contention, p. 30.
58 Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim Riots, p. 306.
Methodology

The issue of sources presents particular difficulties in writing about violence, and has prompted some spirited exchanges in the academic literature,\textsuperscript{59} as well as other contributions that are not overtly polemical.\textsuperscript{60} Interpreting sources can be a long and laborious process, and there are more than a few gaps and controversies that can never be resolved to satisfaction. During six years of following the Poso conflict, I have myself observed how memories fade, versions of events evolve and important potential interviewees move out of the area, are not willing to talk, pass away or are even sometimes killed. The difficulties of researching violence are reflected in the many empirical inconsistencies between different academic studies of the one violent conflict. As a significant number of the empirical details of this study also vary from previous works on the Poso conflict, I have discussed the methodology I employed in compiling this dissertation at some length below. I have also noted in footnotes at a few points in each chapter where I am presenting a different account or detail to other works, along with a brief explanation of why I believe the account presented in this study to be correct.

My primary source of information for this dissertation is more than 70 formal interviews I conducted in Palu and Poso during research trips in December 2001-February 2002, July 2003, March-May 2004 and July 2007. I recorded most of these interviews, with prior consent from the interviewees.\textsuperscript{61} Except for a few short passages here and there where an interviewee preferred to speak in English, I conducted all interviews in Indonesian. The initial selection of interviewees was challenging, as there were few available secondary sources discussing the Poso conflict when I commenced my fieldwork. As such, I initially interviewed a broad set of respondents chosen on the basis of recommendations from local NGO activists, journalists and snowballing from the first people interviewed. Often, an NGO activist, community member or “off-duty”


\textsuperscript{60} See, for example, Cribb, “Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia”, particularly pp 3-14.

\textsuperscript{61} In a few instances the interviewee asked that no recording be made or I chose not to do so. The earliest recordings were made using a tape cassette; since 2003 I have recorded interviews on minidisc, which has the distinct advantages of better sound quality and a five hour capacity for each disc. It has proven invaluable to have clear recordings of interviews available years after I conducted them. In most interviews that I did not record, I took notes and then typed a more complete transcript at the first opportunity.
local journalist familiar to the interviewee would attend these initial interviews. In addition to my own initial interviews, a local journalist also kindly allowed me to listen to some interview recordings he had made while reporting on the May-June 2000 violence.

As my research progressed and my interest became more focused on combatants’ contribution to the escalation and decline of violence, I began to interview predominantly people who had been directly involved in violence. Increasingly, I conducted these interviews without the presence of third parties, although interviewees often brought along a friend or, when interviewed in their home, were accompanied by family members. On my second and third research trips, some of the interviewees were serving sentences in prisons in Palu.

Over all, around three quarters of the people I interviewed during these four research trips were based in Poso, and the number of Christian and Muslim interviewees was roughly even. Among various different categories of interviewees, it was hardest to arrange interviews with “outside mujahidin” (i.e. mujahidin who entered Poso from other parts of the country or even occasionally from abroad), and ideally I would have liked to have interviewed more individuals from this group.62 For the most part, I have not identified interviewees by name in this dissertation; indeed, many interviewees asked specifically that they not be named. Instead, I have chosen several different methods of attribution depending on my perception of the sensitivity of the cited information. Where possible I provide location, date of interview and some characterisation of the interviewee, but I have omitted any or all of these details whenever I judge it necessary.

Between late-2004 and mid-2006, I also made four research trips to Palu and Poso in the course of my work for the International Crisis Group. During these trips I conducted additional formal interviews with senior police, local government officials, judges, prosecutors, community and religious figures, as well as combatants. I recorded very few of these interviews. I also took the opportunity on these trips to meet informally

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62 Once contacted, most potential interviewees were willing to be interviewed (during the research only three people – two Muslims and a Christian – refused). The more serious limitation to interviewing a large group of respondents was the reticence of interviewees to suggest other possible sources.
with some of the people I had interviewed during my dissertation-specific research
trips.

The individuals interviewed gave generously of their time, with some individuals
consenting to be interviewed several times and interviews sometimes lasting several
hours. The many interviews I conducted were an essential part of this research project,
and I believe these interviews have yielded rich material, as I hope the reader will agree
upon reading the excerpts provided in the text. But I am also aware of the limitations of
the interview as a critical tool in a situation of ongoing violent conflict. It is the
privilege and at once the challenge of writing a contemporary history to be able to
interview those who participated in the events under study. The limitations of
interviews have been widely remarked upon by researchers of violent conflict, and I
mention only a few of the most salient difficulties here. Interviews are not readily suited
to use in isolation as “event histories”, as they self-evidently reflect the interviewee’s
point of view, which in highly polarised conflicts can produce partisan accounts.63 One
particular narrative of an event may quickly gained precedence as the community’s
“accepted” account, or a frequently told narrative may crystallise into its most
compelling form.64 The emotional weight of interview material or the fear of breaking
rapport with the interviewee may sometimes lead the interviewer not to ask critical
questions.65 Information conveyed as a confidence may appear to hold extra credence,
but simultaneously becomes more difficult to verify.66 Similarly, one sometimes faces
limitations in how one can phrase a question, when it is based on information or
documents that the interviewer may not wish the interviewee to be aware are in the
interviewer’s possession. To disclose this information would beg the difficult questions:
Who is your source? Who gave you that document? The researcher does not have a free
hand to ask just any question, and to enquire about particular topics may be counter‐
productive.67

63 For a discussion of this point in the context of Northern Ireland, see Jenkins, “Doing Violence to the
Subject”, p. 234; Feldman and Jenkins, “On Formations of Violence”, p. 595.
64 Gyanendra Pandey, “In Defense of the Fragment: Writing About Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today”,
Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival ed. Carolyn Nordstrom and
67 Compare with Sluka and Feldman (as cited in Lee), who each emphasised the importance to successful
research of not enquiring about certain “things, places and people” such as “arms and explosives or the
identity of [IRA] members” during fieldwork in Northern Ireland. See Raymond M. Lee, Dangerous
As such, throughout my research I also sought to collect other video and written material to cross-check, contextualise, supplement and enrich the interview information. These materials were also an important aid to guide selection of interviewees and interview questions. Video has emerged during the second half of my research as an increasingly important research resource. For developments after 2004 in particular, local NGOs kindly shared parts of their increasingly extensive Poso-related video-footage archives. Most private television networks now have contributing cameramen in Poso, and websites of Indonesian channels such as SCTV and MetroTV often post excellent video footage online of events in Poso and interviews with local figures.

Written materials included media clippings, police reports, interrogation dossiers and court documents, reports by government agencies on the violence, reports or documents written by other observers or partisans and a small number of leaflets circulated during the conflict.

I was able to collect an extensive set of media articles on Poso from various sources. NGOs and private individuals in Central Sulawesi often had extensive clipping archives of provincial press publications including the daily newspapers Mercusuar, Radar Sulteng and Nuansa Pos as well as weekly or monthly publications such as Mingguan Al-Khairaat and Formasi. The newspaper archive of the National Library of Australia had complete collections of most national media and the South Sulawesi-based daily newspaper, Pedoman Rakyat. Many back issues of Indonesian media can also be accessed online in one way or another. Media affiliated to religious groups concerned with Poso have at times been posted online, available from the groups themselves or else private individuals have generously provided copies. Local NGOs have also periodically produced newsletters detailing the results of their field investigations or else aimed at peace building. Admittedly, I have found much of this media reportage of the Poso conflict to be inaccurate, with large parts of it also overtly partisan. Reportage remains a useful source of comparative material, however, particularly when several different accounts of a single event are available, or when reportage can be compared with other sources of information. The media is also a useful source of interviews with
some combatants, witnesses and state officials, although the transcripts of these interviews in newspapers are rarely verbatim accounts.\textsuperscript{68}

Police interrogation dossiers (called "Berita Acara Pemeriksaan" and typically referred to by their acronym, B.A.P.) can be a valuable source of biographical information and can also help in formulating interview questions. In Indonesia, interrogation dossiers contain the pre-trial statements to interrogators of all potential prosecution witnesses, as well as records of the questioning of the suspect(s), and details of other evidence. In the years I have been collecting them, these documents have been getting progressively longer, and often now run to more than 500 pages. The information in these dossiers must be treated with particular caution, however. The depositions are typically not verbatim records of the answers of witnesses and suspects. Answers are usually neatly formulated and one can often find cut-and-paste passages in the depositions of different witnesses in the one dossier. It is also generally not possible to know the circumstances under which the depositions were made. In some conflict-related trials, witnesses have withdrawn their depositions when called before the court, on occasion with good reason. Wherever possible, I have used information from interrogation dossiers only in comparison with other sources.

I have also collected copies of dozens of court decisions from Poso cases as well as some prosecution sentencing requests, defence pleas and appeal documents. District court judgments, sentencing requests and defence pleas each typically contain summaries of witness testimony from the trial. Although not verbatim transcripts, I have found these summaries of testimony to be a useful source to cross-check information from interviews, media reportage and interrogation dossiers.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} Where I was able to compare the recordings of media interviews with the transcripts that appeared in local media, some media had actually added several (falsified) sentences to interview answers, and not just paraphrased answers for brevity or clarity.

\textsuperscript{69} To provide one example, the Palu District court decision in the case of Herman Parimo, a Protestant man who died in 2000, confirmed a cash payment to him by a Christian bureaucrat during the first period of violence in Poso (see Chapter 2). I first came across a report of this payment in a report from a then defunct newspaper. By the time I read the report, Herman Parimo had passed away. The bureaucrat refused an interview when first contacted, and I did not clarify the matter to my satisfaction when I was able to interview the bureaucrat in 2004. In the records of testimony in the court decision, however, both Parimo and the bureaucrat acknowledge the payment, confirming the reportage. The Supreme Court decision in Parimo's case also proved to be the only source I could find which provided the date of his death.
I have also made more limited use of copies of police reports and government reports. I have only cited these documents where I am confident of their authenticity, or else where doubts persist, they are noted in the associated footnote. The level of mundane detail each of these reports contain, apparent correspondence with other sources and lack of obvious advantage to any imagined forger’s interests contribute to my impression that they are authentic.

Finally, living in Jakarta has itself presented opportunities to collect extra materials. NGO activists often pass through the city or come to hold protests, sometimes accompanied by Poso community members. I also attended several trials of suspects from Poso which were held in Jakarta in 2006-2007, and engaged two research assistants to follow further trials in Jakarta and Palu in mid to late 2007. Testimony in these trials yielded additional material on the motivations of combatants who carried on with violence after 2002, and also provided the opportunity to observe several victims of violence in May 2000 and July 2001 testify about their experiences. Attending these trials and comparing what I witnessed with what appeared in the written documents from those trials also helped me to better interpret documents from earlier trials that I did not attend.

In broad terms then, my method has been to practise triangulation, as all researchers do to varying extent. Beyond this broad characterisation, however, I would like to provide a few specific examples of techniques that I have found more or less useful as an aid to researching and writing about Poso.

The first is the question of dates. There is often confusion between different texts on when particular incidents happened, for instance whether the third period of violence started on 23 May 2000 or 24 May. This problem is compounded by a feature of Indonesian language that appears curious to a native speaker of English, namely that “malam 23 May” may actually refer to “night-time on 22 May”. The best method I have found to deal with such confusion is to search the newspaper archives for the earliest report of a particular incident, and thereby attempt to “disprove” all but one of the possibilities. For the example of the third period, the earliest reports appeared in newspapers dated 24 May, which leaves 23 May as the only possible option.
Not all inconsistencies are as simple as the dates of reported incidents, however. Often it is a matter of choosing between different details in partisan or incomplete accounts of events. Natalie Zemon Davis suggests one interpretive approach in her work on sixteenth century violence in France:

I have taken especially seriously descriptions of Catholic violence coming from Catholic writers (as in the Memoires of the priest Clause Haton) and descriptions of Protestant violence coming from the Histoire ecclesiastique. These sources are not necessarily telling the whole truth about their party’s violence, but at least we can assume that what they positively describe did occur.  

Davis’s observation can be a useful rule of thumb, but there are exceptions. For instance, exaggerated or fictitious accounts of violence perpetrated by one’s own side may be useful as propaganda or else serve the interests of the perpetrators in other ways. A clear example from Poso is the story of Abdullah/Ahmad, which I have found in two different jihadist publications published six months apart as “The Story of Abdullah Single-Handedly Fighting 3 Enemies” and “Ahmad: A Poso Mujahid Who Escaped the Toyado Abductions”. The common passage from each story is an account of Abdullah/Ahmad killing a Christian adversary with a machete in Malei Lage village. This is the earlier version of their fight, told in the third person:

Abdullah (not his real name), who took part in the battle at Malei Lage, left his house carrying a home-made gun and a machete slung at his waist. When the two forces were face-to-face and bullets began to fly, looking for their prey, Abdullah started to move forward with his weapon through a burned-out house. Unsuspected by Abdullah, three Christians appeared at a window that had not been burned, each carrying a machete and one of them with a home-made gun. The Christian pointed his gun at Abdullah from a distance of only seven metres, but the weapon just made the sound “click”. Abdullah immediately fired his weapon at the Christians, but it also jammed. One of the Christians took this opportunity to draw his machete to attack Abdullah. Like a wild boar he lunged at Abdullah and swung his machete towards Abdullah’s head, but Abdullah avoided this attack and was able to wound the Christian in the forehead. An intense one-on-one duel followed, with each man armed with a machete. Initially Abdullah was forced back and fell flat on his back in a ditch after tripping on a tree root. The Christian took advantage and again swung his machete at Abdullah’s head. Abdullah could not evade the blow and

71 For instance, Schulte Nordholt broaches the possibility that the casualty figures produced by an official investigation of the 1965-66 anti-communist purge may actually be exaggerated, as the result of a “bureaucratic attitude to please one’s superiors by reporting that the project to annihilate the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia – Indonesian Communist Party) was completed successfully.” See Henk Schulte Nordholt, “A Genealogy of Violence” in Roots of violence in Indonesia, ed. Freek Colombijn and Thomas Lindblad, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), p. 44.
was forced to block it with his elbow, and fresh blood flowed forth. Seeing this, the Christian was more eager still to repeat his attack. Even though flat on his back, Abdullah was able to avoid this second attack and moreover was able to swing his machete into the Christian’s neck and the man fell next to Abdullah, with fresh blood gushing from his arteries. Afterwards, it turned out that villagers in Malei Lage knew the fallen man as a key figure in the Christian forces who had often spread terror among local Muslims. One by one he people of Malei Lage hugged and congratulated Abdullah and gave praise to Allah, who had helped them via Abdullah’s hands.

A slightly different account appears in the later publication, this time narrated in the first person by “Ahmad”. This time the battle is just part of Ahmad’s experiences in Poso, as he has by then also escaped the Toyado abductions, in which six Muslims were killed. Neither account gives a date for the Malei Lage clash, but they clearly refer either to an attack on 30 June or 1 July. Press coverage of these attacks does provide a kernel of truth on which the story could centre, as a Christian man in his sixties was reportedly killed by machete on 30 June. The Muslim men I interviewed who took part in these attacks, however, said matter-of-factly that one Christian died in each attack, but told no story resembling Ahmad/Abdullah’s deeds. Although I cannot be absolutely certain, I thus believe we can conclude that the Ahmad/Abdullah heroic duel is either a figment of the author’s imagination (albeit one set within the context of real occurrences such as the Malei Lage attack and Toyado abductions) or else a greatly embellished version of events. The lessons for interpretation are to always be alert to how a narrative could serve the interests of the narrator, and to combine useful rules of thumb such as Davis’s observation with efforts to gather as many different sources as possible for each event.

A third set of interpretive techniques concerns my estimate of a total of 600-1000 people killed during the Poso conflict. This estimate is not at the upper end of estimates of the death toll in Poso, with some media and academic accounts proposing a death toll of 2000 people killed. The challenge in establishing a death toll for events in the Poso conflict is perhaps less severe than for cases of violent events of much greater magnitude, but the variance between the lower and upper limits of my estimate should signal that significant difficulties remain. Arriving at an estimate of the number killed

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73 Ahmad is seemingly the better fighter, as unlike Abdullah he is not wounded after tripping on the tree root. He also has an appreciative audience of both Muslims and Christians watching his duel. When Ahmad kills the man his Muslim spectators shout “Allahu Akbar” and the Christians flee.


75 For a wide-ranging discussion of the difficulties in establishing the number of fatalities in cases of mass killings, as well as overview of some techniques to arrive at an estimate, see Robert Cribb, “How Many
is a very sensitive endeavour, as a particular figure runs the risk of being misinterpreted as an attempt to underplay or overstate the violence, and I would like to briefly explain the rationale behind my estimate. The main source of uncertainty over the death toll in the Poso conflict is the third period of violence in May-June 2000, and to a lesser extent the remainder of 2000 and 2001. For the years 2002 to 2007 good records exist, and the degree of uncertainty for these years amounts only to the possibility that just a few more or fewer people were killed, depending on the precise number of people killed in specific incidents of violence. During the May-June 2000 period of violence, however, there was an almost total breakdown of law and order in Poso for two weeks. The bodies of many of those killed during this period were dumped in the Poso river or else buried in mass graves around the district, some of which may not yet have been discovered. In writing about this period and its component incidents, I have attempted to identify local estimates of the death toll that can establish lower and upper limits for the possible number of people killed, and then compare these estimates against the available evidence. In the main text of this dissertation I give a figure of “at least 246” people killed during the May-June 2000 violence, a figure sourced from a report on the violence presented by the governor of Central Sulawesi. This figure may well be conservative, given the government’s presumed interest in downplaying the extent of the violence, and by quoting the governor’s figure I assume that at least that many people, and most probably quite a few more, must have been killed. The challenge then is to seek an estimate of how many more may have died. To this end, I have established a rough upper limit by considering the estimates of fatalities made by survivors of the Walisongo massacre, the single worst incident during the May-June 2000 violence. These survivors made their estimates in the context of a legal investigation and court trial of some of the accused perpetrators of the massacre, and as such I feel it is unlikely that they would have had an interest in understating the number of people who were murdered. The head of the village where the massacre took place testified that 191 of his village’s residents had been killed, a figure he obtained by subtracting the number of

6 On the political significance often attached to particular death toll figures, see Cribb, “How Many Deaths?”, p. 83.
7 Apart from the third period of violence, difficulties arise for the remainder of 2000 and 2001 because of incomplete reporting and conflicting death tolls for particular incidents of violence.
8 For instance, in May 2006 in Tambaro village police exhumed seven bodies from a previously undiscovered mass grave dating to the May-June 2000 violence, based on information provided by a Christian man imprisoned in Palu. See “Polisi Bongkar Kuburan Massal di Poso”, Kompas, 11 May 2006.
people registered as internally displaced persons from his village’s pre-conflict population.\textsuperscript{80} To me, such an estimated upper limit for the death toll in the Walisongo massacre suggests that although it is likely that more than 246 people were killed during the May-June 2000 violence, it is unlikely that the number killed during this period was as high as three or more times greater than the governor’s estimate. Although the information is incomplete and uncertainty remains, if the figure for the third period was several times greater, it might be expected that we would know of more massacres similar to that which took place at Walisongo, or given that Christian forces at the time did not appear to have a well-thought out plan to conceal the extent of the killings, we would expect more bodies to have been found. (A Muslim team that searched for bodies of the victims of the third period violence found 147 bodies between July and September 2000.\textsuperscript{81}) An estimate of 600-1000 people killed for the entire conflict thus allows for the possibility of a significantly higher death toll than the governor’s estimate during the May-June 2000 violence and its aftermath, while establishing some limit on the probable number of fatalities.

Structure Of Dissertation

The chapters of this dissertation are arranged in chronological order. Some chapters cover a single period of violence in Poso, while others cover two periods. I have divided the chapters so that each deals with a distinct aspect of the escalation and decline of the Poso conflict.

Chapter Two examines the first two periods of violence in Poso in December 1998 and April 2000 respectively, which each took place before Poso became a site of protracted conflict. Among all the periods of violence in Poso, these two episodes are the most suited to analysis in terms of the moment of opportunity and uncertainty after Soeharto’s resignation, when for a time it was unclear how individuals and groups would secure local-level access to the state. For one thing, in the violence of each period, there were clear and visible links to district-level politics. Yet Chapter Two will

\textsuperscript{79} Bandjela Paliiadju, \textit{Laporan Gubernur Propinsi Sulawesi Tengah tentang Pananggulangan dan Langkah yang Dilakukan Sebagai Akibat Kerusuhan Poso}, Powerpoint presentation, no date.

\textsuperscript{80} Record of testimony of Ngabidun Djaelani in Palu District Court Decision no. 459/Pid.B/2000/PN.PL in case of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu, 5 April 2001, p. 31. For survivor estimates of specific incidents within the Walisongo massacre, see Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{81} See deposition of Jabar A. Salam in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 13 October 2000, pp. 1-3; record of testimony of Jabar A. Salam in Palu District Court decision in case of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu, 5 April 2001, p. 32.
also highlight the shortcomings of a model of politically-motivated actors as an explanation for the violence. An important example that demonstrates some of these shortcomings will be the case of a prominent leader acting to perpetrate and encourage violence against his own political interests.

Chapter Three examines the sudden, rapid escalation of the conflict. During two weeks in May-June 2000, the sites of violence spread beyond the district’s capital, hundreds were murdered and religious identity mostly sufficed as a reason for an individual to be killed. By this period, the violence lacked discernable links to district-level politics. Both Christians and Muslims initiated some clashes, but the violence was overwhelmingly the result of a campaign of attacks on Muslims perpetrated by segments of Poso’s Christian community. Christians formed a new combatant entity – the kelompok merah (lit. red group) – to provide core combatants for this violence, and this chapter will examine the interaction between kelompok merah members and rank-and-file combatants, as well as the motivations behind the violence.

The May-June 2000 violence marked the point at which the conflict in Poso became protracted and threats to individual security on the basis of religious identity became an everyday concern. This period of violence also precipitated the entry into Poso of mujahidin from other parts of Indonesia and beyond; the entry of these new actors self-evidently meant it no longer made sense to try to understand the violence simply in terms of the local political context. These men came to Poso to help the district’s Muslims to defend themselves and indeed to strike back against Christians. But for the more established among the jihadist organisations to which these outside mujahidin were affiliated, Poso was also part of a broader struggle with goals not specific to the district. Chapter Four will examine the development of an alliance between local Muslims in Poso and outside mujahidin, and the implications of this alliance for two major periods of violence in 2001. One aspect of the analysis in this chapter will be to examine the motivations of the local men who fought with outside mujahidin and the extent to which these locals adopted the outsiders’ agenda.

Chapter Five examines the decline of violence in Poso, which can be observed from a decrease in the number of deaths since 2002 to 40 or less per year, and from the end of attacks perpetrated by large crowds after August 2002. This chapter will examine three
aspects of the decline of violence. First, the chapter will explore the pattern of central government interventions in the Poso conflict and the contribution of these interventions to the decline in fighting. The second part will be to explain why many combatants stopped fighting in 2002. Finally, this chapter will also examine the activities of a core group of local Muslim men and outside mujahidin who continued to perpetrate sporadic attacks even after most combatants had ceased to participate in attacks. In particular, I will examine what motivated these men to perpetrate violence and the extent of the space that remained for them to perpetrate attacks.
CHAPTER TWO – RIOTS IN POSO

Before violence started in December 1998, Poso had a reputation as a peaceful region. Besides the district’s slogan of Sintuwu Maroso – “Strong When United” – Poso’s reputation at the time is evident in the small number of police deployed in the area. Different police sources put the number of personnel assigned to Poso in December 1998 at between 169 and approximately 400 personnel, with one of these sources saying Poso was renowned as a safe area (daerah aman). To put these numbers in context, in 1998 these police were guarding a population of approximately 420,000 people spread across almost 30,000 square kilometres or 44 per cent of the land-mass of Central Sulawesi province. The district’s peaceful reputation had in fact led to its main Christian town, Tentena, being chosen to host the 24th anniversary convention of the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI – Partai Demokrasi Indonesia) in January 1997 when other locations in Sulawesi had been considered too unsafe. The choice now appears ironic to say the least.

The district had not been free from violence in the earlier decades of the twentieth century. Schrauwers notes that battles against the Dutch, the hardships of Japanese occupation, incursions of Darul Islam and Permesta rebels and the murder of alleged communists all live on in the memories of either the district’s middle-aged or elderly residents. The most recent of these horrors, however, took place in the 1960s, a time before the memory of the younger half of the population in 1998. Those authors seeking more recent and direct portents of the violence that has taken place from December 1998 onwards have turned up only ephemeral disturbances and controversies on a much more limited scale. How then can we account for the violence in Poso from 1998

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6 The two events that are commonly cited in accounts of the Poso conflict as prior religious disturbances are a controversy surrounding a 1992 essay written by a convert to Christianity regarding Islam, and a
onwards? This chapter takes up this question for the first two periods of violence in Poso. Respectively, these were four days of rioting in December 1998, culminating in widespread arson attacks (the first period), and five days of rioting sixteen months later in April 2000, during which six people were killed (the second period).

In Chapter One, I explained that existing accounts have identified a structural context for the Poso violence, a context which Poso shared with much of Indonesia immediately following Soeharto’s resignation. Impending electoral reforms and decentralisation of government functions left local actors uncertain over how they could continue to seek and secure access to state employment and contracts, which were disproportionately important to Poso’s economy. With the collapse of the Soeharto regime, local aspirants to political office would in many cases need to develop local power bases. Ethnicity and particularly religion stood out as possible local sources of power in Poso, where competition for bureaucratic positions had in any case taken place along religious lines during the last years of Soeharto’s rule. The consensus amongst most observers of the Poso conflict is that within this structural context, local actors seized upon two moments of political opportunity to seek gains through violence. The first period of violence took place in the midst of the search for a new district head (the senior elected official in Poso), whereas the second period coincided the appointment of a new district secretary (the district’s senior career bureaucrat).

The coincidence of the first two periods of violence in Poso with moments of political contestation and opportunity parallels one of the general patterns of inter-religious and inter-ethnic riots observed in South Asia. The literature on South Asia is worth

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8 On this point, see Brass, Theft of an Idol, pp. 17-18; Tambiah, Levelling Crowds, pp. 224-230
discussing briefly because most foreign observers writing on the post-Soeharto violence have consulted it. Among this literature, Brass’s observations on Hindu-Muslim riots in India have been particularly influential. Brass argues that local politicians and associated “riot specialists” routinely produce Hindu-Muslim riots when opportunities arise for them to make political gains through violence. These politicians instigate riots because they are the most effective strategy to “produce communal solidarity to gain electoral advantage”. Brass thus shares van Klinken’s conviction that elite actors in riots are essentially motivated by political interests; in Brass’s words,

political rationality on the part of the principal riot producers is critical: the ends in view are clear, the prospects of success reasonable enough to make the effort worthwhile, and the results often enough precisely what are desired.

Among observers of Poso, Aragon has articulated a version of this political argument most fully and clearly. Aragon characterises the conflict as a fight about the “political economy of being Protestant (or Catholic) and Muslim”. The chief villains in Aragon’s account are urban factional leaders – “Pamona-affiliated Protestants and Bugis-affiliated Muslims”- who mobilised rural supporters to fight through religious solidarity and economic patron-client ties. Aragon succinctly outlines the motivations of these leaders:

In hindsight, analysts can see that the Poso conflict escalated because entrenched district executives, who faced newly competitive elections, tried to protect their candidates and business profiteering through slanderous fliers and the mobilisation of voters by religion.

As with Brass’s analysis, most agency appears to rest with these elites, as the “actions of a few political leaders or “big fish” led to severe losses for tens of thousands of people” or in a later formulation, “Playing the cards of religious identity politics among sensitive ethnic constituencies brought predictable votes, but also uncontrollable violence.”

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11 Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi”, p. 47.
13 Aragon, “Mass Media Fragmentation”, p. 5.
This chapter acknowledges many of the links between both periods of violence and local politics as set out in existing accounts, and I will present my own version of the political machinations surrounding the first two periods of violence. But in doing so, I would like to suggest two necessary modifications to the idea of the December 1998 and April 2000 violence as politically motivated. Principally, I will argue that neither leaders nor rank-and-file were so detached as to perpetrate violence simply to win political contests. Instead, we need to consider how pre-existing tensions, and each incident of violence as it occurred, affected decision-making.

Second, I would like to challenge the “big fish” metaphor, where hapless rank-and-file fight for elite interests. I agree that leaders have more agency than rank-and-file to influence the course of the violence, but I believe we need to shift our analysis from “manipulation” towards a coincidence of interests.

**Political Context - The First Period – December 1998**

The accusations of political manipulation in the first period of violence in Poso – which ran from 24-28 December 1998 – centre on the election of a new district head. This election was due to be held in 1999; under the system at the time, the district head was chosen by the district legislature. This 1999 district head election was of course to be the first since the collapse of Soeharto’s regime in May 1998. The incumbent, local Muslim man Arief Patanga, could not seek re-election as he had served two five-year terms. Patanga tendered his “letter of resignation” in mid-December 1998, but this was merely a formal administrative requirement, and one that did not take immediate effect. His term in office did not end until June 1999, meaning the search for a successor was only in its very early stages when the violence took place.  

Indonesia’s electoral and local government laws were swiftly reformed after Soeharto’s resignation but the effect on the process to choose a district head was not as profound as sometimes claimed. Patanga, for example, had won the district head position in 1989 and 1994 through a process where the district legislature sent a list of candidates for the post via the provincial governor to the Minister of Home Affairs who chose the winner. 

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16 This process is set out in Article 16 of Law no 5/1974 on the Key Points of Local Government (*Pokok-Pokok Pemerintahan di Daerah*).
minister was not bound to accept this ranking and indeed often overturned it. In theory, this system enabled the central government to exercise tight control over who became district head. Even in the 1990s, however, there were just under 300 districts in Indonesia, and it seems plausible to suggest that Poso district was not always at the centre of Jakarta’s thoughts.\(^{17}\) Certainly the records of the 1994 district head election and the local political machinations that accompanied the compilation of a list of candidates to send to the provincial governor suggests that local political parties felt the outcome of this local process was significant. Patanga had dominated this 1994 election as the incumbent, securing top spot on the list of candidates put forward by three of the four Poso legislature “fractions”.\(^{18}\) Even so, there was a long-running dispute between political parties on which other names should be on the list the legislature would send to the governor, which in fact caused a delay in the finalisation of the list.\(^{19}\) Allegations were also raised around the time of the election that Patanga had bribed his way to victory for his first term in office from 1989-1994.\(^{20}\) Another attempt to discredit several of the candidates saw allegations surface that the candidates or their families had past associations with Communist-linked organisations.

Considered in the light of these previous local contests between candidates, the new process to elect a district head under the regional autonomy legislation passed in May 1999 does not appear so different. Instead of several candidates being chosen by the legislature, one of whom would be appointed by the minister, the 1999 law granted the district level legislature power to make the final decision on who would be their next district head.\(^{21}\) In fact, the bigger change potentially lay in how the legislature that chose the district head would be constituted. New electoral laws (and associated laws on

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\(^{21}\) This process is set out in Articles 34-40 of Law no 22/1999 on Local Government. Even before the law came into force, the government had stopped exercising its authority to determine the winner of district head contests. The system introduced by the 1999 law was replaced by direct election of district heads under a new Law on Local Government passed in 2004. The first direct elections for district heads were held in mid-2005.
political parties and the composition of legislatures) reduced the share of seats granted to military appointees from 20 per cent to 10 per cent and opened the election up to contestants other than the regime’s Golkar party, the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) and the United Development Party (PPP). Under these new laws, 48 parties took part in the June 1999 legislative election.

Again the continuities with the late New Order are at least as important as the changes. Golkar’s share of the vote declined significantly, but the party still won nineteen of the 36 seats up for election. Golkar’s victory in Poso was typical of its performance in Sulawesi more generally, which remained a Golkar stronghold in the 1999 elections. The other two New Order parties, PDI-P and PPP, each won five seats. The remaining seven seats were spread between six different new parties.

The district legislature’s official preselection of candidates for district head had seemingly not started in December 1998. Of those rumoured to be interested in the post, district secretary Yahya Patiro, provincial-level Golkar politician Muin Pusadan and vice-district head Malik Syahadat had all made it on to the list of candidates sent to the governor five years earlier. As the district’s senior bureaucrat, local Protestant Patiro was regarded as the early front-runner, with both his supporters and opponents acknowledging that Patiro’s support base extended beyond just Christians, with some Muslims east of the city also reported to favour him. Such support of course would not necessarily translate into votes from members of the district legislature. Patiro would need support from both religious communities to win. Until 1999, when the Morowali

22 Under Soeharto, only these three parties had been allowed to contest each of the elections held since 1977. For a summary of changes in the electoral laws and their implications, see National Democratic Institute, The New Legal Framework for Elections in Indonesia, 23 February 1999.
23 The remaining four seats went to police and military appointees. In 1997, Golkar had won 27 seats of 31 up for election, with 8 seats reserved for appointees. See Sumono, Perbandingan perolehan Suara Pemilihan Umum Anggota DPR Pada Pemilu 87, 92 dan Hasil Sementara Pemilu 97 Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Sulawesi Tengah, nd.
24 In the election for the national legislature, Golkar secured at least 43 per cent of the vote in all five provinces in Sulawesi, and more than 50 per cent of the vote in every province in Sulawesi apart from North Sulawesi. The party’s national vote was 22.3 per cent. See Aris Ananta et al, Indonesian Electoral Behaviour: A Statistical Perspective, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), pp. 259, 265.
25 PDI-P (the extra P stands for “Perjuangan” (Struggle)) was one faction of the New Order PDI, led by Megawati Soekarnoputri, one of the daughters of Indonesia’s first president. Megawati’s faction had been unable to participate in the 1997 election, after Soeharto illegally arranged her removal as party chairperson in 1996.
area was excised from Poso to become a separate district, Christians comprised only 35 per cent of the population of the district compared with 63 per cent Muslims; after the excision, Christians accounted for 41 per cent (versus 56 per cent Muslims), and there were also fewer Christian legislature members than Muslims. Patiro could not win if the poll became starkly polarised along religious lines. As it turned out, among the potential candidates for district head, it was Patiro’s reputation that would suffer the most damage from the December 1998 violence. In the end, he did not make it onto the shortlist for the election.

The riot

The violence started with a brawl between two youths – a Christian and a Muslim – in the vicinity of the Darussalam mosque in the city ward of Sayo (See Map 1). It is clear that the Muslim, Ahmad Ridwan, suffered a knife wound to his arm at the hands of his assailant, Roy Runtu Bisalemba. Beyond that basic fact, there are various versions of this initial scuffle: that Ridwan was attacked in the mosque itself, or on the verandah of the mosque, or that the fight took place near the mosque after which the wounded Ridwan ran inside, and that Ridwan had been unarmed and taken by surprise or that he had hidden a knife under the carpet of the mosque in expectation of a fight.

In explaining the escalation of violence, of course, the precise details of the initial brawl are not significant. Any fight between a Christian and a Muslim so close to a mosque (let alone inside one) would always be open to interpretation as a religiously motivated attack and could thus inflame inter-religious tensions. The specifics of the brawl mattered little to the rumours that spread throughout the district over the next few days, which in their most exaggerated form informed their audience that the imam of the Sayo

27 Interview with a prominent Muslim resident of Poso, July 2003, Interview with former residents of Poso living in Tentena, July 2003.
28 Catholics, included in the Christian figures above, made up only 0.5 per cent of the population before Morowali was excised. BPS Poso, Kabupaten Poso dalam Angka 1998, p. 141
30 A photograph of the injured Ridwan appears at http://www.fica.org/hr/poso/pictures1.html, accessed 14 April 2007. Roy was the son of the head of the Poso branch of PDI, but I have found no suggestion that this was relevant to his involvement in this fight.
31 See, for example, FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 2; “Poso Mencekam, Bupati Diungsikan”, Jawa Pos, 29 December 1998; Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, Laporan Penugasan Ke Sulawesi Tengah, p. 2; interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.
mosque had been hacked to death inside the building.32 The timing of the brawl also compounded its sensitivity – it took place late in the night on Christmas eve, which by coincidence fell during the Islamic fasting month in 1998. Yet despite the potential inherent in the religious “baggage” of the fight to inflame wider animosities, the immediate retaliation was in fact targeted at the specific perpetrator of the initial fight. This retaliation took the form of a small crowd of Muslims gathering to ransack several houses in Sayo before dawn on Christmas day, including that of the Christian youth Roy.33

There was one more coincidence in the timing of the brawl – Christmas day was a Friday in 1998, meaning many of Poso’s residents would, depending on religion, either attend a church service or perform the Islamic Friday prayer within hours of the brawl and the first retaliatory attacks. Even before these worship services took place, the district’s bureaucratic and security-sector leaders met and sought to head off any religious interpretation of the night’s event. They duly declared the causes of the brawl to have been “purely criminal” (kriminal murni), which would have been readily recognisable to the local audience as the antithesis of religious tension in New Order parlance. Local religious leaders were then asked to convey the criminal nature of the brawl during their worship services; meanwhile Roy (and several others who had been involved in the brawl) were swiftly arrested.34

Despite these efforts to contain the fall-out from the brawl, violence resumed in the afternoon following the Friday prayer.35 In public discussion of the brawl during these hours, the salient detail of the incident was that the Christian youth Roy had been drinking at the Chinese-owned Toko Lima store before fighting with Ridwan. Crowds returned in the afternoon to ransack Roy’s house again as well as several homes owned

35 Several Christians who at the time lived in the city said that after the message of criminality was conveyed in the Christmas services, Christmas day essentially passed without serious incident. Two chronologies written from the Muslim point of view describe the incidents detailed above, however, leading me to believe the Christians are mistaken in their recollection. For details of the Friday afternoon violence, see FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, pp. 2-3 Kronologis Kejadian Kerusuhan Massa Di Kota Poso Pada Tanggal 25 Desember 1998
by his relatives, but they appear to have concentrated more on raiding each of the hotels and stores around town known to sell liquor. Toko Lima was one of the stores targeted, and one chronology lists thirteen different stores and hotels in several different city wards that were each damaged or even burned down on Christmas day. Many of these stores were in the city wards of Gebangrejo, Kayamanya and Moengko, which lay across the river from the part of Poso where the initial brawl had taken place and where Roy and his relatives lived. The stores in these three wards may have been targeted by Muslim youths who were unable to cross Poso’s main river bridge, which was being guarded by the security forces (See Map 1).36

Map 1: Poso Town (Main Streets Only)37

In response to these disturbances, the police then sent more personnel to Poso overnight to reinforce their relatively small permanent presence in the district. The provincial police chief, Colonel Soeroso, also himself made the four-hour journey to Poso from the

provincial capital, Palu, to arrive just before noon on 26 December. Soeroso convened a public meeting at the district head’s residence, where it was decreed that the sale of alcohol would be banned in Poso with immediate effect. A round-up of alcohol quickly commenced, and thousands of bottles were destroyed using heavy machinery in a ceremony in front of the district legislature building that afternoon. Soeroso returned to Palu later that night.

Poso’s problems though were of course far from over. The initial brawl, the subsequent clashes and the round-up of alcohol had all heightened tensions between local Christians and Muslims. Not all Christians had objected to a round-up of liquor per se, but they were angered by the manner of its conduct: “We also supported the eradication of alcohol, but it was anarchic. Breaking things, and even starting to set things alight.” The result was that crowds of Muslims and Christians began to gather in and around the city, drawn in part by exaggerated rumours of what had taken place in Poso to that point. Many of the Muslims who came into the city from surrounding villages gathered around the market in Gebangrejo ward, while the largest gathering point for Christians would eventually be several kilometres south of the city in Tagolu village.

We were sitting around at night in our village, when someone came in a car and said that a youth had been attacked in the Sayo mosque. They said attackers had used a machete and the youth was badly injured, and it had happened in a mosque. In our village we felt why did it have to be a Muslim, why would you attack them in a mosque, if there was a problem, it shouldn’t have been [approached] like that. That’s what made 300 people leave from my village for the city that night.

The rumour was that churches would be burned, that there was a group, they told us the Islamic community wanted to burn churches. So automatically this [provoked] a desire to defend, so the Christian communities around here, from other villages [as well], went down to the city. [The way to describe it] was that we wanted to help our friends in Lombogia who they said were going to defend [the churches].

37 All maps in this dissertation are aligned so that the top of the map is north. In Chapter Three, this means that in Map 4, north points to the right of the page.
38 The extra police were two Platoons of mobile brigade (Brimob) from the provincial capital, Palu. See Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, Laporan Penugasan Ke Sulawesi Tengah, p. 10.
39 Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, Laporan Penugasan ke Sulawesi Tengah, p. 10.
41 Interview with a former Poso resident living in Tentena, February 2002. By 2007, the common objection raised by Christians to this liquor round-up was that it should have been police who confiscated the alcohol.
42 One Christian city resident also suggested it was the influence of Roy’s family and the affront his relatives felt at the damage to his house that motivated many Christians from other parts of Poso district to come to the city. Interview with a Poso resident living in Tentena, February 2002.
43 Interview with a Muslim resident of village in Poso district, July 2003.
44 Interview with a Christian resident of village in Poso district, July 2003.
Before charting the further escalation of violence, it is necessary to take stock of the
developments thus far. The brawling, liquor round-up and arson had not been directed
at overtly political targets. One could argue that the owners of the shops and hotels that
had been raided may have been likely financiers for Christian candidates in the coming
elections, although no-one I interviewed volunteered or confirmed this interpretation.
Nor had anyone hoping to provoke larger clashes along religious lines attacked a place
of worship, despite the potency of even the rumours of such an attack in mobilising
crowds. We are left to question then whether the liquor round-up was itself deliberate
and pre-conceived provocation. Certainly, rounding up alcohol had raised tensions
between Christians and Muslims in Poso, and this may have been the intention. On the
other hand, the round-up may not have been pre-planned: it is hardly surprising that
local youths would be interested in rounding up liquor once given a pretext, and that the
seizures were not orderly. Many of Poso’s youths were given to drinking, and those
involved in the round-up openly admit that there was ample opportunity to spirit away a
proportion of the seized goods for personal consumption.

If the significance of the liquor round-up and associated clashes are ambiguous, later on
26 December events did begin to take on a political edge, as the role of some leaders in
encouraging violence started to come into view. Firstly, in the late afternoon, local
Protestant figure Herman Parimo and three other senior local Protestants went to see the
district head Patanga at his residence.\footnote{Record of testimony of Leo Mandayo, Tangkuka Sambaeto, Arief Patanga, Herman Parimo in Parimo Decision, pp. 11-13, 28-29, 54.} Parimo reportedly was a former member of the
district legislature, and had joined the Central Sulawesi Youth Movement (GPST –
Gerakan Pemuda Sulawesi Tengah) in the late 1950s and 1960s, a movement formed to
resist rebellions to Poso’s north and south.\footnote{Various accounts of the Poso conflict list Parimo as a member of the district legislature (i.e. for the period, 1997-1999) but his name does not appear in a list of the 40 members in a recently-published history of the Poso legislature. A relative also asserted that Parimo was not a member in 1998, but said he may have been in the 1970s. This, too, is puzzling, as Parimo’s name does not appear in lists of members for the 1971-77, 1977-82, 1982-87 or 1987-1992 legislatures in either the district legislature history or a general history of Poso. See Haliadi, Mahid, Jamaluddin, DPRD Poso, 1952-1999 : Studi Sejarah Parlemen Lokal pp. 99, 105, 106-107; Hasan et al Sejarah Poso, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogy, 2004), pp. 263, 267-268.} Parimo and his companions offered to help
keep peace in the city by bringing in crowds (of Protestants) under the banner of the
long defunct GPST. Needless to say, such a move could only have caused mayhem and
Patanga declined the men’s offer.\footnote{One Parimo supporter asserted that Patanga had in fact asked Parimo to conduct a Christmas parade in the city during this meeting, and in so doing had trapped the unwitting Parimo for political reasons. This} Nevertheless, three village chiefs testified at
Parimo’s subsequent trial that he came to their village to encourage them to send Christian crowds to the southern fringe of the city, testimony that Parimo did not dispute.48 There has been particular suspicion that Parimo was trying to start a political riot to somehow help district secretary Yahya Patiro’s electoral prospects, because it later emerged that the Patiro had given Parimo Rp 5 million (approximately $700) in cash around this time.49 The timing of the payment does inevitably make it suspicious, but if the money was a fee to start a riot it seems a bargain price.

Second, the same night, a rumour spread that Patanga’s residence would be attacked. In response, some of the Muslim youths who had come to the city from surrounding villages chose to guard the house overnight.50 This rumour was the antecedent of the campaign that would begin immediately after the first period to depict the violence as a campaign of insurrection by local Christian officials, including the front-runner for the district head post Yahya Patiro.

Several hours after the provincial police chief returned to Palu on the night of 26 December, the violence continued. Crowds burned tyres, a (Christian-owned) house and several motorbikes. Rival crowds from different neighbourhoods also threw rocks at each other the next morning, and several people were injured. As a result, a further peace meeting was held at Poso’s government offices on the morning of 27 December.51 Delegates from the meeting – which again brought together local government, security, religious and community leaders – then visited one of the main points of confrontation between rival crowds: the ‘Tentena’ intersection in the Poso city ward Kasintuwu.52 At the intersection, they encouraged the rival crowds to disperse. That night, district head Patanga, district secretary Patiro, local military commander F. X. Suprapto and Poso police chief Deddy Woerjantono also went to Tagolu village – just south of the city –

48 Another village chief said that Parimo sent his son as an intermediary for the same purpose, which Parimo did dispute. Parimo decision, pp. 14, 16, 32, 35.
49 “$” refers to Australian dollars unless otherwise specified. “GPST dan Tragedi 28 Desember”, Palu Pos, Edition XXXI, pp. 1, 7. In court testimony, Patiro said the payment was a routine gift that he made to Parimo each Christmas; Parimo testified that Patiro had given him the money both because Parimo had just recovered from an illness and as a Christmas present. See Parimo Decision, pp. 23, 56.
50 I have determined the timing of these events based on an interview with one of the youths who guarded the house, considered in comparison with chronologies of the first period. Nevertheless, there is still some uncertainty regarding the timing of the guarding of the house. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
51 “Kronologis Kerusuhan Poso”, Mercusuar, no date.
52 Called the “Tentena” intersection because it is the point at which the road to Tentena begins.
and encouraged the sizeable crowd of Christians that had gathered there to disperse.\textsuperscript{53} By some accounts, the Protestant figure Parimo, who had met the district head the previous evening, was also asked to make a speech urging the crowd to leave, but dodged the request and instead left for the city. In his court testimony Parimo said that he did address the crowd, but agreed with other testimony that he left the meeting before its conclusion to enter the city.\textsuperscript{54}

The Tagolu peace meeting did not have the desired effect. Later that evening, two or more trucks full of Christians did in fact drive from Tagolu down into the city. Christians who were in Tagolu at the time typically say that the trucks “lolos” (lit. escaped), implying that those who entered the city on the night of 27 December were not under the control of recognised community leaders.\textsuperscript{55} These statements are intended most specifically as a rebuttal of reports that Herman Parimo led the crowd, even though Parimo had offered precisely this form of “security assistance” to the district head the previous day. (These rebuttals notwithstanding, Parimo most likely did in fact lead the crowd.) The trucks displayed banners bearing the name GPST – the defunct youth movement Parimo had joined in the 1950s - and the passengers sang hymns while circling the city.\textsuperscript{56} The premise for this move into the city was that it was a “Christmas parade”. It is true that one frequent celebration of certain religious holidays in Indonesia is for truckloads of youths to circle towns late at night making a commotion, but the plausibility of this particular convoy being a parade is well summed up by a Muslim youth who saw the trucks: “They said they were holding a Christmas parade but the funny thing was they were carrying all manner of things like machetes.”\textsuperscript{57} One of the trucks reportedly headed for the port in Bonesompe, while the other headed for the market in the centre of the city.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{53} Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, \textit{Laporan Penugasan Ke Sulawesi Tengah (Palu dan Poso) tanggal 6 sampai dengan 9 January 1999}, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Parimo decision}, pp. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{55} Another interviewee phrased this as a specific denial of Herman Parimo’s culpability: “If he was a leader why did some of the crowd get through when he was trying to stop them. That means some of the crowd weren’t listening to him any more.” Interviews with former Poso residents living in Tentena, July 2003, interview with a former Poso resident living in Tentena, February 2002.
\textsuperscript{56} In explanation of the appeal to Poso’s younger generation of the symbol from the defunct 1950s movement, a youth who lived in the city in 1998 remarked, “[The symbol reminded us that] our parents had proven able [to fight back, so what about us]”. Interviews with former Poso residents living in Tentena, July 2003, July 2007.
\textsuperscript{57} Interview with a Poso resident, Poso, July 2003.
\textsuperscript{58} Interview with former Poso residents living in Tentena, July 2003.
By this point, a crowd had gathered around Poso’s central market with the idea of protecting it. As the truck approached the market along Poso’s main street, this crowd clashed with those on the truck, and along with the police forced the truck back to the end of the road and then out of the city.59 (I have not found any account that provides details of the journey of the other truck to the port.) If there had been any plans for the crowds of either Muslims or Christians in and around the city to disperse, the entry of these trucks into the city made certain this would not happen.

As day dawned on 28 December, the rioting of the first period reached its peak. Another group of Christians entered the city from Tagolu. Some accusatory narratives claim this crowd numbered as many as 2000 people, other eyewitnesses recall only a few more than one hundred people.60 This crowd apparently came upon graffiti denigrating Jesus as they passed through one of Poso’s main intersections. Some accounts attribute the Christian crowd’s apparent attempt to attack Poso’s marketplace to their anger upon seeing this graffiti, but it seems likely that violence would have resulted anyway once so many Christians had come into the city.61 The main point of confrontation with a rival Muslim crowd came to be the bridge separating the two halves of the city. As those in the Muslim crowd gained ascendency and pushed Christians back from the bridge, they were then able to burn parts of the city wards of Lombogia, Kasintuwu and Sayo.62 More than 100 houses and other buildings were destroyed, and around 80 people were injured in the clashes, including one Protestant man who was doused with petrol and set alight.63 Places of worship were not targeted in Poso, but a church was later burned in the provincial capital Palu on 30 December.64 The district head’s residence also came under attack during the morning; both Patanga and district

60 Interview with a Poso resident, July 2003. The number of trucks used to transport this crowd was a point of contention during the trial of Herman Parimo. A Muslim witnesses recalled seeing twenty trucks, Parimo and most Christian witnesses asserted that there were five. See Parimo Decision, pp. 39, 48.
61 Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, Laporan Penugasan Ke Sulawesi Tengah, p. 2.
62 Not everybody understood why particular houses were being selected. A participant remembered the pattern of burning as follows: If a person was influential, an influential person, then maybe their house would be sought, then that house would be burnt, but we didn’t burn them all.... [What sort of figures were people after?] Oh, I didn’t know what their names were at the time. Someone would say, this is so-and-so’s house, just burn it. This is his house here, burn it, ah, they were chosen one by one. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
64 Mangkoedilaga and Marbun, Laporan Penugasan Ke Sulawesi Tengah, p. 6.
secretary Patiro were evacuated from the city for their own safety until late in the afternoon.  

During this peak of violence on 28 December, it seems clear that there were people among the crowds providing direction on who or what the crowd should target. Even after the crowd of Christians had been driven back, not all Christian owned houses were burned. Instead one Muslim man present in the crowd on 28 December recalled houses were being burned on the basis of the owner’s social status.

If a [Christian] person was influential, an influential person, then maybe their house would be sought, then that house would be burned, but we didn’t burn them all [i.e. all houses in each ward] ... I didn’t know what their names were at the time, someone would say, this is so-and-so’s house, just burn it ... they were chosen one by one.  

Beyond the targeting of the property of particular individuals, the breakdown of law and order during the peak of the riot also presented an opportunity to loot. There does not appear to have been a sharp religious divide among looters:

In the first riot, when I came to the city, there were several of my friends there who were Christians, and we looted together in the terminal. At the time, Muslims’ opponents were the [Christian] people who came down from Tentena, and Christians from Lombogia, who had their own group (blok). But Christians in Bonesompe, Gebangrejo, they came with us and looted.

Most people ... came empty handed, they didn’t come from their villages looking for a war, they came to loot. There were no leaders, but people were in groups from each ward, Bonesompe, Lawanga, maybe 50 people.

One interviewee also suggested the defence of Poso’s market from looting was a cooperative effort:

Around the central market in Poso, the Christian and Muslim communities had intermingled. When the rumour spread that the community from around here [a Christian village outside the city] would burn the market and the area surrounding it [during the first period], Christians and Muslims banded together to defend the area.

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65 A witness at the trial of Herman Parimo testified that she heard Parimo telling the crowd, “Take the [district head's] residence, abduct the district head, burn it.” Several other witnesses gave similar testimony. See “Suara Aneh di Telinga Nurjanah”, MAL, Fourth Week, September 1999, p. 7; Record of testimony of Nurjanah in Parimo decision, p. 35.

66 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003. A former Poso resident living in Tentena corroborated this selective pattern of arson, saying two of his family’s houses had been burned while the neighbouring houses were left untouched. Interview with former Poso resident living in Tentena, July 2003.

67 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

68 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

69 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
Whatever the veracity of these specific claims, it seems clear that the identity of an individual as a Muslim or a Christian had not become a sole and sufficient basis to attack that individual during the first period of violence. There is no doubt that many people took part in the violence because they felt their religion, their places of worship or their religious community had been wronged. The above quote on the cooperative defence of the market notwithstanding, it is also clear that when crowds fought each other, Christians were on one side and Muslims were on the other. But a range of those present, both Christian and Muslim, indicated that away from the main sites of confrontation, people were not targeted just because they held one religion or another.

One youth recalled the pattern of violence as follows:

There were a lot of [unfamiliar] people, possibly from Ampana, from Poso Pesisir, from Parigi. But it was easy to work out which side was which, as Christians were gathered in majority Christian areas, and vice versa. Also, most people from the villages were wearing white headbands to show they were Muslims, while Christians wore white cloth on their wrists. But at the time, there were still a lot of cases where Christians might be at the market when it happened [the fighting] and Muslims saved them, there wasn’t mutual aggression, unless you happened to be part of the crowds throwing rocks at each other. Other people were left alone.

Some of the Muslim youths who took part in the fighting also recalled the first period more as a fight between neighbourhoods than a community-wide confrontation across the religious divide:

Some people did wear them [headbands], but only a few, because at the time, it was more an ethnic (suku) thing, rather than being religious, because we never discussed religion. We just said, our targets are Lombogia people and Toko Lima.

We were looking for Lombogia youths, there was no problem with [youths] from Sayo, except for the ones who had caused trouble (mengganggu). It was just Lombogia residents, because they were the problem.

The importance of identity markers other than religion accords with the common observation from other conflicts that the process referred to as “totalisation” – whereby an individual’s status as friend or foe comes to be wholly defined by one identity marker alone – takes place only over time. It is also possible, however, that some of

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70 Ampana is a coastal town east of Poso, Poso Pesisir is a coastal sub-district west of the city (now subdivided into several sub-districts), while Parigi is the capital city of the neighbouring district to the west of Poso.
71 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
72 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
73 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
the statements that downplayed the extent of the religious divide may have reflected the speaker’s anxiety that fighting against a group because of their religious identity may not be legitimate, or may not be perceived as legitimate by the broader community. Such an anxiety may account for one of the banners that appeared after the December fighting: “We have no quarrel with Christians, we are only fighting Herman Parimo and his followers.” This message would be reproduced almost verbatim on another banner in a later period of conflict in Poso except with the religion of the target and the implied aggressor reversed.

No-one was killed in the fighting in Poso in December 1998, despite the widespread arson and other property damage. Part of the reason lies in the weaponry used: crowds mostly just threw rocks at each other, and carried weapons no more sophisticated than machetes or at most peluncur (literally “launcher”, a weapon used to fire arrows). The crudeness of the weaponry does not suffice to explain the lack of fatalities, though: it would become readily apparent approximately eighteen months after the December 1998 violence that such weapons were quite adequate for widespread killing if wielded by men and women intent on murder. Another possible explanation was that the youths who fought in this first period were largely acting out the repertoire of violence with which they were familiar from previous brawls in and around Poso, in which there was seldom anyone killed. It would take a simple accident for the violence to escalate to murder, or the same sort of leadership that directed the crowd to target specific houses.

The peak of the December violence lasted only one day, with the arson attacks after Christians had fled from the city marking the end of the fighting. The next day - 29 December – the governor and provincial security leaders came to Poso and convened a peace meeting. By this time efforts were well and truly underway to establish the identity of the culprits of the violence. Banners were put up around the city blaming the violence on Parimo, district secretary Patiro and other Christian officials. The following is typical of the genre, “ Arrest and Hang Yahya Patiro, Herman Parimo, CH Rongko

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75 For further discussion of this issue, see Chapter Three.
76 Banner appears in picture in Palu Pos, Edition XVII, nd, p. 5. (Kami tidak bermusuhan dengan Umat Kristiani, tapi kami hanya berperang dengan Herman Parimo dan pengikutnya)
77 See Chapter 3.
and DA Lempadeli and their Cronies as Criminals, Insurrectionists, GPK...” A leaflet accusing Christian officials of insurrection also circulated around this time, allegedly authored (and certainly at least distributed) by Agfar Patanga, the younger brother of the incumbent district head. Agfar Patanga would much later serve a six-month sentence in prison over the leaflet. Of those named in the accusatory banners and leaflets, only Parimo would be put on trial over the December violence. Facing a primary charge of leading a rebellion against the district government (Article 108 (2), Criminal Code), he was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment in November 1999, later reduced to fourteen years in his first appeal. The precise length of the sentence proved to be immaterial, as Parimo fell ill in prison and died while being treated in Makassar in May the following year. The youth Roy and another Christian participant in the initial brawl on Christmas Eve also served prison terms.

The second period 15 – 20 April 2000

When a second period of violence took place in Poso in April 2000, the indications that some local elites deliberately provoked the violence were much clearer. For instance, a politician from Poso representing the Islamic party PPP in the provincial legislature issued a public warning two days before the violence began that rioting would be the result if a particular candidate for Poso district secretary was not appointed; the same warning had allegedly also been conveyed to the governor, H.B. Paliudju in private a week earlier. The violence in Poso again began with a brawl between Christian and Muslim youths, which this time appeared contrived even from its first moments: as one of the Muslims involved in the brawl fled, bandaged his healthy arm and began telling...
people he had been knifed. The police themselves clearly believed the violence had been deliberately instigated. They eventually arrested the youth who had bandaged his hand and also conducted a long-running investigation into one local Muslim contractor on the suspicion that he had organised crowds to engage in arson.

This violence took place on a much larger scale than the December 1998 rioting: this time six people were killed, and almost the entire city ward of Lombogia, which had an 89 per cent Christian population, was set alight. Four churches were also burned and another was heavily damaged. Does politically motivated manipulation account for the violence reaching this new scale? And if provocation was so obvious – with the politician’s comments being reported in the provincial press before a stone was thrown in anger – what motivated those who took part in the violence to do so? Also, with foreknowledge that plans were afoot to foment violence, why could the police and local government not stop the riot?

Before addressing these questions directly, we return to the aftermath of this first period of violence to set out the political context for the April fighting.

**Political Context**

In the months after the December 1998 violence, as various investigations were conducted and the local media carried stories about the connections between the riot and the need to elect a new district head in Poso, the district legislature nevertheless set about preparing for its election of a new district head. This initiative was puzzling because the outgoing Patanga’s term in office did not end until June 1999, about the time of the scheduled general elections for the district legislature. Under normal circumstances, the new legislature would have the responsibility for electing the new district head, and it was not clear that a new legislature would want to, or be obliged to, accept the work of the previous legislature. Not surprisingly though, not least of all given the potential financial rewards for its members, the existing legislature remained intent on itself nominating which candidates would comprise the final shortlist. The

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Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung RI) no. 211/TU/55K/Pid/2000 in case of Herman Parimo, 28 December 2004, pp. 11-12.


86 For details, see “Suhu Politik Poso Panas Lagi”, *Formasi*, 18-25 February 1999. A member of the legislature elected in 1997 explained that while he himself was above taking bribes, potential candidates
final five were Muin Pusadan (nominated by Golkar), Edy Bungkundapu and Marten Luther Manganti (PDI), Mashud Kasim (TNI-Polri) and Ismail Kasim (PPP). By the time the election was held on 30 October 1999, the field had been pared back further to just three candidates: Pusadan (a Muslim politician and academic based in Palu), Bungkundapu (secretary to the provincial legislature) and Mashud Kasim.

Before the nominations were finalised, however, there was still time for district secretary Yahya Patiro to attempt a political recovery. Like Patanga, Patiro had fled Poso at the peak of the December violence. With his name appearing on accusatory banners all around the city after the riot, he chose to remain in Palu. To secure a nomination for district head, he would obviously need to return to Poso and attempt to clear his name, which he did in late March 1999. Staying at the government-owned Hotel Wisata in the majority-Muslim beachside ward of Lawanga, Patiro took the opportunity to meet a group of local Muslim youth activists shortly after his arrival. However, upon learning that Patiro was in Poso another crowd of Muslims gathered in front of the Hotel Wisata later the same night and began throwing rocks at the building. Patiro escaped over the back fence before the crowd could enter the hotel, which it later ransacked. With the help of a nearby resident he was taken to the local district military base (Kodim), after which he quietly returned to Palu with a police escort. He was subsequently transferred to the provincial civil service in Palu as an aide to the governor, with his political ambitions in tatters.

By this stage, political aspirants in Poso must have thought violence to be a most useful tool. Moreover, there must have appeared to be few risks in perpetrating violence: in this Hotel Wisata case, for example, I found no record of any arrests. The police themselves inadvertently may have encouraged the idea that a willingness to deploy violence could bring influence. An example is the police’s decision to consult widely with local Muslim, Christian and community figures on where to hold Parimo’s trial for district head would treat him and other members of the legislature to trips to Palu and fine dining while there to lobby for each party’s nomination. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

87 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
88 I was unable to establish Kasim’s background. In 2002, a Mashud Kasim was head of the provincial Housing and Regional Infrastructure Office (Kimpraswil), but I cannot be certain that it was this Kasim who ran for district head in Poso.
90 Interview with Yahya Patiro, December 2004.
and whether to take Agfar Patanga into pre-trial custody. In both cases, the police concern was that the wrong decision could cause violence. Yet by consulting with the public about whether violence was likely rather than just making the decision themselves, the police must have underlined to those they spoke to that violence could influence law-enforcement decisions.

Nevertheless, neither the June 1999 legislative election nor the election for a new district head were marked by severe disturbances. The Muslim Golkar candidate Pusadan won the district head poll, collecting sixteen votes (three fewer than the number of Golkar members in the legislature), while Kasim received thirteen votes and Protestant civil servant Bungkundapu eleven.

One of the first tasks for Pusadan was to appoint a new district secretary (the senior career bureaucrat in Poso). The post was keenly sought after, with the contest reminding us that different factions may compete even within the one religious group. Pusadan’s favoured candidate was the third assistant to the district secretary, Awad Al-Amri, who was a Muslim of Arab descent, and whom Pusadan indeed eventually installed to the post. A vocal faction centred on PPP preferred the head of the district Development Planning Board (Bappeda), Damsyik Ladjalani, a Muslim from the coastal area east of Poso town. Christians suggested Ladjalani was implicated in the violence of the first period, and one observer suggested he was behind the March 1999 attack on Patiro. However, provincial legislature member Haelani Umar campaigned actively for Ladjalani, sending letters of support to both the governor and Poso district head and repeatedly speaking approvingly of Ladjalani in the press. Ladjalani was also supported by some Muslims who resented what they saw as the domination of key posts

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92 Lasahido et al., *Suara dari Poso*, p. 44. Pusadan’s victory has generally been referred to as a win for an “outsider”, but by winning the district head post from a position in the provincial legislature he in fact emulated Patanga’s path to the job when first elected in 1989. From 1987-1989, Patanga was deputy chairperson of the provincial legislature. See Hasan et al, *Sejarah Poso*, p. 281.
93 Other short-listed candidates were the head of the Civil Registrar’s Office, Nus Pasoreh, a Protestant; and Parks and Sanitation head Hengki Taroreh, also a Protestant. See “Berharap Damsyik Setelah Yahya Patiro”, *MAL*, Fourth Week, February 2000.
94 Sangaji, citing a media report, notes that Damsyik Ladjalani, now head of new district Tojo Una-Una, was suspected of organising this attack on the hotel. In Sangaji’s account, the incriminating detail was Ladjalani’s failure to follow an instruction from Arief Patanga, the outgoing district head, to inform the Poso police of Patiro’s presence. Anto Sangaji, “Pertarungan Paska Soeharto” in *Rumput Kering di Balik Anyir Darah*, unpublished manuscript, March 2004, p. 3.
in Poso by Muslims from Bungku (a sub-district of the then newly excised Morowali district). Pusadan, the vice district head and head of the Poso legislature indeed all hailed from Bungku. To have raised the issue of Bungku domination in the context of the district secretary position appears disingenuous, however, as none of the short-listed candidates for district secretary were Bungku Muslims.

Before the decision on a district secretary was made, however, Ladjalani was transferred to the provincial civil service to become assistant head of the provincial Development Planning Board in Palu. As Ladjalani’s chances were thus perceived to have diminished, support for him seemingly escalated into threats. One chronology, which overall adopted a Christian point of view, alleged a delegation from the Poso branch of the Indonesian National Youth Committee (KNPI – Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia) met the governor on 9 April and threatened that if Al-Amri and not Ladjalani was appointed there would be further riots in Poso. Whether or not this meeting took place as described, five days later Halaeni Umar repeated the same threat in implicit form to a journalist from the provincial paper Mercusuar. In what has become an infamous quote, Umar stated, “I predict there will be another riot in Poso. And it might be bigger than what has gone before.” The riot would take place, Umar stated, because the government had blocked community aspirations by not appointing Ladjalani as Poso district secretary. The night after Umar’s comment was published, fighting in Poso resumed and, as Umar predicted, escalated to a greater scale than the December 1998 period of violence.

The Riot
Trouble this time started at around 10:00pm on 15 April 2000, a Saturday night. A Muslim youth, Firman Said alias Dedi approached two Christian youths buying cigarettes near the Tentena intersection, which it is worth repeating is in Poso, not

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96 For an example of a statement of ethnic support for Ladjalani, see “Berharap Damasyik Setelah Yahya Patiro”, MAL, Fourth Week, February 2000.
98 In theory though, if the selection of the district secretary took place under the new regional autonomy law, the governor should not have played a role in the selection process. Cheq and Recheq Forum, Tragedi Kemanusiaan di Poso, p. 5.
Tentena. An altercation ensued and Dedi punched one of the youths.\(^\text{100}\) Around an hour later, Dedi returned to the intersection on a motorbike with two companions and dragged a samurai sword along the asphalt. The Christian youths, some of whom were waiting with knives, took exception to this and chased Dedi, who fell off the motorbike. Dedi then ran away on foot, leaving the motorbike behind, although not before he, his two companions and the Christian youths had paused to throw rocks at each other. Dedi most likely then ran to the nearby Muslim majority ward Lawanga. Returning to the scene, the Christian youths apparently handed the motorbike to police at this point.

A few minutes later, a small crowd of around 30 Muslims from Lawanga and Kayamanya themselves came to the scene, carrying machetes, *peluncur* and blocks of wood. Dedi was among them, having bandaged his arm to give the impression he had been knifed in the earlier encounter. The police managed to avert more serious trouble for the moment, however, by keeping the two crowds apart and convincing people to go home.

At around 10:30 the next morning, Sunday 16 April, a group of youths from Lawanga began to engage in the same sort of anti-liquor drive that had marked the early moments of the first period, but this time on a smaller scale. After seizing liquor from several locations, including a Muslim-owned store in Lawanga, they poured some of the liquor out onto the road and destroyed some of the bottles in the car park of the district legislature (DPRD) building.\(^\text{101}\) Not long afterwards, a group of around 25 Muslims returned to Lombogia, seemingly looking for Angki Tungkanan, one of the Christian youths who it was rumoured had attacked Dedi the previous night.\(^\text{102}\) The arrival of these youths in Lombogia at an hour when Christian worshippers were still at the Pniet

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\(^\text{100}\) Substantially the same chronology of these events is reproduced in Lembaga Lintas SARA, *Kerusuhan Poso II: Dalam Sebuah Investigasi*, pp. 7-11; FSIR, *Derita Muslim Poso*, pp. 8-13; Lasahido et al, *Suara dari Poso*, pp. 47-51, Ecip and Waru, *Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya*, pp. 30-36. All of these reports in fact appear to have adopted the Crisis Center GKST chronology of the second period without attribution and with only minor modification. For the original GKST document, see Rinaldy Damanik et al, *Kronologis Peristiwa Kerusuhan Poso (II) April 2000*, (Tentena: Crisis Center GKST, 1 May 2000).

\(^\text{101}\) Basic details of the liquor roundup appear in the oft-repeated GKST chronology. The details regarding the shop in Lawanga and the DPRD building are drawn from what appears to be an earlier draft of the police report cited in footnote 106. The draft is not signed or dated, however, and these details do not appear in the final version. The draft may be inauthentic. See Suratmo S, *Laporan Khusus ttg Keurushan dan Bentrokan Kelompok Massa di Kota Poso tanggal 15 April s/d 19 April 2000*, (Palu: Direktorat Intelijen dan Pengamanan Polda Sulteng, 2000), p. 3.

church appears to have caused a panic, with those in the church quickly returning to their homes.\textsuperscript{103} Nothing further ensued at this point, however.

Later that night around 8:00pm, another crowd of several dozen Muslims returned to Lombogia carrying machetes and other crude weapons. The *lurah* (ward chief) went out to meet the crowd, along with Paulus Tungkanan, who was the father of the youth Angki whom the crowd had been seeking earlier in the day.\textsuperscript{104} The police brokered negotiations between the two sides, but even as they talked some members of the crowd set several Christian-owned houses alight, before a Muslim youth attacked Paulus Tungkanan with a machete, causing a large gash wound to his back.\textsuperscript{105} This attack drew an immediate response from the Christians at the scene, and the two rival crowds began to pelt each other with rocks and to fire arrows at each other. As a result, at least seven more people and three police were wounded.\textsuperscript{106} The police sent two platoons of riot police to the scene and by around 3:00am the clashes had tailed off for the night. Fearing further trouble, the Poso police chief also called for reinforcements from Palu at this point, and as a result a paramilitary police or “Mobile Brigade” (Brimob – Brigade Mobil) unit from Palu arrived in Poso early the next day.\textsuperscript{107}

I simply do not have the data to ascertain exactly who was fighting at this point. Given the threats that preceded the violence, it is likely some members of the crowd of Muslims in particular were acting out a pre-conceived plan. But even if there was a plan, Dedi’s subterfuge in falsely bandaging his hand suggests that those attempting to organise violence still needed to garner support beyond their immediate group. Indeed, one Muslim youth from a village outside the city explained that it was inaccurate rumours of Dedi’s death that brought him to Poso:

\footnotesize{103} The panic may have arisen after an attempt to knife a youth who could not tell them where Angki was. Lembaga Lintas SARA *Kerusuhan Poso II: Dalam Sebuah Investigasi*, p. 8.
\footnotesize{104} Tungkanan, a retired military officer, was also the head of one of RT (Rukun Tetangga – Neighbours’ Association) in Lombogia. RT is an administrative unit two levels below ward.
\footnotesize{105} Lembaga Lintas SARA, *Kerusuhan Poso II: Dalam Sebuah Investigasi*, p. 8, interview with Paulus Tungkanan, February 2002. Tungkanan, a retired military officer, allegedly became a key commander of Christian forces in the third period of violence. He said that the night he was wounded, he was forced to flee over the fence of the hospital.
\footnotesize{106} Casualty figures from Soeroso, *Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa di Kecamatan Kota Poso Kabupaten Poso Sulteng Dari Tanggal 16 s/d 19 April 2000*, (Palu: Polda Sulteng, 2000), pp. 10-11. As each of the seven wounded persons listed in this report are Muslims, it seems a reasonable assumption that the number of wounded was actually higher.
\footnotesize{107} The police also requested back-up from the army at this point. Soeroso, *Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa*, pp. 10-11.
The second period resulted from a Muslim dying in Kasintuwu, he was hacked to death. In my village we heard, and the funny thing is that at this point the police didn’t know who had done it, but the news in our village was that Lombogia residents were the culprits, so the crowd took action again for four or five days.  

In any event, the violence continued to escalate the following morning, 17 April. The district authorities were by now well aware that the situation was getting out of hand. The recently elected district head Pusadan and the district’s law enforcement chiefs also came out to speak to each of the crowds in an attempt to calm the situation. The Brimob unit sent to Poso as reinforcements were also deployed to the Tentena intersection, where they established a blockade in an attempt to keep the Muslim and Christian crowds apart. As they were unable to reach Lombogia for the time being because of the Brimob barricade, the Muslim crowd instead turned its attention to neighbouring Kasintuwu, another majority Christian-populated ward. Here they set about burning houses. Within approximately two hours of Pusadan’s peace efforts, the crowd of Muslims also broke through the police barricade of the Tentena intersection, and started to fight with the Christian youths gathered in Lombogia. The Christian youths, who had seemingly concentrated their defences in the area around the Pniel church, were forced back further into Lombogia, allowing the Muslim youths to burn the church, associated buildings and nearby shops. This was the first place of worship to be burned in Poso during the conflict; local Muslim leaders would justify the church’s destruction in a peace meeting the next day on the grounds that Christians had been using the building as a fort.

After the church was burned, the police increased their efforts to halt the violence. Reportedly after first firing warning shots into the air, the Brimob unit from Palu instead fired directly into the crowd of Muslims at around noon, killing three youths and wounding several others. Two of those killed – Yanto and Muhammad Rosal Mahmud – were still teenagers. (Mahmud moreover was still in school.)

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108 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003. It is possible that this youth had confused the rumours of Dedi’s injuries and the subsequent death of Muslim youth, Ulan, on 19 April 2000.
109 FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 11, Lembaga Lintas SARA, Kerusuhan Poso II: Dalam Sebuah Investigasi, p. 9.
110 Soeroso, Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa, p. 8.
111 A police report states that two of those killed were each seventeen years old; a chronology written from the Muslim point of view states that one of the boys, Yanto, was only thirteen. Soeroso, Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa, p. 5, FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 11.
Given the effect these shootings had on the escalation of violence and the prominent place they occupied in discussion of the riot after the fact, it is worth pausing briefly to consider what led the police to fire into the crowd. Local police in fact denied that they could have been responsible for the shootings, saying none of the police deployed that day had been issued the type of bullets used to kill the three men. The police instead asserted that the military had conspired to discredit them, presumably either by substituting live rounds for blanks, or by firing from a concealed location (each somewhat far-fetched alternatives to the straightforward explanation that the police were the shooters). These objections notwithstanding, there appear to be two possible reasons for the police action. One is a genuine concern to try to stop the rioting – the police chief was no friend of those seeking to gain from the violence and this would be only the first of several occasions during the Poso conflict on which police adopted a “shoot on sight” approach. But these killings may in fact have foreshadowed a second pattern that recurred during subsequent periods of conflict, where the security forces retaliated with lethal force when one of their own was wounded or killed. One chronology of the April violence in fact explains the shootings in these terms, saying the police opened fire after one of their number was hit by an arrow.

Regardless of police motives, the killings further enraged the crowd of Muslims, and by 3:00pm the violence had resumed. Christian interviewees claimed that the police had by now withdrawn all personnel to their district headquarters on Poso’s main street in Gebangrejo, although I have not been able to verify whether this was the case. There was one difference in the afternoon’s violence as compared with that in the morning: there were now two targets, Lombogia and the police. Earlier in the afternoon, a procession taking the body of one of the dead youths back to Kayamanya had paused to throw rocks and Molotov cocktails at the police station in Gebangrejo before being moved on by warning shots. After the funerals, several police-owned buildings in Bonesompe ward as well as the residences of a handful of officers were set alight. At the same time, the crowd now set about trying to destroy Lombogia ward. Most of the ward’s residents had by then fled, although several dozen reportedly continued to fight

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112 Interview with a police source stationed in Poso in 2000, Jakarta, February 2004, see also “‘Aparat di Poso Disudutkan’: 95 Persen rumah di Lombogia Dibakar”, Surya, 30 April 2000.
113 Lembaga Lintas SARA, Kerusuhan Poso II: Dalam Sebuah Investigasi, p. 9.
114 Interviews with former Poso residents living in Tentena, February 2002.
115 Soeroso, Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa, pp. 6-7.
until the next day. The arson attacks only halted in the late afternoon as heavy rain set in. By afternoon’s end, an estimated 130 houses, two churches and three schools had been burned, and thousands of people had fled to the outskirts of the city.

At this point, provincial authorities sought to intervene. The governor, provincial police chief and provincial military commander all flew to Poso early the next morning, 18 April, and convened a meeting in the function hall at the district head’s residence. The Muslim community leaders invited to the meeting issued several demands: that the Brimob unit from Palu be withdrawn and the shootings investigated, that the governor clarify which local officials had been involved in the first period of violence in 1998, and that Poso police chief Dedy Woerjantono, who had been spearheading an investigation into local corruption, be replaced. They also apologised for the burning of the Pniel church, with the proviso that they believed the building had been used as a fort. Underlining the political context of the violence, they also asked for Agfar Patanga to be released and Damsyik Ladjalani to be installed as district secretary. The provincial police chief agreed to the demand regarding Brimob on the spot and the unit was withdrawn to Palu several hours after a replacement unit arrived that night. The provincial officials also took the opportunity to tour some of the sites of violence across the river in Kasintuwu. Indicative of the extremely poor security situation, hundreds of youths initially blocked the governor from reaching Kasintuwu and thronged around the governor during his inspection. Several buildings were also set alight even as the provincial delegation was out on the streets inspecting the previous day’s damage.

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116 Interview with a Tentena resident, Tentena, February 2002.
118 Given the eventual figure for the April violence of 406 houses burned, it is quite possible that even more houses had already been burned. For figure of 406, see “Aparat di Poso Disudutkan”, Surya, date not recorded.
119 One media report suggests the governor in fact left for Poso the previous night. See “Gubernur Sulteng Secara Mendadak Kunjungi Poso”, Tinombala, 18 April 2000.
120 Woeryantono was investigating the suspected misuse of Farmer Enterprise Credit (Kredit Usaha Tani – KUT) funds. For one account of the misuse of these funds, see George Junus Aditjondro, “Remungan Buat Papa Nanda, Anak Domba Paskah dari Tentena” in Rinaldy Damanik, Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso: Menggapai Surya Pagi Melalui Kegelapan Malam, (Jakarta: PBHI; Palu: LPS-HAM Sulteng, 2003), pp. xxx-xxxii.
121 Situmorang, Laporan Atensia, p. 8; Interview with a Poso man, February 2002; Interview with a delegate to meeting, July 2003.
122 “Brimob Ditarik, Diganti 100 Perintis”, Tinombala, 19 April 2000; Soeroso, Laporan Peristiwa Kerusuhan Massa, p. 12.
123 See for example, “Brimob Ditarik, Diganto 100 Perintis”, Tinombala, 19 April 2000.
Before returning to Palu, the governor also visited Christian IDPs in Tagolu later in the afternoon, urging them not to seek revenge. 124

At this point, the political interests of those seeking to produce a riot had arguably been served. They had made their point during the meeting to the governor regarding Damsyik Ladjalani, the violence had delayed the trial of Agfar Patanga, and the position of police chief Deddy Woerjantono was now shaky. Yet any chance that the violence would cease with the gubernatorial visit and the withdrawal of the Brimob unit had evaporated by the next morning, 19 April. Lombogia was by now abandoned, but a Muslim youth was found murdered near a Christian family’s home. The young man, Ulan Lanusu, had been knifed in the neck and arm, earning him the unfortunate distinction of being the first person murdered during the conflict. 125 Angered by news of this murder, another crowd of Muslims gathered and proceeded to burn two more churches and more Christian-owned houses. 126 The crowd also engaged in a “sweeping” to look for Christians, who could be readily identified by means of their identity card. They duly found two Christians and murdered each of them, by one report setting the bodies alight after the men were dead. 127 Another Christian man reportedly drowned later that night as he fled from Gebangrejo and attempted to swim across the river to the safety of Kawua, a majority Christian-populated ward.

Why were people murdered? I have found no record to suggest that police ever identified, let alone prosecuted a suspect for the Ulan murder, leaving us in the dark as to the context of the killing. It is probable that revenge for the attacks on Lombogia was part of the motive of Ulan’s killer(s), but we have no way to judge whether Ulan’s killers knew him or simply happened upon him. Although we do lack details, Ulan’s death and the two subsequent murders show that identities were becoming more thoroughly totalised, as different religious identity now became a basis for killing. Even so, for much of the second period violence was more narrowly targeted at Lombogia and its residents (where the Christian youths falsely rumoured to have wounded Dedi

124 “Ribuan Warga Poso Mengungsi”, Surya, nd (probably 19 April 2000). Aragon suggests the governor’s precise comment, “Saya mohon saudara-saudara tidak balas dendam, biarlah Tuhan yang membalas,” (“I would ask you not to seek revenge, let it be God who strikes back.”) caused great offence, as it could be interpreted to mean the government planned to take no action against the perpetrators of violence during the second period. See Aragon, “Mass Media Fragmentation”, p. 22.
125 Details of injuries from Suratmo S, Laporan Khusus, p. 10.
hailed from). The shift to wider targeting of individuals based on their religious identity during the course of the riot is embodied in the two quotes below.

When I went to the city [during the second period] I was blocked by a white crowd [ie Muslims] holding machetes and spears. “Where do you want to go?” [they asked me.] “I’m looking for my children”. “Where are they?” I said “In Lombogia, they go to school here.” “Where are you from?” “From the kampung [ie outside city].” “Ok, you may go.” They accompanied me [to Lombogia] but if I’d been from Lombogia they would have killed me, they thought I was from Lombogia but I told them I was from the kampung. So they accompanied me there [and they said] “Don’t do anything to him.”

When I reached Kasiguncu, I called my boss [who was a Muslim]. “Could you pick me up, I’m in Kasiguncu.” My boss said, “I can’t guarantee your safety,” because at the time they were asking for identity cards in Kayamanya, looking at people’s identity, Muslim or Christian.

The murders of 19 April did not immediately lead to further killings, and in fact provincial police reinforcements sent to Poso that night largely restored order in the city on 20 April. A series of peace meetings and visits by high-ranking officials were then convened. The latter included a visit to Poso on 22 April by Major General Kirbiantoro, commander of the Sulawesi-wide Wirabuana Military Region. The records of Kirbiantoro’s meetings though suggest he was at least as intent on criticising the police and emphasising that police were responsible for security in Poso as he was on ensuring there was no further violence.

For their part, the police commenced a number of investigations, after establishing a provincial-level team of detectives to handle the violence the day after rioting ceased. One focus of enquiries was the Muslim youth Dedi, who had falsely claimed to have been knifed in the early moments of the fighting. Along with his twin brother Fatman Said alias Didi, he would eventually be arrested and sentenced to a prison term. Haelani Umar’s comments in the press immediately prior to the second period also came under scrutiny, with police questioning both Umar himself and the journalist who

128 Interview with a Poso man, Palu, May 2004.
129 Kasiguncu lies just west of Poso town; the interviewee was returning from Palu.
130 Interview with a former Poso resident living in Tentena, July 2003.
132 See “Pangdam Minta Kapolda Usut Penembak Massa”, Mercusuar, 24 April 2000; “Pangdam Jenguk ‘Aprilia’ Yang Lahir Saat Kerusuhan”, Mercusuar, date not recorded. Rivalry between the military and the police had intensified after the police were established as a separate force in April 1999.
133 Ecip and Waru list Dedi and Didi’s sentence as three years, but I have been unable to locate a corroborating reference for the length of prison term. The prosecutor’s sentencing request was for four years. See “Tanggapi Tuntutan JPU Atas Dua Provokator Kerusuhan Poso Jilid II: ‘Tuduhan Menyebarkan Berita Bohong Tidak Tepat’”, Mercusuar, date not recorded; Ecip and Waru, Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya, p. 121.
conducted the interview. A third target was local Muslim businessman and political aspirant Maro Tompo, who was an attendee at both the 18 April meeting with the governor and the later meeting with Kirbiantoro. Police suspected Tompo was responsible for gathering crowds and for instigating some of the arson attacks on Christian areas. They interviewed more than twenty witnesses in their investigation of him, but in the end he never faced trial.

Tompo certainly also featured on the list of villains whom Christians held responsible for the April violence. Indeed most of the attendees at the 18 April meeting with the governor were among those Christians considered provocateurs. They included local fish trader Nani Larnusu, local Bugis businessman Daeng Raja, construction contractor Mandor Pahe and local religious leader Adnan Arsal.

Muslims did not appear to make much of a show of blaming Poso’s Christians for the April 2000 violence, such was the mostly one-sided nature of the damage. Instead local observers again blamed the consumption of alcohol as one of the causes, while Haelani Umar also came in for criticism for his pre-riot comments. The greater focus though appears to have been the shooting of the three Muslims on 17 April. To defuse criticism of their actions on 17 April, the police asked the military police to investigate the incident. Poso police chief Deddy Woerjantono was also removed from his position shortly after the riot.

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135 Tompo ran unsuccessfully in 1999 as a candidate for the district legislature on the now defunct People’s Sovereignty Party (Partai Daulat Rakyat – PDR) ticket. The list of PDR candidates tells us something about Tompo’s associates. The second-ranked candidate for PDR was Ahmad Laparigi, who has twice been imprisoned for embezzlement of conflict relief funds and was arrested in connection with the beheading of a village chief in Poso in 2004, but not charged. The third-ranked candidate, Yusuf Dumo, has also been investigated for corruption. Details. See “Bocah masuk hutan tanpa pakaian”, *Surya*, 23 April 2000.
138 Some more recent Muslim-authored accounts have started to depict the April violence as an instance of Christians attacking Muslims. The assertions in such accounts stand at odds even with earlier Muslim-authored chronologies. For an example of such accounts, see Fauzan Al-Anshari and Ahmad Suhardi (ed.), *Tragedi Poso*, pp. 16-17.
139 See “Hailani Umar Pemicu Kerusuhan Poso”, *Tinombala*, 19 April 2000
140 See, for example, “Pangdam Minta Kapolda Usut Penembak Massa”, *Mercusuar*, 24 April 2000.
None of these investigations were to be resolved, however, before attention was diverted by a further period of violence in Poso the following month. This third period of violence, lasting two weeks from late May-June 2000, dwarfed the December 1998 and April 2000 violence, and marked the escalation of the Poso violence into murderous and protracted conflict.

Conclusion
This chapter has looked at the first two periods of violence in Poso. I have analysed these two periods as a pair because they took place before Poso became a site of protracted inter-religious conflict. The violence perpetrated during these two incidents, although serious, did not spread beyond the city limits, and each period of fighting lasted no longer than a few days. In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned that I would focus my analysis on two points – whether political motivations adequately account for these riots, and whether “big fish” led hapless crowds to serve the big fish’s ends.

First, let us consider an example from each of the first two periods to evaluate the political motivations model. For the first period, let us consider the example of Herman Parimo, the Protestant man who received the heaviest prison sentence after the December violence, and who has been widely identified as a political supporter of the district secretary, Yahya Patiro. To recap quickly Parimo’s involvement in the December 1998 violence, he offered “security assistance” to the district head on 26 December, sought anyway to marshal a crowd of Christians after the district head refused his offer of help, led this crowd into the city after district authorities had ordered Christians gathered in Tagolu to disperse on the night of 27 December, and was again prominent among Christian crowds during the main day of rioting on 28 December.

If we are to adopt a model of political motivations, we might (indeed, it could be argued, must) then conclude that Parimo led the crowds in expectation of improving Patiro’s electoral chances in the race to become the next district head. The problem is that Parimo’s actions in leading crowds into the city on 27 and 28 December, if anything, greatly harmed Patiro’s chances of winning the top job. Indeed, it is not readily apparent how any other political outcome could have been expected from Parimo’s actions. As discussed in the body of this chapter, it was not in Patiro’s
interests for the legislative election or the district head election to become starkly polarised along religious lines - Christians simply did not have the numbers. Patiro’s accusers themselves attribute a second political motive to Parimo - to murder the incumbent district head Arief Patanga in the hope that Patiro would become district head without an election. But there was no guarantee that Patiro’s interests would be advanced by the murder of the district head either. As district secretary, Patiro was not next in line to take over the role of district head if Patanga died. It was more likely that Malik Syahadat, the Muslim vice-district head, would take over, or else that the governor would appoint a provincial official as an interim district head. The governor actually took the latter step when Patanga’s term expired in June 1999, before the election for a replacement had taken place. Indeed, far from helping Patiro, Parimo’s actions during the riot provided the kernel of truth required by Patiro’s opponents to blame Poso’s Christians for the first period of violence, and indeed to depict the riot as an insurrection by local Christian officials.

Van Klinken provides a final alternative for a political model of Parimo’s motivations: “Physical force was also a necessity [as a resource to compete politically], if only as a defensive measure.” But “defensive measures” hardly appear to account for the range of Parimo’s actions during the riot - he did not after all set up barricades or fortifications at the boundaries of Christian settlements. Instead, the crowds he led attempted to enter majority Muslim populated areas.

How then are we to explain Parimo’s well-documented actions of late December 1998? What might his motivations have been? While we cannot discount a simple political miscalculation on his part, I would suggest that we can better explain Parimo’s actions as motivated by a sense of indignant anger at a perceived affront rather than by any expectation of political gain. Such a conclusion is not definite, given that we do not have a record of Parimo’s commentary on the violence, but several incidents early in the first period present themselves of possible sources of this indignation. Parimo may have perceived an affront in the timing of the liquor round-up on Christmas day, or in the attacks on Roy’s house and other Christian-owned shops and residences. Conceivably, Parimo’s reaction to these events may have been magnified by local anxieties over the place of indigenous Christians in Poso.

142 Van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 80.
The importance of Parimo’s actions to the escalation of the December violence means that an explanation of the first period as politically-motivated manipulation by the supporters of Muslim aspirants to the post of district head is also incomplete. That is not to say that some local Muslims did not actively seek political gain from the first period. In fact, some clearly did, either by directing crowds to burn particular houses, or by seeking to frame the interpretation of the riot during and particularly after the fact by installing banners, distributing leaflets and making comments to the local press. But the strategy of these Muslim political hopefuls could not succeed without Parimo’s actions, which were essentially unpredictable and beyond their control. Had the violence stopped with the peace meetings on 27 December, for example, it would have been much more difficult for these political hopefuls to make the case that Christians had produced the riot for political ends.

A further obstacle to explanation of the December violence through a prism of politically-motivated manipulation is that the first two and a half days of disturbances do not appear to have been overtly political. (The shift to an overtly political context then took place when Parimo visited Patanga’s residence on 26 December.) Of course, it remains possible that Muslim political aspirants orchestrated the disorderly liquor round-ups on 25 and 26 December as an initial provocation; indeed some accounts suggest Muslims had plotted a conspiracy even before this round-up took place (although some of these accounts display a Christian bias and so must be treated sceptically).143 There may well have been such a conspiracy, but if the round-up was deliberate provocation, it was a roundabout route for the assumed conspirators to take to their eventual goal, a route that only made sense after what appears to have been a spontaneous initial brawl.

In summary, the Parimo example highlights the limits of depicting violence as a means dispassionately deployed to an end. Van Klinken provides the clearest example of the “dispassionate” model in the Indonesian context, specifically in his analysis of Dayak-Madura violence in Kalimantan:

143 See, for example George Junus Aditjondro, Kerusuhan Poso dan Morowali, Akar Permasalahan dan Jalan Keluarnya, (paper presented at seminar on “Application of Emergency Status in Aceh, Papua and Poso?” Hotel Santika, Jakarta, 7 January 2004) not paginated.
I am arguing, in other words, that the anti-Madurese campaign was for these ethnic associations only their secondary objective. The primary objective was to dominate provincial politics, informally if not formally. To achieve that, the Madurese could almost have been selected at random from among the other perhaps equally abundant settlers – Javanese, Banjar, Bugis – as a common enemy.144

Rather than being dispassionate, I would suggest that the first two periods of violence built on pre-existing community prejudices, contempt and resentment.145 These feelings do not in themselves cause violence, but nor are they irrelevant as motivations once violence occurs. Once the liquor round-up took place and Christian houses had been targeted, pre-existing feelings of resentment may have contributed to Parimo interpreting these actions as a (personal) affront, and made correcting the affront more urgent than his coolly considered political interests.

If Parimo’s example forces us to consider an individual acting against his political interests, a second example, this time from the April 2000 period of violence, suggests that political interests may not be the whole story even when actors are clearly pursuing political gain. For this example, we will focus on the local Muslim businessmen who appear to have encouraged or even instigated the violence, among whom was the police’s chief suspect - Maro Tompo. We can be sure of some of these men’s political interests in the second period, because they stated them publicly, whether in the form of the pre-riot warning of further violence, or in the demands made at the 18 April peace meeting. To recap, these interests included pressuring for district secretary aspirant Ladjalani to be appointed against the wishes of the district head, or at least to show that they were still a force to be reckoned with despite bureaucratic defeat; stopping the trial of Agfar Patanga; and forcing the removal of local police chief Woerjantono. By the time of the peace meeting with the governor, provincial police chief and other senior officials on 18 April, these men had achieved some of these goals and were not likely to make more progress towards the others through further violence. Yet violence continued almost directly after this meeting and moreover continued for another two days. How are we to explain this continuation? Admittedly, contingency may be part of the answer – maybe the violence would have stopped sooner if the Muslim youth Ulan had not been murdered on the morning of 19 April. Another alternative is to attribute

144 Van Klinken, “Indonesia’s New Ethnic Elites”, not paginated.
145 Aragon presents one version of the development of these resentments and tensions in Poso. See Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi”, pp. 76-77.
violence after the meeting to rank-and-file individuals, who we would then assume to be less interested in the outcome of the peace meeting and instead motivated primarily by enmity for their opponents. I believe there is some truth to each of these explanations. But I would also say that if we can accept that feelings of enmity would motivate rank-and-file individuals to perpetrate violence, then the same argument should also be valid for politically-interested leaders. Might not these leaders also have taken the opportunity to kick their disliked opponents while they were down, and while the police were not in a strong position to stop them.

So far we have focussed on the motivations of elites and leaders, without properly considering the question of how the violence was organised and why the rank and file may have chosen to fight. How much agency do we rightly grant to the “big fish” – were they able to control the course of the violence?

Certainly, we have abundant evidence that in the first two periods in Poso leaders were often able to direct and manipulate the rank-and-file. A rumour was spread that the district head’s house would be attacked, and so Muslim youths came to guard the residence; Herman Parimo and his associates offered “security assistance” under the banner of the GPST, and were duly able to drive several trucks bearing the defunct organisation’s logo into the city the following evening; in the second period, a riot was threatened and duly produced, complete with wilfully false claims of injury after what appears a contrived initial brawl.

But other aspects of the violence were less certainly the product of manipulation, or at least seemed to suit the interests of the rank-and-file. The liquor round-up of the first period may have been a good opportunity for youths to drink for free, for example. In the second period, it seems reasonable to assume that local youths knew plotting for a riot was afoot, and yet they still chose to fight.

Patronage ties may be part of the answer, and we will need to look to future studies to clearly and comprehensively map the nature of any ties rank-and-file individuals may have had with local elites. But I think we should also take heed of Van Klinken’s observation regarding the early moments of the Maluku violence:
Rather than being organised from above, it seems more likely that the groups were at this stage ad hoc and based on existing neighbourhood solidarity.\textsuperscript{146}

If we give more credence to some degree of bottom-up mobilisation for violence – and the crowds in the first period clearly did mobilise in neighbourhood blocks – then we can think of relations between leaders and rank-and-file in terms of a coincidence of interests. If rank-and-file were themselves interested in a fight which in the first two periods still retained some resemblance to commonplace youth gang brawls, then we can think of many of the ends to which they were being “manipulated” largely as more specific manifestations of crowd members’ broader prior intentions. It would not then have taken a strong commitment to a particular agenda to follow directions to burn or loot this house or to fight in this ward. Even if one did follow such a direction, one would still retain great autonomy to burn a different house, loot elsewhere, stop fighting, leave the crowd, or otherwise act beyond the control of leaders.

Finally, I would like to take up the question of the influence of the national context on the first and second periods of violence. I have repeatedly acknowledged the enabling role of the structural context that Poso shared with other sites in immediate post-Soeharto Indonesia, but I feel this chapter has also demonstrated the important contribution of chance events and circumstances to the actual occurrence and escalation of violence. Three chance circumstances contributed to the first period of violence. The arrival of the new local police chief Woerjantono in Poso just a week before the first period began – too short a time to familiarise himself and assert his authority locally – further weakened the local police at a time when popular deference to the security forces had in any case lessened greatly throughout Indonesia. The family background of at least one of the men involved in the initial brawl – Roy was from a family of relatively high local status - arguably made the brawl immediately relevant to a wider group of people than might otherwise have been the case. The third coincidence was the timing of Christmas in 1998, not only during Ramadan as has often been noted, but also on a Friday, meaning that both Muslim and Christian communities would gather for worship services on the day following the night-time brawl. Chance occurrence also contributed significantly to the second period of violence in April 2000. The decision of a Brimob unit to fire into a crowd of Muslims on 17 April, in what may have been a reprisal killing, became crucial to the escalation and political outcomes of the violence.

\textsuperscript{146} Van Klinken, \textit{Small Town Wars}, p. 98.
The shooting doubtless generated additional popular anger and left the police in a poor position to intervene in the escalating violence. The murder of the Muslim youth Ulan also contributed to the continued escalation of the violence even after initial peace efforts had been made.

A second element of the national context is the possible effect of violence elsewhere in Indonesia on effects in Poso. Bertrand is the leading proponent of the idea that violence in Poso in some sense snowballed from elsewhere in Indonesia, although van Klinken also argues in general for the borrowing of tactics across different sites of violence. In the context of the first period, the snowballing argument means considering the possible effect of the burning of 21 churches in a riot in the Ketapang area of Jakarta on 22 November 1998, and the retaliatory burning of ten mosques almost 2,000 kilometres away in Kupang in East Nusa Tenggara province on 30 November. Poso was by no means a world unto itself, and it is a plausible argument that local events in the district took on greater significance because imaginings of what could happen had been heightened by reports of violence elsewhere in Indonesia. Nevertheless, I have not found evidence of specific influences from Ketapang or Kupang on Poso to parallel the detail Bertrand presents of an IDP flow from Kupang leading to a church being burned in the South Sulawesi capital of Makassar, for example.

How might the argument of snowballing apply to the April 2000 violence in Poso? By the time of this second period of violence in Poso, both Christians and Muslims had perpetrated terrible violence in Maluku and North Maluku provinces. At least three major periods of fighting took place in Maluku before April 2000, with various estimates suggesting more than 1,000 people had been killed. In North Maluku, hundreds of Muslims were killed in a matter of days in late December 1999, drawing national attention to the remote islands. Overall, the North Maluku conflict had also resulted in more than a thousand deaths – both Muslim and Christian – before the April violence in Poso. It is almost certain that the community in Poso would have been

147 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, pp. 104, 132-33; van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 62.
148 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, p. 104
149 Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, p. 104
152 For a comprehensive discussion of the North Maluku conflict see Chris Wilson, Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God (London: Routledge, 2008 (forthcoming)).
aware of at least some of the violence in these two provinces. But considered in the light of the violence in Maluku and North Maluku, the April 2000 violence in Poso actually shows the limits of arguments for snowballing and the borrowing of tactics. In comparative terms, what stands out about the April 2000 violence in Poso is how little killing took place — six people dead, half of them shot by police. Violence was worsening and religious identity was becoming a sufficient basis to kill a person in Poso, but in April 2000 this escalation was taking place largely independently of violence taking place elsewhere in the country. It was still to be another month before community members in Poso themselves engaged in large-scale killings.
CHAPTER THREE – THE THIRD PERIOD, MAY-JUNE 2000

In the middle of the second period of violence in Poso in April 2000, the governor of Central Sulawesi visited Christians who had fled the city and made the following request to them, “I would ask you not to seek revenge. Let it be God who strikes back.”

When the violence of the second period ended several days later, few people in Poso shared the governor’s optimism that God would be the next to strike. Instead, many of the district’s residents appear to have expected a more immediate and worldly resumption of the violence. Villages began to make local preparations to face possible further clashes; a sub-section of Poso’s Christian community went one step further, and began to prepare to perpetrate large-scale reprisals.

The outcome of these various preparations was a sudden and drastic escalation of violence beginning almost exactly a month after the April 2000 riot. In two weeks starting on 23 May 2000, at least 246 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in Poso, while tens of thousands of people fled from the district by land and sea. By contrast, in the two riots spread across sixteen months prior to the third period just six people had been killed, half of them shot dead by the police. The duration of the third period of violence also contrasted with the two riots that preceded it: two weeks as opposed to four days (December 1998) and five days (April 2000). The physical destruction during this May-June violence was also immense, as crowds burned thousands of houses and other buildings in villages in at least six different sub-districts. The aggressors in most clashes were crowds of Christians. They described their violence either as revenge or as a spontaneous response to “defend our territory”, even though the violence was on a far greater scale than that which had gone before. Assertions of spontaneity notwithstanding, a more organised core of Christian combatants fought amongst these crowds and at least loosely coordinated much of the fighting.

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1 “Ribuan Warga Poso Mengungsi”, Surya, nd (probably 19 April 2000).
2 The figure of 246 is sourced from the Central Sulawesi governor’s report on the violence. Given the breakdown of law and order and the political uses to which a lower or higher figure for casualties could be turned, no accurate figure is ever likely to emerge for how many people were killed in May-June 2000. Official estimates of casualties in large-scale Indonesian riots have generally been held to be conservative. The same governor’s report provides a figure of just under 70,000 IDPs. This may also be conservative, but is likely to be closer to the truth than the figure of 425,000 cited by van Klinken, which is higher than the entire population of Poso. See Laporan Gubernur Propinsi Sulawesi Tengah tentang Pananggulangan dan Langkah yang Dilakukan Sebagai Akibat Kerusuhan Poso, Powerpoint presentation, pp.7, 9, 10; van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 83.
How are we to explain such a rapid escalation from the two initial riots in Poso to the mass killings of the third period? This will be the central question addressed in this chapter. The escalation was not just a jump in intensity of violence, but also involved an expansion of the geographic scale from two riots within the city limits to a period of violence that directly affected most of the district.

Existing studies of the Poso conflict, including those that provide detailed description of the third period, have tended to explain the May-June violence as a continuation of the processes that underpinned the first two periods. Aragon, for example, who terms the May-June 2000 violence “a vendetta likely organised by urban [indigenous, predominantly Protestant] Pamona [ethnics]”, explains the escalation in terms of a logic of “multiplied revenge” that all three periods shared:

As conditions worsened, segments of Poso's Muslim and Protestant communities began to respond to any perceived assault with a pattern of multiplied revenge; not tit for tat, not just explosive anger, but the idea that an extra wallop or calculated punishment was required in the vindictive act. "Our cousin was knifed, so we burn your town. You burned our houses, so we ambush hundreds from your community, kill them, and cut them into pieces." 3

Sidel and van Klinken for the most part follow suit in explaining the May-June 2000 violence in the same terms as they had used for the two preceding periods. Sidel, although briefly describing the organisation of Christian forces for the third period separately, nevertheless includes this period within the logic of inter-community fighting produced by uncertainty over religious boundaries. The violence escalated, Sidel asserts, because each period of fighting sharpened religious boundaries and heightened mutual suspicion, while at the same time sharpening “the organisation and instruments of violence on each side”. 4 For his part, van Klinken explains the May-June 2000 violence in terms of a similar political logic to that which he sees underpinning the December 1998 and April 2000 violence. In his view, leaders encouraged violence at a moment of political transition for their own political gain. Van Klinken is forced, however, to introduce some changes to his model for the May-June 2000 violence. No moment of political transition coincided with this period, and so van Klinken describes the violence as in part a “struggle for dominance over the entire district”, but also in part driven by “impotent rage, revenge and fear”. 5

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4 Sidel, Riots, Pogroms, Jihad, pp. 162-164.
5 Van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 83.
I share these authors’ views that there were significant continuities in the processes underpinning the violence from December 1998 to April 2000 to May-June 2000. It could hardly be otherwise, when many of the combatants in the third period had also been involved in one or both of the earlier periods of violence. There are, however, crucial differences to explain. The first is the formation of a new and more organised combatant entity on the Christian side, which I will term the “kelompok merah” (lit. red group). Where the previous fighting had required individual commitment of hours or days, many of the individuals in the core group of the kelompok merah devoted more than a month to preparing for and perpetrating the violence of the third period. Throughout this chapter I will trace the activities of this core combatant group and present a close examination of how their activities affected the organisation, forms and escalation of violence.

Van Klinken’s model notwithstanding, the second difference is the lack of a discernable direct link to district politics. The lack of this link requires us to take a renewed look at what motivated leaders and combatants to fight during this period.

**Preparations for Violence**

The April 2000 violence was confined within the city, but its aftermath affected the atmosphere in many other parts of Poso district. An important mechanism in raising local-level tensions was the displacement of large parts of the city’s Christian population during the second period. The arrival of these people seeking refuge in many villages around the district, as well as in the main Christian town Tentena, spurred religious solidarity and added to the anticipation of further violence. For instance, one Christian villager asserted that the IDP flows of the second period made every Christian villager in Poso a kelompok merah member, as “Whatever way you look at it, us Christians were concerned for our friends.” The following interrogation dossier excerpt depicts the effect of the arrival of Christians fleeing from the second period of violence on Sepe village, a predominantly Christian settlement south of the city in Lage sub-district:

Q5. Give a brief account of when you fled your village and when you returned?

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6 On the importance of IDP flows to the North Maluku conflict, see Chris Duncan, “The Other Maluku: Chronologies of Conflict in North Maluku”, *Indonesia* 80 (October 2005): 80.
7 Interview with a Poso resident, January 2002.
A: Initially in May 2000 at around 10:30pm, IDPs from Lombogia came to Sepe, Lage subdistrict, Poso district – I didn’t know how many of them came, because there were very many, and the IDPs walked to our village from the mountain, and upon arrival in Sepe they were all received by the [Christian congregation], then the IDPs from Lombogia were accommodated in the Mawar Sarung Sepe church, and at the same time another portion of the IDPs were moved to Tentena. After the arrival of those IDPs from Lombogia, the atmosphere in Sepe became increasingly heated: a “zigzag” (chicane barrier) was placed on the main road and at night the community established guard posts, and a roster was established for people to take turns guarding. Each night ten people would man each post, and there were two posts in Sepe, one at each end of the village. I also manned the guard posts twice a week....[answer to question 5 continues] 9

Mutual suspicions motivated people in villages around Poso to begin to make preparations for more fighting. A villager in a majority Muslim village described the atmosphere around the same time as follows:

Nothing was certain, we didn’t know when they would attack, but the community predicted there would be a large-scale attack .... So they [Christians] were making preparations, we also made preparations, but on a village by village basis, we didn’t prepare to enter the city, we just prepared in our own village ... so we made as many dum-dum [home-made “bazooka”10] as we could, as many peluncur as we could, arrows, and we used the bombs that were [normally] used to bomb fish for our preparations.11

The expectation that violence would take place outside the city was new, and it not clear why this shift took place. In one sense, this shift in perception was clearly part of the expansion of the geographic scale of the conflict. On the other hand, many youths from various villages around the district had in fact gone to the city during one or both of the December 1998 and April 2000 riots. Although their villages had not to that point been affected, these youths already had direct experience of the fighting.

It is likely that these mutual suspicions and ad hoc preparations would have eventually led to at least localised clashes between villages. But, as it eventuated, it was not these local processes, however, that most directly led to the commencement of the May-June 2000 violence. Rather, we can trace the initiation of the third period to organised preparations for violence undertaken by a relatively small section of the Christian community. These men and women began preparing to strike back at Poso’s Muslims almost immediately after the second period, probably at the beginning of May. In all likelihood, these preparations centred on Kelei village, southeast of Tentena. The

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8 These events most probably occurred in April 2000. It is not uncommon for depositions to contain jumbled dates, or for Poso residents to confuse dates when recounting events in the district
9 Deposition of Junior Bobi Tingginehe in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 4 November 2000, pp. 2-3.
10 A dum-dum is a metal pipe, stuffed with shrapnel such as nails, metal and glass shards and an explosive (sometimes match heads) to propel the shrapnel.
11 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
preparations in the village may have included rudimentary military-style training for a limited number of combatants and manufacture of home-made weapons. It is difficult to provide a detailed account of these preparations, however, because most Christians deny any training took place, whereas Muslim accounts are dominated by the exaggerated and probably false court testimony of a Muslim youth, Anton. Claiming to have infiltrated the preparations in Kelei, Anton described military-style training taking place there for 42 days, with 700 participants and the delivery of 727 factory-standard firearms. The following paragraphs set out the most likely course of events in Kelei based on comparison of these conflicting accounts, with interpretive difficulties discussed in the footnotes.

Kelei was the home village of the Protestant civil servant A. L. Lateka, who by some accounts was the most senior kelompok merah leader during the May-June 2000 violence. Immediately before the third period of violence, Lateka was living in Palu, where he worked at the Central Sulawesi Regional Investment Coordination Board (BKPM). Lateka’s most immediate, visible link to the earlier violence in Poso involved his brother-in-law, Herman Parimo, who was sentenced to fourteen years in prison in 1999 for his role in leading Christian crowds into the city during the first period. Lateka had reportedly attended Parimo’s trial and, even before the trial began, wrote a letter to the Supreme Court asking that the proceedings be expedited. In the event, Parimo fell ill and died while receiving treatment in Makassar on 7 May 2000. A. L. Lateka appears not to have been the only member of his family who became

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12 Anton claimed to have infiltrated the kelompok merah and testified in the trial of three Catholic men who were sentenced to death for their role in the third period. His testimony did not explain how he managed to infiltrate the kelompok merah, despite being detailed on many other points; his claim regarding 727 factory standard weapons was implausible and never corroborated by other information; he also came forward as a witness much later than most people who appeared in the trial, long after extensive press coverage of the case. Given these and other problems with his account, I do not regard Anton’s testimony to be credible, and it is not discussed at any length here. For a detailed account including further discussion of the inconsistencies in Anton’s testimony, see Dave McRae, “Criminal Justice and Communal Conflict: A Case Study of the Trial of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu”, Indonesia, 83 (April 2007): 99-100, 105-106.

13 See Chapter Two. Parimo was married to Lateka’s eldest sister.

14 According to a description of the letter in what appears to be a police intelligence report, Lateka also demanded that Agfar Patanga and Damsyik Ladjalani be taken into custody as they had caused the December 1998 riot, and that certain Christian figures withdraw their support for a letter condemning Parimo’s actions. See M. Situmorang, Laporan Atensia No. Pol. R/IA/03/VII/1999/Dit-Ipp, Direktorat Intelligen dan Pengamanan, Polda Sulawesi Tengah, 28 July 1999, p. 2. Around the same time, Lateka also reportedly wrote to the Central Sulawesi governor concerning Parimo. See Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi”, p. 63.

involved in the third period violence: other Christians also named two of Lateka’s brothers, Bakte and Kade, as key combatants in May-June 2000.16

We cannot ascertain with any certainty how many people may have taken part in the training activities described above. I would guess, however, that the number was closer to 100 than the 700 Anton asserted took part.17 We know of at least two different groups of Christians who appear to have come together to train in Kelei. The first group was comprised of youths displaced from the city during the second period of violence, of whom most came from Lombogia ward. Indeed, one of the Christian IDPs described the people who fled Lombogia in particular as the “spearhead” of Christian forces.18 The Christian man who mentioned these youths’ presence in Lateka’s home village described Lateka’s appeal to these youths as follows:

He [Lateka] didn’t ask for help, but because the youths had been victims [in the first and second periods], youths from Lombogia, from Sayo, they were waiting for someone who would lead them ... they went to the church to ask the church to speak out, but the church didn’t have the courage to say anything. The church all became cowards after a hundred of them came [to the church offices in Tentena] ...19 So with the reluctance of the church to go along with what these youths wanted, Lateka was easily able to get followers. Because they didn’t have a leader, but for their aims they needed someone who was ready to lead, and they felt they had [in Lateka] got a man who was a brave leader.

The people who had fled from Lombogia were not just a source of trainees. Some of them became senior Christian leaders during the May-June 2000 violence. The most prominent example is Paulus Tungkanan, the retired police officer who was wounded while negotiating with a crowd of Muslims in Lombogia on 16 April (as described in Chapter Two). Tungkanan left the city the morning after he was wounded and made his way to Tentena, where he has lived since. After arriving in Tentena, Tungkanan acted as a, or, in some accounts, the key Christian leader in the May-June 2000 violence,

16 Lateka’s niece Bea is also mentioned in the interrogation deposition of Yenny Tadengga, a woman arrested after the first incident of the third period of violence. Interviews with a Tambaro resident, April 2004, May 2004; interview with Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2003; deposition of Yenny Tadengga in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 31 October 2000, p. 2.
17 One of the main reasons for this guess is that if there had been 700 trainees in Kelei, the kelompok merah would have had less need for ad hoc recruitment of local villagers for each clash in the May-June 2000 violence. As discussed below, however, this ad hoc recruitment was in fact a recurring feature of the third period.
18 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
19 A Christian man who helped IDPs leave the city during the second phase told a similar story of Lombogia residents and their desire to involve the church: “They [Lombogia youths] were in a rage by then [after retreating from the city after a day and a half of fighting]. They said, “Find a car! We want to go to Tentena, to see (hadap) the GKST!” Interview with a Poso man, February 2002.
according to several Christian detainees in Palu prison. At least two of Tungkanan’s adult sons, Angky and Berny (the latter killed in 2005) were also rumoured to have played important roles in the May-June 2000 violence.

A second group who also appear to have trained in Kelei between the April 2000 and May-June 2000 violence came to the village under the leadership of Fabianus Tibo, a Catholic long-term migrant from Flores who lived in neighbouring Morowali district. Tibo had previously served a six-year prison term in Poso in the early 1990s for his involvement in a dispute between transmigrants from Bali and Flores, in Lawangke village, in which four Balinese were killed. This conviction is the source of a widespread belief that Tibo was a preman (thug), although no specific details are known. During the May-June 2000 violence Tibo appears to have acted as an important field commander for the kelompok merah, although he was by no means the highest leader. He himself denied taking part in training in Kelei or even being present in the village during the period when training most likely occurred, but his account is contradicted by the depositions of two of his travelling companions. Assuming that Tibo did indeed train in Kelei, he appears to have brought a relatively small group of perhaps one or two dozen men, who were themselves migrants from Flores or the other islands in Nusa Tenggara Timur province. The involvement of this group from Flores still puzzles observers, and at this point we can make only an educated guess as to whether the men were hired help, came to Poso because of prior personal association with other kelompok merah members or were motivated primarily by feelings of religious solidarity.

20 Interviews with Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva, Palu, July 2003; interview with a Poso man detained in Palu, date withheld.
21 Paulus Tungkanan himself has repeatedly denied allegations that he was involved in the May-June 2000 violence. In my first interview with him in 2002, however, Tungkanan complained that he had lost influence among Poso’s Christians once their security situation improved, at which point the community paid more heed to indigenous inhabitants. (Tungkanan is originally from Tana Toraja in South Sulawesi.) Although he declined to discuss what role he might have played in the third period, his complaint suggests his authority rose and fell with the community’s perceived need to perpetrate violence. In my view, his complaint thus partially corroborates the many statements by other interviewees that Tungkanan was one of the leaders of Christian forces. Interviews with Paulus Tungkanan, February 2002, February 2006, July 2007.
22 For details, see McRae, “Criminal Justice and Communal Conflict”, pp. 87-93.
23 In a prison interview, Tibo told me he had travelled to Kelei as part of a group of fourteen men. The deposition of one of his travelling companions provides no details on how large Tibo’s group was when they arrived in Kelei, but says that the group numbered 27 men by the time they left the village. Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003; deposition of Rafael Sina in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 29 May 2000, p. 2.
The only direct accounts of the training in Kelei (available to me) come from four interrogation depositions in the dossier of Fabianus Tibo. Two of the depositions are provided by his travelling companions, another came from a resident of the majority-Christian village Sepe, and the fourth was provided by the Muslim man, Anton. As I do not consider Anton’s account credible, the following paragraphs are exclusively drawn from the depositions of the three Christian men.

Judging from comparison of the men’s accounts, it is likely that the training in Kelei had started by the second week of May 2000. One of these men said that the training took place away from the village itself, with two sessions each day: the first taking place from 4:00am until the middle of the day, and the second from 3:00pm until 6:00pm. There are few details of the identity of trainers in the depositions, but all three Christian men said that one of Tibo’s companions, Marinus Riwu, provided them with instruction in the use of arrows. Tibo himself is described in two of the depositions giving directions to trainees on what they would do in Poso. “Anyone not wearing a black shirt and a kongkoli (forest grass) bracelet is an enemy and must be attacked.” “If [you meet] kelompok putih forces they must be killed.” None of the accounts mention A. L. Lateka appearing at the training, or in any capacity at all. The Christian men all stated that the participants manufactured weapons while in Kelei, including bows, arrows and spears.

24 Tibo’s travelling companions, Leonardus Lewa and Rafael Sina (each, like Tibo, originally from Nusa Tenggara Timur province), say Tibo picked up them and others from several villages in Morowali district between 11-13 May 2000 and then took the group to Kelei on 14 May. The Sepe resident, Tingginehe, says he took part in training in Kelei after a Christian man came to his village and selected him and IDPs from Lombogia who were staying in his village to take part. He says he went to Kelei on 12 May. Unfortunately, none of these three men were called as witnesses in Tibo’s trial, so the validity of their depositions was not tested in court. As such, the information in them should be treated only as preliminary. The fourth deposition was that of Anton. The details of the training in his deposition contradict the accounts of the other three men, but are not consistent with the time-line of the conflict, as he describes training taking place for six weeks, when only 35 days separated the second and third periods.

25 On Anton’s testimony, see footnote 12.

26 Tingginehe said that he arrived at the training on 12 May, Sina and Lewa each said they arrived on 14 May. It is possible, of course, that training had already commenced prior to their arrival.

27 Deposition of Junior Bobi Tingginehe in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 4 November 2000, p. 4. Tingginehe’s account of training is the most detailed among the three Christian men. Sina and Lewa’s depositions each provide only a few lines of description of the training.

28 First quote: deposition of Leonardus Lewa in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 30 May 2000, p. 2. Second quote: deposition of Junior Bobi Tingginehe in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 4 November 2000, p. 5. If this second comment can be taken at face value, it is a strong indication that the decision to kill had already been taken during the Kelei training. In evaluating each of these comments, however, we must remember that the depositions were typed by investigators who were attempting to compile a case that Tibo had ordered others to murder during the May-June violence. There is no guarantee that the depositions are verbatim accounts, particular as the validity of these two depositions was not tested by calling the men as witnesses in court.
arrows, peluncur, home-made “bazookas” (dum-dum) and according to one of their depositions, home-made firearms. 29

During the period that Christians were training in Kelei, it appears that some of the participants took part in an attack on a nearby Muslim settlement in the vicinity of Didiri village (probably Korongjongi). 30 This attack was part of a series of disturbances in the southeast part of Poso district between 16-19 May 2000 around two villages: Didiri itself and Taripa. 31 The violence around these two villages did not escape the attention of residents of Poso town and may have raised tensions there, but because they did not immediately precipitate retaliatory violence in the city or generate widespread hostilities along religious lines, they are more accurately understood as the immediate precursors to the third period violence, rather than part of the third period itself.

Training in Kelei appears to have ceased on 21 May, or at least paused, as two groups of Christians went to the city on 22 May. One, under the leadership of Fabianus Tibo, went to Santa Theresa boarding school in the Poso city ward of Moengko Baru, ostensibly to remove the children there from a rumoured attack. The other group was seemingly led by Lateka. We do not know where this second group went immediately after leaving Kelei, but given that they entered the city from the southwest early the next day, it is possible that they went to a Christian-populated village on the fringes of the city, such as Lembomawo. 32 Each group’s subsequent activities in the city are described in detail in the next section.

29 See deposition of Rafael Sina, 29 May 2000, p. 2, deposition of Leonardus Lewa, 30 May 2000, p. 2, deposition of Junior Bobi Tingginehe, 4 November 2000, p. 4, all in the dossier of Fabianus Tibo. Christians also appear to have manufactured contrived body armour for some of their combatants, either in the form of rubber vests or even seemingly solid metal vests. Pictures of these two items appear in Al-Anshari and Suhardi (ed.), Tragedi Poso, pp. 75, 80.
30 A Tentena resident interviewed in 2002 attributed the Didiri attack to the Christian youths who at the time had been preparing to attack Poso in Kelei village. Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.
31 Different sources that mention these disturbances provide conflicting details, but apart from the attack on the Muslim settlement, the violence in the area appears to have included a rice mill and a Muslim-owned house being burned, road-blocks being established to control traffic and seek Muslim drivers (with one driver possibly murdered). For various versions of these disturbances, see “Sandi Pembantaian di Frekuesni 425-225”, MAL, Fourth Week, June 2000, p. 11; FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 14; Lasahido et al, Suara dari Poso, p. 51; Ecip and Waru, Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya, p. 70; interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.
32 A woman who was part of Lateka’s group stated in an interrogation deposition that she was picked up on 22 May and taken to Barati village (where a female village elder administered an adat rite. The group then went to Poso she said, arriving at about 6:00pm on 22 May. She did not disclose the precise location, saying only “we crossed a long bridge and then went down a laneway”. Depending on which bridge she was referring to, this suggests the group either went to Lembomawo or Gebangrejo. Deposition of Yenny Tadengga in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 31 October 2000.
If a group of Christians engaged in training in Kelei after the second period, an obvious question is what exactly the trainees were preparing for. We can garner only a rudimentary answer from the depositions of trainees, but other documents and my interviews provide a more comprehensive picture of the aims of kelompok merah leaders and key combatants during the May-June 2000 violence.

The clearest single statement by a kelompok merah leader of the rationale for the third period violence is provided by “Lateka’s mandate” (amanat Lateka), a one page typewritten letter addressed to the National Commission for Human Rights (Komnas HAM). The letter has been attributed to A. L. Lateka, but first came to attention only when read out publicly several days after his death. The letter is reproduced here in full.\(^3^3\)

Demands of our Struggle

To: National Commission for Human Rights
   Jl Latuharhari 4b
   Central Jakarta

Aim
1. Struggle to restore the human rights of the Poso community, which have been systematically laid waste.
2. Free the Poso community of the oppression of rioters (perusuh).

Target
1. Eliminate/arrest the rioters/provocateurs (provokator) who have thus far been protected by the government

Demands
1. Free Poso of rioters/provocateurs whom the authorities have already identified
2. The patience of Poso’s people is at an end and the time has come to assert that Poso’s people are the indigenous inhabitants who must live in freedom in their own birthplace.
3. Because Lombogia, Kasintuwu and churches have been razed/burned by the Muslim rioters/provocateurs it will be our struggle to raze all of the villages of the rioters/provocateurs (Moengko, Kayamanya, Bonesompe and Lawanga)
4. The security forces should stop taking sides as thus far in reality the security forces have always obstructed us, meaning crowds following the instructions of provocateurs have been free to burn Christian residents’ houses and buildings.
5. Give us the opportunity and freedom to help the government to pursue the provocateurs/rioters and to take action against them as a guarantee of restoration of security as a component of national security.
6. It is a matter of deep regret that the security forces have not overcome the rioters’ brutality, but instead have let them loot, burn people’s houses and churches.

\(^3^3\) I have translated what purports to be a photocopy of the original letter. Substantially similar versions of the letter are reproduced in the prison memoir of the Christian minister who first read out the letter publicly, and a contemporary news item. See Damanik, *Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso*, pp. 31-32; “Memperjuangkan Amanat Lateka” *Formasi*, no. 48, July 2000, p. 7.
7. The support of the central government will be inseparable from the achievement of the aims and target of our struggle.

On behalf of the Pejuang Pemulihan Keamanan Poso (Champions of the Restoration of Security in Poso)
Ir. Adven L. Lateka 34

By analysing each of the points of the letter, we can draw out some of the underlying grievances that fed into the violence, as well as some of the more immediate motivations.

A good starting point in analysing the letter is Lateka’s formulation of the boundaries of *kelompok merah* group identity. There are two key phrases in this respect: “Poso’s people are the indigenous inhabitants” and “Christian residents”. 35 These two identity markers – ethnic and religious – do not correspond exactly in Poso, but it is not accurate to think of the groups as separate. For instance, a non-indigenous Christian man who fought during the third period started his narrative of the conflict by remarking, “We feel that we are the indigenous residents here.” 36 The relevance of both identity markers to the May-June violence are also neatly captured in three pieces of graffiti dating from the third period that were photographed by a Muslim chronicler: “Pamona Poso my birth land, indigenous people of Poso unite”, “Christians are free”, “Muslims must leave the land of Poso”. 37

This dual identification has led some authors to argue that the conflict is best understood primarily in ethnic terms, with an emphasis on competition for land between indigenous people and migrants. Aditjondro in particular argues that the description of Poso as a “religious conflict” should be exchanged for “a paradigm of the displacement of Poso’s indigenous communities”, with the third period violence understood as a primarily ethnic enterprise to “reclaim their customary land from migrants who have defiled their land.” 38 Lateka’s letter does touch upon the issue of land and territory,

34 Ir. – Insinyur (an engineering degree)
35 Respectively, “warga Poso adalah penduduk asli” and “Rakyat Kristiani”
36 Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.
37 Respectively “Pamona Poso Tanah Kelahiranku, Poso Asli Bersatu”, “Merdeka Kristen” and “Muslim Harus Tinggalkan Tanah Poso”. Substantially the same collection of photographs appears in two Muslim-authored accounts of the third period. See Al-Anshari and Suhardi (ed.), *Tragedi Poso*, pp. 61, 65; Tim Pencari Bukt, *Fajar Merah Saga*, Photo 16, Photo 25, Photo 26.
38 George Junus Aditjondro, *Kerusuhan Poso dan Morowali, Akar Permasalahan dan Jalan Keluarnya*, (paper presented at seminar on “Application of Emergency Status in Aceh, Papua and Poso?” Hotel Santika, Jakarta, 7 January 2004) not paginated. Aragon also identifies “insider-outsider friction over economic use of land as the basal line of fracture”, but it is clear she is arguing for the inclusion of an
saying “Poso’s people are the indigenous inhabitants who must live in freedom in their own birthplace.” Nevertheless, while we should remain sensitive to the fact that ethnic identity and competition over land were among the motivations for some combatants to take part in the violence, religion still stands out as the primary cleavage in the third period. Two features of the violence make the primacy of religion clear. Ethnic ties did not lead certain individuals to fight against their co-religionists in Poso, for instance, in the way that Muslim and Christian Kao-ethnic people fought together against Muslim Makian-ethnic migrants in North Maluku, to give one example. 

Nor do kelompok merah members appear to have confined the target of their attacks to only particular ethnic groups among Poso’s Muslims.

In fact, the primary adversaries whom Lateka identified in his letter are “perusuh” (rioters) and “provokator” (provocateurs), with one or both of these groups mentioned eight times in the letter’s ten points. The kelompok merah will eliminate/arrest (menumpas/menangkap), pursue/take actions against (memburu/menindak) and raze the villages (meratakan) of these groups. Lateka himself did not name names, but the identity of the men Christians considered to be provocateurs was well known. Tibo, for example, named the Muslim men Adnan Arsal, Daeng Raja, Maro Tompo, Agfar Patanga, Nani Lamusu and Mandor Pahe when interviewed by the press at the conclusion of the third period. Other Christian combatants recounted similar lists of names during my interviews with them.


Chris Wilson, “Ethnic Origins of Religious Conflict in North Maluku Province, Indonesia, 1999-2000”, Indonesia 79 (April 2005), pp. 87-89. I have found only one reference to Muslims fighting for the kelompok merah, in a contemporary press interview with a kelompok merah combatant: “And you should remember that our group are not all Christians, there are several Muslims.” Considering its uniqueness, it is possible the reference is spurious. See “Hanya Dendam Pada Penindas”, Formasi, June 2000, p. 6.

Similar transcripts of the interview, which most likely took place on 8 June, appear in Palu-based tabloids MAL and Formasi. In the Formasi version, two additional names appear in Tibo’s list: Andi Ridwan and Mat Laparigi. See “Kami Hanya Mencari Provokator”, Formasi, July 2000, p. 10; “Saya Ajak Masyarakat Muslim Berdama”, MAL, Fourth Week, June 2000, p. 9. Arsal was a Department of Religion employee, Agfar Patanga was the younger brother of Arief Patanga (district head in Poso from 1989-1999), Nani Lamusu was a fish trader, whereas the rest of the men were businessmen or contractors.
It is clear that Lateka’s rioters/provocateurs are Muslims, but Lateka himself makes only one mention of the word “Muslim” in his letter. This is typical of other rhetoric surrounding the May-June 2000 violence.

We were looking for rioters, we were not fighting against Muslims. At the time we had a banner, on which we wrote in big letters “We are not fighting against Muslims nor are we their enemies. It is rioters that we are looking for.”

Even cursory examination of the May-June 2000 violence makes it clear that the *kelompok merah* were in fact fighting against Muslims, even if in such rhetoric combatants asserted that they were not fighting their adversaries because they were Muslims. But the rhetoric still had its effects, most notably the disproportionate care *kelompok merah* members usually took to not burn mosques in the villages that they attacked. A chronology of the Poso conflict compiled by a Muslim organisation in Palu lists six mosques and one prayer house (*mushollah*) burned during the third period. By the same report’s count, 3,492 houses were burned. Of course, the decision not to burn mosques may have been a tactical move to try to limit the conflict to district scale and to avoid involving Muslim populations elsewhere, a tactic observers have also identified in the West Kalimantan and North Maluku conflicts. But it is also possible that the reluctance to burn mosques reflected an anxiety on the part of the perpetrators that attacking a group because of their religion may not have been legitimate, or may not have been perceived as legitimate by the broader community. After all, Muslims had installed a banner almost identical to the one described above after the first period,

41 Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002. This interviewee clarified the term “rioter” later in the interview, saying “Whoever [stood and] faced us, we would consider to be a rioter.”

42 This same reluctance to mention religion was also evident in a discussion I had with several Tentena residents regarding their perceptions of the causes of the violence. They were happy to discuss political subterfuge to control the district head position, but made a show of being reluctant to explicitly state that the people they were referring to were Muslims and that they perceived the political competition had taken place along religious lines. Discussion with Tentena residents, July 2003.

43 See FSIR, *Derita Muslim Poso*, p. 40. This matches the figure in the governor’s report. See *Laporan Gubernur Sulawesi Tengah*, p. 7.

44 In the initial confrontations of the North Maluku conflict, which took place between (mostly Muslim) Makian and (mixed Muslim and Christian) Kao ethnics, Wilson notes that Kao also took care not to burn mosques. Peluso notes the same behaviour on the part of Dayaks in the 1997 conflict. Wilson observes that one motivation for the Kao “restraint” may have had been their own side’s mixed religious composition. However, both authors observe that not burning mosques was also intended to make a statement that the violence was not “about religion”, intended as a tactical move to minimise the risk of attracting new opponents to each conflict. See Chris Wilson, “The Ethnic Origins of Religious Conflict in North Maluku Province, Indonesia”, *Indonesia* 79 (April 2005): 88. Nancy Lee Peluso, “Passing the Red Bowl: Creating Community identity through violence in West Kalimantan, 1967-1997” in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution*, ed. Charles A. Coppel (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 111.
when as the demographic majority in the province and the country they had little reason to fear widening the conflict to involve other Christian populations (See Chapter Two).

The December 1998 and April 2000 riots also stand out as a central part of the rationale for violence that Lateka expressed in his letter. This follows directly from Lateka’s focus on “perusuh” and “provokator”. At one level, the letter displayed a feeling of indignant anger at the effrontery of the perpetrators of the first two periods of violence — “the patience of Poso’s people is at an end” — leading to a justification of the May-June violence as revenge or retaliation, expressed explicitly in Demand 3. Whether by chance omission or because it was indicative of Lateka’s own preoccupations, the letter does not mention the murders at the end of the second period, and instead mentions explicitly injury to property alone (looting, burning of houses, burning of churches). Nor did Lateka mention the death in custody of his brother-in-law, although it is hard to imagine that this did not loom large in his thoughts. Indeed, other Christian sources do not reproduce Lateka’s exclusive focus on property damage. Another Christian figure, who preferred an ethnic interpretation of the conflict, focussed on the murders, describing the killings of the two Christians during the April 2000 violence as a violation by migrants of Poso’s adat (customary law).

We have not fenced off this land, we have not fenced off the forests, nor have we dammed the sea. We have allowed you to come here, but if you spill blood here then you must face the consequences.45

The feelings that they had been intolerably affronted as well as a desire for revenge were encapsulated in two common phrases that Christians use in description of the May-June violence: “[Period] three happened because of one and two,” and “Having turned both cheeks we had no cheek left to turn.” This second statement is particularly rich in its potential interpretations. At one level it explains away the defeats of the first and second periods as the results of Christian stoicism, thus nullifying these previous riots as an accurate test of the relative strength of local Christian and Muslim populations. On another level, the saying also justifies the third period violence as reasonable by suggesting that Christians had entered a period that went far beyond the normal limits of stoicism.

45 Interview with a Christian figure, January 2002. Although this figure discussed the conflict in ethnic terms, he perceived Christianity to be part of Poso’s indigenous ethnic identity.
The conviction of local Christians that they had been subjected to repeated affronts is important as an illustration that the decisions individuals were making to fight in the third period were not taken dispassionately. This sense of having been affronted was not simply based in discursive identification as the result of clever framing by manipulative leaders, even if that may sometimes be perfectly sufficient basis to generate indignation and anger. For a group that was much broader than just the leaders who expressed these sentiments, feelings of indignant anger at a perceived affront would have fed off lived experience, be it forced displacement, loss of property, or, for a few people, injury or even the death of a relative.

But a greater preoccupation than previous affronts that comes through in Lateka’s letter is the failure of the government and security forces to take action in response to the first two periods of violence. His preoccupation is evident in the fact that four of the letter’s ten points touch upon the government’s or security forces’ past performance in Poso. Under the rationale the letter typifies, this failure of the state to provide protection renders the rioters/provocateurs as an ongoing and immediate threat. Epitomising this feeling of threat, several Christian combatants recalled that they were convinced that after the April 2000 violence, Tentena would have been the next location to be attacked if they had not themselves taken action. This idea of an impending threat led many Christians to describe the third period violence as defensive, “mempertahankan kita punya wilayah” (defending our territory), or at best as a war (implying the fighting was two-sided), even though the violence wrought on Muslims and their villages far exceeded anything that had previously occurred in the area. The perceived failure of the security forces to act also provided a justification for Poso’s Christians to take matters into their own hands, reflected in the two points of Lateka’s letter that invite the government to join with Lateka’s Pejuang Pemulihan Keamanan Poso (Champions of 46 Target 1, Demands 1, 4, 6. The reference in Demand 4 to the security forces’ obstructing “us” makes it possible this letter also refers to the portion of the May-June 2000 violence that preceded Lateka’s death on 2 June. The security forces had intervened on several occasions to break up clashes and drive Christian assailants away from the city’s fringes. As a comparison, another Christian leader, Fabianus Tibo, complained to the press just after the third period (prior to his arrest) that the kelompok merah had been unable to capture provocateurs because the security forces had “obstructed us and shot at us”. See “Saya Ajak Masyarakat Muslim Berdamai”, MAL, Fourth Week, June 2000, p. 9.

47 The idea of defence most often explicitly referred to territory, ie the assertion that Christians were not aggressively attacking Muslims’ villages but instead were defending their own villages. One combatant though expressed the idea of defence in family terms, “By chance I was given the task of leading sector “X” [detail deleted by author from interview transcript], because my father had been wounded, so the time had come for his son to defend (him).” Interview with a Christian combatant, date and location withheld.
the Restoration of Security in Poso) to take action against those responsible for past violence.\(^{48}\)

The following two quotes are long, but bring together many of the themes identified above. The first quote is from a combatant, the second from a Christian community member.

First quote:
[During the first period] we thought, “Let’s just surrender (mengalah) and make peace.” It was peaceful, but all the while they were consolidating. Another small blow-up developed into another large blow-up [ie, the second period], but we were able to subdue things, because we, Christians, told people in church, “Let’s not be like this, let’s not listen to them.” So we tried to just take it (mengalah) again, obediently, but in the end the third [period] was triggered. Ah the third one, you could say there was no mercy in the third one. Because we had [endured it] twice, we weren’t able to hold back. We struck back (balas). We struck back right to the very last drop .... If we hadn’t countered them, Tentena would have been razed. You could say [our attacks] were just defensive, defending our territory, because our religion had been trodden upon and insulted, our church had been burned, and they even said, ‘The Lord Jesus is a Pig’ and ‘The Lord Jesus has Flea-Ridden Long Hair’, various types of insults, but we took it all on the chin. But because we saw their plans were getting increasingly out of hand, we countered them.\(^{49}\)

Second quote:
The most sensitive thing for the community here was that their churches had been burned – the Pentecostal church, the Pniel church, the Advent church – as long as it was a church, even a Catholic church, it had been burned. If their houses had been burned, their possessions looted, well ... they could still be stoic (sabar), but as soon as the churches were burned, and then there had been someone killed, and they saw at the time that the person killed, a Torajan, was killed in front of the security forces, who did nothing, they just held their weapons [interviewee motions as if holding a weapon by his side]. When the looting was happening, I saw it – the security forces were there but they just stood like this, with their weapon [at their side], so the community didn’t believe in the security forces anymore, not all of the security forces, but the oknum [rogues] who had been on duty. So without this belief, where else could they seek protection. That was the cause, back then there was also information that they were planning a third [riot], and in this third one it would be Christian religious figures and community figures who would be murdered. So as I see it, the third [period] was revenge, before they attack us better to attack them ... If they had attacked, it was certain they would have attacked in this direction [towards Tentena], but instead we attacked in that direction [towards the city].

A final theme that is strongly evident in these two quotes is the feeling that the Christian religion had been insulted. While some combatants were extremely reluctant to state that they were fighting against Muslims on account of religion, others in fact explicitly depicted the third period violence as a religious enterprise. Indeed, even a single individual could be inconsistent within the one interview: the same man who described

\(^{48}\) Demands 5, 7.

\(^{49}\) Interview with a former Christian combatant, July 2003.
the *kelompok merah* banner’s declaration that their enemies were not Muslims also referred to the *kelompok merah*’s rules of engagement as the *hukum sepuluh* (literally, ten laws), apparently an allusion to the Ten Commandments.\(^5^0\) Another non-combatant who sympathised with the violence described these rules of engagement in even more explicitly religious terms:

> In Biblical terms not a single item could be looted, not even a single needle could be taken. There was a rape, so it was compulsory for the person who perpetrated the rape to be killed, and so it was done.\(^5^1\) There could not be any wrongdoing in this episode. A grand retaliation, with prayers, and greetings “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”\(^5^2\)

Some combatants also described God as an agent on their side:

> When we deployed that night, we sang songs like “Onward Christian Soldiers” (*Laskar Kristen Maju*) all the way to the battlefield. We went until twelve at night, so we still had a chance to rest. When we arrived in the field, as light approached I prayed, I said “God, with the rays of the sun, I hope you give your love to us. Now we are facing the enemy. Help us Lord, break their bones, you own their souls, but we are taking the devils that have possessed their lives. If you are on our side, who can resist us.” When there were only ten metres left between us and the enemy, they shot at us but not one of us was hit, not even one. Their bullets just went overhead, sometimes only air would come out of their weapons. I was surprised at the terrific power that was with us, we faced them numbering around 150 people, whereas there were a thousand of them, but imagine, although no other part of them was wounded, their necks broke, that’s what surprised us. When we were able to kill them with machetes or bows, when we cut them, a pig ate them. Yes, a pig, a group of pigs, hundreds ate them, which made us think, maybe this is what they meant when they said ‘The Lord Jesus is a pig’.\(^5^3\)

The man’s reference to Jesus manifesting himself on the battlefield as a pig was only half joking, if it was at all.

The importance of religious imagery to the violence inevitably raises the question of the extent of the involvement of the Central Sulawesi Christian Church (GKST). Certainly, the GKST was accused in the provincial press and Muslim niche media of instigating, coordinating and even commanding the May-June 2000 violence.\(^5^4\) Among academic observers, van Klinken makes the strongest statement that the church was involved, albeit without supporting details: “It now seems beyond doubt that Tibo was taking orders from top people within the GKST church, well-connected individuals who

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\(^{5^0}\) Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.

\(^{5^1}\) This refers to the murder of Christian man Wens Tinegari, cited by several combatants in support of assertions that Christians would not tolerate rape or atrocities within their ranks.

\(^{5^2}\) Interview with a Christian man, January 2002.

\(^{5^3}\) Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002.

managed to erase their involvement by the time Tibo was arrested and later sentenced to death.  

There is some evidence of contact between GKST leaders and Christian combatants during or immediately after the third period. For instance, a military intelligence officer produced a letter to the secretary of the GKST Synod signed by Tibo during the trial of Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus that requested petrol, rice and instant noodles for Sepe and Silanca villages. According to a note on the letter, the Synod had apparently fulfilled the request. Senior members of the church were also able to contact Christian fugitives immediately after the third period, most notably when two ministers brokered the arrests of Dominggus and Marinus.  

It was also a minister of the church, Rinaldy Damanik, who publicly read out Lateka’s letter justifying the third period violence after the kelompok merah leader’s death.

Indeed, Damanik and the GKST Crisis Centre, of which he was coordinator at the time of the third period, have often been the primary targets of suspicion. The Crisis Center was formed after the April 2000 riot, ostensibly to help evacuate threatened Christian populations and distribute humanitarian aid. The Center issued a number of statements and reports on the May-June 2000 violence which at best tacitly condoned the violence. It also accepted a number of Christian combatants as members, a step that Damanik explained as an attempt to convince them gradually to withdraw from violence. At a personal level, it is clear that Damanik grew into a figure of great influence within the church and broader Christian community during the conflict – he was chosen as secretary-general of the church synod in December 2000 and then head of the synod in 2004.

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55 Van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*, p. 84. Van Klinken’s assertion is weakly referenced. One reference is an expanded internet version of a leaflet handed to me by a protester at a rally shortly before the execution of Tibo and co which was demanding that the men be freed. Such a document would obviously downplay Tibo’s involvement and responsibility. His second reference is a 2006 article from a national news magazine.


57 Interview with Dominggus da Silva, July 2003.

58 Damanik was imprisoned in 2002 on a weapons possession charge after home-made firearms were found in a vehicle in which he was a passenger. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment, but was released in November 2004.

May-June 2000 violence, and I have not come across any specific evidence to support accusations that he played such a role.

The available evidence thus falls well short of proving that the church exercised authority over the third period violence – certainly accounts of key sites of kelompok merah activity do not typically mention ministers of the church. There is also evidence that suggests that the church did not make use of its great local authority in Poso in 2000 - even recognised by men who were at best nominal Christians – to lead the violence. The authority of the church is clear from the fact that local youths twice went to the GKST seeking leadership in 2000: an initial group went to the church immediately after they fled Lombogia during the April 2000 riot, and a second group went at the outset of the third period violence. Both times, however, these crowds appear to have left disappointed; on the second occasion a senior church leader reportedly told the crowds, “Anyone who fights is a [member of a] ‘GPK’ (Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan – Security Disturbing Movement).”\textsuperscript{60} Indeed, a local youth highlighted the church’s unwillingness to get involved as one of the factors that helped Lateka gain influence with the people who had fled from Lombogia. As such, I believe it is likely that neither the church as an institution nor its most senior officers commanded or coordinated the third period violence.

This is not to say that there were not ministers of the church who were themselves frustrated with the GKST’s formal stance. Several ministers whom I interviewed clearly strongly approved of the May-June 2000 violence.

Who would be willing for his brothers to be massacred or murdered, of course one would come and defend them, that would be the usual thing I would think, that how a person’s instincts should be. I myself often criticised Christians who did not want to defend their brothers, but [it’s a question of] the [appropriate] way of defending them.\textsuperscript{61}

Some combatants also told anecdotes of local ministers blessing combatants before they departed for clashes. Such blessings – and the statements condoning the violence released by the Crisis Centre – may in fact have been the most important role played by ministers of the church who approved of the May-June 2000 violence. Such blessings and statements would have bestowed social respectability on the decision to fight, a respectability that may have been strengthened because some important combatants

\textsuperscript{60} Damanik, \textit{Tragedi Kemanusiaan di Poso}, p. 35. On the term “GPK”, see Dave McRae, “A Discourse on Separatists”, \textit{Indonesia} 74 (October 2002): 41-43.
were also members of their village’s local church committee.\textsuperscript{62} Wilson highlights the importance of social respectability bestowed by religious figures in the context of the North Maluku violence, writing “religious sanction for violence alienated any remorse that Christian men may have felt, increasing both their sense of purpose and their ability to carry out further atrocities without guilt.”\textsuperscript{63} Horowitz makes the same point but in a more general context: “If it [ie, ethnic violence] did not have legitimacy and social support, otherwise respectable people would not participate, and perhaps more important, could not resume ordinary life, free of social sanction, after the fact.”\textsuperscript{64} Thus irrespective of whether the Crisis Centre or any ministers of the church actually played any role in physically supporting combat, through their public condoning of violence they may have encouraged ordinary Christians to take part.

* * *

The preparations for violence and indeed the disturbances in the southeast of Poso district in mid-May did not escape the attention of the community in Poso town. Rumours of a planned Christian attack on the city began to circulate, leading some Christians and Muslims to leave the city during what turned out to be the final week before the third period of violence began.

Both Christians and Muslims have built accusatory narratives around these departures from the city, which preceded the actual violence. Several Muslim residents of the city later cited the departure of their Christian neighbours as alleged evidence of these neighbours’ foreknowledge of the May-June attacks. Conversely, a Christian figure from Poso depicted the decision of any Muslim who chose not to flee the city as a sign of aggressive intent: “Muslims indigenous to Poso who chose not to get involved [in the violence] fled from Poso. The only ones left in the city were Bugis or from Gorontalo.”\textsuperscript{65}

Even at this late stage, decisive action to send more troops to Poso, to take visible steps to investigate the previous violence or even to engage in dialogue with community

\begin{footnotes}
\item[61] Interview with a minister of GKST, date and location withheld.
\item[63] Wilson, \textit{Ethno-religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God}.
\item[64] Horowitz, \textit{The Deadly Ethnic Riot}, p. 266.
\item[65] Interviews, Poso, Palu, January-February 2002.
\end{footnotes}
leaders might have prevented violence or lessened its scope. But despite the decision of many of the city’s residents to flee, the district government and security forces did not appear to appreciate the seriousness of the situation. Poso was left under the command of the interim police chief placed in the district after the previous commander had been removed in the wake of the April violence. Neither have I found records of additional police or military being moved to the district prior to the commencement of the fighting on 23 May. Moreover, the district head was absent in South Sulawesi on the day the fighting began. Government and security force efforts on the final night before violence began, 22 May, epitomise their response to the developing crisis. With rumours rampant of an imminent attack on the city by Poso’s Christians, the district administration contacted sub-district authorities in the majority-Christian town Tentena to seek clarification. The Tentena-based officials assured their counterparts in the city that no preparations for an attack were evident in the town. The district government in turn chose to relay this message to the city’s residents on the night of 22 May by sending out a truck and loud hailer to circle the city’s streets, assuring the community that there would be no attack and appealing for calm. The first Christian sortie into the city, in which three Muslim men were killed, began just a few hours after this announcement.

The start of violence

The attack on the city that marked the start of the third period took the form of a pre-dawn foray on 23 May into the city wards of Kayamanya and Moengko by a small group of around fifteen Christians, all clad in black and armed with machetes. The group, under the leadership of Protestant civil servant A. L. Lateka, appear, at least initially, to have been pursuing the plan set out in Lateka’s letter to take action against “provokator”. For instance, one of the targets of the morning’s attack was the Muslim fish-trader Nani Lamusu. By one account, the group entered Nani Lamusu’s house, another said that one of the men killed had been guarding Lamusu’s residence. Palu newspaper Mercusuar reported the group also threw rocks at a car owned by Mandor Pahe, another of the men whom Christians considered to be a “provokator”. Instead of apprehending these provocateurs, however, the group’s members killed three Muslim

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66 Community members in Poso recall that around this time there were also what in hindsight turned out to be signs of the coming violence; for instance, a Muslim villager remembered a neighbour promising to show him a homemade gun, only to renege when he realized the man was not a Christian. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
men whom they happened to encounter on the streets, including a policeman, whose pistol they seized.\textsuperscript{68} The group then fled to the nearby Santa Theresia Catholic School complex in Moengko, pursued by local Muslim residents. News of the murders then quickly drew a large crowd of Muslims to the school.

\textbf{Map 2: 23 May 2000 attack on Moengko and Kayamanya (approximate route)}

Although it appears to have been A. L. Lateka who led this initial sortie, this was also the point at which the Catholic migrant Tibo first came to public attention in Poso. When the Muslims pursuing Lateka’s black-clad group arrived at the school, they found Tibo standing outside, also clad in black and armed with a machete, just as the members of Lateka’s group had been. Understandably, the crowd and police who arrived shortly

\textsuperscript{67} Interview with a former Poso resident living in Tentena, February 2002; “Poso Rusuh Lagi”, \textit{Mercusuar}, 24 May 2000, p. 11. On the movements of the group, see also the deposition of Reko Indro Sasongko in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 7 June 2000, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{68} Post-mortem reports for two of the men killed – Kamaruddin Ali and Abdul Syukur - appear in the court indictment of Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus, which is also reproduced in the district court decision in their case. Each man suffered extensive wounds to their head and arms, caused by a sharp object; Ali had also been stabbed in the chest and back. See \textit{Tibo Decision}, pp. 10-14.
afterwards concluded that Tibo was one of the assailants responsible for the morning’s murders. Tibo’s own account was that he had arrived at the school the previous day as part of another group of around fifteen men. His intention, he said, had been to remove the school’s children before a rumoured attack on their school, and he had been asleep when the murders took place; he had then gone out the front when the school’s children woke him to tell him that there was trouble in the city and that some men had fled into the school.69

The police who came to the scene entered into negotiations with Tibo, and he handed his machete to them. (Lateka was presumably out of sight within the school complex by the time the police arrived.) Despite the presence of the increasingly large crowd of Muslims and a request from the police that Tibo accompany them to Poso’s police station, he somehow managed to flee into the forested hills behind the complex.70 Most of Tibo’s men, Lateka’s black-clad group and the school’s students and teachers also made their escape.71 All the various escapees headed south towards the majority Christian areas of Poso, first to Tambaro village just south of the city and then further south back to Tentena. Behind them in the city, the crowd torched the school complex, including its church, and several nearby houses. Several houses were also burned on each of the next few days in Moengko and Kayamanya.72 Most probably, these arson attacks were retaliation for the violence of 23 May, with Muslims who had chosen to stay in the city burning the houses of Christian residents who had already fled.

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69 Interview with Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2003. Tibo’s version of events does not ring true, and is unlikely to be the whole truth. It is possible he and his men were not directly involved in Lateka’s attack, but their very presence at the school, let alone their black clothing and weapons, seem too much of a coincidence to be entirely unrelated.

70 Tibo skipped over his method of escape during my interviews with him; other accounts suggest he went into the school on the pretence of summoning his men to surrender, but then ran away. Rohde provides a different account, saying Tibo and his companions had agreed to surrender but fled when the Muslim crowd broke police lines. See Rohde, “Indonesia Unraveling?”, p. 119.

71 Two members of Tibo’s group, Leonardus Lewa and Rafael Sina, were arrested at the scene after being beaten by the crowd. “Pimpinan Perusuh Eks Napi Betelame”, Mercusuar, 25 May 2000.

After the murders on the morning of 23 May, tensions immediately rose even further within the city as crowds of Muslims gathered at several locations, including the market, in anticipation of further attacks. Each of the Christians I interviewed who were still in the city at this point said that they then left by day’s end:

I was in the city, but the attack was at dawn, by the afternoon I had left Poso, because I saw that many families had already left. Besides, I had several different fields up to sixteen kilometres from Poso, one seven kilometres away [south], one ten kilometres away [south], and I had seen that a lot of people from [south of the city] were beginning to gather. You could see that starting to happen in Poso as well, but not to the same extent. And I had spent several nights tending my fields, and I saw that villagers who would normally be tending their fields, were now preparing arrows, so I thought these are not people preparing to farm, to be honest they were preparing for war.

There were reportedly two further clashes in the south of the city later in the day on 23 May. In the more serious of the two incidents, around a dozen houses were burned and several people were wounded when rival crowds clashed in Sayo ward. It is not clear whether the Sayo clash was part of the same plan as the foray into Moengko and Kayamanya or alternatively was an unplanned side-effect. In another clash near the

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74 Interview with a former Poso resident living in Tentena, July 2003.
town’s drinking water plant in Gebangrejo, police apprehended a female member of the group Lateka had led through Kayamanya and Moengko earlier in the day.76

The 23 May attack on Kayamanya and Moengko was clearly born out of the preparations for violence Christians had been undertaking since at least early-May. Nevertheless, this attack had not gone particularly well from a Christian point of view. Lateka’s group had not apprehended or killed any provocateurs, Lateka himself had been wounded in the attack, and one of Lateka’s group and two of Tibo’s men had been arrested.77 The kelompok merah leaders’ next move was to convene a meeting on the following day in Kelei village. Attendees at this meeting reportedly included Lateka, Tibo, the retired police officer Paulus Tungkanan and Protestant civil servant D. A. Lempadeli.78 By Tibo’s account of the meeting, Lateka gave the order to the gathering that Poso be razed.79 Following this meeting, many of the participants travelled to Tagolu village (just south of the city), where they established a command post (posko). This posko was located in the house of A. L. Lateka’s younger brother, Bakte.80

Tagolu village was a strategic location for a command post and as a staging point for attacks, because it lay at the fork of the road south from Poso to Tentena and the road east to the Muslim coastal town of Ampana. Controlling Tagolu thus allowed Christians to launch attacks along either road, while also simultaneously blocking road access from Poso to Tentena and leaving open a secure route of retreat to the south should it be required. The establishment of the posko also meant the path to safety for Muslim communities south of Tagolu was blocked.

76 The location of the drinking water plant relative to the Santa Theresia church in Moengko suggests that the woman who was apprehended, Yenny Tadenga, may have been attempting to flee south back to majority-Christian areas. Tadenga herself told police she had stopped near the plant on the way to the attack on Kayamanya and Moengko that morning, and so had not taken part in the violence. Tengko, Sekilas tentang Kerusuhan Poso III, p. 1; deposition of Yenny Tadenga in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 31 October 2000, p. 2.
78 Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003.; deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 26 July 2000, p. 5.
79 Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003; deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 26 July 2000, p. 5.
80 The house was actually the “official residence” (rumah dinas) of Bakte’s wife, who worked at the nearby Tagolu community health centre. He described the house as approximately 9 x 7 metres, with three rooms. It was first established as a posko, Bakte asserted, while he was absent from the house; Bakte also said that most houses in Tagolu lodged kelompok merah members during the time the posko
The posko appears to have served as a location for Christians to question prisoners, make phone calls to district and provincial authorities, and as a lodging place for some kelompok merah leaders, particularly Tibo. We do not have a precise picture of the leadership structure within the posko. In a deposition, Tibo himself named Erik Rombot and Tungkanan as the highest leaders, with himself, Yanis Simangunsong, Ladue and Unang as subordinates, but did not describe the role of each man in detail. Others held captive at the posko during the third period added the names Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu (both Tibo associates), Romi Parimo, Mama Wanti and Marthin to the list of alleged leaders there. A. L. Lateka, although a senior kelompok merah leader, appears to have spent most of his time in other parts of Poso. The posko was not the only centre of kelompok merah activities in Tagolu. The Tagolu village hall appears to have been used to execute prisoners, as a wire noose was later found hanging from the building’s rafters. The Tagolu Forestry office may have been used to plan some attacks, as a chalk line map of Poso was reportedly found on a table there. Nineteen bodies were also found in several shallow mass graves around the village.

Hundreds, maybe even thousands, of Christians gathered in Tagolu during the time the posko was operating. Christian combatants who were in Tagolu at the time stressed that the crowd gathered “spontaneously”, a characterisation intended to justify the violence that they committed as a defensive response:

was operating. During the time the house was used as a posko, Bakte also recalled, the telephone was treated as “toll-free” by the many visitors to the house. Interview with Bakte Lateka, July 2007.

As these names are sourced from a deposition, they should be treated as preliminary information only. In a prison interview, referring to the “bos-bos” (bosses) at the posko, Tibo mentioned three names: Erik Rombot, Bakte [Lateka] and Fentje (presumably Fentje Angkouw). Deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2000, p. 7. Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003.

Dominggus and Marinus were mentioned in the collective sense (i.e. the three defendants) by Mahfud Rosid Kusni in his testimony in the murder trial of Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus. Ros Kristina, a Christian woman held against her will at the posko, mentioned both Dominggus and Marinus, as well as the other three individuals, in her interrogation deposition in Tibo’s dossier. Kristina would potentially have been a key witness as the murder trial, but the prosecution only read out her deposition rather than calling her in person, so there are reduced grounds to judge the validity of her information, and therefore these names should be treated only as preliminary.


The interrogation deposition of the sectoral police chief stationed in Tagolu at the time, Fence Yohan Londa, states that a crowd had gathered in Tagolu as early as noon on 23. Londa though says they were able to transport many of these people back to Tentena by truck on 24 May, only for the crowd to reassemble later the same night. See deposition of Fence Yohan Londa in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 16 October 2000, pp. 1-2.
Because we had already lost all hope [after the second phase violence], we stood our ground in Tagolu, to [fight] all out there. It turned out the villages to the south (di atas) came down out of spontaneous sympathy, [their presence] is what raises accusations of coordination, that there was a [central] command. 87

The crowds were not summoned nor were cars sent to pick them up, no, they came down [to Tagolu] as one to defend. No vehicles were provided, the crowds just commandeered vehicles. In the situation at the time, no driver could refuse. They had to take them. 88

To the extent that these claims of spontaneity mean that the kelompok merah was not an army in any formal sense, they contain a kernel of truth. The sheer number of people who gathered in Tagolu makes it very unlikely that more than a small proportion were affiliated with the kelompok merah by means of anything resembling organisational ties; indeed it may be that only a fraction of these people had even taken part in the training in Kelei. Long-standing prior organisation would not have been an absolute pre-requisite to gather a large crowd in Tagolu. After all, large numbers of Christians had gathered in the village in a matter of days during the first period of violence. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that there was an organised core of people in the village, who had been preparing for several weeks to perpetrate violence. Without the presence of so many Christians in Tagolu, making the village superficially inaccessible to security forces, the posko could not have operated. But it would have been the organised core and not any spontaneous arrivals who determined which villages the crowds which had gathered in Tagolu were to attack.

The first day the posko most probably operated – 25 May – was also the day that the violence of the third period spread beyond the city limits. As the events of the third period unfolded, violent incidents in fact took place at many disparate locations around the district. Many of these incidents, though, were concentrated around three primary “fronts”. Two of the fronts were in the vicinity of the Tagolu posko. The first of these fronts lay to the posko’s east, located in a series of villages lying along the road from Tagolu to the majority-Muslim town of Ampana (which I call the Lage-Tojo front, after the subdistricts where this violence took place). The second front was located in the villages around the southern fringes of the city, primarily north but also south of Tagolu (which I call the southern front). The third front was in Poso Pesisir sub-district, west of

87 Interview with a Tentena resident, July 2003. 
88 Interview with a former Tagolu resident, Tentena, July 2003.
the city. Owing to this front’s distance from Tagolu, the attacks in Poso Pesisir were most likely not coordinated directly from the posko.

Map 4: Three Fronts of Violence
The first large-scale fighting outside the city took place on the Lage-Tojo front, starting with a clash in Bategencu village on 25 May. Over the course of the first four days on which violence took place in the area, part or all of at least six villages were burned down.\textsuperscript{89} Definite casualty figures are not available, but a comparison of different accounts suggests at least five people were killed during these initial clashes.\textsuperscript{90} The \textit{posko} did not initiate the first of the clashes in the area, but some of its members came to the aid of local Christians, assumed leadership positions among the crowds and helped secure “victory” in the fighting. It is not clear that these clashes were linked to the first and second periods in any direct sense, save that this was a “border” area between predominantly Christian and predominantly Muslim villages, at a time when tensions were high because of the previous violence and the circulation of rumours of impending attacks. These clashes are typical of one of the major patterns of violence during the third period, in which rival crowds clashed before one side was forced to retreat and their village was burned. In each of these clashes, which represented the most direct continuity in the form of violence from the first and second period, only a few people appear to have been killed.

\textbf{Map 5: Key Locations, Lage-Tojo front}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} In addition to the attacks on four villages described in the text, Lee and Buyung Katedo sub-villages were reportedly also attacked on 29 May. See Tengko, \textit{Sekilas Tentang Kerusuhan Poso III}, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{90} One account lists eight dead by 28 May, without specifying which specific attack on this front resulted in each fatality. See “Polda Mulai Ambil Tindakan Tegas”, \textit{Mercusuar}, 29 May 2000.
\end{itemize}
The first day of clashes in Bategencu took place after several truckloads of Muslims left from the majority Muslim coastal town of Ampana to head west towards the city, much as had happened in the first period of violence around eighteen months earlier. By one account, these Muslims were drawn to the city by the news of Lateka’s attack on Moengko and Kayamanya two days earlier; another version is that they came to Poso in response to news of a disappearance in the vicinity of the villages they attacked. When the convoy from Ampana reached the Muslim-populated villages near Bategencu, they banded together with local Muslims to attack Bategencu in the late afternoon:

Finding themselves unable to repel this attack, Bategencu’s residents retreated and sought refuge in the next majority-Christian village along the road, Sepe. This was the second IDP flow into Sepe in a month, as the village had also received Christian residents of the city fleeing the April 2000 violence, as described earlier in this chapter. The attack on Bategencu appears to have confirmed the Sepe villagers’ anxiety that they would be attacked, and they prepared to fight. Another villager who took part in the resultant clash, who lived in an adjacent Christian settlement, said he did so “because each of us felt that we wanted to hold out so that they [Muslims] could not get past, that was spontaneity on the part of Christians, we’re not hiding that, almost everyone who felt able-bodied [took part].” At this point, the Christians who had

91 One journalistic account estimated the size of the convoy that departed from Ampana to have been seven truckloads. See Ecip and Waru, Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya, p. 74.
92 The two versions are of course not mutually exclusive. The rumoured disappearance related to vehicles being stopped at a road-block established in Sepe village. This version would explain why Muslims advanced along the inland road towards the city, which ran through numerous Christian villages including Sepe, rather than taking the coastal road, which would have been a safer route. One account in fact stated that the convoy from Ampana initially went directly into the city (presumably via the coastal road) before doubling back to attack Bategencu. If true, this would make it more likely that the rumoured activities of those blocking the road in Sepe were the specific context of the attack. Interview with Poso man, July 2003; Rinaldy Damanik and Masdianto Posende, Catatan Peristiwa Pasca-Kerusuhan Poso II (Sementara), (Tentena: CC GKST, 6 June 2000), p. 1.; Tengko, Sekilas Tentang Kerusuhan Poso III, p. 1.
93 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003. In contrast to this man’s recollection that there was no resistance, other accounts describe a clash taking place. See, for example, Damanik and Posende, Catatan Peristiwa Pasca-Kerusuhan Poso II, p. 1.
94 Deposition of Junior Bobi Tingginehe in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 4 November 2000, p. 2.
95 Interview with a Christian villager, Lage sub-district, July 2003.
gathered around the *kelompok merah posko* in Tagolu also came to their aid. Some of these *posko* members were not from the immediate area, such as Tibo and Dominggus and reportedly also Berny Tungkanan. Others do appear to have been locals: for instance, the Silanca resident, Ladue. Rumours of their prowess may have been one reason why these non-local *posko* members could assert their authority as leaders. For example, a Christian villager from the area said that although Tibo and Dominggus were not known personally to the area’s villagers, they could quickly assert authority because of their rumoured “ilmu” (magical powers, typically invulnerability).

The day after the Bategencu clash, 26 May, two crowds thus stood ready to attack each other. On the Christian side were villagers from several local Christian settlements along with members of the Tagolu *posko*. The crowd of Muslims was again the loose mix of Ampana residents and Muslims living closer to Bategencu. One of the men on the Muslim side described the day’s aims: “We wanted to go there [Bategencu] again, because the aim was to raze Christian villages all the way into the city, some people even said all the way to Tentena.” In the event, the crowd of Christians drove the Muslim crowd back from Bategencu and thereafter themselves advanced to bum down much of Toyado village. This marked the end of the day’s hostilities, and the Christian crowd withdrew back along the road towards Tagolu.

A local Muslim villager attributed the *kelompok merah*’s success that day to better weaponry and better tactics. There had been more Muslims than Christians at the clash he said, but with the Muslims arranged as a column filing along the road, by his estimate stretching as far as two or three kilometres,

> Even if a blind person had taken a shot, someone would have been hit. The Christians had only a few people on the road, behind corrugated iron sheeting and metal drums. Then other people would shoot, not the ones on the road. The ones on the road were bait.

96 Deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 26 July 2000, p. 6; Interview with a Poso man, January 2002; interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
97 Ladue is named by Tibo in his interrogation deposition as one of the leaders in these clashes, and I have corroborated this detail in other interviews. Depositions of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2000, p. 7 and 31 July 2000, p. 4. Interviews with Poso men, July 2007.
98 Interview with a Silanca resident, July 2003.
99 Interview with a Silanca resident, July 2003.
100 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
A document focusing exclusively on Christian casualties in this clash lists one dead and seven wounded (including one injured by his own *dum-dum*. The Toyado village chief, a Christian, said in an interrogation deposition that one of the village’s residents, a Muslim, was killed. The Toyado village chief also estimated 200 houses had been burned in his village. As was the case in most villages attacked throughout the third period, the mosque was left untouched. There is some confusion over whether the men from Ampana stayed to fight on subsequent days: one report states that five truckloads of the crowd returned to Ampana immediately following this clash, while another Muslim-authored chronology still lists “*mujahid-mujahid Ampana*” fighting in the vicinity on 27 May.

From this point onwards, Christians were the aggressors on the Lage-Tojo front. There were two more days of clashes immediately after the 26 May fighting. On the second day of these clashes, the *kelompok merah* burned Tongko and Labuan villages. There were then no further large-scale clashes on this front for around a week. Part of the reason may have been a peace deal struck between Malei-Lage village and Sepe. The essence of the deal was that Christians would not attack Malei-Lage if the Muslims living there vacated the village temporarily during the May-June disturbances. Despite the deal, Malei-Lage was eventually burned on 5 June.

I do not have sufficient information to reach a firm conclusion about whether the clashes on this Lage-Tojo front were part of a pre-meditated plan. On the one hand, the location of the *kelompok merah posko* in Tagolu suggests that Christians were at the very least aware that there was likely to be fighting along the road from Tagolu to Tongko. On the other hand, it was Muslims from Ampana (and not the Christians at the *posko*) who initiated the first clash on the front. Key *kelompok merah* combatants from outside the immediate vicinity of the villages described themselves assuming leadership roles within the crowds on this front, but detailed local-scale research would be required to gain a clearer picture of how local and non-local combatants interacted and who took tactical decisions such as on which day to attack a village.

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102 For the report that Ampana crowd left, see Tengko, *Sekilas Tentang Kerusuhan Poso III*, p. 2. For the report that they stayed, see Tim Pencari Bukti, *Fajar Merah Saga*, p. 8.
The Christians who had gathered in Tagolu played an important role in the clashes on the Lage-Tojo front, acting as leaders and providing extra personnel, but it was not their sole focus at the time. On 27 and 28 May, for instance, significant clashes between Christian and Muslim crowds also took place elsewhere in Poso. Closest to the Tagolu posko, there were renewed clashes in Sayo ward on each of these days. Violence also began in Poso Pesisir on 28 May, initially comprising attacks on some of the villages close to the western fringe of the city. A Tibo deposition suggests that A. L. Lateka and another man Tibo named as a kelompok merah leader, D. A. Lempadely, travelled to Poso Pesisir to take part in the fighting there.

Indeed, considered purely in terms of the geographic spread of violence, 28 and 29 May 2000 may have seen the highest intensity of fighting during the third period. On each of these days, clashes took place on all three fronts almost simultaneously. It was also during this two day period that the worst massacre of the entire Poso conflict began. The massacre - commonly dubbed the “Walisongo massacre” after the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) where the first killings took place – started with a clash between Christians and Muslims in the vicinity of the school on 28 May. When Christians overpowered their adversaries, they killed an estimated 38 people in the school’s mosque and reportedly took others hostage. Over the next four days, kelompok merah members then set about capturing many of the people who had escaped from the school or nearby Sintuwulemba village – killing the men and reportedly sexually assaulting some of the women before releasing them. In all, around 100 Muslims were killed.

103 Interviews with Malei-Lage residents, July 2003.
104 Dominggus may have led attack on 27 May, both he and Tibo claimed to have been at Sayo on 28 May.
105 See footnote 149 regarding uncertainties over the dates on which attacks in Poso Pesisir took place.
106 Deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 26 July 2000, p. 7. Interviewed in 2007, Lempadely denied travelling to Poso Pesisir prior to Lateka’s death on 2 June, but admitted he was in Poso Pesisir after Lateka was killed. Interview with Lempadely, July 2007.
107 The casualty figure for the 28 May killings in the mosque comes from the account of Sutarmin, who survived the attack. Sutarmin was also one of the three survivors in another killing that formed part of the Walisongo massacre on 1 June, in which 25 people were killed. I lend particular credence to these numbers as upper limits for the casualties in each incident, because they were provided by Muslim survivors.
108 A reasonable upper limit for the death toll may be provided by the testimony of the Sintuwulemba village chief, Ngabidun Djaelani, in the murder trial of Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus., who testified that 191 residents of his village had been murdered. He obtained the figure by subtracting the number of registered IDPs from his village’s pre-conflict population. Djaelani himself was in Palu at the time of the massacre. See record of testimony of Ngabidun Djaelani in Tibo decision, p. 31 and deposition of Ngabidun Djaelani in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 3 July 2000, p. 2.
Although there are other reports of captives being killed during the third period, none are of the same scale as these incidents.109

According to profiles of the school published subsequent to the massacre, the Walisongo boarding school was established in 1987, and received a further allocation of land from the district government in 1996.110 At the time of the massacre, around 150 students were studying at the school, both boarders and day students. The school was located adjacent to the majority-Muslim Sintuwulemba village (population approximately 1000111), which itself was established in the 1970s to resettle transmigrants from Poso Pesisir sub-district whose land west of the city was frequently inundated by floods. Taking place nine kilometres south of the city, the events of late May left the school and Sintuwulemba village isolated: to the village’s immediate north the Tagolu posko and the Christians gathered there lay between Sintuwulemba’s residents and the city, while the road south passed through numerous Christian-populated villages and the district’s main Christian town, Tentena.

The chain of events that led most immediately to the massacre started at least as early as 25 May, when Christians in the area raised objections to the school’s two-way radio antenna and asked that it be removed.112 After brief negotiations, those at the school agreed to take down the antenna in return for an assurance that the Christians would not attack them.113 According to one of the Muslim men who survived the subsequent

109 For other accounts of the murder of prisoners, see “Jalan Keluar Masuk ‘Kristen’”, Formasi, August 2000, p. 14; “Saya Bersama Tubuh Manusia Dicurahkan ke Jurang”, MAL, Second Week, September 2000, p. 9; deposition of Ros Kristina in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 6 July 2000, p. 2.
110 The details of this paragraph, the final sentence excepted, are drawn from “Pesantren Walisongo, Riwayatmu Dulu”, Formasi, 54, October 2000, p. 7, “Lembah Persatuan yang Porak-Poranda”, no details recorded, “‘Mereka Biadab, Mereka Lebih Rendah dari Binatang’”, MAL, First week, July 2000, p. 13.
111 In his deposition, Djaelani says 1,703; Sangaji gives a 1997 population of 1,047, but with no indication of source. Deposition of Ngabidun Djaelani in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 3 July 2000, p.2; Arianto Sangaji “Pembakaran Rumput Kering”, p. 11.
112 It is not difficult to see how the antenna could become a point of contention. On the one hand, Christians were convinced that villagers in Sintuwulemba were using the two-way radio to communicate with Muslims in the city to plan a coordinated attack on Tagolu. Understandably, the Christians at Tagolu wanted the antenna removed. On the other, as the May disturbances had left Sintuwulemba residents unable to physically travel to the city, the antenna was the main remaining link the Muslims living there possessed with co-religionists elsewhere in the district. It would be understandable if they were reluctant to take the antenna down. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003
113 Recording of Darwis Waru interview with “II” made available to author. Waru requested that only the man’s initials be mentioned in this text.
violence, however, Christians started harassing the school only two hours after the antenna had been removed.\textsuperscript{114}

Negotiations continued the next day, 26 May, this time regarding the evacuation of some of the residents of Walisongo and Sintuwulemba. When these negotiations broke down, a police platoon commander, Mohamad Najib, and twelve of his men who had been ordered the previous night to go to the school attempted to evacuate around 100 people anyway.\textsuperscript{115} Their convoy of vehicles made it only as far as neighbouring Tagolu village, however, where the (sectoral) police chief, a Christian, warned Najib not to attempt to pass through the village. Many Christians had gathered in the village, and Najib would need to seek reinforcements.\textsuperscript{116} When no additional personnel could be summoned, Najib took the convoy back to Walisongo. After the convoy returned to Sintuwulemba, Najib recalled, a \textit{kelompok merah} member demanded use of the policemen’s truck to transport Christian villagers seeking refuge. Under threat of force, Najib acceded.\textsuperscript{117} The truck was returned to him later that night with the windscreen smashed. The police driver Najib had provided also came back with a dart wound to his arm.\textsuperscript{118}

Far from making renewed efforts to help the people at Sintuwulemba, Najib and his men left the next morning at 11:00am.\textsuperscript{119} The Tagolu police station chief and the Lage

\textsuperscript{114} Recording of Darwis Waru interview with \textquotedblleft II\textquotedblright made available to author. \textquotedblleft II\textquotedblright says that Sahuddin, one of the teachers at the school who was subsequently killed, asked one of the Christians what his name was, to which one man replied \textquotedblleft Dominikus D\textquotedblright. This may be a reference to Dominggus da Silva. A Muslim-authored chronology presents a different version saying [Christian] \textquotedblleft ninja\textquotedblright cut the antenna and broke it. See Tim Pencari Bukti, \textit{Fajar Merah Saga}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{115} Deposition of Mohamad Najib in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 2 October 2000, p. 2. A Christian source said negotiations broke down because the people at Walisongo only wanted to evacuate women, children and elderly people, whereas the Christians at Tagolu wanted everybody to leave. \textquotedblleft II\textquotedblright acknowledges that the request was for \textit{“adik-adik yang ada di tempat itu”} to leave, but says the negotiations failed because Sintuwulemba residents refused a Christian demand that they surrender all of their weapons to the Lage police chief. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003, Recording of Darwis Waru interview with \textquotedblleft II\textquotedblright made available to the author.

\textsuperscript{116} Deposition of Fence Yohan Londa (Lage police chief), in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 16 October 2000, p. 2. Londa claimed in his deposition that the \textit{kelompok merah} had effectively taken over the Tagolu police station from 24 May until Londa’s departure from Tagolu on 28 May.

\textsuperscript{117} The truck was taken by an associate of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva, who was executed with Tibo in September 2006. Dominggus acknowledged appropriating the truck, but said the policeman would relinquish the vehicle only after Dominggus had given him Rp50,000 for diesel. Interview with Dominggus da Silva, July 2003.

\textsuperscript{118} Deposition of Mohamad Najib in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 2 October 2000, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{119} Each of the two policemen claimed that the Tagolu police station chief phoned Tibo at the Tagolu posko to request safe passage for Najib before he attempted to reach Poso, although Tibo denied this. See record of testimony of Mohamad Najib in Tibo decision, pp. 36-37, deposition of Mohamad Najib, in
sub-district head, also based in Tagolu, then left at around noon the next day, 28 May, which may have in fact been after the first of the killings had already taken place. These two stated in interrogation depositions that they were unaware of the massacre when they left, but that they saw large numbers of *kelompok merah* members in Sintuwulemba, and that the village was already ablaze.

Finally, on 28 May, the school was attacked. The day’s violence developed in several stages. Firstly, at around 9:00am, the *kelompok merah* appear to have sent a small group of men from the Tagolu *posko* to the boarding school. This first group of Christians clashed with Muslims gathered at the school, and before long the *kelompok merah* members retreated to Tagolu. Some of those at the school or in Sintuwulemba fled into the forest after this first clash, whereas others stayed at the school.

A larger group of Christians soon returned to the school. Those present estimated this second group to number anywhere between 40 and 300 people. This group’s arrival sparked a second clash with Muslims who were at Walisongo, in which the Muslims were swiftly overwhelmed. Those Muslims still at the boarding school then fled into nearby rice paddies, before around seventy men fled into the Al-Hijrah mosque. Having run out of *peluncur* darts, those inside the mosque decided to surrender, according to a Muslim survivor’s account. When Christian assailants entered the

dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 2 October 2000, pp. 2-3, deposition of Fence Yohan Londa, in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 16 October 2000, p. 2.

120 Despite these police withdrawals, it appears at least one vehicle carrying nine people was able to leave Sintuwulemba before the *kelompok merah* attack. Recording of Darwis Waru interview with female resident of Sintuwulemba made available to the author.

121 Deposition of Minto Ida in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 23 August 2000, p. 3; deposition of Fence Yohan Londa in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 16 October 2000, p. 2.

122 Several Christians said this first group went to Sintuwulemba with the intention of evacuating the village’s Christian residents. Tibo offered a different version, saying the first group of Christians went to the school at the request of a police captain, Mandagi, to help evacuate Muslims from the area. Interview with Tentena resident, July 2003; Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003; Deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2000, p. 4; Rinaldy Damanik, *Masdianto Posende, Catatan Peristiwa Konflik di Desa Sintuwulemba: Pesantren Walisongo, Tentena: CC GKST*, 14 June 2000.

123 Different Christians provided different interpretations of the initial clash at Walisongo. One man, who blamed the clash on the negligence of police, said he felt Muslims would have been alarmed by the arrival of *kelompok merah* members, and would have thought, “Rather than have our heads cut off, better to attack them first.” Another man cited this clash as evidence of the alleged duplicity of the Muslims at Walisongo, “People who said they were afraid were now ready to stand in our way.” Notice that both versions assert that Muslims were the first to attack. It is of course equally possible that Christians were the first to attack the Muslims gathered at the school. Interview with Tentena residents, July 2003; interview with former Christian combatant, July 2003.

124 One of those who said he fled after the initial clash was Ilham, a survivor of the later 1 June killing who went on to describe his experience to the local media and testify in the Tibo murder trial.
mosque, the man recalled, they slashed the necks of many of those inside, and took others hostage.126 In contrast, Christian combatants denied the claim that they had killed people who had already surrendered. Rejecting the label “massacre”, these combatants asserted that anyone killed on 28 May perished in a battle, and that the battle lasted less than an hour.127 A chronology released by the Central Sulawesi church’s Crisis Centre two weeks after the massacre endorsed these claims, saying the men in the mosque were killed when they continued to fire on Christians despite having displayed a white cloth to indicate their surrender.128 Interviewed three years after the chronology was released, however, one of the document’s authors admitted that he was doubtful of its accuracy.129

In the course of these clashes, Christians razed the boarding school complex, apart from the mosque where the killing took place, and also burned around 200 houses in Sintuwulemba village. (The mosque was reportedly also subsequently burned.130) As the Tagolu police station chief indicated, many houses in Sintuwulemba were also burned. There then appears to have been a lull in the violence, before more Christians returned at around 3:00pm to collect Muslim bodies and search for survivors (These bodies appear to have been dumped in a gorge near Pandiri village, or buried in other mass graves in the vicinity of Sintuwulemba).131 One man who was still alive in the mosque when the kelompok merah members returned, said that they killed anyone showing signs of life and then loaded the bodies into their truck. The man himself played dead and was able to escape because there were too many bodies for the truck to transport in one trip, he recalled.132

125 ‘Kami Dibantai Seperti Menebas Batang Pisang’, Suara Hidayatullah, July 2000. The figure of 70 people is sourced from the deposition of Sutarmin in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 10 June 2000, p. 2.
126 Record of testimony of Sutarmin in Tibo decision, p. 29, deposition of Sutarmin in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 10 June 2000, p. 2.
127 Interview with Poso men, July 2003. A variation on this assertion is that most of those killed died while trying to cross the Poso river to flee. This is unlikely to be true (there were no similar large-scale casualties when other groups of people crossed the river), but the assertion is interesting because it is effectively an admission from Christians that a lot of people were killed.
128 Damanik and Posende, Catatan Peristiwa Konflik di Desa Sintuwulemba: Pesantren Walisongo.
129 Interview with a former GKST Crisis Center member, July 2003.
130 A Muslim survivor account and the CC statement say the mosque was not set alight, but a picture of the mosque published in July 2000 shows the building burned by that point. See “‘Mereka Biadab, Mereka Lebih Rendah dari Binatang’”, MAL, First week, July 2000, p. 13. Also record of Ngabidun Djaelani testimony in Tibo decision, p. 31. Damanik and Posende, Catatan Peristiwa Konflik di Desa Sintuwulemba: Pesantren Walisongo.
131 Deposition of Sutarmin in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 10 June 2000, pp. 2-3.
This initial massacre was not the end of the chain of events. Over the course of the next four days, some of the survivors of the first two clashes at the school were rounded up by the kelompok merah, along with other Sintuwulemba residents. Some of those captured had been sheltered by local families during the intervening days, who reportedly defied a threat that those caught harbouring escapees would themselves be abducted and killed. A large group were found sheltering in fields near Tambaro village, not far from Sintuwulemba, and were taken captive by the kelompok merah on 31 May. One of these captives estimated there were approximately 28 males and eighteen women and children.

The treatment of the men, women and children differed. The men were tied up and led by foot to the Ranononcu village hall, where they were tortured. The men were also questioned, with the deposition of one survivor indicating the captives were asked who among them had taken part in the attacks on Lombogia ward in April 2000. This version is consistent with some material in a Tibo deposition, but another survivor’s account makes no mention of this line of questioning. After this ill-treatment, the men were loaded onto a truck and taken back to Tagolu, stopping at a spot used to quarry gravel from the Poso River. Here the men were unloaded from the truck and most were killed. (A survivor suggests 28 men suffered this fate (although three escaped).)

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134 Deposition of Untung Djumadi in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 10 June 2000, p. 2; record of testimony of Untung Djumadi in Palu District Court Decision no. 51/Pid.B/2001/PN.PALU. in case of Heri Mangkawa and Ferry Nandus Kuhe, p. 7. The highest estimate of male captives, made by a witness in the trial of two Tambaro men, was 48 people, another witness in the same trial estimated that there were around 40 captives, without specifying gender. See record of testimony of Hajriah alias Popi and of Sutarmin in Palu District Court Decision no. 51/PID.B./2001/PN.PALU. in case of Herry Mangkawa and Ferry Nandus Kuhe, pp. 7-8.
135 See deposition of Sutarmin in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 10 June 2000, p. 4.
136 Recording of Darwis Waru interview with II made available to the author. A comment attributed to Fabianus Tibo in his dossier reads: “I said to the red crowds (Christians) around that location (Tagolu) that prisoners should be asked if they were involved in the burning of Christians’ houses in Lombogia, and if not they should be taken to the Poso (military) company headquarters (in Kawua).” To the question of what he told people to do if someone admitted involvement in the Lombogia violence, the dossier records the somewhat implausible answer that Tibo instructed that such captives be handed over to the security forces; Tibo’s deposition goes on to elaborate that four Javanese men admitted that they had burned houses, and so were taken to Kilo 4 and then left to make their own way into the city, presumably in the hope they would turn themselves in. See deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 28 July 2000, pp. 5-6.
137 Recording of Darwis Waru interview with “II” made available to the author.
The women and children were held for several days in the Tambaro village hall. On the night of 1 June 2000, according to the subsequent testimony of several of the women in court trials, they were sexually assaulted, as *kelompok merah* members searched the women’s genitals to check for concealed magic amulets. The women were then allowed to march to the military company headquarters in Kawua in the southern part of the city.

We are never likely to be able to fully recover the reasons why the men in the mosque were killed. If there was in fact a premeditated plan to do so, it is unlikely anyone would admit as much given the virtual certainty that they would face severe legal sanctions. It is possible that the first killings occurred out of the chance opportunity presented by Sintuwulemba’s position as an enclave. This left the Muslim men little chance to flee, whereas on the Lage-Tojo front there was more opportunity to flee both by land and sea. Even in this second scenario, I suspect the killings would have required one or several leaders to order others or themselves to start perpetrating murder on such a large scale. Whereas the first murders on 28 May could have been a product of the circumstances immediately after a clash, the subsequent murder of captives could only have been planned. We are left to wonder though whether these later killings were intended to conceal the 28 May murders, or simply reflected the fact that some combatants had now crossed the threshold of mass killing.

Police never properly investigated this massacre, meaning that we do not have as clear a picture of the identity of the perpetrators as in some other incidents later in the conflict. A firmer idea of exactly who was involved would likely aid interpretation of what factors led to the massacre. In the absence of more detailed information, the testimony of these women and the few men who survived provide a preliminary indication of the composition of the forces responsible for the Walisongo massacre, as do the statements made in their own defence by the people these survivors accused.

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139 Indeed, the literature on Poso does not provide a detailed treatment of why so many may have been killed at Walisongo. The most common explanation has simply noted that Sintuwulemba was a minority (ethnic and religious) enclave. See Sangaji, “Pembakaran Rumput Kering”, p.8, Ecip and Waru, *Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya*, p. 86.
140 In 2006, police quietly re-interviewed many of the Christian men whose names had been associated with the Walisongo massacre as well as others who were rumoured to be key *kelompok merah* leaders or combatants. More publicly, police also disinterred the remains of seven people believed to be victims of the Walisongo violence from a mass grave in Tambaro village in May 2006. I have not been able to
Some of the men named as perpetrators were from the Tagolu posko, while others were residents of Christian-populated villages near Sintuwulemba. From the posko, Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus were each indicted for involvement in the murders, although each denied taking part.\textsuperscript{141} In a prison interview, Tibo instead suggested it was Erik Rombot, Bakte Lateka and Fentje Angkouw who had gone to the school from the posko.\textsuperscript{142} Regarding the later capture of escapees in the vicinity of Tambaro village, two Tambaro residents, Heri Mangkawa and Feri Nandus Kuhe were convicted of abduction occasioning death. A witness at their trial also testified regarding the involvement of two other men, Roy Yara and Agus Paelamara.\textsuperscript{143} Another male captive, “Il”, said in an interview with the media that four of the men at the Ranononcu hall had spoken using Poso and Mori language.\textsuperscript{144} This is not sufficient information to identify who these four men may have been, but does suggest they were not Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus.

As details of the violence at Walisongo came to light, the massacre became a short-hand for violence by Christians against Muslims in Poso during the third period, and a rallying point for Muslims around Indonesia to come to Poso in the subsequent months and years.\textsuperscript{145} At the time the massacre occurred, however, news of the killings was slow to emerge, with media reports published as late as 31 May listing only twelve people killed in all the clashes to that point in the third period. Several times that number had in fact been killed by that time in Walisongo alone.\textsuperscript{146} There is little doubt that this delayed reporting of the full extent of the violence in Poso slowed any sense of urgency in making an effective response to the violence.

\textsuperscript{141} For details of the evidence against these men and their own versions of the events at Walisongo, see McRae, “Criminal Justice and Communal Conflict”, pp. 91, 94-95, 97.
\textsuperscript{142} Interview with Fabianus Tibo, July 2003. In a subsequent interview, Bakte Lateka denied the allegation that he was involved.
\textsuperscript{143} Record of testimony of Untung Djamadi in Defence Plea of Hery Mangkawa and Ferry Nandus Kuhe, 7 June 2001, p. 5; record of testimony of Untung Djamadi in Hery Mangkawa and Ferry Nandus Kuhe decision, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{144} Recording of Darwis Waru interview with “Il” made available to the author.
\textsuperscript{145} The massacre also dominated the law enforcement response – dozens of arrests were made for other incidents, but at least five of the six heaviest sentences handed down in the aftermath of the third period – three death sentences, a twelve year sentence and an eight year sentence, all arose from the alleged involvement of the defendants in the massacre or its aftermath. See Decision in case of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva and Marinus Riuw (co-defendants), Decision in case of Hery Mangkawa and Ferry Nandus Kuhe (co-defendants).
\textsuperscript{146} See, for example, “Poso Diserang dari Empat Penjuru”, Mercusuar, 31 May 2000.
Even with the inadequate reportage by the provincial press of the extent of the violence in Poso, some Muslims in Palu did attempt to come to their co-religionists’ aid in late May. The main example was a group of several dozen men calling themselves Laskar Jihad Al-Khairaat, who left Palu for Poso on the evening of 27 May. The group’s name referred to Palu-based Islamic organisation Al-Khairaat. Although an Al-Khairaat cleric saw the men off, the group does not appear to have enjoyed the organisation’s unequivocal endorsement, as a more senior member of the organisation, Saggaf Aldjufri, publicly expressed his disagreement with their departure.

In order to reach Poso town by road, the Laskar Jihad Al-Khairaat convoy first needed to pass through the coastal sub-district, Poso Pesisir. This proved to be impossible. Even before the men left Palu, the kelompok merah leader A. L. Lateka had arrived in Poso Pesisir to organise Christians to attack Muslim villages there. In the early morning on 28 May, clashes took place in Kasiguncu, Bega and Mapane, a cluster of villages close to the western fringe of Poso town. Even before these clashes, villagers in Poso Pesisir had set up obstructions on the road and established guard posts, but both Muslim and Christian residents of the area attributed the start of large-scale fighting to crowds brought from elsewhere in Poso Pesisir (allegedly by Lateka). A Muslim resident of Mapane said his village was warned by local authorities hours before it was attacked that an armed crowd of Christians wanted to pass through the village to enter the city, and that his village should remove obstructions from the road. The village complied, hoping to thereby secure its own safety. When the crowd did start to move towards the city, it split into two groups at a T-junction in the road. Half headed for the city and attacked Mapane and Bega villages, whereas the other half headed in the opposite direction.

147 The convoy may have swelled as it passed through Muslim areas in Parigi. A villager in Poso described the convoy as numbering in the hundreds, and another villager described the men as “help from Parigi”. Interview with Tokorondo resident, January 2002; interview with a Poso man, July 2003; “Laskar Jihad Alkhairaat Kirim Pasukan ke Poso”, Surya, 29 May 2000.
149 See Deposition of Fabianus Tibo in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 26 July 2000, p. 7; Interview with a former resident of Poso Pesisir, July 2007. References to the dates of attacks in Poso Pesisir are inconsistent, sometimes even within the one account. There is not always sufficient basis to eliminate all but one possibility, and it cannot be stated with certainty on which date many of the events described in the text took place. I have endeavoured to establish the correct date for each incident through comparison of multiple sources, but I have indicated alternative possible dates for many of the clashes in Poso Pesisir in the footnotes.
150 Interview with a former resident of Poso Pesisir, July 2007; Tengko, Sekilas tentang Kerusuhan Poso III, p. 2. One Muslim-authored chronology lists these clashes taking place on 27 May. See FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 18.
direction towards Palu to attack other Muslim settlements. A Christian villager from Poso Pesisir who was part of the crowd that headed for Palu recalled Lateka and around five associates coming to his village in late May to recruit a crowd to fight, with Lateka himself brandishing a pistol.

We here [in this village], we really didn’t want to take part. But there was a leader who forced us ... he’s dead now, Lateka, yes, Lateka came here. He said “If you don’t take part then you’re not a Christian, and if there’s anyone who can’t be used [for the fighting], then we’d be better off just killing them so that they’re good for something.” So we took part.152

After joining Lateka, the man recalled, they reached Saatu on the first day of attacking Muslim settlements (most probably 28 May) and Tokorondo the next, although this sequence of attacks is not consistent with some other accounts. Indeed, although the details of each individual clash in Saatu and Tokorondo are relatively clear, it has been impossible to establish the precise sequence of events, with different accounts providing conflicting dates.153 Regardless of the timing, when Lateka and his recruits attacked Tokorondo (either on 28 or 29 May), they crossed paths with the Laskar Jihad Alkhairaat convoy, which was still on its way to Poso, and the two groups clashed.154

Even with the support of the men from Palu, Muslims in Tokorondo were overwhelmed.

We held on, even though we knew that we could not resist them, as we could see how many of them there were, and we knew they had weapons,155 so we fell back bit by bit, resisting for a while, then falling back a bit, all the way back to the edge of our village. At the border of our village, we forced ourselves to hold on, because there were still a lot of women and children in the village. Not all the houses in our village were burned at that point, but several days later, nineteen of the younger people in our village went back to

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151 Interview with a Mapane resident, July 2007. On this point, see also Tim Pencari Bukti, Fajar Merah Saga, p. 9, which criticises Muslims in Poso for their perceived naivety in complying with the request to clear the road, and Ecip and Waru, Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya, pp. 75-76.

152 Interview with a villager in Poso Pesisir, February 2002.

153 The fact that the village’s men participated in multiple days of attacks raises doubts over just how important coercion was to their recruitment as combatants. Another Christian man who was wounded in the Tokorondo clash made no mention of coercion, reportedly telling the press that everyone in his village had participated in the attack because they feared their village was under threat, but that he had simply piled into a truck without knowing where he would be fighting. The overall model of violence that the interviewee suggests, however - a few core combatants joining with larger numbers of local villagers - is consistent with other descriptions of the Poso Pesisir violence. See “Hanya Dendam Pada Penindas”, Formasi, 47, June 2000, p. 6. Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

154 The Palu-based Formasi tabloid suggested the clash with the men from Palu in fact took place in Masamba village, several kilometres from Tokorondo. See “Mempertahankan Desa Takurondo”, Formasi, 47, June 2000, p. 7; “Kronologis Kerusuhan Jilid III”, Formasi, 47, June 2000, p. 5; FSIR, Derita Muslim Poso, p. 20.

155 Regarding weapons, the interviewee elaborated, “[When they attacked], we didn’t see what weapons they were using, but we have evidence that our villagers suffered gun-shot wounds from real bullets, and that we heard continuous streams of gunfire, meaning they had genuine weapons (i.e. factory standard).”
see if there were any of our villagers lying dead there, but we met with the *kelompok merah* and had to run to the sea and flee by boat, after which the rest of our village was burned.

In the course of this clash, one of the men from Palu, Abdul Jihad, was shot in the head and died.\textsuperscript{156} Several Tokorondo residents may also have been killed. Local villagers recalled that after Jihad was shot, the men from Palu turned back.

Hundreds of people arrived from Palu, and the situation became more heated. But they came empty-handed, what did they expect to do. [Our foe] had long-range weapons [ie firearms]. One of them fell on the road [Abdul Jihad, shot in the head] and they [ie, the men from Palu] said, “We’re pulling out.”\textsuperscript{157}

Like the men from Ampana who had approached Poso from the opposite direction four days earlier, the Laskar Jihad Al-Khairaat group do not appear to have accurately anticipated the extent of the escalation of the violence at this time, compared with the level of violence during the first and second periods. The preparedness of Christians took Muslims by surprise, especially those outside Poso. This weakens the argument that the Poso violence was the result of snowballing in any direct sense from Ambon. Clearly Muslims had not anticipated that the violence would escalate as far as it did, and did not fully appreciate how the violence had changed until experiencing this change directly. Weight of numbers had been sufficient to prevail in confrontations between crowds in December 1998 and April 2000, and an individual could participate in the clashes during those riots without significant risk of death. By the May 2000 violence, some combatants were using crude home-made firearms (*senjata rakitan*) that could fire factory-standard ammunition, and it is possible that the few military and police who joined the ranks of the fighters may have also used their guns. Although many of the men fighting on the Christian side were ad hoc recruits like their Muslim opponents, the core of organised combatants on the *kelompok merah* side helped to give them the advantage.

It would still be several more days after the clash in Tokorondo described above before the intensity of violence throughout Poso began to decline significantly. The marker for this decline was the death of A. L. Lateka in Kayamanya ward on 2 June 2000.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} In some sources, the man’s name is written Abu Djihad. See Ecip and Waru, *Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya*, p. 80; “Mempertahankan Desa Takurondo”, *Formasi*, June 2000, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{157} Interview with a Tokorondo resident, January 2002. Corroborated by interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

\textsuperscript{158} Some accounts of the third period list Lateka’s death as occurring on 26 May or 5 June. The correct date is 2 June. See “Kerusuhan Poso Pecah Lagi Jumat Pagi, Dua Tewas”, *Suara Pembaruan*, 2 June
Lateka was killed when a convoy of Christians he was leading into the city from Poso Pesisir was blocked by Muslim youths near the Kayamanya mosque. As with most incidents during the third period, the different accounts of this event contradict each other. Many Christian accounts suggest Lateka was tricked into coming to the city by the newly installed Poso police chief, Djasman Baso Opu, on the pretext of holding a parade.\textsuperscript{159} Supporting this interpretation, one of the men who claimed to have taken part in Lateka’s convoy that day said that Lateka had told his recruits not to worry about bringing along all of their gear.\textsuperscript{160} In contrast, a Muslim man who was in Kayamanya at the time interpreted Lateka’s convoy as an attack, and one that the ward’s residents had been awaiting for several days.\textsuperscript{161} Lateka had been beaten to death when attempting to come to the assistance of an aide, Christian women Paulina Da’i, who was also killed in the clash, the man recalled. Christians disputed this version, claiming Brimob personnel had shot Lateka in the head.\textsuperscript{162}

There are several possible explanations for the decline in violence after Lateka’s death, none of which are mutually exclusive. One option is to focus on the agency of the individual, namely the loss of impetus inherent in the death of one of the kelompok merah’s key leaders. The shoot-on-sight order for rioters in Poso instituted by police the day before Lateka’s death could be a second explanation. Police had made immediate use of this order, shooting dead two men and wounding two others in Toini village in Poso Pesisir sub-district on 1 June, and possibly also felling Lateka the next day.\textsuperscript{163} The increased risk of death for Christian combatants that this order created may have temporarily dissuaded all but the most committed from taking part in attacks. It is also possible that Christians may already have attacked most of the areas that they were able to reach by the time Lateka was killed. Vast numbers of people had by then fled the district and most Muslim-populated villages had been burned, while the police and military were defending some of the untouched areas in the city. Key Christian

\textsuperscript{2000} News of Lateka’s death could appear in Suara Pembaruan on the day he was killed because Suara Pembaruan is an evening newspaper.

\textsuperscript{159} Note the parallel with the version of Herman Parimo’s involvement in the December 1998 violence, where a Christian man maintained Parimo had been deceived into leading a crowd of Christians into the city at the request of then district head Arief Patanga.

\textsuperscript{160} Interview with a Poso man, January 2002.

\textsuperscript{161} Interview with a Kayamanya resident, January 2002.

\textsuperscript{162} Interview with a Kayamanya resident, January 2002. A Brimob shooting would be consistent with the shoot-on-sight directive issued to police in Poso the day before Lateka was killed. See “Kerusuhan Poso Pecah Lagi Jumat Pagi, Dua Tewas”, Suara Pembaruan, 2 June 2000.

\textsuperscript{163} “Kerusuhan Poso Pecah Lagi Jumat Pagi, Dua Tewas”, Suara Pembaruan, 2 June 2000.
combatants may also have started to experience “battle” fatigue after more than a week of fighting.

The day after Lateka died, there appear to have been no major clashes on any of the three main fronts of violence. There was then a further sequence of attacks in Poso Pesisir on 4-5 June, and two more attacks on the Lage-Tojo front on 5-6 June.\footnote{Aditjondro suggest burning of kampung started in earnest only after Lateka’s death. The information I have from press reports and interviews does not bear out this assertion.}

Security Forces Intervene

Finally, at the end of the first week of June 2000, the security forces began to make a concerted push into Poso to try to put a stop to the violence. The police sent around 280 Brimob personnel from Jakarta to Poso in the early hours of 7 June. The military also dispatched a task force from Makassar under the leadership of infantry colonel M. Slamet, comprising six company-equivalent units (Satuan Setingkat Kompi - SSK).\footnote{"Enam SSK dan Kendaraan Tempur Kodam VII Siap ke Poso", Pedoman Rakyat, pp.1, 16. Two companies of paramilitary police (Brimob) from Pare-Pare in South Sulawesi may also have travelled to Poso as part of this task force, although I was not able to confirm this detail.}

Admittedly, these were not the first reinforcements police and military had sent to Poso during the third period. By 28 May, police had sent three SSK (approximately 300 personnel to Poso) as well as a Brimob platoon and were planning to send another SSK of Brimob.\footnote{"Polda Mulai Ambil Tindakan Tegas", Mercusuar, 29 May 2000.} It is clear that these deployments were inadequate. By the time the Brimob personnel from Jakarta went to Poso on 7 June, the provincial police chief Soeroso said there were already six SSK of police and military in Poso.\footnote{"Danrem: Kelompok Merah Aktif Menyerang", Mercusuar, 7 June 2000, p. 11.} Yet the security forces’ response to the May-June 2000 violence was far too slow, and in some of the specific cases outlined above, negligent in the extreme.

Inevitably, such tardiness and negligence has fuelled conspiracy theories centring on the security forces’ perceived desire to profit economically from unrest in Poso, establish a second regional military command in Sulawesi, or even to discredit the national-level civilian government.\footnote{See, for example, George Yunus Aditjondro, Pemekaran Kodam di Sulawesi, (Jakarta: NDI, 2002), p. 10.} Although it is clear that some security forces personnel did profit from the conflict and claims of other conspiracies must be investigated, there is no clear evidence that senior officers harboured sinister intentions. A degree of the
tardiness may be attributable to the same failure to appreciate the full seriousness of the situation that was evident in the provincial press’s slow realisation of the full extent of the murder that had taken place in Poso. The urgency of the security forces’ response to the third period violence also would not have been helped by the rivalry between the military and the police in the wake of the separation of the two forces in April 1999. In the context of the May-June 2000 violence, the two forces quarrelled over the procedure for the police to request military assistance, as well as over the chain of command when police and military personnel were operating simultaneously in Poso. Such behaviour is less surprising when we recall the visit to Poso by the military commander responsible for all of Sulawesi immediately after the April 2000 violence, described in Chapter Two. During this trip the commander appears to have taken some pleasure in emphasising that it was the police who were responsible for (the lack of) security in the district.

On the day after the Brimob personnel from Jakarta arrived in Poso, 8 June, the police finally disbanded the Tagolu posko, seizing weapons including 27 dum-dum, a senjata rakitan (home-made firearm), fifteen slingshots and 550 arrows. On the same day, the police also sponsored a peace meeting between kelompok merah representatives (including Tibo) and several Muslim men in Malei Lage village. Both the Deputy Head of Central Sulawesi Police and the newly appointed Poso Police Chief, Superintendent Djasman Baso Opu, attended the meeting. The next day, another peace meeting was held in Tentena, again attended by the two senior police and Tibo, as well as Tibo’s associate Dominggus and a Christian minister from the GKST Crisis Centre, Rinaldy Damanik. At the meeting, Damanik read out “Lateka’s mandate”, the letter reproduced earlier in this chapter. After the Tentena meeting, the community in Poso were given one week to hand in any weapons they possessed.

There is little information about how the kelompok merah demobilised from the Tagolu posko. Two important combatants said that they went into hiding for several months after the posko was disbanded to avoid encountering the security forces. One hid in Toraja district in South Sulawesi; the other moved around different villages in the south.

170 “Kelompok Merah akan Turun Poso”, Mercusuar, 10 June 2000.
of the district.\textsuperscript{172} Other combatants interviewed said simply that after the early June peace meetings, those at the posko returned to their respective villages.\textsuperscript{173} Another account comes from two interrogation depositions provided by a Christian woman, Ros Kristina. Her account is described here briefly, but it is problematic. Because the depositions were made in the course of an investigation into Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu, her comments focus on these three men, particularly Tibo and Dominggus. More seriously, Kristina did not appear as witness in the men’s trial, meaning the depositions were not subjected to scrutiny in court, and I do not have other information to assist in evaluation of the depositions’ credibility. Nonetheless, the depositions state that on the day the posko was disbanded, Tibo ordered those at the posko to leave, but reassured them that the posko’s dissolution was not the end of their struggle, and they would again attack Muslims once the security forces had left. Kristina continued that Dominggus picked her up that night and took her to Kelei, stopping at each village along the road to tell each community to remain on guard.\textsuperscript{174} She then describes Dominggus and Tibo returning to their home village, Beteleme, and says she also met A. L. Lateka’s brother, Bakte, when she travelled to Beteleme.\textsuperscript{175}

By the time of the Tentena meeting on 9 June, both the police and military had established separate security operations in Poso. The police operation was code-named “Sadar Maleo”.\textsuperscript{176} The military, although professing to be under the operational coordination of the police, established their own “Cinta Damai” (Love Peace) Task Force using personnel from Makassar in South Sulawesi. Both police and military personnel engaged in sweeping operations to seize weapons from the community. Within the first week after the Tentena meeting each operation had seized hundreds (perhaps thousands) of weapons. Most weapons were crude and home-made, but the security forces also seized factory-standard ammunition.\textsuperscript{177}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{172} Interviews with Poso men, July 2007.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Interviews with Tentena residents, July 2003.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Deposition of Ros Kristina in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 6 July 2000, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{175} Deposition of Ros Kristina in dossier of Fabianus Tibo, 7 July 2000, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{176} The maleo is an endangered bird, which was at one point found in plentiful numbers in Poso. “Sadar Maleo” means “Aware of the Maleo”. Thankyou to Syamsul Alam Agus for explaining the connection of the maleo bird to Poso.
\item \textsuperscript{177} For details of weapons seized, see “Ratusan Senjata Tajam Disita di Poso”, Kompas, 12 June 2000; “TNI Sita Amunisi Buatan Luar Negeri”, Pedoman Rakyat, 13 June 2000, pp. 1, 3; “Tim Operasi Cinta Damai Sita 750 Butir Amunisi”, Pedoman Rakyat, 17 June 2000, pp. 1, 11.
\end{itemize}
By late June 2000, the security forces were also finding mass graves. At least 74 bodies were found in at least four different villages. Nineteen bodies were found in three separate graves in Tagolu; 34 bodies were found in two separate locations in Pandiri, eleven bodies were found dumped in marshland near Sintuwulemba, while eighteen bodies were found in Padang Marari village near the western shore of Lake Poso in Pamona Selatan sub-district. Some reports said the Tagolu graves were very shallow, with three bodies lying only five centimetres below the surface. In the Pandiri sites, the bodies had been burned before being dumped into a gorge. Many other bodies had simply been dumped in the Poso river and left to float out to sea. Whatever preparations Christians had made for this third period of violence, a plan to properly conceal the extent of the killing does not appear to have been part of them.

After the initial conciliatory approach of the peace meetings in Malei and Tagolu, both the police and military began to make arrests. In all, more than 150 people were taken into custody over a period of several months following the third period. As Christians were at this point responsible for the majority of the worst of the violence in the conflict, many more Christians than Muslims were arrested. The arrests, however, were not completely one-sided. Muslims arrested included the twin brothers suspected of deliberately instigating violence in the earlier April 2000 riot, suspects for the murder of PDI-P politician Gerald Polii, who was abducted and then beaten and stabbed to death in Poso town on 29 May, as well as six men arrested in early August in Lawanga when found in possession of senjata rakitan, other weapons and several dozen bullets. There is at present no complete data-set of who was arrested or of the result of those cases that were brought to trial. The arrests do not appear to have been based on any systematic attempt to understand the kelompok merah command structure, however, or to prioritise particular incidents of violence. The highest profile arrests were those of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu, with Tibo and Dominggus in particular having been repeatedly named in press coverage as key fugitives prior to being taken into custody. Each of the three men were sentenced to death in April 2001,

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178 Overall, according to the governor's report on the violence, 111 bodies were recovered from mass graves. Unfortunately the report does not list the locations of the graves. See Laporan Gubernur Propinsi Sulawesi Tengah, p. 7.
and executed just over six years later. The two Tambaro residents arrested in connection with the Walisongo massacre were sentenced to twelve and eight years respectively, while another Christian man, Sarlis, received a ten year sentence. Most of the men who appear to have been key kelompok merah members were either not arrested, arrested on only a minor charge, or in a few cases arrested and subsequently released without trial. This undermined the contribution criminal justice could have made to stemming the violence, both because key perpetrators remained at large and because the public were aware that these perpetrators enjoyed impunity, further fuelling a sense of injustice.

Efforts to make arrests may also have been undermined by the religious solidarities of law enforcement personnel. For example, the combatant mentioned above who hid in Toraja district after the kelompok merah posko was disbanded said he in fact encountered security forces intelligence officers there, but the men knew him personally and did not report him. Although left unstated, the implication was that these Christian intelligence officers would not turn in a fellow Christian. Another kelompok merah leader said he had been apprehended by security forces personnel at one point during the third period when returning from an attack but the men were Christians and let him go.

A few police and military also came under suspicion of direct involvement in the violence or of providing support to one side or the other. Twenty nine members of the Poso district military command were investigated in connection with the May-June violence, although media reports suggest as few as two of these men may have been formally established as suspects. Senior provincial police also indicated to the media that around fifteen members of the Poso Resort police were under suspicion, characterising the extent of these men’s involvement as failing to be neutral because of feelings of (ethno-religious) solidarity. One of those reportedly under investigation

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181 For a detailed discussion of the three men’s trial and their execution in the context of the criminal justice approach to Poso, see McRae, “Criminal Justice and Communal Conflict”.
182 Ecip and Waru, Kerusuhan Poso yang Sebenarnya, pp. 120-121.
was the Lage sectoral police chief, the man who left his post in Tagolu on the day that Walisongo massacre started nearby.

The provincial government also formed a reconciliation team for Poso after the May-June 2000 violence, under the leadership of vice-governor Kiesman Abdullah. The team made its first trip to Poso in mid-July, and thereafter set about organising several elite-level peace initiatives. The most prominent among these initiatives was a peace meeting attended by President Abdurrahman Wahid, several ministers, the national police and military chiefs and Governor Paliudju on 22 August. Dubbed the *Rujuk Sintuwu Maroso* (Sintuwu Maroso Reconciliation), the ceremony took the form of a Pamona-ethnic *adat* rite, with fourteen *adat* representatives signing a broadly-worded statement agreeing to commit to peace and support law enforcement measures against those responsible for violence. After so many people had been killed, seen their houses destroyed or otherwise been displaced, this meeting never had much chance of success as a stand-alone initiative. The ceremony’s chances of success were further reduced because most of the *adat* figures appear to have had little direct connection with any of the preceding periods of violence. Onlookers jeered the ceremony even as it was taking place, and none of my interviewees attributed a significant influence to this ceremony in affecting the dynamics of the violence.

Despite the flurry of police and military activity following the disbandment of the Tagolu *posko*, sporadic violence continued after the third period. A small group of armed men stopped a bus on the southern outskirts of the city on 19 June and dragged a Muslim passenger from Kayamanya ward off the vehicle to beat him. Curiously, the men did not kill the passenger, but signalled the bus as it was driving off to return the passenger, who was then treated at Poso hospital. See “Poso Kembali Mencekam”, *Mercusuar*, date not recorded, “Lewat Poso, Penumpang Bus Trauma”, *Mercusuar*, date not recorded.
Three days later, the police shot dead three men in the vicinity of Pinedapa-Saatu in response to a disturbance in which 30 houses were burned. Another vehicle was stopped in Pinedapa village, and two Muslim passengers were shot, but survived to receive treatment. Muslim-owned houses located in majority-Christian areas, and vice-versa, were also burned sporadically. Around the same time, Muslims began preparations in several locations in and around Poso to take revenge for the May-June 2000 violence. By late 2000 and particularly early 2001, these preparations would lead to a resumption of more concerted violence.

Conclusion

An understanding of the May-June 2000 violence is crucial to overall analysis of the Poso conflict, as it was during this period that the intensity of the violence escalated to mass killing and Poso became a site of protracted inter-religious conflict. At the outset of this chapter, I highlighted two key differences between the May-June 2000 violence and the two riots that preceded it: first, the emergence of the kelompok merah as a new combatant entity, and second, the lack of a direct link to district politics, thereby necessitating a renewed look at the motivations of combatants. I will now return to these points.

In the body of this chapter, I have traced the formation of an organised core of Christian leaders and combatants, as well as the movements of the individual members of this core around the district during the third period of violence. The members of this organised core were not recognised local politicians, although some were civil servants, nor did they occupy positions of formal authority in the Central Sulawesi Christian Church. Instead the leaders were typically figures of some previous social standing, but who rose to particular prominence in the third period because they were motivated to fight on account of direct losses for themselves or their families during the December 1998 or April 2000 violence. These individuals made a significant commitment to the cause: some of them would have been intensively involved for over a month by the time they trained in Kelei and then fought for the two weeks of violence from late May to early June. This level of commitment was new – combatants in the first and second periods fought only for hours or at most a few days. This core of combatants established

193 "Danrem: Mereka Geromblan Biadab", Mercusuar, date not recorded.
as their prime enemies the “provokator” and “perusuh” from the December 1998 and April 2000 violence, but it is clear that their targets went further. The training they conducted and the weapons they manufactured were clearly intended for a larger scale of violence than just the targeting of just a few men, for instance. In the end, as described above, at least 246 people were killed, with not a single person from the initial list of key provokator among them.

The influence of these core kelompok merah combatants on the violence was immense. They determined the timing of the start of the third period of violence by attacking Kayamanya and Moengko wards on 23 May. They put in place a structure to support a prolonged period of violence by establishing the posko as a staging point in Tagolu. They appear to have strongly influenced the geographic spread of the violence through their personal presence at clashes.

The influence of core combatants on the geographic expansion of violence has interesting implications for the puzzling phenomenon of neighbour attacking neighbour, which has attracted great analytical attention in the literature on inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence. A common explanation is that totalisation of identity overcomes previous familiarity – in the context of the May-June violence this would mean that neighbours were no longer seen as individuals but instead as Muslim adversaries. Indeed, it is clear that neighbours in Poso did begin to perceive each other as a threat during the third period – hence the two cases in which neighbouring villages entered into negotiations to try to secure a local peace. (In the event, neither of these agreements held.) But in Poso, these neighbours appeared to actually have attacked each other – as opposed to fearing each other – only after co-religionists from elsewhere arrived. Hence local villagers clashed in Bategencu after Muslims from Ampana arrived, and continued the next day when kelompok merah members from the posko came to reinforce Christian crowds. Clashes started in Poso Pesisir after Lateka and/or other kelompok merah leaders came and mobilised Christian villagers to fight as crowds.

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195 “Poso Kembali Bergolak”, Mercusuar, date not recorded. I was not able to establish on what date this particular incident took place.
The core group of the *kelompok merah* also established from the very first attack, when they murdered three men whom they encountered on the road, that the third period would involve killings. In fact, core combatants appear to have been central to the escalation to mass killings. As much is evident from the significant proportion of prisoners or over-powered combatants among fatalities for the third period. As many as half or more of those killed in the third period may have been murdered prisoners of the *kelompok merah*. I draw this conclusion for two reasons. First, the high number of people found in mass graves, suggesting these people were killed in groups. Second, although people were killed in clashes between crowds, where we have records of these clashes the fatalities are invariably only in single digits. I would argue that it was most likely core combatants, and not random rank-and-file individuals, who were killing most of the prisoners.

The paradox of the influence of these leaders, however, is that when acting by themselves, the group at the core of the *kelompok merah* were weak. When they attacked the city on 23 May as a small group of combatants, they were forced to beat a hasty and haphazard retreat. Indeed, this 23 May attack showed that the core group were not even particularly well armed, as they used machetes and considered a policeman’s pistol a valuable enough trophy for them to seize it. In short, the core group of the *kelompok merah* needed crowds to be able to operate. Without the participation of crowds – either drawn from the hundreds who came to Tagolu or recruited ad hoc at each site of violence - the core group may not have had the manpower even for one large-scale attack, let alone simultaneous attacks on multiple fronts. Beyond providing foot-soldiers for attacks, crowds were also essential to the *kelompok merah* enterprise because they precipitated a general breakdown of law and order in Poso. With security forces unable or insufficiently determined to move around the district, the *posko* in Tagolu was able to operate largely unimpeded.

Thus it is clear that the violence of the third period was mass violence, to which the ad hoc participation of thousands of Christian residents of Poso was crucial. Given that confrontations between crowds involving hundreds of people may often have resulted in only a few deaths, it is quite possible that most ad hoc combatants among these crowds did not personally perpetrate violence that was any more serious than was the norm in the first and second period riots. As I have already stated, it is more likely that it was the
core combatants who were responsible for many of the murders at the heart of the third period. But even if they did not personally perpetrate murders, the participation of these rank-and-file - en masse - was a part of the conditions that enabled these crimes to happen.

The example of the Walisongo massacre illustrates the importance of crowds in producing a situation that enabled mass killings, even when the crowds may not have been involved directly in the violence. This massacre was a set of related incidents that took place over at least four days. If news of the initial killings on 28 May had surfaced more quickly, or it had been easier for security forces to reach the areas where the massacre was taking place, it is plausible to imagine that the later killings could have been prevented.

On a more mundane level, local Christians would also have played an important role as guides to kelompok merah combatants from other parts of Poso, who otherwise would not have been as familiar with the local lay of the land as the Muslim villagers they were attacking. Indeed, Muslim villagers in different parts of Poso were convinced the violence against their village could not have succeeded without their Christian neighbours pointing crowds towards the weak-points of their village’s defences.

Yet as crucial as crowds and local Christian populations were to the core group of the kelompok merah, this core group lacked organisational ties to these people. The core group still needed to recruit individuals ad hoc at each site of violence. More research will be required into exactly how this recruitment was achieved, including the relative importance of local leaders, coincidence of interests and coercion.

Before moving on, it is necessary to qualify these statements regarding the importance of leaders and core combatants to the escalation of violence. The importance of the core group notwithstanding, I consider it unlikely that all of the violence during the third period was part of a single, coordinated campaign. Much as the breakdown of law and order allowed the core group to pursue their agenda, it would also have provided the opportunity for other local actors to settle scores or otherwise pursue their own interests. One case we know about, because the victim was high profile, was the murder in the
city of Protestant PDI-P legislator Gerald Polii, seemingly at the behest of Muslim political opponents. But it is also likely that other murders and violence during the third period entailed local communities acting independently of the kelompok merah’s core leadership group.\(^{198}\) Determining now whether or not any single incident is linked to a broader campaign is extremely difficult and often impossible, because of the ubiquitous claims that the violence was “spontaneous” and widespread denial of personal involvement by attributing local violence to forces beyond each village.

If there was scope for individuals to pursue their own interests, there was also space for individuals to resist or ignore the call to violence.\(^{199}\) Every large-scale conflict or riot has examples of individuals who in one way or another help or refuse to kill members of the rival group. Just one example from the third period is provided by the account of a Muslim man, Taiyeb Lamello, who was taken captive by Christians and held at the Tagolu posko. Lamello testified that kelompok merah members from his home village came to the posko to ask that he be allowed to return home to tend to his ailing wife.\(^{200}\) If this account is factual, village allegiances appear to have trumped the broader Muslim-Christian divide in this instance.

If better organisation was crucial to the escalation of violence, what about the question of motivations? In particular, what motivated people – many of whom had also participated in the riots that preceded the third period – to also take part in larger-scale clashes.

One of the more common explanations in the literature for the motivations underpinning an escalation to larger-scale clashes focuses on the role of fear produced by real and anticipated violence. Communities in Poso in May 2000 had every reason to fear that their villages might be attacked: from their experience of the first and second periods, they had seen evidence of the destruction that could be wrought on villages; the movements of people fleeing past or anticipated violence had heightened mutual

\(^{197}\) Within the city, these roles may have been reversed, as a member of the core force described their role as guiding villagers who would otherwise not know their way around the city streets.

\(^{198}\) This might particularly apply to some of the attacks in the south of the district in areas well away from the posko and other centres of kelompok merah activity.

\(^{199}\) This may have varied by geographic location. It is likely there would be greater scope for non-involvement away from border areas between majority-Christian and majority-Muslim areas, for example.

\(^{200}\) Record of testimony of Taiyeb Lamello in *Tibo Decision*, p. 44.
suspicions and sharpened resentment; and, once the third period was underway, villagers in locations the violence had not yet reached were able to see plumes of smoke rising from burnt settlements elsewhere in the district.

The “security dilemma” is one model commonly applied when fear is factored into analysis.\footnote{See, for example, Stuart J. Kaufman, “Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses and Moscow in Moldova’s Civil War”, \textit{International Security} 21,2 (1996): 108-138; David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, “Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict”, \textit{International Security} 21,2 (1996): 41-75. For a critical application of the concept to the dispersion of violence in the North Maluku conflict, see Wilson, \textit{Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia}.} The “security dilemma”, introduced to the study of ethnic and religious violence from the field of international relations by Posen, occurs when the actions one party takes to secure itself from a perceived threat posed by a second party end up making the first party less secure. The dilemma arises in particular, Posen explains, when parties cannot establish whether a potential rival’s military build-up is for offensive or defensive reasons, or when offensive action appears superior to defensive action to ensure survival.\footnote{Barry R. Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict”, \textit{Survival} 35,1 (1993): 28.} The concept appears a poor match for the third period violence in Poso. The preparations made for violence by the kelompok merah, for instance, were not triggered by any misconstrued defensive preparations made by Poso’s Muslims, for example. The concept may have limited applicability in the local-level suspicions that saw villages setting up guard posts and making preparations for violence. But even at this local level, a “security dilemma” does not help us explain why violence appeared to start in many locations only after co-religionists from elsewhere in the district arrived.

A more appropriate model of fear for Poso is provided by Horowitz’s comparative study seeking general features of the “deadly ethnic riot”. Horowitz proposes that rioters are “risk averse”, choosing to attack at a location and time where there is only a moderate risk to their own personal safety.\footnote{Horowitz, \textit{The Deadly Ethnic Riot}, p. 384.}

Angry or aroused people are not necessarily heedless of risk. An impressively wide range of variables affects the rioters’ calculation of risk. Among these are supernatural beliefs in invulnerability, lack of credible opposing force or possible retaliation, societal condemnation (confirmed by the action and inaction of the state), inadequate police deployment, and a variety of risk-averting tactical decisions taken by the rioters themselves.\footnote{Horowitz, \textit{The Deadly Ethnic Riot}, pp. 525-526.}
Horowitz's observation is a generalisation and one drawn from the example of riots at that, and so is not a perfect match for Poso. In particular, I am not convinced that Christians had thought so far ahead as to what retaliation the third period violence might generate, nor that they were as careful in selecting sites for violence as the rioters that Horowitz describes. Indeed, the seeming lack of forward planning is another point that weakens political interpretations of the Poso violence. Nevertheless, I feel that Horowitz's concept of risk aversion leads us to an important insight regarding the violence of the third period. It is clear that the fear or apprehension of being attacked was an important motivation to perpetrate violence. The role of fear is evident both in the local preparations of villages after April 2000 to face possible further clashes, as well as in the stated motivations of kelompok merah leaders, core combatants and a range of other Christian interviewees. But what Horowitz helps to remind us is that for people to stay and fight, or engage in lengthy preparations to fight, they must generally perceive that their fears are surmountable. That is to say, if they fight, they will have a reasonable chance of winning. When the threat of violence – real or anticipated – appeared insurmountable, most people in Poso fled. Hence, in the third period Poso's Muslims – who had every reason to fear they would be attacked – mostly fled if they could when it became evident that they could not counter the violence that Christians were perpetrating. The same pattern was evident, but with the sides reversed, later in the conflict: most Christians also fled during clashes in 2001 and 2002 when it was clear that they could not effectively resist Muslim attacks, as I will explain in the next chapter. Indeed, I believe the decision of most combatants on the weaker side in each clash to flee (if a route of escape was available) rather than fight to the last is part of the reason why clashes between crowds in Poso often produced only a few fatalities.

The particular advantage of thinking about fear in this way is that it allows us to factor fear into our analysis without labelling the thoughts and motivations of local actors as irrational. Horowitz's idea of risk aversion leads us to consider fear as a part of an individual's calculation of their interests, rather than putting interests on one side and fear on the other side of a rational/irrational dichotomy.205 We can then do the same for

some of the other important “emotive” motivations I have identified for the violence in Poso: indignant anger, resentment, contempt and by the third period, a strong desire for revenge. We can then consider how such motivations are part of an individual’s decisions to reformulate their interests and priorities, rather than consigning them to irrationality.

As with the previous chapter, I would like to conclude by considering the influence of the national context on the third period of violence in Poso. The main point of relevance is the accusations raised locally that the third period violence was orchestrated by national level actors. Aragon well sums up a number of these allegations:

Suspects implicated through news media included the entire Poso security "apparatus," the wife of a Jakarta conglomerate leader (isteri konglomerat di Jakarta) who purportedly had assisted the now-slain Lateka to obtain weapons, Indonesian Army personnel (TNI) who had smuggled weapons, and even a German tourist traveling in South Sulawesi.\textsuperscript{206}

To Aragon’s list might be added speculation that Soeharto’s family had planned the conflict, or that often unspecified foreign parties had a hand in the violence.\textsuperscript{207} Such allegations notwithstanding, the actors in the third period violence were overwhelmingly local, as was the scope of the rhetoric justifying the violence, as I have mapped out at some length in this chapter. Of the alleged outside links, I find the allegations that money was sent to Poso from elsewhere in Indonesia to support violence in the district most credible. Significant sums of money were being sent to communities in Poso for humanitarian aid around the time of the third period, and it would be a case of anomalously meticulous and scrupulous financial management if none of this money ended up being used to support the fighting. I should stress, however, that there is a significant gap between people from outside the district donating money and considering those same people to be controlling the violence. In any case, much of the kelompok merah’s activities during the third period would not have needed much in the way of funds.

This impetus to find actors from beyond the district who were secretly responsible for the violence may have in part been a hangover from the experience of Soeharto’s New Order regime. Farid observes that many of the killings that took place during the

\textsuperscript{206} Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso”, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{207} See, for example, “Keluarga Cendana Dalang Kerusuhan Poso”, \textit{MAL} First Week August 2000, p. 6; “Saya Menduga Ada Campurtangan Pihak Asing”, \textit{MAL} Third Week August 2000, p. 10.
Soeharto era could be attributed directly or indirectly to “a dictator and omnipresent military”. With analysts caught “flat-footed” by the inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence after Soeharto’s resignation, Farid suggests, one of the dominant streams of analysis was to continue to view these conflicts through the prism of Soeharto-era state violence: “trying to determine who among the army officers and Suharto’s cronies was the hidden mastermind, or *dalang*, and what his political motives were”.208

What of the question of snowballing from other conflicts in Indonesia, or the borrowing of repertoires from these conflicts? The provincial press occasionally speculated that there may have been direct links between the third period violence in Poso and other conflicts, including one article that mused that a prominent Christian militia leader from North Maluku could be hiding in Poso.209 Such speculation notwithstanding, I have not found evidence of snowballing or borrowing of tactics any more direct that the minimal influences of these phenomenon during the December 1998 and April 2000 violence. Nevertheless, the severity of the violence in Poso during the third period was such that parts of the local media soon did begin to dub the conflict a potential “second Maluku” (Maluku Jilid II).210 There was a degree of unintended prescience in such comparisons, as news of attacks on Muslim populations in Poso during the third period swiftly attracted members of Indonesia’s jihadist networks to the district. Many of these men, whom I term outside mujahidin, were veterans of the Maluku conflict before they came to Poso. The influence of these outside actors on the dynamics of the conflict will be the subject of the next chapter.

209 The full extent of this article’s evidence was that the militia leader was missing in North Maluku, and so could possibly be in Poso. See “Antara Beny Doro dan Cornelis Tibo”, *MAL*, Third Week, June 2000, p. 8. For speculation on possible links to Maluku, see “Ada Dugaan, Provokator Poso dari Maluku”, *MAL* Third Week August 2000, p. 9.
CHAPTER FOUR – REVENGE, JIHAD AND THE FOURTH AND FIFTH PERIODS

After the two weeks of intense violence from late May to early June 2000, most Muslims in Poso harboured a strong desire for revenge. Hundreds of Muslims had lost immediate family members in the third period violence, many thousands had lost their homes, and almost all had been forced to flee their villages. Recalling their feelings at the time, several local Muslim men explained that their only thoughts were of how to take revenge (balas dendam) on Poso’s Christians.1

Muslim populations elsewhere in Indonesia and even abroad responded swiftly to news of the May-June 2000 attacks. Humanitarian donations for Poso’s IDPs flowed to Central Sulawesi from around Indonesia, and even from as far as the United Arab Emirates. The news also spurred several of Indonesia’s jihadist networks to mobilise to send their members to Poso. The first members of these networks, whom I will refer to as “outside mujahidin” (i.e. mujahidin from outside Poso), arrived in Poso just a few weeks after the third period violence, and quickly set about recruiting local Muslim youths to receive rudimentary military training and doctrinal instruction regarding jihad. The results were swift, with the first known cooperative attack on a Christian settlement in Poso by outside mujahidin and local Muslims taking place in December 2000. The alliance between outside mujahidin and local Muslims became crucial to the next two major periods of violence in Poso: a series of clashes in June-July 2000 known as the fourth period, and several days of large-scale attacks on Christian villages in late November – early December 2001, referred to as the fifth period. These two periods of violence will be the subject of this chapter, the first of two that focus primarily on the alliance between outside mujahidin and local Muslims. The next chapter will focus on this alliance in the context of the decline of violence in Poso from mid-2002 onwards.

The outside mujahidin who came to Poso generally belonged to one of two broad groups. The first group were members of jihadist networks derived from the 1950s and 1960s Darul Islam (DI) rebellion.2 Included in this group were Jemaah Islamiyah (JI),

Mujahidin Kompak, and various other DI splinter groups — which each drew their members primarily from Java and Sumatra — as well as two related South Sulawesi-based organisations: Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah. These networks sent relatively few members to Poso, but they were disproportionately significant to the violence in the district after their arrival. In making the move into Poso, these organisations were able to draw on the expertise of some of the several hundred Indonesian Muslims who had undertaken jihadist training in Afghanistan between 1985 and the mid-1990s, as well as the alumni of similar training in the southern Philippines.

The timing of the third period violence in Poso — well after equally serious violence had started in Maluku — meant that these networks could also send to Poso men who had trained and fought in Maluku province since mid-1999.

The second broad group were the mujahidin who came to Poso as recruits of Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunna Wal Jamaah (hereafter Laskar Jihad), a Java-based militia formed in early 2000 in response to violence in Maluku and North Maluku. Laskar Jihad came to Poso in July 2001, almost a year after the arrival of the first of the mujahidin from the DI-derived networks. As an organisation, Laskar Jihad was ideologically opposed to mujahidin from the first broad group — for instance, Laskar Jihad recognised the legitimacy of Indonesia’s government whereas other mujahidin typically did not. These divisions were sharpened by squabbling in Maluku, and Laskar Jihad’s members did not cooperate closely with other outside mujahidin in Poso.

Surprisingly few academic works have examined the activities of Indonesia’s jihadist networks in Poso or other post-Soeharto conflict areas in any detail. Two of the three main comparative single-author monographs on the post-Soeharto conflicts devote almost no attention to outside mujahidin. Bertrand, with his focus on the historical development of the structural background that enabled each conflict, makes only the briefest mention of the deployment of Laskar Jihad fighters to Maluku, and does not

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4 See Fealy, “Radical Islam in Indonesia”, p. 18; ICG, Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia, pp. 2-10, 16-23.
6 ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 6.
mention the DI-derived network at all. Van Klinken devotes several paragraphs to discussing the arrival in Poso of outside mujahidin from both broad groupings as an example of Muslim coalition building; in his chapter on Maluku, two paragraphs note the arrival of Laskar Jihad. But for the most part, the activities of outside mujahidin do not fit well with van Klinken’s focus on local politics, and are incidental to his narrative of the conflicts. The third monograph, authored by Sidel, treats outside mujahidin at greater length, but in the context of the post-Soeharto conflicts focuses almost solely on Laskar Jihad.

More generally, three factors have contributed to the dearth of studies on jihadist networks in Indonesia’s conflict areas. The inaccessibility of these often clandestine movements as research subjects is one factor. It has been difficult, although not impossible, for researchers (particularly foreigners) to meet outside mujahidin, and local Muslims may often deny these men were present or else may themselves not fully understand the background of outside mujahidin. Within Indonesia, there has also been a deep scepticism of the existence of these jihadist networks as independent agents, with many Indonesian observers and NGO activists dismissing outside mujahidin as creations or puppets of the military or intelligence agencies, domestic or foreign. In a related phenomenon, some Indonesian observers and media reports have also misidentified attacks by mujahidin as the clandestine actions of Indonesian military or police personnel. This scepticism and misidentification has served to discourage studies of these networks in their own right. A third factor is that among foreign observers, these networks have been more comprehensively studied in the context of

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7 This ideological opposition is discussed below in a separate section on Laskar Jihad.
8 See Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, pp. 131-132.
9 See van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*, pp. 84, 103.
10 North Maluku may be something of an exception, as Wilson argues in considerable detail that the mobilisation of the Pasukan Jihad (Jihad Force) in the province was an overwhelmingly local concern, the intermittent presence of some outside mujahidin notwithstanding. See Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God*.
11 I have encountered these difficulties in my own research. In particular, I was able to conduct interviews with only three outside mujahidin – a member of Jemaah Islamiyah, a member of Mujahidin Kompak and a member of Laskar Jihad. I have attempted to address this shortcoming in data by supplementing these interviews with interviews with local men who trained with outside mujahidin and with other sources familiar with outside mujahidin, interrogation depositions, the publications of jihadist organisations, video recordings and other sources.
13 See, for example, “Jejak-Jejak Tentara Sesat di Poso”, *Media Sangkompo*, October 2002, pp. 4-6; “Polisi Berlakukan Siaga I untuk Poso”, *Sinar Harapan*, 18 October 2003; “Ketua Majelis Sinode GKST:
terrorism against Western targets than as actors in local conflict areas. Another class of studies of these networks focuses more on their lineage and history than on their contemporary activities.¹⁴

The above factors notwithstanding, academics have not completely ignored the presence of outside mujahidin in Poso, Maluku and North Maluku. Most studies, however, that do address the activities in jihadist networks in these areas focus almost exclusively on Laskar Jihad, which sent several thousand fighters to Maluku starting in April 2000, and a hundred or more men to Poso starting in July 2001.¹⁵ This focus is evident both in studies written before the activities of the DI-derived networks were well understood, as well as in some more recent works such as Sidel.¹⁶

The focus on Laskar Jihad has introduced several blind-spots or misperceptions into the study of Poso and other post-Soeharto conflict areas. The sheer number of men that Laskar Jihad sent to Maluku in particular means that Laskar Jihad as an organisation often has been the focus of study, with less attention being given to the militia’s interaction with local men or to how attacks were cooperatively planned and organised. Put differently, locals are too often absent from the picture of Laskar Jihad activity. The attention devoted to Laskar Jihad has also contributed to an exaggerated perception of the extent of the links between the Indonesian military and jihadist networks in general. Laskar Jihad initially boasted of meetings with high-ranking military officers, and it is well known that sections of the military turned a blind eye to and occasionally facilitated the departure of Laskar Jihad members to Maluku.¹⁷ But it is not clear that we can extrapolate from the example of Laskar Jihad to assert that other jihadist


¹⁵ Several authors have suggested that excessive focus on Laskar Jihad may derive from the organisation’s deliberate strategy to maintain a high public profile, in contrast to the clandestine activities of other outside mujahidin. See ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 14; Hasan, Laskar Jihad, pp. 189, 196.

¹⁶ In describing the activities of jihadist groups, Sidel typically mentions Laskar Jihad by name and then includes a non-specific reference to “other Islamic groups” or “similar Muslim paramilitary troops”. As a consequence, he describes Laskar Jihad’s activities in Poso and Maluku in more detail than those of the DI-derived groups. As Sidel cites studies that discuss the significance of DI-derived movements to violence in Poso and Maluku at some length, it is not entirely clear why he adopts such a predominant focus on Laskar Jihad. See Sidel, Riots, Pogroms, Jihad, pp. 165, 183-5, but also pp. 198, 213.
networks had the same level of contact with the military. In some cases, the preoccupation with Laskar Jihad has also led to a misperception of the identity of the perpetrators of violence. Hasan, the author of the most-detailed study of Laskar Jihad yet compiled, in fact raises doubts over whether many of the militia’s members took part in any attacks in Maluku, doubts not always echoed in other studies. Aragon, although herself focussing each of her studies on other aspects of the Poso conflict, notes the misidentification inherent in naming Laskar Jihad as the primary jihadist organisation in Poso.

This report [by the GKST Crisis Centre], which seeks to list all cases of violence in Poso from May to December 2001, repeatedly points to Laskar Jihad as the group responsible for the continued violence. In other words, the only organisation publicly representing Poso Christians both at home and abroad was inaccurately naming Laskar Jihad militias as the perpetrators of the violent strikes against them.

One of the main exceptions to the tendency to focus on Laskar Jihad has been the reports of the International Crisis Group (ICG). Three ICG reports have as their primary focus the activities of DI-derived networks in Poso. *Jihad in Central Sulawesi* describes the entry of JI and Mujahidin Kompak into Poso and seeks to explain the network behind two attacks in October 2003; *Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks: Lessons from Maluku and Poso* identifies the type of network likely to be responsible for a major bombing in 2005, as well as naming three local groups that could have collaborated with outside mujahidin in such an attack; *Jihadism in Indonesia: Poso on the Edge* describes the background to a January 2007 police raid intended to capture jihadists responsible for violence in Poso from 2004-2007.

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17 Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, p. 190. Connections with senior military figures did not save Laskar Jihad from subsequent stern and fatal military action against the militia. See Chapter Five.
18 Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, p. 193. See also the separate section on Laskar Jihad below.
19 Aragon, “Mass Media Fragmentation”, p. 44.
Although the presence of non-Laskar Jihad mujahidin in Poso was known before these reports were published, the 2004 report *Jihad in Central Sulawesi* was path-breaking in presenting unrivalled detail on the nature, structure and precise identity of the jihadist networks active in the district.22

Even though these ICG reports have made an important contribution to the understanding of jihadist violence, the reports themselves have their own limitations in their contribution to the study of Poso. The focus of these reports has been as much or more to gain insights into national-level jihadist networks as it has been to examine the Poso conflict itself. This is particularly true of the first report, *Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, which reads more as a study of Jemaah Islamiyah and Mujahidin Kompak than of Poso. As much is clear from the report’s conclusion, in which all but one paragraph are devoted to insights gained from the Poso case regarding Jemaah Islamiyah and terrorism in Indonesia. The two subsequent ICG reports in the set, which have a somewhat greater focus on Poso in its own right, are nevertheless primarily oriented to explaining violence in the later years of the conflict, particularly from 2004-2007. There is still scope to study further the interaction between outside mujahidin and local men, paying greater attention to the motivations and interests of local men, and to the effect of this interaction on violence in Poso.

The ICG reports also tend to be structured around explaining one major attack, in what Sidel somewhat pejoratively describes as a “whodunnit” approach.23 This structure means that the reports have covered only a very limited range of incidents in Poso in depth. Neither of the two major periods of violence I will discuss in this chapter, for example, have been treated in any detail.

The involvement of outside mujahidin in violence in Poso also prompts renewed scrutiny of the relative importance to the conflict of local and national-level contexts and actors. The outside mujahidin were members of jihadist networks that were engaged in activities throughout Indonesia: other members were fighting in Maluku,
proselytising in various parts of the country, and planning terror attacks in Sumatra, Java and Bali. The scope of these networks raises the question of whether their arrival in Poso can be explained primarily by factors specific to the conflict or by developments elsewhere in Indonesia.

One caveat is necessary at this point: my focus on the development of an alliance between outside mujahidin and local Muslims should not be read as an assertion that only Muslims perpetrated violence during the time period covered in this chapter. The latter half of 2000 and 2001 was a time of open conflict in Poso between two communities divided by their respective religious identities, and both Muslims and Christians were responsible for different attacks. The single deadliest attack during this time period - the 3 July 2001 Buyung Katedo massacre, in which fourteen Muslims were killed – was in fact perpetrated by Christians. But Muslims gradually established military superiority over Poso’s Christians during 2001. To the extent that Christians continued to mobilise for violence it was increasingly to defend border areas or to ambush buses and other vehicles well within Christian territory. Because of the dominance that Muslims established, an understanding of the nature of the alliance between local Muslims and outside mujahidin is crucial to explain the escalation and the later decline of the violence from the fourth period onwards.

Outside Mujahidin Come to Poso – Preparations for Reprisals

The first jihadist networks to come to Poso after the third period did not bring an entire ready-made fighting force. Instead, each organisation sent small teams of men to meet local leaders and to begin to recruit local youths. Owing in large part to the reports of the International Crisis Group, we have a more complete picture of the arrival of Jemaah Islamiyah and Mujahidin Kompak’s first representatives in Poso than we do of the arrival of other groups.

Jemaah Islamiyah first sent a senior emissary to meet local Muslim leaders and then, soon after, sent a small team of trainers to the district; thereafter the organisation centred its presence in Poso in the Tanah Runtuh area of Gebangrejo ward, home to local Muslim figure Adnan Arsal. 25 Arsal’s profile had risen during the earlier periods

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24 As this section refers to a period of time before Laskar Jihad arrived in the district, all references to “outside mujahidin” refer to members of the DI-derived networks only.
25 See ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, pp. 8-9; ICG, Jihadism in Indonesia, p. 3.
of conflict, particularly the May-June 2000 violence, when he reputedly remained in the
city at a time when many community leaders fled.26 The organisation’s arrival in Poso
was essentially clandestine, as its members do not seem to have immediately revealed
their affiliation to Arsal or to the other Muslim figures with whom they met.27

Mujahidin Kompak was also in touch with Arsal, but chose to establish its base in
Kayamanya ward, which is adjacent to Gebangrejo.28 By August 2000, Mujahidin
Kompak had sent two small assessment teams to Poso, mostly composed of veterans of
the Maluku conflict; these teams brought with them a few of the guns the organisation
had garnered for use in Maluku.29 Once established in the district, Mujahidin Kompak
concealed its military activities by using the Islamic charity Kompak as a cover.30 Apart
from providing a cover, the humanitarian assistance Kompak sent to Central Sulawesi
also gave Mujahidin Kompak members an avenue to approach Muslims who had fled
from Poso to other parts of Central Sulawesi, among whom outside mujahidin found
some of their first recruits.31

The first outside mujahidin to arrive in Central Sulawesi would have found a receptive
atmosphere in Palu and Poso, where anger over the May-June 2000 violence meant that
many local Muslims considered violent retaliation to be warranted. Large numbers of
Muslims from Poso were sheltering in Palu in mid-2000, either in makeshift camps at
locations such as the Gawalise sports stadium or with relatives. Reflecting the mood at
the time, the mainstream, if Muslim-biased, Palu-based tabloid Formasi printed an item
titled “Ethics of War in Islam” in its June 2000 edition, which comprised [rough]
Indonesian translations of three verses from the Qu’ran.

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah
does not love transgressors [2:190]. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn
them out from wherever they have turned you out, for slander is worse than murder; but

26 Interview with Adnan Arsal, February 2002; interviews with Poso men, January 2002, July 2003, July
2007.
27 See ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, pp. 7-8. As late as 2007, local Muslim men who had trained
extensively with JI members and cooperatively perpetrated violence claimed that they had only become
aware that the outside mujahidin were JI members after being taken into police custody. Given the
exculpatory effect of such statements, they must be treated with scepticism. See, for example,
28 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004; deposition of Mohammad Fadli Barasalim
29 ICG, Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks, p. 7.
30 The South Sulawesi-based Laskar Jundullah also used Kompak as a cover, as its commander, Agus
Dwikarna, was head of the charity’s Makassar office. ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 5.
31 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.
do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of people who have no faith [2:191]. [article skips over a verse] And fight them on until there is no more slander, and religion is only for Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who violate regulations [2:193]. [Italics indicate variance in the Indonesian text from a published English translation of the Qu’ran] 32

The article also explained that a jihad may not be waged to satisfy a desire for revenge, and that in the time of the prophet Muhammad it was forbidden to target the elderly or children, to cut down plants or to destroy property not associated with the enemy, to attack first or to try to force Islam on conquered areas. In addition, several local youths recalled that Muslim religious figures in Poso were vocal in their support of a jihad: “One hundred per cent of religious figures were indoctrinating us to fight a war, giving us a religious perspective, that we must strike back. It was a matter of religion [they said], a war.” 33

With their own desire to fight and the strong social approval for jihad, it is likely that local Muslim youths would have eventually perpetrated some form of reprisals for their losses during the third period, even without the assistance of outside mujahidin. After all, some of the local Muslim men who had fled their villages during the third period – either leaving the district altogether or moving to areas away from Christian settlements - returned of their own accord after several weeks; news of the May-June 2000 violence also appears to have spurred some of Poso’s Muslim diaspora to return to the district. 34 These early returnees set up guard posts in their villages or else congregated in relatively safe areas such as Kayamanya ward, arming themselves as best they could. One youth recalled,

32 “Akhlq Perang Dalam Islam”, Formasi, June 2000, p. 18. The omitted verse, Q. S. Albaqarah 192, reads “But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” Translation adopted from Abdullah Yusuf Ali (translator), The Holy Quran (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), p. 24, except where text is italicised. The following is the full Ali translation of the same passage: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah does not love transgressors [2:190]. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith [2:191]. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. [2:192] And fight them on until there is no more tumult and oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression. [2:193].”
33 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
34 An example of the latter group is Fadli alias Opo, a local youth who trained with Mujahidin Kompak and confessed to involvement in a string of attacks from 2001-2003, according to his interrogation deposition. (The information on these attacks was not tested as he was brought to trial only for a 2006 armed robbery.) The biographical section of his deposition says he returned to Poso in 2000 from Toli-toli after hearing of the Walisongo massacre. See deposition of Mohammad Fadli Barasalisim Bin Zakir alias Opo alias Ustad Aan in his own dossier, 17 March 2006, p. 3.
After less than three months we came back, but even during the time when we were taking refuge in a different village we were making preparations, we started to study how to make weapons, and also started to look for bullets. I had a friend whose friend could get bullets, so we gathered together funds. The first time, we were sent about 150 bullets, and around twenty of us with thirteen homemade guns (senjata rakitan) between us returned to our village. We repaired our village so that there was at least makeshift housing, and also started to stand guard, while at the same time beginning guerrilla operations. At night we would walk into the area of neighbouring villages and if we saw one or two people we would take a shot and then retreat.Outside mujahidin were able to significantly increase the capacity of local Muslims to perpetrate reprisals by providing locals with training, weaponry and, to some extent, a more thoroughly elaborated version of jihadist ideology to underpin the violence. Before the end of 2000, both JI and Mujahidin Kompak had conducted their first round of training for locals. The courses each organisation provided were longer than kelompok merah training before the third period violence (see Chapter Three), but much shorter than the three years of instruction some of the outside mujahidin had received in Afghanistan. ICG suggests Mujahidin Kompak initially ran programs of three weeks’ to a month’s duration, while each JI training program ran for three months. Each organisation’s program involved a combination of physical training (tadrib) and religious instruction (ta’lim). Local Muslims may not have known exactly who their trainers were or what group their trainers were from – the men I interviewed generally referred to the outsiders’ organisation by the generic term “Mujahidin”. Different sources provide different details of the precise timing and location of each organisation’s various training programs, and there is not yet any definitive list of all the training provided by outside mujahidin in Poso district and surrounding areas. The first Jemaah Islamiyah-run training appears to have taken place near Ampana in late 2000 (although another source said the first training took place in 2001 in Uekuli village, a coastal settlement east of the city in Tojo sub-district). A later round of training appears to have been held near the Tanah Runtuh neighbourhood, perhaps starting in February 2001. ICG estimated the number of initial local trainees in the JI-run program at 35-45 people; local men who said they had taken part in three month

35 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003. The village described in the quote was outside the city in a border area between Christian and Muslim villages.
38 ICG, Jihadism in Indonesia, pp. 3-4; interviews with Poso men, July 2003, April 2004.
training programs which may have been run by JI said there were 50-100 participants. The location of training organised by Mujahidin Kompak and how many times such training was held is less clear. A former Mujahidin Kompak member said the organisation held its first training of local combatants from Poso in neighbouring Parigi-Moutung district in late 2000, with around fifteen participants; the deposition of a local trainee partly corroborates these details. In addition to the training it held for Muslim men in Poso, Mujahidin Kompak also took some local men to train in Maluku in 2001 and 2004. According to ICG, various other jihadist networks held training in parts of South Sulawesi close to Poso as well as at a site near Pendolo on the shore of Lake Poso, also close to the South Sulawesi provincial border.

Even within the one training program, the degree of military instruction each trainee received appears to have varied. Much of the early training organised by outside groups appears to have been limited. A man who said he took part in training near Tanah Runtuh in 2001 claimed that participants used wooden replicas of weapons, and not even their own homemade firearms. In his interrogation deposition, a participant in Mujahidin Kompak training in 2000 said trainees had only one “senjata jungle” (World War II era bolt-action rifle, more commonly written “jenggel”) between them to practise shooting. A Mujahidin Kompak member described much of the training he provided in Poso as essentially “scouts training” (first-aid, navigation, map-reading) mixed with “the arts of war” (that is, obstacle courses or, for a more select group, weapons and explosives training). Along similar lines, a local trainee recalled his experience as follows:

40 Interview with Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004, deposition of Yusman Said alias Budi in dossier of Mohammad Fadli Barasalim Bin Zakir alias Opo alias Ustad Aan, 24 March 2006 p.3. Although we cannot know the circumstances under which this deposition was compiled, this would have been a strange detail for interrogators to fabricate, as Budi was being interrogated over his involvement in a 2006 armed robbery. The details of any training Budi undertook in 2000 were irrelevant to his conviction for the crime.
41 On the 2001 training, see, for example, deposition of Emil Salim Mardani in dossier of Sofyan Djumpai alias Pian, 11 June 2004, p. 3. Many details in this dossier appear to have been fabricated, but the journey of Poso men to Maluku has been corroborated by other sources and is beyond doubt. On the 2004 training, see ICG, Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin’s Networks, p. 14.
42 See ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 11.
43 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
44 Deposition of Yusman Said alias Budi in the dossier of Mohammad Fadli Barasalim Bin Zakir alias Opo alias Ustad Aan, 24 March 2006, p.3.
45 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.
We studied how to take cover, how to enter an area we were attacking. Even that wasn’t really taught there, because we knew the lie of the land in our own village, and so around my village I’d analyse what technique we should use to attack. They didn’t teach us how to make weapons either, we already knew.\footnote{Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.}

Certainly it is possible that in their accounts these men were concealing the full extent of the training that took place. Nevertheless, the above descriptions are broadly consistent with the portrayal of training camp (reputedly in Southeast Sulawesi) on a VCD apparently made for fundraising purposes.\footnote{In the version of the VCD in my possession, which includes one hour of footage from Maluku, Poso, Aceh and probably also Kalimantan, the approximately twelve minutes of footage of the training come at the beginning of a section on Poso. The VCD is obviously spliced together from many different sources of footage. It is narrated in Arabic, although in some sections the original cameraman provides impromptu commentary in Indonesian while filming, and the chants referred to in the main text are in Indonesian.} The VCD shows recruits training in physical agility and attacking a mocked-up village all while holding wooden replicas of guns, set to a background of chanting exhorting viewers to “wake from their long sleep” and step forward bravely to “destroy Satan’s forces”. An instructor demonstrates the use of a pistol and is shown firing the weapon at one point, and one man is seen holding what appears to be a genuine long-barrelled firearm while participating in a drill, but none of the trainees are shown firing a gun.

By the same token, however, some participants in jihadist training in Poso clearly learned advanced skills such as bomb-making (not difficult for local youths who were already skilled in the repair of electrical appliances). In later years of the conflict, two youths from Poso were even sent to Java to learn more advanced bomb-making there.\footnote{International Crisis Group, \textit{Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah’s Current Status}, 3 May 2007, p. 3.}

Some of the local Muslims who participated in training courses held by outside mujahidin later held more rudimentary training sessions in their own villages when they returned home. A participant in one village’s sessions said the training amounted to half a day of running, jumping and rolling held once a week.

I’m not sure you’d say it was fun, the rolling made you dizzy, sometimes I’d lay low to avoid going [to the sessions], but if you didn’t go, you also felt you’d missed out, because you learned an art (ilmu), the art of battle, so you had to go. But then if you did go, you ended up with a sore body from all the jumping.\footnote{Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.}

By gathering youths from around the district to take part in training, outside mujahidin developed an increasingly wide network of contacts in the various villages around Poso.
After three months I went back to the village, and if they [mujahidin] wanted to go to the village, I’d go straight back there. My friends then trusted me as a leader because they knew I’d been sent to Poso [town]. Even before I went to Tanah Runtuh, I’d often brought groups of people to guard our [vacant] village at night [rather than sleep in the populated neighbouring village]. After I came back [from Tanah Runtuh], if we wanted to attack, we could quickly ask for help from Poso [town], particularly from people we already knew. Normally they’d come by boat, because there were a lot of security forces along the coastal road. 53

The provision of training indeed proved to be an effective first step for outside mujahidin to forge long-standing relations with local Muslim youths. Admittedly, not every recruit for training joined subsequent activities – an early Mujahidin Kompak trainee told interrogators that he had found a return to drinking more palatable than the tasks his trainer had expected of him. 51 But some of the earliest local trainees continued to perpetrate violence for years. For instance, Safri Ambo Bokori alias Aco G.M., one of the first men trained by Mujahidin Kompak in 2000, was still active in an associated group when he took part in an October 2003 shooting and arson attack on a village in Morowali. 52 Another example is Lilik Purnomo alias Haris, a local man who played a key role in plotting the October 2005 beheading of three Christian schoolgirls in Poso (See Chapter Five). 53 The attack was a cooperative effort with JI: ICG dates Lilik’s association with the organisation to his participation in its first round of training in Poso in late 2000. 54

The Agenda Behind the Violence

At the broadest level, local Muslims and outside mujahidin shared an interest in perpetrating reprisals for the third period violence. This was an initial basis to work together. This section attempts to map out the interests and motivations of each group of men in more detail to expose some of the differences. I will then discuss how these differences affected the interactions between the two groups, and the extent to which the interests of either group were reflected in the ensuing violence.

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49 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
50 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
51 Deposition of Yusman Said alias Budi, in dossier of Mohammad Fadli Barasalim Bin Zakir alias Opo alias Ustad Aan, 24 March 2006, p. 3.
53 Lilik admitted his involvement to police after his arrest and he was sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment. Direct observation by author of trial of Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano.
For local Muslims, the priority after May-June 2000 was to take revenge. Muslims in Poso considered two particular subsets of the district’s Christian community to be most responsible for the third period violence. Villagers who lived in border areas between predominantly Muslim and predominantly Christian settlements harboured a desire for revenge most strongly, although not exclusively, against their Christian neighbours. Without the help of these near neighbours, Christians from elsewhere in the district would not have possessed the local knowledge to breach their defences, local Muslims judged. Attacking villages near border areas could also serve to simplify the “religious geography” by removing settlements that lay between two villages inhabited by co-religionists. Villages reputed to have been Christian strongholds during the May-June 2000 violence, such as Sepe and Silanca in Lage sub-district, were also a particular target of revenge. The focus of local Muslims’ desire for revenge was reflected in the pattern of reprisals in 2000-2001: each Christian border village was attacked, and two of the Christian strongholds – Sepe, and Tangkura in Poso Pesisir sub-district – were also over-run.

In similar fashion to Christians who had formulated an unwritten list of “provokator” and “perusuh” before the third period violence, Poso’s Muslims also circulated several lists of Christians of whom it was alleged that they took part in the May-June 2000 violence. Most of the individuals on these lists were members of the local Christian elite. One of the earliest lists to emerge was a five page document titled “List: Names of the Intellectual Authors/Masterminds of the Riot and Massacre of Poso’s Muslims in 2000”. The document names its source as “Pos Komando Jihad Poso”; although the list is not dated, it must have been compiled almost immediately after the third period violence because an image of its pages appeared in an August 2000 edition of the Palu-based weekly tabloid MAL. Of the approximately 80 names on the list (including A. L. Lateka, who was presumably dead at the time the list was compiled), I have identified only one man who was subsequently attacked. A second list of Christian names

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54 ICG, *Jihadism in Indonesia*, p. 4.
55 *Daftar: Nama-Nama Aktor Intelektual Dalang Kerusuhan dan Pembantain Muslim Poso Tahun 2000*. The copy of the list in my possession bears the stamp of the Forum Silaturrahim dan Perjuangan Ummat Islam Kabupaten Poso, a coalition of local Muslim figures and organisations that over time was increasingly controlled by Adnan Arsal and his allies. I cannot ascertain whether the stamp indicates that the document was copied from FSPUI’s archives, or whether FSPUI played a part in compiling or issuing the list.
56 The unfortunate individual is Drs. J. Kogege, who was shot in the head while in his car on 3 September 2001. (He survived.) Two other men on the list - Fabianus Tibo (who is listed under the name “Cornelis” Tibo, which at one point was incorrectly believed to be his first name) and Dominggus da Silva - were
emerged from a document submitted to the Palu District court by Tibo, Dominggus and Marinus, three Catholic men who stood trial in 2000-2001 for their role in the third period violence. In the document, the three defendants named sixteen (Protestant) men who they alleged were the most responsible for the conflict in Poso, in a move intended to deflect responsibility for the violence to others. The document itself was not immediately circulated more widely, but the judges presiding over the trial included the list in the text of their judgment, effectively making the names public. Since the judgment was read out, the “sixteen names” have become firmly ingrained in the public psyche and there have been persistent Muslim demands for the men to be arrested. Curiously, there was almost no correspondence between the lists of names in the Pos Komando Jihad and Tibo documents: only retired police officer Paulus Tungkanan appeared on both. Despite the greater prominence of this second list compared with the Pos Komando Jihad document, none of the sixteen men has been murdered or targeted in an attack.

Outside mujahidin were perfectly happy to assist local youths to seek revenge by providing them with physical and military training. Their willingness to provide training derived from what outside mujahidin saw as their fundamental obligation to defend Muslims under threat; some outside mujahidin doubtless also shared the local youths’ desire for revenge for the deaths of their co-religionists. A Mujahidin Kompak member, for example, indicated that news of the Walisongo massacre had been the strongest motivation for fighters from Java to come to Poso and that he himself had become emotional after visiting the site of the Walisongo massacre and finding bone fragments scattered around the area. In another mujahid’s words, “Because we saw the government would not take the side of the Muslim community, we ‘punished’ (menghakimi) the orang merah [i.e. Christians] ourselves.”

arrested around the time the list must have been issued and were sentenced to death and indeed were executed in September 2006. Their co-defendant, Marinus Riwu, who was also executed in September 2006, does not appear on the list. The men are almost always referred to collectively as “the sixteen names”, and I suspect few people in Poso could name all sixteen people on the list. Indeed, several different versions of the list circulated in the year before Tibo and his associates were executed.

The obligation to defend Muslims notwithstanding, ICG notes that the mobilisation to Maluku was a matter of debate within DI-derived networks. Opponents worried that the conflict had political undertones and that local Muslims were not devout. The pro-jihad factions won out, and this debate had been settled before the May-June 2000 violence in Poso provided a reason for outside mujahidin to travel to the district. See ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, pp. 4-5; ICG, Recycling Militants in Indonesia, p. 24.

Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.

Interview with a former Jemaah Islamiyah member, January 2007.
But the goals of jihadist networks went beyond simply punishing the *kelompok merah*. At least for the more established of these networks, such as Jemaah Islamiyah, the jihad in Poso was only one part of their operations in Indonesia. For instance, Fealy identifies as JI’s long term goal the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia.\(^{61}\) JI’s strategy to achieve this goal involved several stages: first, the establishment of small devout communities to act as “beach-heads”; next, the development of a true Islamic consciousness more broadly in Indonesia.\(^{62}\) JI had developed a “disciplined and military capable organisation” to pursue these goals, as its leaders saw the “tactical use of violence” as an essential to eventual success.\(^{63}\) There were at least two ways that a jihad in Poso could contribute to this over-arching goal.

First, anger at the violence against Muslims in Poso could be exploited as a hook to recruit new members in other parts of Indonesia. The importance of recruitment is evident from the identity of those whom the DI-derived networks sent to Poso. Many Afghanistan and Philippines alumni did go to Poso, but the networks also sent men with no prior military experience.\(^{64}\) These new recruits were sent to Poso despite the fact that these networks probably could have conducted training and other combat operations in Poso solely by relying on the many Afghanistan and Philippines veterans that they had at their disposal.

The narrative of a VCD produced from the Poso conflict, titled “The Call to Jihad in Poso” (*Panggilan Jihad Poso*), provides a glimpse of what the film’s producers thought would appeal to potential recruits in other parts of Indonesia. The main narrative on the VCD is presented during an eight-minute section roughly in the middle of 26 minutes of graphic footage of the victims of one of the worst attacks on Muslims in Poso. The two off-screen narrators issue an appeal for the viewer to come to Poso. The first narrator, who speaks for the longest, appeals to a sense of Muslim solidarity for the viewer to come and fight in Poso, and threatens of dire consequences if the call to jihad is not heeded.

\(^{61}\) Fealy observes that the formation of such an Islamic state is itself an intermediate, if concrete, goal on the road to JI’s ideological commitment to establish an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia. See Fealy, “ Radical Islam in Indonesia”, p. 32.

\(^{62}\) Fealy, “ Radical Islam in Indonesia”, p. 32


\(^{64}\) For example, see the narrative of the experiences in Maluku and Poso of Mujahidin Kompak combatant Asep Jaja in ICG, *Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks*, pp. 6-9.
Can we claim to be Muslims, can we claim to have faith in Allah if at the same time we do not think of our brothers who are suffering, do not heed the disaster they are experiencing, if the desire does not rise in our hearts to defend them, to feel together the hurt they feel, the suffering, the arduous trials caused by the evil conspiring of infidels? We are contemptible in Allah’s presence, we have no value in Allah’s presence, if we do not care about all of this. Don’t let it be that Allah says that we betrayed his religion, that we betrayed the Muslim community, because we did not want to take heed of them [ie Muslims in Poso], did not want to think of them. Think of the elderly here as you would think of your own parents, feel the suffering of small children here as our own suffering, when they feel hurt, we also feel hurt, when they suffer we also feel the suffering, and when they are attacked, we are ready to defend them, whatever the price ... even if it means giving up our lives. Let Allah place us among the ones chosen to defend His faith, let us be among the ones chosen by Allah, our lives, our possessions exchanged by Him for a place in heaven.

The second speaker on the VCD phrased his own appeal to the viewers’ Muslim solidarity by emphasising the challenges recruits would face in Poso:

Truly *jihad fisabilillah* is a very onerous undertaking and is difficult for a person. No one can withstand [the path of jihad] except for a [select] few, Because of its great difficulty, Allah will repay it with a true reward. Look at your brothers (*ikhwan*), this is our life in this world of jihad, Allahu Akbar, staving off hunger, staving off the cold, traversing hills and mountains, for the sole cause of defending Allah’s religion.

Precisely at the moment that we are exhausted, when we are risking our lives to defend our religion, you are comfortably [sitting there] engaged in debate, saying the greater *jihad* is to resist one’s worldly desires. In case you wanted to know, the greatest *jihad* to resist your worldly desires is here [in Poso], your desires will be tested, why should we return to our houses, or [would it be better for us] to stay here and defend our religion. Allahu Akbar, it never occurred to you to defend your brothers here. Your faith must be questioned, it must be questioned, Allahu Akbar, we’re waiting for you here.

The precise mechanism by which jihadist networks recruited new members in other parts of Indonesia is not set out comprehensively in existing studies, although two ICG reports provide interesting preliminary examples. These mechanisms are of greater relevance to the study of jihadist networks in their own right than they are to the

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65 Earlier in his address the narrator explains that this conspiracy is a worldwide collaboration between Jews, Christians and communists. See *Panggilan Jihad Poso*, which depicts the victims of the July 2001 Buyung Katedo incident, described below.


67 It is clear that this narrator’s address was originally done on-camera (hence “look at”), but that the audio track has been taken and spliced onto different background footage.


violence in Poso, however, and thus they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. More
detailed information on recruitment mechanisms would nonetheless be of interest to the
study of Poso in as far as these mechanisms could shed light on the extent to which
recruits who joined jihadist networks in order to fight in the post-Soeharto conflicts
were also committed to the longer term goals formulated by each organisation’s leaders.
With a better understanding of the internal dynamics of jihadist networks, we could
more thoroughly assess how likely it was that outside mujahidin actually pursued their
organisations’ long term goals in Poso. Unfortunately, it was not possible during the
compilation of this dissertation to interview sufficient numbers of outside mujahidin to
make such a judgement, and I have instead focused on whether outside mujahidin were
able to promote these long terms goals among local Muslims.

Second, fighting in Poso could be viewed as a means to convert the district into a secure
base, or at least to make the local Muslim population more devout. In pursuit of this
end, the training programs these jihadist networks provided to local Muslims included
\textit{ta’lim} (religious instruction) as well as the military-style training described above.
Outside mujahidin described this religious instruction as the more important component
of training. In addition to \textit{ta’lim} held in conjunction with physical training, several
jihadist networks also brought \textit{da’i} (preachers) to Poso specifically to preach, and sent
these individuals to stay in various villages throughout the district. These \textit{da’i} were
familiar with the outside mujahidin who had come to fight, but did not themselves take
part in battles.

I am not aware of any detailed accounts of exactly what material was presented to local
recruits in early \textit{ta’lim} sessions in Poso. ICG, for example, notes only that JI insisted on
a full month of religious training before starting on physical instruction, without going
into details of the material presented. Clearly a large proportion of the material dealt
specifically with the doctrine of jihad, including practical rules to be followed when
perpetrating violence.

They taught that we could not kill children, women, or even people who had surrendered.
They were very strict. You weren’t allowed to take the enemy’s possessions for
yourselves, we’d take stuff and put it all together in one spot, then it would be sold by the

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item[70] ICG, \textit{Jihad in Central Sulawesi}, p. 5.
  \item[71] Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
\end{itemize}
leader, and then we’d use the money to buy ammunition. But you couldn’t take the money yourself.  

Local youths appear to have been receptive to the idea that they were involved in a jihad, but may not have picked up the finer points. One trainer lamented that the instruction given to new recruits had been too dogmatic, resulting in them taking a hard-line stance in all situations; a local youth also doubted the degree of nuance that Muslims in Poso had taken away from training:

That’s the confusing thing, at the time as well as military training for the community, there were also spiritual activities, religious explanations, they [outsiders] said what jihad was, what the term meant, so maybe the community—well the younger ones—understood it [the violence] as jihad, even though they couldn’t distinguish what jihad was [and what it wasn’t], the important thing was that it was jihad.

Another aspect of ta‘lim essentially consisted of moral instruction and religious education that was not directly related to the obligation to perpetrate violence. The provision of this moral instruction reflects what Fealy describes as the “inescapable obligation” of JI members to persuade Muslims of the need to implement Islamic law. The resolve of outside mujahidin to provide moral instruction may have been further strengthened in Poso by the dismay of some of these men at the lifestyle and ignorance of Islam of many of the trainees. Most local Muslim combatants interviewed admitted to frequently drinking alcohol, and ICG suggests that many of the recruits for early rounds of training had a background as local gang members.

Outside mujahidin may have been determined to provide moral instruction, but this did not automatically mean that all local combatants were receptive to outsider moralising. Many local trainees, even those who remained active among mujahidin ranks, appear to have kept on drinking alcohol even after they had taken part in ta‘lim. The predilection of local youths to embrace vice was presumably the source of the following interesting excerpt from a sermon given at the burial of the fourteen Muslim victims of the July 2001 Buyung Katedo incident (described in a later part of this chapter).

Forgive all of our sins ya Allah. Forgive the sins of the [local] mujahidin who have perished ya Allah. Some among them did not pray ya Allah, some among them still used amulets (azimat) ya Allah, some among them still drank palm wine (arak) ya Allah, then they stepped forward to wage war to defend Your religion ya Allah. Please have mercy

73 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
74 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
75 Fealy, “Radical Islam in Indonesia”, p. 27.
on them ya Allah ... Have mercy on those who have fallen and have mercy on the mujahidin who are still alive who are stepping forward to continue your struggle.  

ICG suggests that locals who were more interested in fighting quickly became impatient with religious instruction; a Mujahidin Kompak member also recalled that the youths he trained had not been particularly interested in moral lessons.

Our approach was that this disaster was a reprimand from Allah, because they had not been close to Allah the Almighty, we steered them in that direction. Young children and women accepted this, but the young men clearly did not. Their interest was in taking revenge, they were men you know, but they didn’t have the strength. I showed them the strength that we had, as Muslims we must have strength, we trained, and then they wanted to fight.

By chance I have a few skills, including practical skills in self-defence, that was the main thing, that was what they needed, so that’s what we used to attract them in the beginning. Informal education [ie, ta’lim] was secondary, usually they would be interested in what they needed, the practical skills.

Whereas the Mujahidin Kompak member described local youths as reluctant to embrace moral teachings, local Muslim youths put a slightly different spin on their receptiveness to religious instruction. Particularly in late 2000 and to some extent in 2001, only men had returned to the villages near border areas with Christian settlements, and standing guard after dark was a nightly necessity. In such an atmosphere, some locals recalled, they needed lectures on jihad to give them courage. This was true both of the men who took part in outside mujahidin-run physical training, as well as those who only attended lectures by a mujahidin preacher (da’i) placed in their village.

Most lectures were about jihad, and under those circumstances, we were a receptive audience. If you were to come and say those things now [people’s reaction would be] “Always wanting to wage jihad, always conflict.” There’s been a shift. People would listen before, but not now.

We heard a rumour that mujahidin had come to Poso, and we already knew it would be these sort of people who could help us, so we had to accept them, at the time everyone accepted them, no-one objected. We needed them, and after they started giving us religious lessons, on jihad, it lifted our spirits. Where before we’d lacked courage, after listening to their lectures we wouldn’t back down, we had no fear .... Before their ta’lim,

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77 Sermon appears at the end of the VCD, *Panggilan Jihad Poso*. The reference to fallen mujahidin is presumably a reference to those killed in the May-June 2000 violence, as few local Muslims had been killed in the course of perpetrating reprisal attacks up until July 2001. Nevertheless, the orator’s reference to drinking suggests that vice was still perceived as a problem in mid-2001.


79 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.

80 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.

81 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
none of us had the courage to attack, we’d just made weapons to attack, but we didn’t have the courage to enter [Christian areas] and attack. 82

These local youths indicated that, to their mind, their perceived need for jihadist doctrine and physical training had also made them temporarily more receptive to moral instruction. Participation in ta’lim and other religious activities was encouraged by peer pressure. One man recalled that he had rarely performed even the Friday prayer before the May-June 2000 violence, but when he came back to his village after fleeing for several months, he found that a mujahidin preacher was living in his village and all of his friends now regularly prayed.83 Some tenets of jihadist doctrine also helped build peer pressure – most local combatants whom I interviewed recalled that they had been taught that it was haram (forbidden) to flee a battle. Locals who fled each time the security situation worsened were ostracised, branded as cowards and sometimes even driven away.

What then was the relative influence on the pattern of violence in Poso after outside mujahidin arrived of local Muslims’ desire for revenge, of jihadist doctrine and of the longer-term interests of jihadist networks? We can weigh up the influence of each factor by examining one of the earliest combined outsider-local attacks: the 24 December 2000 attack on Sepe village, in which two Christian men were killed. The attackers, a small group of mostly local men led by an outside mujahid, Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, were armed with two factory-standard weapons from Maluku, homemade guns and bombs and attacked the village at night.84 Farihin described the rationale for the attack in the following terms:

The community needed guidance (pembinaan), so in mass psychology terms, we followed what the community wanted. The atmosphere at the time was thick with the desire for revenge, so we tried to leave it up to them. “Which villages had attacked [Muslims] in the past?” “Oh, from there [ie, Sepe].”85

82 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
83 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004. In another sign of the effects of increased moral and religious instruction, a religious leader associated with Tanah Runtuh expressed his pleasure when I interviewed him in early 2002 that Poso’s Muslim population had become more visibly devout. Interview with Wahid Lamidji, Poso, January 2002.
84 Interview with Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, date withheld. Farihin said the weapons were a revolver originally from the Philippines, which could be fired at the beginning of an attack to stop people coming out of their houses, and a semi-automatic SKS rifle obtained from the police.
85 In another interview, Farihin explained the locals’ desire for revenge in more detail, “They said many people from Sepe had been involved, Tibo had recruited a lot of the youths there. It was also very close to the city .... and [villagers from] Sepe and Silanca were known to have gone on a rampage (membabibuta) so their desire for revenge was strong.”
We provided an example for them, when twenty of us attacked Sepe, they [Christians] were in disarray, as were the security forces [stationed there]. People will never be ready, if they are sleeping, then suddenly there is gunfire, they panic, and even if they are many, our few will appear to outnumber them. That’s all we taught them, as simple as that...

Our mission was just to harass them, to prove that if caught unawares [even in a stronghold like Sepe] they would be in disarray, [just as] when [Muslims] were attacked in Walisongo, in Poso Pesisir, they had not been ready. 86

The primary aims of the attack, as Farihin describes it, were to continue to forge a link with local recruits by helping them to attack a target of their choice, and at the same time to increase the recruits’ confidence. The local youths’ desire for revenge was thus the key factor in determining which village would be targeted. By contrast, the limited scale of the attack – aimed at “harassing” the village rather than attempting to raze it to the ground – is more readily explained by how the attack fit into outside mujahidin’s plans to train local recruits.

Other early attacks are more difficult to interpret. Of the incidents from December 2000 – June 2001, only the February 2001 bombing attack on an Omega bus plying the Palu-Tentena route stands out as another obvious example of local-outsider cooperation. The local practice of “fish bombing” (fishing by detonating explosives underwater to stun or kill marine life) meant that local Muslims knew how to make rudimentary explosives even before outside mujahidin arrived, but the details of this attack suggest that this particular bomb was detonated by a timer.87 The bomb exploded some time after the bus had stopped for lunch along the route, and witnesses indicated that one of the passengers did not rejoin the bus after the lunch break.88 By bombing a bus heading to Tentena, the attackers could be sure that most or all of the victims would be Christians; the bombing of public transport heading for Christian destinations became one recurrent pattern of violence for the next five years. Other early incidents – lynchings, shootings, burning of churches and houses – are not recorded in sufficient detail in media reportage and other secondary sources to gauge the motivations, agenda and the identity of the perpetrators. The next set of incidents for which I have sufficient

86 Interview with Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, date withheld.
87 An explosion in a house in Bonesompe ward in November 2000 may have been an early sign of outside mujahidin introducing bomb-making to Poso. The two men killed in the attack were described as “not from Poso”. The location of the explosion, in a majority Muslim ward not easily reached from Christian areas, suggests it could have been an instance of bomb exploding while being assembled, although I do not have any corroborating information to confirm this. See “Pihak Ketiga Mulai Bermain di Poso”, Nuansa Pos, no date recorded.
information to attempt such an analysis was the first set of larger-scale reprisal attacks on Christian villages, which took place in late June-July 2001.

The Fourth Period – June-July 2001

By mid-2001, sporadic violent incidents were happening frequently, with at least six disturbances per month between April and July, and most often many more than that. As a result, although a cluster of attacks in June-July 2001 are customarily referred to as the fourth period of violence, there was no sharp transition from peaceful conditions to violence to define the start of this period. I have chosen the attack on a Christian settlement within Malei-Lage village on 30 June 2001 to mark the starting point of the fourth period, because this incident represented a different form of attack from the sporadic violence that preceded it. The attack on Malei-Lage was the first in mid-2001 in which a large part of a village was burned; indeed, one participant proudly asserted that this attack was the first large-scale reprisal against a Christian village after the third period. A second attack on another Christian settlement in the vicinity of Malei-Lage followed the next day. Despite the new scale of these attacks when compared with the sporadic violence, the fourth period was defined by an attack perpetrated by Christians several days later on 3 July. In this incident, a crowd attacked Buyung Katedo village (not far from Malei-Lage but closest to the Christian village Sepe) before dawn; when Muslims returned to the village they found the bodies of fourteen co-religionists, mostly women and children, who had been brutally murdered. The Buyung Katedo massacre, as the attack was quickly dubbed, almost immediately triggered further clashes around the district. A series of tit-for-tat lynchings and other attacks also ensued, continuing until early August 2001. Both Muslims and Christians were responsible for different attacks during this period, but Muslims proved more able to burn down large parts of villages. Pockets of Christian villages adjoining or fully surrounded by several distinct Muslim-populated areas were a particular target.

Immediately before the first attack of the fourth period on 30 June, hundreds of Muslims gathered at the beach in Malei-Lage village, according to a local Muslim villager’s account. The man said most of the attackers were from the village, but that there were also significant numbers of people he did not recognise, including mujahidin from Java. The other combatants unknown to the man most likely came from other

89 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
Muslim villages along the road east to Ampana. Despite the presence of outside mujahidin, this man asserted that this particular attack had been a local initiative.\(^{90}\) Local youths strongly desired revenge after their village was burned during the third period, the man said; an attack on a Christian settlement would also further simplify the local religious geography.

When the attack started at around 11:00am, the crowd of Muslims walked along the road to the nearby Christian settlement, where they encountered little resistance. Most Muslim combatants had their own *senjata rakitan*, the man said, but before the attack bullets were freely distributed, and some of the people from outside the village also brought bombs. One Christian man was killed, and the crowd of Muslims, which was growing in number as the attack continued, set about burning the houses in the settlement. They stopped soon after a company of paramilitary police (Brimob - Brigade Mobil) arrived and told them to go home.\(^{91}\) The next day, 1 July, in a neighbouring Christian settlement in Tongko village, a second attack proceeded along similar lines. The Muslim crowd encountered less resistance, the man recalled, although another Christian man was killed.\(^{92}\)

A GKST Crisis Centre report on the Malei clashes complained that Brimob personnel were present during the clashes, but did not act to stop the burning.\(^{93}\) As a criticism directed at the specific Brimob personnel involved, this is perhaps unfair. One combatant noted, the thirty-odd troops would have been endangering themselves if they had attempted to contain the much larger crowd of Muslims.\(^{94}\) What such a small deployment of Brimob troops does show, however, is how little effort the security forces were making to stop the violence. Local Muslims indicated they were convinced that the security forces must have known an attack was coming, and could have sent more troops if they had wanted to prevent violence. “How could they not [have known]! The rumours were hot, there would be an attack, it makes no sense to say that they wouldn’t have known.”\(^{95}\)

\(^{90}\) Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
\(^{91}\) Interviews with a Poso man, July 2003, April 2004.
\(^{92}\) Interviews with a Poso man, July 2003, April 2004.
\(^{93}\) Crisis Centre GKST, *Kronologis Tragedi Kerusuhan Poso Mei-November 2001*, no date, p. 3.
\(^{94}\) Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
\(^{95}\) Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
The Malei-Lage attacks were soon overshadowed by much more deadly violence in the immediate vicinity, the worst of which was an attack on Buyung Katedo village before dawn on 3 July.\textsuperscript{96} Fourteen Muslims were killed and much of the village was burned. All but two of the victims were women and children, and most suffered several deep machete wounds to different parts of their bodies.\textsuperscript{97} The fourteen victims were buried in a mass grave in Lawanga ward on the night of 3 June. The death toll alone makes the attack a major incident, as it was the most lethal single incident in Poso from 2001-2004.\textsuperscript{98} Over and above the death toll, however, the manner of the killing and the identity of the victims made the attack a particular source of Muslim anger. The following is an excerpt from a sermon given at the burial:

Truly Christians, who we call “Obet” ya Allah, have acted cruelly towards us ya Allah.\textsuperscript{99} They have murdered and chopped up our children, they have slit open the bellies of our women, taken out their foetuses and replaced them with young pigs. Ya Allah our God. They are cruel ya Allah, there has never been a group of people as cruel on this earth that You created ya Allah. We do not want peace ya Allah. You know what is in the hearts of all men ya Allah. You know what is in our hearts.\textsuperscript{100}

How can we explain this renewed escalation of violence: the two attacks on Malei-Lage and then the Buyung Katedo attack? Clearly the desire for revenge and mutual contempt arising from earlier periods of violence was a factor in the motivations of both sides. But such feelings do not explain the escalation from the previous sporadic disturbances to a period of large-scale attacks.

The task of explaining this escalation is made far more difficult by a lack of detailed information. The fourth period violence is not discussed at length in any existing study of Poso; in addition, the various chronologies of the period prepared by religious

\textsuperscript{96} Some accounts, including a contemporary VCD depicting the aftermath of the killings place this attack on 4 July, or on the night of 3-4 July. I can state with certainty that the correct date is 3 July (or expressed differently, the night of 2-3 July), because the first news of the attack appears in the 4 July edition of the South Sulawesi daily, \textit{Pedoman Rakyat}. See “13 Warga Poso Tewas Mengenaskan”, \textit{Pedoman Rakyat}, 4 July 2001, pp. 1, 12.

\textsuperscript{97} A Christian-authored chronology made the implausible claim that the victims had died when bombs concealed in the houses that were set alight exploded. The wounds on the victims do not resemble bomb wounds, there do not appear to be burn marks on the victims or their clothes, and one would expect Christians also to have been killed if this were the case. See Cheq and Recheq Forum, \textit{Tragedi Kemanusiaan di Poso}, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{98} In 2005, the bombing of Tentena’s central market exceeded the death toll from Buyung Katedo, killing 23. In 2000, many more people were killed in the Walisongo massacre than died in the Buyung Katedo killings.

\textsuperscript{99} The term “Obet” derives from the Maluku conflict. A public service advertisement screened in Maluku showed a Christian child, Obet, and a Muslim child, Acang, who lives have been disrupted by the conflict. Religious communities in the province thereafter adopted the names as epithets for their adversaries. See Spyer, “Fire Without Smoke and Other Phantoms of Ambon’s Violence”, pp. 29-31.
organisations, combatant entities and NGOs are incomplete and contradict each other on many points of fact. I also do not have a complete archive of local media coverage for this particular period, and the national media devoted little interest to these events at the time.

Nevertheless, some studies and some of the available information suggest that local politics may have contributed to the escalation. One study attributes the fourth period to anger at the district head’s decision to appoint Muslim civil servant Awad Al-Amri to the long vacant post of district secretary. Media coverage of Al-Amri’s appointment suggests Christians wanted a Christian appointed to the post as a form of “power-sharing”, so that the district’s senior elected official was a Muslim, and the senior bureaucrat was a Christian.

Another indication of a political element in the escalation of violence was the plan of a Christian organisation, Forum Komunikasi Masyarakat Tana Poso (Communicaton Forum of the Community of the Land of Poso), to hold a protest at the district legislature on 2 July, which would include a demand that the district head resign. Such a protest would be a bold and provocative move, given that as a result of the geographic segregation of Poso’s religious communities at the time, Gebangrejo ward (where the legislature was located) was Muslim territory. A delegation of 30 Christians departed from Tentena on 2 July, but they were unable to enter the city proper, as police and a crowd of armed Muslim men stopped them on the southern outskirts of the city in Sayo ward.

Different accounts link this failed protest to the fourth period violence in two ways. An NGO chronology attributes the 30 June attack on Malei-Lage to a Muslim response to rumours that Christians were planning a large-scale protest. A crowd of Muslims tried to reach the city to block this protest, the chronology suggests, but encountered resistance in Malei-Lage, resulting in a clash. It is possible this version accounts in part for the attack, although none of the local men I interviewed regarding the Malei-

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100 Speech appears on VCD, Panggilan Jihad Poso.
101 Lasahido et al, Suara dari Poso, p. 56. Al-Amri was appointed as acting district head in early 2000.
104 For somewhat different interpretations of the motives of those blocking the Christians’ path, see Crisis Center GKST, Kronologis Tragedi Kerusuhan Poso Mei-November 2001, p. 2.; Lasahido et al., Suara dari Poso, p. 57.
Lage clashes mentioned the protest as part of the context. Other reasons could also account for the attack: destroying the settlement as well as another one nearby further simplified the local religious geography and so may have made Muslim villagers feel safer; outside mujahidin would have encouraged the attack as part of a jihad in Poso; and the training that these outsiders had provided made it more likely that Muslims would overcome the settlement’s defences.

A second suggested link between the protest and the fourth period violence is that it was Christian anger at being blocked in Sayo that prompted the attack on Buyung Katedo incident, which took place before dawn the following morning. Muslims in Poso made this link at the time, as is clear from footage of the burial appearing on a contemporary VCD. On the video, a youth appears holding up a placard calling for the arrest of the leader of the Christian delegation and one of the delegation’s members.

It is certainly possible that immediate feelings of anger at the blockade of the planned demonstration brought pre-existing indignation at perceived affronts and injustices into sharp focus, and magnified some Christians’ desire for revenge. It is notable that this explanation does not rely on political motivations or aims; instead this version of events suggests that raised tensions resulting from political developments contributed to the Buyung Katedo massacre. An adequate explanation of the violence must take into account the multitude of effects of the two-and-a-half years of disturbances that preceded the fourth period. These include local desires to perpetrate reprisals and the increasing totalisation of identity, where members of the other religious group became legitimate targets for violence irrespective of their own personal involvement or non-involvement. One effect that may have been of particular relevance to the Buyung Katedo massacre is that some men in Poso had become accustomed to perpetrating horrific violence. Studies of other violent conflicts have often suggested that perpetrators become desensitised to the act of killing after repeatedly perpetrating violence.

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106 See, for example, Lasahido et al, *Suara dari Poso*, p. 57.

107 These two men were J. Santo and P. Tonimba, respectively. Both men were subsequently signatories of the Malino peace accord in December 2001. See Chapter Five.

the Buyung Katedo murders had gained prior experience of killing with machetes during the May-June 2000 violence or its aftermath.

The Buyung Katedo attack was far from being the end of the fourth period violence, although no subsequent attack approached the massacre’s death toll. On the same day that the massacre occurred, there were seemingly two separate attacks in Sayo ward: one attack perpetrated by Christians, in which a mosque was reportedly burned, and an ambush of four Christians riding two motorbikes by Muslims, in which all four people were killed.\(^\text{109}\)

On 4 July, according to an NGO chronology, several dozen houses were burned in Christian-populated Betania village and an IDP barracks was burned in Masamba, both in Poso Pesisir; a church and several houses were burned in the city; and two bodies were found in the Poso river.\(^\text{110}\) Violence continued the next day, 5 July, when six Christians were killed in the vicinity of Toyado village. There are at least two different versions of this incident. Contemporary press reports stated that the men, described as “perusuh” (rioters), were killed when they fired on police, who then returned fire. In a different version of this incident, a local Muslim man said the men died after Muslims burned a Christian IDP barracks, and claimed that some of the deaths may have been caused by bombs hidden in the barracks. He said the attack on the barracks was a reprisal after Christians had burned down a nearby Muslim-inhabited IDP barracks shortly beforehand.\(^\text{111}\)

The next day, 6 July, the site of violence shifted to Poso Pesisir sub-district, where the Christian village Saatu (and reportedly also nearby Pinedapa village) were attacked. The assailants killed a villager and burned more than one hundred houses.\(^\text{112}\) A travelogue written by a Muslim man who visited Poso shortly afterwards highlighted the contribution of this attack to simplifying the local religious geography by eliminating a pocket of Christian settlements that stood between different Muslim areas. The visitor recalled his host informing him that they would not have travelled to Poso by land if the

two villages, which lay along the main road through Poso Pesisir sub-district, still stood intact.113

Sporadic incidents of violence continued until early August 2001. Some of the more deadly attacks included a clash between Muslim and Christian crowds in Pendolo on 18 July in which two people were killed in Pendolo, the lynching of a Muslim man in Tentena on 21 July; and reportedly also the lynching of three Christians who were pulled out of a public transport vehicle near Malino Bau village on 29 July.114 Muslim crowds also attacked and destroyed the Christian settlements in the majority Muslim Tojo sub-district, which lies between Buyung Katedo and Ampana, during the remainder of July.115 Overall, the fourth period violence caused at least 34 deaths and by one estimate crowds burned 22 settlements during this period.116

Thereafter, there was a marked reduction in the number of incidents in August, although the month was by no means free of violence either. For instance, there were reported attacks by Christians on Labuan and Lemoro villages on 13 and 20 August respectively, with the latter incident causing two fatalities.117 The relatively improved security situation continued until mid-October 2001. By the time the escalation of violence in October started, there was a new actor in the conflict: the Java-based militia Laskar Jihad.

**Laskar Jihad Comes to Poso**

In the aftermath of the fourth period and the Buyung Katedo incident, the Java-based paramilitary group Laskar Jihad established a presence in Poso. The group was formed in April 2000 as the paramilitary wing of the Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah (FKASWJ - Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah Communication Forum) – a loose...
network of salafists aligned with the Yogyakarta-based preacher Ja’far Umar Thalib.\textsuperscript{118} Almost immediately after the militia was formed, Laskar Jihad sent several thousand of its members to Maluku, where it commenced operations in May 2000.\textsuperscript{119} Both in Maluku and later in Poso, Laskar Jihad was the least covert of the various jihadist groups. Whereas Mujahidin Kompak, JI and their ilk publicised their activities discreetly among their own networks to the ends of fundraising and recruitment, Laskar Jihad aggressively pursued a public profile, setting up a website, print media and in Ambon a radio station to broadcast news of the group’s activities.\textsuperscript{120} Of the various jihadist groups, Laskar Jihad also appears to have enjoyed the closest ties to the military. There is a broad consensus among observers that Laskar Jihad had the support of some senior military officers, who ignored President Abdurrahman Wahid’s order to prevent Laskar Jihad from travelling to Maluku.\textsuperscript{121}

When the group chose to move into Poso, Laskar Jihad first sent a two man investigative team to Central Sulawesi on 14 July consisting of FKASWJ chairperson Ayip Syafruddin and Jamaludin Mangun, the head of FKASWJ leadership board in South Sulawesi.\textsuperscript{122} The pair met the Central Sulawesi governor, Poso district head, local Muslim figures and IDPs from Poso housed in Palu.\textsuperscript{123} The meeting with the governor was well publicised, and served to underline the government’s unwillingness to intervene effectively to stop violence in Poso, as they would not prevent Laskar Jihad from entering the district.\textsuperscript{124} Within a week of the team’s arrival, two more sets of Laskar Jihad members (31 people in all) arrived by passenger ship in Palu, and by the end of July, Laskar Jihad had announced on its website that it was now recruiting

\textsuperscript{118} Although acknowledging that the precise meaning of the term is contested within Islam, Fealy explains that the term “salafi” or “salafist” is generally used to refer to “those who regard themselves as the strictest adherents to the model [of proper Islamic thinking and behaviour] set out by the early generations of Muslims”. See Fealy, “Radical Islam in Indonesia”, pp. 13-14. On Jafar Umar Thalib and Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah, see International Crisis Group, Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don’t Mix, pp. 12-16.


\textsuperscript{120} Hasan, who conducted his doctoral research on the group, explains Laskar Jihad’s very public jihad as a grab for status by the salafists who established the group “to enhance their identity and thereby negotiate a place on the map of Indonesian Islam.” Hasan, Laskar Jihad, p. 197.

\textsuperscript{121} For one example, see van Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia”, p. 118, who identifies sympathy for Laskar Jihad’s cause or a desire to destabilise President Wahid’s government as possible motives for military inaction.

\textsuperscript{122} “Pendaftaran Laskar Jihad ke Poso Dibuka”, laskarjihad.or.id, 30 July 2001; “Laskar Jihad Datang, Kristen Resah”, laskarjihad.or.id, 5 August 2001.

\textsuperscript{123} “Laskar Jihad Datang, Kristen Resah”, laskarjihad.or.id, 5 August 2001.
volunteers for Poso. Laskar Jihad then established offices in both Palu and Poso, with various estimates of the size of its contingent in Poso ranging from 100 to 700 men.

By the time Laskar Jihad arrived in Poso, there were well-established frictions between the group and Mujahidin Kompak/Jemaah Islamiyah. These frictions dated from each group’s operations in Maluku, but had their ultimate roots in different interpretations of Salafist doctrine. These frictions may account for the advice given by a board member of the Al Amanah pesantren in Poso, Wahid Lamidji, to the Laskar Jihad assessment team that neighbouring Morowali district was in greater need of Laskar Jihad’s help than Poso. (JI members used the Al Amanah pesantren as a cover for their operations in Poso.) Despite this lukewarm welcome, Laskar Jihad was able to establish posts in several villages and recruit locals, including some men previously under the sway of other mujahidin groups. A local man in one of the villages where Laskar Jihad established a presence said the group’s attraction stemmed from its members’ willingness to settle in the village, in contrast to other outside mujahidin who had visited the village but slept in the city. He said the group’s members held religious discussions twice a week, and also gave the sermon for the Friday prayer. Laskar Jihad’s sermons focussed on the failings of local Muslims, the man recalled, saying “If we thought about their dakwah (proselytising), maybe it was us who were in the wrong and not the Christians, because they [Laskar Jihad] said that we had forgotten God, so God had given us smoke [ie from burnt houses], visited a disaster upon Muslims because many of us had forgotten Him.” That said, even a casual glance at Laskar Jihad publications in Poso makes it clear that the group also actively promoted violence against Christians and anti-Christian sentiment.

Laskar Jihad distributed an almost daily Poso-specific bulletin in the district, entitled Bel@ (Berita Laskar Jihad), and also sold its national level tabloid, Buletin Laskar

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124 The police did arrest a later contingent of 35 Laskar Jihad members as they disembarked from a ship at Palu port on 15 August 2001, but let them go after they did not find any weapons in their luggage. See “Injak Palu, Laskar Jihad ‘Dijemput’ Polisi”, MAL, date not recorded.
129 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
Jihad. Bel@, typically a one page flyer, promoted a strident anti-reconciliation standpoint and encouraged the view that Poso should be segregated geographically along religious lines. For instance, in one edition, Laskar Jihad applauded the 3 September 2001 shooting of Sintuwu Maroso University rector J. Kogege as emblematic of the action Muslims should take if Christians entered Muslim territory, saying “we must be stern in our action against them [Christians]” because “they would never let Muslims pass through their own territory.” The bulletins also contained tracts on morality, advertised Laskar Jihad health and religious activities, and described attacks that had taken place on Christian areas.

Despite the group’s militant rhetoric, it is difficult to quantify Laskar Jihad’s exact involvement in violence in Poso, not least because this question is the object of intensely vitriolic debate. Even local Muslim combatants sympathetic to Laskar Jihad described the group as less militant than the mujahidin who arrived in Poso in 2000. One combatant from Lage sub-district recalled that the group’s ten members who were stationed in his village “took almost no part in attacks” and provided religious instruction only, not military training. Some local Muslims not affiliated with Laskar Jihad disparaged the group as “Laskar Pilox” (Laskar Spray-paint), saying they showed up after the fighting in each attack to spray-paint their organisation’s name and claim credit for the battle. But by the same token, another local combatant who joined Laskar Jihad asserted the group had conducted military training, and in fact had formed a fourteen-member special forces (pasukan khusus) unit out of local trainees. Even if

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130 While in Poso, the group freely distributed bound back issues of Bel@, grouped into month-by-month sets.
132 For one example of this debate, see “Hak Jawab Veteran Lasykar Jihad (1)”, post on keluarga-islam mailing list, http://www.mail-archive.com/keluarga-islam@yahoogroups.com/msg13876.html, accessed 8 February 2008.
133 A local combatant who joined Laskar Jihad cast this difference pejoratively, saying Mujahidin were more “keras” (hard-line), as their teachings encouraged simple hatred of all groups not of the same faith. Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.
134 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004. Two editions of Bel@ describe Laskar Jihad-run training sessions of a very limited nature. The first session ran for two days from 8-9 October 2001 and involved 50 youths in Toliba village, while the second session ran for only a day in Tokorondo village on 25 November. See “Laskar Jihad Gelar Latihan Gabungan Dengan Muslim Toliba”, Bel@, 12 October 2001; “Latihan Gabungan di Tokorondo”, Bel@, 27 November 2001.
135 ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 14. This characterisation of Laskar Jihad’s behaviour may be slightly embellished. In its Bel@ tabloid, Laskar Jihad most often referred to the Muslim side in clashes in generic terms such as “kaum Muslimin” (Muslims) or “mujahidin Poso”. I have not found any explicit claim in the bulletin that Laskar Jihad participated directly in an attack. Also, most writing on the walls of burned out building that I observed on several trips to Poso in January and February 2002 was etched in charcoal, not spray-paint.
136 Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.
Laskar Jihad members from Java did not take part in battles, it seems likely that the youths who received instruction from the group did. Certainly, local men who joined Laskar Jihad asserted that they continued to fight. Sangaji, based on his interviews with local Muslim combatants, also attributes to Laskar Jihad the development of the "bom kontak" (literally, “contact bombs”, i.e. bombs propelled by catapult which exploded upon impact) used during the fifth period of violence.\textsuperscript{137}

A less direct role in clashes than other groups would be consistent with Laskar Jihad’s earlier involvement in Maluku province, where observers increasingly question how many of the group’s members took part in fighting. For example, while he stresses that the group did have a 100-strong pasukan khusus (special forces) in Maluku that took part in fighting, Hasan suggests that few of Laskar Jihad’s 3,000 strong force in the province ever directly participated in attacks, observing that “of the more than one hundred members I interviewed, only two fighters claimed to have engaged in real battles.”\textsuperscript{138}

Viewed in the light of their members’ limited involvement in fighting, the apparent paradox of Laskar Jihad’s presence in Poso is that the level of violence did intensify significantly within a few months of their arrival, a phenomenon also observed by Hasan in Maluku.\textsuperscript{139} (In Maluku, Hasan attributes this escalation to the increased jihadist spirit of local Muslim fighters after Laskar Jihad’s arrival). Violent incidents became increasingly frequent in Poso in September and October, before a peak of violence in late November. It may be that Laskar Jihad’s public presence, which was so clearly tolerated by the authorities, emboldened other groups to launch larger-scale attacks.\textsuperscript{140} The more likely explanation, however, is that there was at best a weak causal link between Laskar Jihad’s arrival and the sharp spike in violence in late November 2001. Instead, this escalation probably primarily reflects the increased preparedness of the groups who arrived before Laskar Jihad in Poso for violence, owing to continuing recruitment and training of locals as well as purchase of weapons. The most intense

\textsuperscript{138} Hasan, \textit{Laskar Jihad}, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{139} Hasan, \textit{Laskar Jihad}, p. 195
\textsuperscript{140} This interpretation is consistent with contemporary reports of an increased confidence among Poso’s Muslim community after Laskar Jihad’s arrival in the district. See, for example, LPS-HAM Sulteng, \textit{Laporan Akhir Tahun 2001}, p. 32.
period of violence after Laskar Jihad’s arrival – called the fifth period of violence - is described below.

The Fifth Period – November-December 2001

The security situation in Poso again became dire in October 2001, and did not improve until early December. The violence at this point included numerous attacks on buses, the burning of several churches, shooting attacks on villages and clashes between armed groups from each community around the outskirts of the city. This section, however, will focus on just the final five days of violence from 27 November – 1 December, which I will term the fifth period. During these five days at least seven Christian-populated villages were razed in Poso Pesisir and Lage sub-districts. Two of the villages destroyed, Tangkura in Poso Pesisir and Sepe in Lage, had previously been considered Christian strongholds. During the final attack in the sequence, a military platoon commander was shot dead; his comrades took revenge almost immediately, abducting eight Muslims from a neighbouring village, only two of whom survived. These five days of violence – which took place during the Islamic fasting month, Ramadan – are noteworthy over and above the two months of increasing violence that preceded them because these attacks spurred central government intervention to bring the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table. The scale and intensity of violence during the fifth period is also interesting for the insight it provides on the increasing military capacity of the alliance of outside mujahidin and local Muslims.

The fifth period violence can in fact be broken down into two separate, temporally and geographically distinct sets of incidents. First, from 27-29 November there were three days of attacks to the west of the city in Poso Pesisir sub-district targeting predominantly Christian-populated villages located along a road running inland from the Muslim-populated settlement, Tabalu. Next, after one day passed without significant incident, there was an attack southeast of the city on Bategencu and Sepe villages on the night of 1 December, followed almost immediately by a reprisal attack by the military on Muslim-populated Toyado village, which neighbours Bategencu.

141 Different partisan accounts of this violence are provided in “Kronologi Poso Membara”, laskarjihad.or.id, 5 December 2001; Cheq and Recheq Forum, Tragedi Kemanusiaan di Poso, pp. 34-40, Crisis Center GKST, Kronologis Tragedi Kerusuhan Poso Mei-November 2001, pp. 6-11.
The first village to be burned in the Poso Pesisir set of attacks was Betalemba village. Both Mujahidin Kompak and Laskar Jihad authored chronologies of this sequence of attacks, and each organisation claimed that Betalemba was attacked after Christians gathered in the village fired the first shot.\(^{142}\) Two Muslims were killed during this attack, one of them an important leader among outside mujahidin.\(^{143}\) There is some confusion surrounding Christian fatalities, but it appears either two or three Christians may also have been killed.\(^{144}\) Again according to media reports, 76 houses, a church and a school were burned in Betalemba, while ten houses were also burned in nearby Patiwunga.\(^{145}\)

The next villages along the road were Patiwunga and then the reputed Christian stronghold, Tangkura. Overnight following the attack on Betalemba, Christians had placed oil drums on the road in Patiwunga and the village head of Tangkura had taken a group of men to fell coconut trees to block the road.\(^{146}\) These defences proved little use, however, when crowds of Muslims began to advance on the villages early in the morning the next day, 28 November. Both villages were razed, two men were killed and local Christian residents fled south, either to Sanginora village or further afield to the Napu valley or Tentena.\(^{147}\) Those local Christians who attempted to repel the attacks were quickly forced to flee into the hills surrounding the village.\(^{148}\)

\(^{142}\) See “Kronologi Poso Membara”, laskarjihad.or.id, dated 5 December 2001, “Kronologi Direbutnya Kembali Desa-desa Muslim Poso”, BUNYAN, Edisi 09, January 2002, pp.19-20. The BUNYAN chronology, a Kompak-authored account, is highly stylised. Its author took pains to stress that Laskar Jihad played no role in the violence and depicted the organisation as subordinate to the mujahidin. He also stressed that Muslims did not loot any of the villages they attacked. Both claims are questionable.\(^{143}\) The mujahidin leader was Abdullah alias Muhamad Sanusi alias Jetli, a Mujahidin Kompak member from Riau province in Sumatra. ICG reports list Abdullah as killed in the attack on Tangkura, but he in fact died one day earlier. See “Kronologi Poso Membara”; Lembaga Pengembangan Studi Hukum dan Advokasi Hak Asasi Manusia (LPS-HAM) Sulteng, “1500 Massa Menyerang ke Desa Tabalu, Patiwunga dan Betalemba: Ratusan Rumah Warga hangus Terbakar, 5 Tewas”, emailed report, 5 December 2001; ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 12; ICG, Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks, p. 8.\(^{144}\) For different estimates, see “Lima Tewas, Kelompok Muslim-Kristen Baku Tembak di Poso”, Radar Sulteng, 28 November 2001; “Poso Makin Panas, Dua Tewas”, Radar Sulteng, date not recorded (but probably 29 November 2001); LPS-HAM, “1500 Massa Menyerang”.\(^{145}\) “Poso Makin Panas, Dua Tewas”, Radar Sulteng, date not recorded (but probably 29 November 2001).\(^{146}\) Interviews with Poso Pesisir residents, January 2002.\(^{147}\) LPS-HAM, “1500 Massa Menyerang”; Interviews with Poso Pesisir residents and a resident of Sulewana, January 2002. Again, different sources provide different casualty figures, with a chronology compiled by the GKST Crisis Centre listing two Betalemba residents and a Tangkura resident killed. See Noldy Tacoh, Kronologis Kejadian Penyerangan Laskar Jihad di Kecamatan Poso Pesisir, (Tentena: GKST Crisis Centre, no date).\(^{148}\) One local Christian man recalled he had fled into the hills after suffering a minor wound caused by a piece of shrapnel. “I lost my courage, I may have a large frame but I felt very small once I was hit.” The man said he tried to return to Tangkura with other local youths that afternoon, but that they were forced to flee again after renewed clashes with Muslims. Interview with a resident of Poso Pesisir, January 2002.
this attack was reportedly a crowd estimated to comprise up to 1500 people; eyewitnesses claimed that a handful of these combatants used automatic weapons.149

The sequence of attacks in Poso Pesisir concluded the next day with an attack on the last two Christian villages along the road inland from Tabalu, namely Sanginora and Dewua. Both villages were razed, and there may have been two fatalities.150 This third consecutive day of large-scale attacks in the same area was a clear sign of increased organisation among Muslim ranks and confidence in their side’s military capacity. Such a pattern of repeated attacks contrasted with the fourth period of violence in mid-2001 violence, during which a Poso Pesisir resident recalled that Muslims were reluctant to attack neighbouring villages on consecutive days, because the first attack would prompt the residents of the next village to be on high alert.151 A Christian resident of Tangkura also claimed that the third day of consecutive attacks had caught him off-guard:

At the time I thought they would not attack again the next day, so at around 6:00pm on the afternoon Tangkura was attacked I went to Napu to seek help from my friends there. But before we could come back, the next day they [Muslims] were already in Sanginora.152

Having taken Sanginora and Dewua, the Muslim forces found themselves at the end of a twelve kilometre foot-track that led to Sulewana village, located just north of Tentena. Christians had used the track to help co-religionists in Poso Pesisir flee during the November attacks.153 If Muslims had wished to continue their advances in Poso Pesisir, they in theory could have tried to use the path to reach Tentena without passing through the numerous Christian settlements located along the main road south from Poso. They chose to go no further, and the focus of the fifth period violence shifted to Lage sub-district, southeast of the city.154

The main attack in Lage took place on the night of 1 December, two days after the Sanginora and Dewua attacks.155 In this attack, a crowd of Muslims first attacked

150 LPS-HAM, “1500 Massa Menyerang”.
151 Interview with a Poso Pesisir resident, July 2003.
152 Interview with a Tangkura resident, January 2002.
153 Interview with a Sulewana resident, January 2002; Damanik, Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso, p. 75.
154 The Dewua-Sulewana footpath is marked on some maps of Poso, and some Christian sources speculated that the Muslim forces may have expected to find a more viable way to reach Tentena than the footpath provided. Such speculation was not confirmed by any Muslim interviewees.
155 The Laskar Jihad chronology of the October-December 2001 period states that there was also a clash on the southern fringes of the city on 1 December. See “Kronologi Poso Membara”, laskarjihad.or.id, 5 December 2001
Bategencu and then proceeded to the neighbouring village, Sepe, reputed as a Christian stronghold. This attack started late at night – between 10:00pm and 12:00am according to different accounts – shortly after the power had been cut off in Sepe village. By contrast, each of the fifth period attacks in Poso Pesisir sub-district took place during the day. Both residents of Sepe and some men who took part in the attack indicated that some of the assailants had factory-standard weapons. Nevertheless, it appears the only fatality in the attack was a military platoon commander killed when soldiers intervened to prevent Muslims crowds from burning the entirety of Sepe. Five Sepe residents were wounded, several dozen houses and two churches were also burned.

The death of the platoon commander had fatal consequences for residents of the nearby Muslim village Toyado - a rival stronghold to Sepe - which served as a staging point for Muslim attacks in Lage sub-district. On 2 December, just hours after the Sepe attack, TNI soldiers went to the village and abducted eight men who were eating the pre-dawn fasting month meal (sahur) at a guard post, including the local commander of the village’s Muslim forces. The soldiers reportedly took the men to Maliwuko village (near Tagolu, just south of the city) and handed them over to a crowd of Christians there. Two of the men managed to escape, but the other six were murdered. Muslims retrieved the body of one of the victims – who had been beheaded – from the Poso river and presented his bloated corpse to a National Commission of Human Rights (Komnas HAM) team that came to Poso almost immediately after the fifth period. The Toyado abductions were not the first instance of swift and illegal retaliation by the security forces; a month earlier, paramilitary police (Brimob) had shot one Muslim youth dead and seriously assaulted around twenty others in Mapane village in Poso Pesisir on 21 October as retaliation for the death of a Brimob constable during a Muslim attack on Betalemba village the day before. Most of those arrested in Mapane eventually won

156 Unfortunately at the time of the interview I assumed that the power had been deliberately cut and did not think to ask whether this was a timetabled blackout (some villages in Poso do not have 24-hour electricity). An LPS-HAM chronology implies the power was deliberately cut. Interview with a Sepe resident, January 2002; LPS-HAM, “1500 massa Menyerang”.
157 Interview with a Sepe resident, 30 January 2002. According to the Sepe resident, an elderly member of the village was shot in his garden earlier in the evening, and was taken by car to the health centre in Tagolu. A contemporary press report indicated that four soldiers were also wounded. I have not found any information on possible Muslim casualties during the attack.
158 LPS-HAM, “1500 massa Menyerang”.
159 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004. It is possible that this attack on Toyado took place one day later, on 3 December, but most sources list 2 December as the date.
160 See “Suaib Ditemukan Tewas Terpenggal”, Radar Sulteng, date not recorded; “Komnas HAM Dihadiahi Mayat Terpenggal”, Radar Sulteng, date not recorded.
compensation from the provincial police, after the Palu District Court declared their detention to be illegal. 161

What prompted the fifth period attacks? A chronology appearing in a Kompak-linked publication asserted that the advance of Muslim forces from Tabalu village to Betalemba was precipitated by a Christian assault on Tabalu, while stating that Bategencu and Sepe were attacked because they had frequently harassed nearby Toyado village. The Laskar Jihad account cites chronic harassment of Muslims in the vicinity of the villages attacked in Poso Pesisir as the reason for the violence. These claims may well be true, as it was common for both Muslim and Christian youths to gather around border areas and fire shots at neighbouring villages during the night. But given how commonplace such “harassment” was, it hardly explains the increase in the level of violence. The attacks might also be explained by the logic of simplifying religious geography, although Christian populations returned to the villages soon after they were attacked.

The Islamic fasting month appears to have been an important motivating factor. Both Laskar Jihad and the DI-derived movements promoted the idea that the fasting month was a particularly apt moment for jihad. In its daily bulletin Bel@, for instance, Laskar Jihad included several items on the merits of jihad during Ramadan; 162 a treatise on jihad during Ramadan published in December 2001 in the Kompak-managed magazine BUNYAN noted that each jihad waged by the prophet Muhammad’s during the fasting month had been a great success, and concluded,

There is broad scope during Ramadan to do good deeds like waging jihad against unbelievers, the highest peak of good deeds in Islam (dzarwatu sanamul Islam). The rewards [for jihad during Ramadan] are in fact many times greater than in the other months of the year. 163

161 After stopping a group of mujahidin in Mapane, Brimob troops arrested 32 of the men. In the course of making the arrests, the Brimob troops beat and humiliated the mujahidin, and shot one youth dead at the scene. The Palu district court then declared the imprisonment of 27 of the men unlawful and ordered police to pay Rp. 200,000 ($30) to each. “Tuntutan Pra Peradilan Dikabulkan, Tahanan Tragedi Mapane Dibebaskan”, Bel@, 12 December 2001.


A local combatant put the importance of Ramadan slightly differently: Christians in 2001 thought that Muslims would be weak because they were not eating or drinking, and so it was necessary to demonstrate that this was the “best” month for Muslims. 164

This belief in the merit of jihad during the fasting month resulted in a recurring annual pattern in Poso of a spike in violence during each Ramadan, particularly during the second half of the month. Attacks coincided with the end of the fasting month in 2002 and 2003, but the pattern was most strongly evident from 2004-2006. In 2004 a Christian village chief was beheaded and six Christians were killed in a public transport bombing, in 2005 three Christian schoolgirls were beheaded and in 2006 the acting head of the Central Sulawesi church was fatally shot in Palu. Only in 2007, after a police raid in January and subsequent arrests led to greatly improved security was the pattern of violence during Ramadan broken.

It is also possible that the scale of the fifth period attacks indicates that they were part of a larger plan to eventually raze all Christian settlements in Poso including Tentena. 165 The higher degree of organisation evident in these attacks would be consistent with the existence of such a plan. There is some evidence that the fifth period attacks were centrally coordinated. Several local combatants said the order for some of the attacks came from the city, with one man indicating he was tasked with maintaining communication with the maktab (headquarters (in the city)) by two-way radio during the attack. 166 Local combatants also said that the December Sepe attack required a far greater degree of planning than the July attacks in the same part of the district. The extra planning was needed because Sepe was located wholly within Christian territory, whereas the July attacks had targeted Christian settlements in mixed Muslim-Christian villages. 167

164 Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.
165 ICG, Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks, p. 9.
166 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004. The man also coordinated movements between different parts of the crowd. In another instance of radio coordination, an off-camera exchange on a VCD depicting an attack on a village in Poso Pesisir in late 2001 involves the following exchange via two way radio: A: “We have pulled back, we’ve pulled back.” A: “Where are you? Over.” B: “I’m at the bridge.” A: “We’re at the graveyard, we’ve stopped at the graveyard.” B: “Go forward, go forward, go forward!” The BUNYAN chronology of the fifth period Poso Pesisir attacks also claims that Muslim combatants overheard Christians using two-way radio during the 27 November attack on Betalemba to request ten factory-standard firearms from Tentena. See “Kronologi Direbutnya Kembali Desa-desa Muslim Poso”, BUNYAN, Edisi 09, January 2002, p.19.
167 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
If there was a plan to raze Tentena, it was stopped mid-stream by a deployment of more troops to Poso in early December, accompanied by efforts on the part of the central government to broker peace (described in Chapter Five). The government intervention meant that the Sepe attack and the Toyado abductions were almost the last serious violence in 2000: two days after Toyado, security forces shot dead a Muslim man protesting the abductions in the city, and there may also have been a fight between Brimob and Muslim forces in Pandajaya near Pendolo village in the south of the district. Overall, according to figures compiled by local NGO LPSHAM, which documented the 2001 violence from media reportage and its own investigations, 99 people were killed in Poso during 2001, with a further 27 people missing. Violence has never reached the same intensity since, with fewer than 50 people killed each year in Poso during the period 2002-2007.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the development of an alliance between outside mujahidin and local Muslims in Poso, an alliance that was initiated after the losses Muslims suffered during the third period. The pattern of violence after the third period was initially one of tit-for-tat lynchings, harassing attacks and some frontal clashes. The military advantage that Muslims gained over time by means of this alliance transformed this pattern to a situation where Christians, although still fighting, were overwhelmed. I have charted the development of this military capacity by examining two major periods of violence in 2001: the fourth period (June-July), in which Muslims demonstrated their greater capacity to burn villages, but also suffered an horrific reprisal in the form of the Buyung Katedo massacre, and the fifth period (November-December), when Muslim crowds destroyed all or part of seven Christian villages in four days of attacks spaced over just five days.

168 In addition to the deterrent effect of extra troops, potential attackers may have judged further attacks imprudent so soon after the military reprisals against Toyado village.
169 This clash is described in a Christian-authored chronology, but I have not found other sources that corroborate the chronology’s account. See Cheq and Recheq Forum, Tragedi Kemanusiaan di Poso, p. 40. Pandajaya was an important centre of mujahidin activity near the border with South Sulawesi province.
170 LPSHAM, Laporan Akhir Tahun 2001, 14 December 2001. LPSHAM’s report actually lists 141 killed, but this is a tabulation error. The figure of 42 houses burned on 2 November 2001 in Pinedapa was mistakenly entered into the deaths column of the summary table. The tally may also include some casualties from incidents that happened in 2000. The report’s figure for missing people also appears to erroneously include the two survivors of the Toyado abductions.
The organisation of the large-scale attacks on villages during the fourth and fifth period bore some similarity to attacks by Christian crowds in the May-June 2000 violence. At the centre of each attack there was an organised core of combatants, consisting of outside mujahidin and the local men whom they had trained. Outside mujahidin would have been only a small numerical minority in most attacks, but they appear to have played a prominent role when present. For example, a local man who fought in the attack on Sepe village during the fifth period indicated that outside mujahidin tended to be in the front line: “Even the security forces were scared of them.”

A local combatant from Poso Pesisir put the same point slightly differently, “Even when there were security forces, they [i.e. outside mujahidin] stayed standing and kept going forward; they wouldn’t lie down.”

Outside mujahidin could occupy leadership positions because of their military prowess and readiness to fight as well as their perceived religious authority; the military and doctrinal training (ta ‘lim) that they provided then reinforced their position of authority. The skills and qualities that outside mujahidin offered were valued because they arrived at a time when locals wanted revenge and needed to defend themselves against the real possibility of further Christian attacks. Outside mujahidin also drew on local authority structures, sometimes working through local leaders to gain recruits; they also sought to recruit charismatic youths from each village who could themselves exert authority. Not every local who trained with outside mujahidin became bound to them by organisational ties, but by late 2001, they had probably forged links with local youths that were more organised than the ties that bound the core combatants of the kelompok merah together during the third period violence. The opportunity to conduct training over a longer time period and the regular contact that ta ‘lim facilitated both would have aided development of a higher degree of organisation. Intentions may also have been important: outside mujahidin may have had a conscious aim to develop a fighting force for the longer term, however inconsistently such an aim was pursued.

The control of factory-standard firearms was another resource that outside mujahidin had available to them in 2000 and 2001 to exercise authority among local Muslims and regulate what violence locals could perpetrate. Factory-standard weapons were particularly sought after because the homemade guns that most men owned were

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171 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
inaccurate and tended to jam after firing only a handful of bullets.\textsuperscript{173} Outside mujahidin appear to have largely controlled access to these weapons at this point in the conflict, handing out guns immediately before an attack and collecting the weapons again afterwards.\textsuperscript{174} A pre-attack ceremony from late 2001 depicted on a fund-raising VCD provides evidence of this pattern, showing an outside mujahid handing out around a dozen firearms to a room of approximately 50 people, before the men pray and set off to attack a village.\textsuperscript{175} It was not until later in the conflict when operational funds ran short, a Mujahidin Kompak member claimed, that outsiders sacrificed this means of control and began to distribute weapons to local Muslims on a permanent basis.\textsuperscript{176}

Although outside mujahidin thus clearly played a role in developing the capacity of Muslims in Poso to fight, and by doing so entrenched themselves in leadership positions, there were nevertheless limits to these men’s agency and authority. One limit was their lack of numbers. Particularly during the period before Laskar Jihad arrived, there may have been dozens rather than hundreds of outside mujahidin in the district, mostly concentrated in wards of the city. With so few people, it is not clear that outside mujahidin played a significant role in the day-to-day routine of violence in villages: at the time, life for villagers in border areas involved a nightly reality of standing guard, harassing their opponents with gunfire and avoiding similar harassment directed at their own village.

Even during major attacks, outside mujahidin did not have control over all combatants. The same widespread desire to fight that helped outside mujahidin gain recruits also meant that each time a large-scale attack was to take place, Muslim ranks would quickly swell. Most local men had their own homemade firearms by 2001, and as a result virtually anyone could participate in an attack without close coordination with those

\textsuperscript{172} Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.

\textsuperscript{173} Despite the use of these weapons in attacks in 2000 and 2001, a somewhat surprising feature of this violence is that the average death toll from each clash did not increase in line with the increasing organisation and weaponry. The reason is probably that Christians withdrew from the fifth period clashes fairly swiftly, realising they could not defend their villages.

\textsuperscript{174} Interview with Mujahidin Kompak member, May 2004.

\textsuperscript{175} Thee firearms include rifles, at least two pistols and two weapons that appear to be automatic fire. In the footage of the attack that followed, only single gunshots are audible, however. In a 2004 report, ICG identified the attack shown on this VCD (the same one described in footnote x) as most likely the November 2001 attack on Tangkura, because the next clip on the video shows Muslims surveying the damage to Tangkura shortly after the village had been razed. The problem with this interpretation is that the attack on Tangkura took place during the day, whereas the video depicts a night-time attack. See ICG, \textit{Jihad in Central Sulawesi}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{176} Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, May 2004.
nominally in command. For instance, one local combatant recalled that he might set off for an attack with what seemed like a few dozen people, only to find himself amongst a crowd of hundreds or even a thousand. Hence, as I concluded in the case of Christian attacks during the third period, the Muslim side in most fourth and fifth period clashes is most aptly described as a “crowd”.

Most of the Muslim men who joined these crowds were probably from villages in the vicinity of the Christian settlement that was to be attacked. Many of these ad hoc combatants would have had very little contact with outside mujahidin: perhaps they may have attended religious activities held in their villages by the preachers these organisations brought to Poso, or received training from a local man from their village who had himself trained with outside mujahidin. The participation of so many local combatants limited the influence of outside mujahidin and the men they had trained on precisely what violence took place. One local combatant characterised these loosely coordinated participants as happy just to hear the sound of their gun firing, and less likely to stick to rules of engagement such as not attacking women or the elderly, nor looting for personal gain:

In the field, a lot of people deviated from what they [outside mujahidin] taught, I guess because most of the youths hadn’t been to their ta’lim; they’d just show up if they heard there was a battle. If most people had known what they taught, things wouldn’t have been brutal. They would have been more disciplined.

The limits of the agency and authority of outside mujahidin were also apparent in the extent to which the local men who trained with them adopted their religious agenda. (I will explore this limit more thoroughly in Chapter Five, which deals with the decline of violence.) To recap their agenda, outside mujahidin encouraged local Muslim youths to identify as mujahidin themselves and they encouraged the idea that it was haram to flee from a fight. They also promoted the idea that martyrdom was virtuous, taught that fighting in a jihad required certain restrictions on targets and forms of violence, and in particular they insisted that local Muslims lead a devout life. These tenets were not unique to outside mujahidin - violence in Poso had been described as a jihad even

177 Even the local men who trained with outside mujahidin may have mainly fought in their own sub-district.
178 On the satisfaction of hearing the sound of gun-fire, a local Muslim man indicated, “Each time we attacked, thousands of bullets would be fired, but only one or two people would be killed, if you counted the cost of the bullets it would come to tens of millions of rupiah.” Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
179 Interview with a Poso man, April 2004.
before these men arrived. Nevertheless, outside mujahidin made particular efforts to establish jihad as the central rationale for violence and to give the term content beyond that of an empty mobilising symbol.

It is difficult to gauge how much of this religious agenda locals accepted in 2000-2001, and how the agenda affected their behaviour. There were some indications that religious instruction did have an influence: the timing of the fifth period violence in Ramadan, believed by outside mujahidin to be an auspicious month for jihad; the observation of a local combatant that he returned to his village to find his peers all now regularly prayed in the local mosque; the pride local combatants said they felt if they were called “mujahidin”. ICG perhaps makes the strongest statement regarding the impact of religious instruction in its 2004 report, quoting without contradiction an unnamed local source saying that many local recruits of Mujahidin Kompak had been convinced that “dying as a martyr was glorious” and that “[m]any [local recruits] would have been willing suicide bombers”. The difficulty we face in evaluating such a statement, and the impact of the religious agenda in general in 2000-2001, is that the commitment of local Muslim combatants simply was not put to the test by the violence in Poso at the time. These were the “good times” in Poso for the perpetrators of jihadist violence. Fatalities among Muslim ranks during attacks were rare – the greater danger was seemingly posed by being ambushed or when a person’s own village was attacked. The risk of death from participating in an attack was high only if a member of the security forces was killed: take for example the fatality in Mapane, the six men abducted from Toyado and killed; a man protesting for the safe return of the abductees was also shot dead. When fatalities did occur among the ranks of attackers, a case could be made that

180 ICG, *Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, p. 21. ICG states that a Muslim youth killed in an accidental explosion in Poso in 2003 had been recruited as a suicide bomber. Another man who was born in Poso, Ashar Daeng Salam alias Aco, was killed while placing a bomb in a McDonalds restaurant as part of the 5 December 2002 Makassar bombings. It is not clear whether Aco was a suicide bomber or accidentally set off the bomb prematurely: the other explosion in the Makassar bombings was not a suicide attack. Outside of these examples, the willingness of Poso men to become suicide bombers has not been tested to date: none of the major bombings in Poso have been suicide attacks, and no local Muslims from Poso were recruited into the four terrorist suicide bombings in Java and Bali from 2002-2005. At least two men involved in the 2004 bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta (although not as suicide bombers), however, were mujahidin from Java who had travelled to Poso. One of these men, Mujadid alias Brekele, was also involved in the 2005 bombing of the market in Tentena which killed 23 people. In 2007, he was sentenced to eighteen years in prison for the 2005 attack. The other man, Rois, was sentenced to death for his role in the embassy bomb. On Ashar Daeng Salam, see “Tersangka Bom Makassar Jadi 16 Orang”, *Sriwijaya Post*, 15 December 2002; ICG, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia*, p. 16; ICG, *Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, p. 17. On Rois, See ICG, *Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks*, p. 1. Direct observation by author of trial of Amril Ngiode alias Aat, South Jakarta District Court, 19 September 2007; “Pelaku Bom Poso Divonis 18 Tahun”, tempointeraktif.com, 3 December 2007.
outside mujahidin were over-represented among those killed – two were killed in late 2001 – and the risk for locals was consequently lower. Moreover, there were few arrests after most attacks, and when people were arrested, crowds could sometimes pressure police to release the detainees without charge. There was also strong perception among local Muslims of the need to fight, and strong peer approval of fighting. Only in late 2002, when these conditions changed, did higher costs begin to be associated with a commitment to jihad (See Chapter Five). Once the cost to them increased, local youths were forced to consider more directly the difference between their own interests and motivations and the agenda of outside mujahidin.

It is also difficult to distinguish more generally between what was jihad and what was revenge. Jihadist doctrine specifically proscribes revenge as a motive, but outside mujahidin also promoted the concept of “striking back in equal measure and form”. By adopting such a doctrine, local Muslims could have attributed their actions to a loftier goal than anger over previous violence. Some local combatants doubtless did see attacks as jihad, but I found many of the combatants I interviewed were perfectly comfortable in explicitly describing their actions as revenge.

As a final note on the organisation of attacks and the motivation of attackers, I would like to note several drawbacks of the approach of this chapter. For the sake of clarity, I have focused in this chapter on an alliance of outside mujahidin and local men, and on two major periods of violence in 2001. But there are three significant drawbacks inherent in this approach.

By focussing on major periods of violence, I have devoted little attention to explaining the frequent sporadic attacks that took place throughout 2001. These attacks would have been a more challenging focus of research, as it would have been particularly difficult for me to find local men willing to talk about their participation in these attacks. When describing a large-scale attack, an interviewee can remain a member of an anonymous crowd; if recounting an attack perpetrated by a small group of men the risk that their

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181 The two men were Huzaifah, killed on 9 November in Lembomawo, and Abdullah, killed on 29 November near Tabalu. Both were shot in the head.
182 For example, one Muslim-compiled chronology lists an instance in June 2001 when Muslims successfully protested in front of the Poso police station for the release of two men held on suspicion of stopping a car and attacking its passengers. See “Actual News! dari Medan Jihad Poso”, mubarizin.net,
account would be incriminating is much higher. Future research would be required to investigate the identity of the perpetrators of the sporadic attacks in late 2000 and 2001, who and what determined the timing and frequency of these attacks, whether those killed were targets of opportunity or specifically chosen, and how many of these attacks were part of a coordinated plan or were random incidents. It may be, however, that the passage of time presents too great an obstacle to obtain a reliable and verifiable record of this period.

By focussing on instances where outsiders and locals cooperated, I have also neglected study of whether any purely local Muslim militia were responsible for sporadic violence. More generally, the limitations of the available data mean that the question of exactly who initiated most attacks – sporadic and large-scale - still requires further research.

The third drawback of my chosen focus is that it has meant not thoroughly setting out how Christians continued to organise to perpetrate violence during this period, the discussion of the Buyung Katedo incident notwithstanding. It would have been difficult to incorporate extensive discussion of Christian organisation within the structure of this chapter; Christian activity during the period that this chapter covered also proved a difficult subject for investigation, with little documentary evidence available. The focus of many of my interviews with Christian interviewees also was necessarily on elucidating the organisation of violence during the third period. The questions of how coordinated a structure Christians retained during this period would also be a valuable focus for future research, as well as what continuities there were between the organisation of violence in the third period and in late 2000 to 2001.

In this chapter, I have primarily taken an actor-centred approach to explain the mobilisation of outside mujahidin to fight in Poso, depicting their arrival as the product of a choice these outside mujahidin themselves made. I also depicted the most important factor in the timing of their choice to be events in Poso itself: the DI-derived groups arrived almost immediately after the third period, violence, whereas Laskar Jihad entered the district within weeks of the Buyung Katedo massacre. Nevertheless, I indicated at the outset of this chapter that I would also need to address the question of

www.mubarizin.net/Bahasan_Utama/Poso/Poso_Eds_13/poso_ed5_13.html, accessed via
whether the entry of outside mujahidin into Poso was significantly influenced or determined by contexts not specific to the district.

There are two main alternatives to my actor-centred, Poso-centred approach to the mobilisation of outside mujahidin to go to Poso. The first is to depict the arrival of outside mujahidin in Poso as a product of the conspiring of high-ranking military officers, intelligence agents or even civilian elites. The interest of these assumed conspirators was not in Poso per se, but in using violence in Poso to discredit President Wahid's government or as a source of financial profit. Pamungkas' explanation of jihadist mobilisation in Poso is one (of many) examples of this interpretation. Suggesting that the military had an interest in encouraging protracted conflict to improve its image, gain increased security budgets and facilitate access for military businesses to Poso's resources, Pamungkas states: "If one militia [i.e. Christians] were to win a battle [i.e. the third period], another militia would be created or brought [to Poso] to restore the balance." 183

There are several weaknesses to conspiratorial interpretations. The first is the simple lack of supporting evidence. 184 Conspiratorial interpretations tend to seize upon the few well known examples of military or intelligence informers or infiltrators within jihadist networks, and then attribute exaggerated authority and influence to these individuals. A good example is the work of conspiratorially-minded research institute CedSos, whose work enjoys some currency among Central Sulawesi NGOs. The institute's allegations of a conspiracy focus on Abdul Haris, a known intelligence agent who played an important role in the arrest of an al Qaeda operative in 2002, and Fauzi Hasbi alias Abu Jihad, reportedly a long-time informer for Indonesia's National Intelligence Agency (BIN) before he was murdered in Maluku in 2003. 185 Although few or often no references are provided, the CedSos account depicts these two individuals as essentially

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controlling the direction of radical Islamic movements in Indonesia. Abdul Haris, for instance, is depicted as instrumental to the decision of mujahidin groups in South Sulawesi to go to Poso:

The success of Abdul Haris in relation to KPPSI [Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam – Committee for the Preparation of Implementation of Islamic Law] was to plunge the Agus Dwikarna-led Laskar Jundullah along with Laskar Santri (which had a close relationship with and was backed by the Wirabuana Military Commander) into the Poso conflict, with the help of [al Qaeda operative] Al Farouk and Aris Munandar (Abdul Haris’s representative/assistant in MMI) to provide ammunition, explosives and weapons.186

No details are provided of how Haris managed such a feat, or why he would even need to convince these groups to go to Poso, given that Agus Dwikarna was already involved in jihadist activity in Maluku before he travelled to Poso.

Conspiratorial interpretations are also weakened by the seeming ignorance regarding jihadist networks of Indonesia’s security forces and intelligence agencies during the period immediately after the Soeharto regime collapsed. Their informers and infiltrators notwithstanding, Indonesia’s security forces and intelligence agencies appear to have had a very poor understanding of the precise nature and activities of jihadist networks in 1999-2000. For instance, in an otherwise sympathetic account of BIN’s efforts to counter radical Islamic groups, Ken Conboy examines a 24-page assessment of known extremists prepared by the agency in September 2001. He suggests that most of the information in this document was “inaccurate or woefully outdated”, and indicates that the assessment made only the briefest mention of Jemaah Islamiyah.187

A third weakness of conspiratorial interpretations is the insignificance of Poso on the national scale. Violence in Poso in late 2000 and most of 2001 struggled to gain national media or political attention; even the Buyung Katedo massacre did not generate an exceptional level of coverage in Indonesia’s leading daily, Kompas, nor in the nation’s most influential weekly news magazine, Tempo. Poso was simply too peripheral to the consciousness of most Indonesians for violence in the district to discredit President Wahid.

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On the other hand, it has been well-documented that the security forces deployed to Poso were able to profit economically from continuing unrest. The security forces could request contributions to their budget from the district government; their personnel reportedly also engaged in more illicit activities such as extorting payments from trucks and buses passing through Poso, renting weapons to combatants and establishing illegal businesses. It is unlikely, however, that the sums of money that could be generated from the district would have made worthwhile a national-level conspiracy to bring outside mujahidin to Poso.

While the possibility of a national conspiracy merits particular scepticism, there was some contact between outside mujahidin and the security forces. Laskar Jihad’s interactions with the security forces are well documented; other outside mujahidin also appear to have obtained at least some of their weapons and ammunition from military and police personnel. But to understand such interaction and transactions, we would do well to heed the picture van Klinken paints in the context of the Maluku conflict of a security forces in disarray, with local units engaging in ad hoc illegal fund-raising and “numerous instances of soldiers and police officers taking sides and shooting at each other across the front line”. There was less direct involvement of soldiers and police as combatants in Poso, but a more fractious picture of the security forces leads us to think of any interaction with outside mujahidin less as exploitation and more as a two-sided relationship. Under a two-sided model, we can allow for outside mujahidin to actively take advantage of complicit members of the security forces, just as members of the security forces could attempt to hinder or facilitate the actions of outside mujahidin depending on their own interests.

A second alternative to an actor-centred, Poso-centred approach is Sidel’s structuralist model of jihadist mobilisation, which I sketched in the introduction to this dissertation. To recap, Sidel argues that the jihadist mobilisation resulted from a shift in the position of Islam in Indonesian public life, namely the defeat of Islamist parties in the June 1999 legislative election, followed by the election of moderate Muslim leader Abdurrahman

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Wahid to the presidency in October the same year. These political outcomes, in Sidel’s words, amounted to the “eclipse and evisceration of the Islamist project” and a “precipitous reversal of the gains Islam had achieved in the 1990s.” In the midst of disappointment at these developments, atrocities took place against Muslim populations in Maluku and North Maluku in December 1999-January 2000. The result was a jihadist mobilisation starting in early to mid-2000 aimed both to “assist vulnerable co-religionists” and “to reassert and reawaken seemingly lapsed religious sensibilities and solidarities.”

Sidel’s structuralist argument is a good fit for the timing of the mobilisation of Laskar Jihad to Maluku: the organisation was formed in early 2000 and sent large numbers of men to Maluku in April the same year. But his focus on Laskar Jihad almost to the exclusion of other networks’ activities may have led him to overlook a significant flaw in his argument. Namely, his model does not fit with the timing of the mobilisation of the DI-derived networks, members of which had decided to travel to Maluku in June 1999 and which had set up their first training camp in the province by October 1999 at the latest.

Because of his focus on national-level structural shifts, Sidel does not look at outside mujahidin as individuals. I do not have comprehensive material on the individual motivations of the men who travelled to Poso, but what is known about these men suggests that they would have gone to Maluku and later Poso regardless of the context Sidel identifies. The DI-derived networks had been building their military capacity throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, in part through sending men to train in Afghanistan and the Philippines (interrogation depositions even suggest some men used their own resources to finance travel to the latter destination). The serious violence against Muslims in Poso and Maluku – an opportunity or even obligation for jihad right

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191 On the entry of outside mujahidin to Maluku, see International Crisis Group, Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorism Network Operates, p. 19, which describes the entry of around 50 men from Makassar including alumni of trainings in the Philippines as early as February 1999, and International Crisis Group, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, pp. 4-5, which focuses on JI and Mujahidin Kompak. On the Buru training camp, see ICG, Noordin’s Networks, pp. 13-14.
on their doorstep - was always likely to motivate these men to travel to these areas to fight.

Where Sidel’s analysis may be of greater assistance is in helping to explain why Muslim businessmen and politicians supported and were sympathetic to those waging jihad. Such support made it easier for these networks to conduct operations in Poso, but does not tell us why outside mujahidin travelled to Poso when they did. To answer that question, we require close study of the movements involved and the conflict itself.
CHAPTER FIVE – THE DECLINE OF VIOLENCE

The escalation of violence in Poso in November – December 2001, as described in Chapter Four, spurred central government intervention to attempt to bring the fighting to an end. This intervention, which included a significant additional deployment of security forces personnel as well as government-brokered peace talks, marked the beginning of a decline in violence in Poso. The decline was clearly evident, among other indicators, in the diminishing number of fatalities caused by the conflict each year. After four major periods of violence – in addition to intermittent shootings, other murders and bombings - had resulted in more than 350 fatalities in Poso in 2000-2001 alone, the number of people killed each year since 2002 has never exceeded 40 fatalities.

Graph 1: Number of Deaths in Poso Conflict, 2000-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers used in this graph are approximate. The 2000 figure in particular may be much higher, as the almost total breakdown of law and order caused by the May-June violence makes it impossible to obtain accurate figures. For the purposes of this graph, I have used the governor’s estimate of casualties during the third period. The number of mortalities for 2001 adopts local NGO LPS-HAM’s count, with the caveat regarding mis-tabulation mentioned in Chapter Four. Figures for 2002-2007 may also differ slightly, as different sources are inconsistent regarding the number of people killed in certain incidents. Any such variance for these later years should only involve an increase or decrease of several deaths, and so is not significant to the overall trend. These mortality figures include people killed in other districts of Central Sulawesi if the relevant incident was clearly part of the Poso conflict.
Another indication of the decline in violence was a "narrowing" of the forms of violence in Poso.² During each of the major periods of violence in Poso from 2000-2001, attacks perpetrated by crowds were one of the main forms of violence. These clashes between crowds reflected the willingness of many villagers to join in fighting in an ad hoc fashion, for reasons ranging from a perceived necessity to pre-empt or defend against attacks by the other religious community, to pre-existing enmity and indignant anger, peer pressure and social approval for violence as well as the desire to take revenge for past wrongs. After the two central government interventions in late-2001 contributed to a decline in violence, however, many combatants and villagers who had previously taken part in violence began to stop fighting. The result was a disappearance of attacks by crowds; after the two central government interventions there was only one more period – in August 2002 - during which attacks by crowds took place.

Despite the absence of clashes between crowds, other forms of violence such as sporadic shootings and bombings continued. Most of the approximately 150 people killed in the Poso conflict since 2002 have died in these sporadic attacks (although a significant subset of the fatalities, 25 people in all, were killed during police or military operations). Some of the people killed in these sporadic attacks since the beginning of 2002 were murdered by Christians, but overall, Christians had ceased perpetrating attacks by 2002 in the face of the clear military advantage that the district's Muslims had established. Instead, most of the sporadic attacks were directed at non-Muslims and were perpetrated by the same alliance of outside mujahidin and local Muslim combatants that I outlined in Chapter Four.

How can we explain the decline of violence in Poso, and by what pattern and processes did the decline occur? These questions will be the central concern of this chapter. My answer to these questions will be presented in three parts.

The first and second parts consider the effect of the two important central government interventions in late-2001. Although she does not discuss the decline of violence in detail, Aragon has noted that the two interventions – peace talks in the South Sulawesi hill town of Malino on 19-20 December 2001, and a large-scale security operation –

² The term "narrowing is Sidel’s, but numerous observers have noted the difference in the forms of violence.
“virtually ended collective violence among Poso civilians.”³ My focus in these sections will be to discuss how the interventions restricted violence, and what space remained for those intent on perpetrating further attacks.

It is clear that there was still space for attacks, as violence escalated again in August 2002 to a level approaching the intensity to the fourth and fifth periods. This escalation was only temporary – the August escalation lasted no more than two weeks – and so the second part considers why many local combatants decided to stop fighting some time after the central government interventions, despite the space that remained for violence.

The third part explains how those who did continue to perpetrate attacks organised the sporadic violence and what their motivations were. It is important to attempt to explain this sporadic violence, because despite the clear overall decline in violent conflict in Poso, the 150 fatalities in Poso between 2002 and 2007 established the district as the site of the most persistent inter-religious fighting in Indonesia. As a comparison, fatalities in Poso after 2002 exceeded conflict deaths in Maluku during the same period by a factor of two. In one sense, explaining this violence repeats the task of Chapter Four, because the perpetrators were a subset of the same group of people considered in that chapter. Whereas the focus of Chapter Four was on explaining the organisation and motivations for major periods of violence, however, in this chapter I will examine sporadic attacks.

There are far fewer studies of the decline of violence in Poso than of the escalation, a point that may be true for the study of violence in Indonesia more generally.⁴ Even a book length study of the post-Soeharto conflicts, such as van Klinken’s, devotes only a few paragraphs to the decline of violence in all of these conflicts. As a result, compared with earlier chapters, there is less scope here to contrast or corroborate the conclusions of this chapter with the work of other observers.

**Central Government Intervention - the Malino Accord**

After the November-December 2001 fifth period violence (see Chapter Four), the central government began to act with greater urgency to bring the Poso conflict to an

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³ Aragon, “Mass Media Fragmentation”, p. 43.
⁴ See also van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*, p. 141, who makes this point for the study of violence in general.
end. The government dispatched additional security forces personnel, with 2,500 police and 1,600 military deployed in Poso by early 2002. The government also sent four ministers to visit Poso and meet separately with representatives of the district’s Muslim and Christian communities on 5 December 2001. Among these ministers was Jusuf Kalla – Minister for People’s Welfare – a businessman originally from South Sulawesi. Although the ministerial delegation swiftly returned to Jakarta, Kalla followed up their visit by sending a long-time associate to Poso to arrange for ten-member Muslim and Christian delegations to come to Makassar in South Sulawesi for further talks.

Kalla, his associate and the South Sulawesi governor H. Z. B. Palaguna duly met the Muslim and Christian delegations whom Kalla had invited to Makassar on 14 December 2001. At these meetings, Kalla explained his concept for a round of peace talks to resolve the Poso conflict. This concept was set out in a short document entitled “Guide for Planned Efforts at Reconciliation in Poso Conflict”, which in essence became the terms of reference for the subsequent Malino talks. In the document, Kalla made it clear that he held the leaders of each party to the conflict responsible for the violence in Poso, and he asserted to these leaders that “most of the [common] people” were “weary, suffering and afraid” after several years of conflict.

Kalla then gave these leaders three “choices”: the government could let the conflict run its course, the police and military could take “stern action like in Ambon” or the two sides could meet for peace talks, after which the government would assist with reconstruction of houses and public facilities in the district. Of course, there was really

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6 Husain, *To See the Unseen*, p. 183. The man Kalla sent was Farid Husain, a medical doctor whom he had recently-appointed as a deputy in his ministry.


8 “Panduan Rencana Upaya Rekonsiliasi Konflik Poso”. The reference to Ambon probably most specifically referred to the deployment of a joint special-forces military battalion known as “Yongab” (Yongab - Batalyon Gabungan (Joint Battalion)) to Ambon from August 2000 – November 2001. Yongab clashed several times with Muslim forces, shooting to kill, and also beat and even executed prisoners. For
no choice at all, and each delegation returned to Central Sulawesi to assemble a team to take part in the main round of talks five days later. The result was the Malino peace talks – named for the hill resort in South Sulawesi where the talks were held on 19 and 20 December 2001.

Kalla’s terms of reference anticipated that each team in the main round of talks would have fourteen members. Four were to be religious figures while the remaining ten would be drawn from groups more directly involved in the violence in Poso. The list of anticipated delegates from combatant groups made it clear that the government did not understand precisely which groups were involved in the fighting, however. On the Muslim side, the government sought two representatives each from “Hisbullah, Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah, Jundullah, Majlis Dzikir and Jamaah Tablig”; whereas the Christian side was to be represented by “Kelelawar (Bats), Macan (Tigers), Kupu-Kupu (Butterflies), Ansimar and Krisis Centre”. Neither list was a good characterisation of the key combatant groups: the Muslim list omitted all Java and Sumatra-based jihadist groups (with the exception of Laskar Jihad, referred to in the document as Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah) and associated local combatants; the list of Christian invitees used group names drawn from press coverage and appeared to include the GKST Crisis Centre as a combatant entity. Indeed, the use of animal names so offended some of Poso’s Christians that they blacked out the names of these groups in copies of the terms of reference distributed in Tentena after the talks, replacing them with the generic description “community figures”.

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9 These might refer to Brigade Hisbullah, the youth wing of the Islamist Crescent Star Party; Laskar Jihad Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah, the Java-based militia; Laskar Jundullah, the South Sulawesi based militia; Majelis Dzikir, a local group led by Kayamanya resident Habib Saleh al-Idrus; and Jamaah Tablig, a non-violent salafist group originating from India.

10 The animal names are drawn from press coverage, although Christian combatant groups may have used some of these names during the May-June 2000 violence. Ansimar (Angkatan Muda Sintuwu Maroso) was founded in December 2000, but the organisation’s precise structure and activities remain little understood. The Krisis Center presumably refers to the GKST Crisis Centre. Although this church-associated body accepted Christian combatants as its members, there is not currently evidence that the body itself engaged in activities beyond providing assistance to displaced Christians and publishing partisan reports on the violence in Poso (See Chapter Three).

11 Indicative of the indignation the document spurred, a Tentena resident who was reputedly among the leaders of the May-June 2000 violence recalled that he said, “Are we going to be put in pens when we arrive [at the talks]? These are groups of animals!” Rinaldy Damanik, one of the Christian delegates at the Malino talks, suggested in his prison memoir that the government groupings were based on a military intelligence assessment from the Wirabuana Military Command. He also noted the offence the document...
Each delegation to the Malino talks in fact was much larger than the government had anticipated: 25 Muslims and 23 Christians took part. Moreover, many of these delegates were not as directly involved in the conflict as Kalla and the government might have hoped. At least a third of Christian delegates and a quarter of Muslim representatives had little or no direct authority over combatants. Indeed, one local Muslim combatant characterised the Malino signatories as “government people”, and said few people in his community even recognised the names of all of the delegates. Another Muslim man said that although Kalla had indicated that he wanted to involve parties directly involved in the conflict, combatants themselves were mere spectators while “Palu people” took part in the talks. The government’s poor understanding of combatant groups notwithstanding, most of any fault for the choice of delegates lay with each community. Both Muslims and Christians chose their own representatives largely independently of the government: Christians chose theirs at a meeting in Tentena, whereas Muslims only finalised their delegation after a large group of potential signatories all travelled to Makassar.

Because the identity of the delegates to the Malino talks had an important influence on the legitimacy of the accord, it is necessary to look more closely at the different categories of people in each delegation. A few members of the Muslim delegation did have direct links to violence in Poso. For instance, Adnan Arsal became the most prominent local Muslim figure during the Poso conflict and was described in a jihadist publication as “Commander of the Poso Mujahidin”; the area around Arsal’s pesantren in Tanah Runtuh sub-ward was also a key centre of outside mujahidin activity in the district. Another delegate, Jono Priyandi, who was described in the accord document as a “religious figure”, was arrested two weeks after the talks in connection caused in Tentena. Interview with a Tentena resident, February 2002; Damanik, *Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso*, pp. 90-91.

12 Damanik indicated that Christians requested an enlarged delegation during their 14 December 2001 meeting with Kalla. See Damanik, *Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso*, p. 91.

13 An interesting topic for further research would be whether the legitimacy of those delegates who did have more direct relationships with rank-and-file combatants was adversely affected by their participation in the talks. Unfortunately I do not have the data to make this judgement.

14 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.

15 Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.


17 See “Adnan Arsal (Panglima Mujahidin Poso): ‘Mereka Mau menang Sendiri’”, *BUNYAN*, January 2002, p. 22. Local combatants also described Arsal as a “panglima” (commander); Arsal, however, denied that his actions merited this title in my interviews with him.
with bomb explosions outside four churches in Palu.\textsuperscript{18} Agus Dwikarna - the leader of Makassar-based Laskar Jundullah, who had been involved in the group’s jihadist activities in both Poso and Maluku – did not take part in the Malino talks proper, but reportedly played a prominent role in an internal meeting of Muslim delegates in Makassar immediately prior to the talks.\textsuperscript{19} Other men – for example, Daeng Raja and Habib Saleh al-Idrus – had direct links to the violence, but arguably had been more important figures before outside mujahidin arrived in Poso. The inclusion of Al-Idrus did fit with the terms of reference, however, as he was head of the Majelis Dzikir, one of the groups the government had targeted to participate in the talks.

Several Muslim delegates lived in Palu rather than Poso, but had direct contact with mujahidin groups. These men included H. Hasanuddin, treasurer of Dewan Dakwah in Central Sulawesi,\textsuperscript{20} and Srie Handono Masudi, a civil servant who in 2002 became secretary of a committee to establish a new pesantren near Palu to replace the Walisongo school. Another delegate, businessman Ahrul Hudaya, had acted as a guarantor for an outside mujahid imprisoned in Palu to take part in a work release program, and had also provided free accommodation in his hotel in Palu in July 2001 for the initial Laskar Jihad assessment team in Central Sulawesi.\textsuperscript{21}

Many of the other Muslim delegates were Palu-based figures who had often made comments in the provincial press regarding the Poso conflict, but who had less obvious direct links to violence in the district. These men included university lecturers Sulaiman Mamar and Sofyan Lemba, the provincial politician Nawawi S. Kilat, lawyer Tajwin

\textsuperscript{18} ICG, \textit{Jihad in Central Sulawesi}, pp. 16-17. Priyandi was also interrogated in connection with the 2002 arrest of an outside mujahid, Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, who was found carrying several thousand rounds of ammunition at the Palu port. Priyandi told interrogators he had visited Farihin several times in 2001 when Farihin was serving a sentence in the Maesa prison in Palu, but asserted that he had no particular connection with him. See deposition of Jono Priyandi in dossier of Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, 22 October 2002, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{19} Lasahido et al., \textit{Suara dari Poso}, p. 74. For a profile of Dwikarna, see ICG, \textit{Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates}, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{20} The deposition from which this biographical detail is sourced (see next footnote) does not specify whether “Dewan Dakwah” refers to Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Islamic Propagation Council of Indonesia).

\textsuperscript{21} All three of these men are questioned in the 2002 interrogation dossier of Farihin Ibnu Ahmad, which was compiled to support Farihin’s prosecution for possession of several thousand rounds of ammunition. See deposition of Srie Handono Mashudi, 21 October 2002, deposition of Hi. Hasanuddin, 22 October 2002, deposition of Achrul Udaya, 25 October 2002, all in dossier of Farihin Ibnu Ahmad. On Achrul Hudaya (also seen as Achrul Udaya dan Ahrul Hidayat) and Laskar Jihad, see “Laskar Jihad Datang, Kristen Resah”, \textit{laskarjihad.or.id}, 5 August 2001. On Ahrul Hudaya acting as a guarantor for work release, see deposition of Farihin Ibnu Ahmad in dossier of Muhammad Islam alias Icam, 5 October 2002, p. 3.
Ibrahim and religious figures Djamaluddin Hadi and Yahya Al-Amri. Among these men, lecturer Sulaiman Mamar, was chosen as head of the Muslim delegation to the Malino talks.

Among the Christian delegates, Rev. Rinaldy Damanik had emerged during the conflict as the most prominent Christian religious figure in Poso, first as coordinator of the GKST Crisis Center and later as head of the GKST Synod. Damanik had also publicly read out “Lateka’s mandate” in June 2000, a letter that justified and set out the rationale for attacks on Muslims during the third period violence (see Chapter Three). Another Christian signatory, D. A. Lempadeli was one of the sixteen Protestant men named by important kelompok merah leader Fabianus Tibo and his co-defendants towards the conclusion of their trial as the most responsible for the conflict. Both Damanik and Lempadeli were appropriate choices as delegates. J. Santo and P. Tonimba were each members of the Christian group that had attempted to hold a protest at the district legislature building the day before the July 2001 Buyung Katedo massacre (see Chapter Four); some local Muslims had thus concluded that the two men must have been involved in the massacre, and they may have been suitable delegates under the terms of reference as a result. The selection of other Christian delegates was more questionable. Most notably, more than a third of the delegation were church representatives, including at least five GKST members apart from Damanik, two delegates from the South Sulawesi church and a Catholic clergyman from Tentena.

However indirect the connection between many of the delegates and the violence may have been, there was nonetheless significant enmity between the two groups, not least because one of the Palu-based Muslim delegates had placed a price on the head of Rinaldy Damanik through the Palu press. The timetable for the Malino negotiations

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22 An account of the Malino talks compiled by Palu-based academics and journalists suggested that Sofyan Lembah set as a condition for his own participation that Hadi, Kilat and Mamar also be invited. See Lasahido et al., Suara dari Poso, p. 72. Ibrahim is a Palu-based lawyer who at the time was head of the Muslim Paralegal Association (Serikat Paralegal Muslim - SPM), while Al-Amri was a cleric at Al-Khairaat in Palu. A group of men calling themselves Laskar Jihad Al-Khairaat did travel to Poso during the May-June 2000 violence, but the men turned around and returned to Palu before reaching Poso city when their leader, Abu Jihad, was shot in the head in Tokorondo village (See Chapter Three).

23 Of the GKST members, Nelly Tan Alamako, may have been an appropriate choice as a delegate, as her church was in Sepe village, a reputed Christian stronghold in Lage sub-district. One of the other church delegates, Sawerigading Pelima, was in fact a Palu-based civil servant, although he was later elected chairperson of the Poso district legislature for the 2004-2009 period.

24 Sofyan Lembah offered Rp. 5 million for the capture – alive – of Damanik, or Rp 10 million for any cleric in Central Sulawesi who would issue a fatwa (non-binding religious advice) decreeing the death
sought to work around such enmity by keeping the two groups separate from each other until a plenary session which would be held on the second day of talks. Each group was accommodated in separate hotels in Makassar; when they arrived in Malino on 19 December, each delegation held separate meetings with government mediators. Keeping the two groups separate may have been an effective strategy to ensure that the talks produced an agreement document, but this strategy came at a cost of severely limiting the opportunities for dialogue between the two parties.

In their meetings with government mediators on 19 December and in other internal meetings, each group drew up separate lists of demands. These demands did not centre on readily quantifiable issues – for example, control of a particular village, the right to form a district or the release of certain prisoners – that could have been subject to genuine negotiations. Instead, each list of demands indicated the grievances of each group without providing a clear basis for concrete action to address these grievances. Christians asked that the security forces prevent lawless actions by outside groups in Poso (but stopped short of demanding explicitly that members of these groups be sent home), provide better overall security and take action to retrieve factory standard weapons. They also called for attention to displaced populations and to economic recovery, for “balance” in the selection of senior district officials, a “responsible” district head and an end to inflammatory sermons and statements from religious figures. The Muslim delegation’s demands were very similar: an end to (perceived) foreign intervention (the equivalent of the Christian demand regarding outsider groups), an end to slander on the part of the GKST, better law enforcement, the return of Muslims’ rights and an assertion that all Indonesians had the right to live in Poso. If these demands were not met, the delegation said, Muslims were prepared to wage a jihad. The lack of quantifiable demands was not the result of insincerity – the form of each delegation’s demands reflected the fact that there were no simple key issues underpinning the fighting. The superficial similarity of the two delegations’ positions

penalty for Damanik. See “Kepala Damanik Dihargai Rp 5 Juta”, Radar Sulteng, date not recorded (but late 2001).
25 Lasahido et al., Suara dari Poso, pp. 74-77.
27 The nine-point list of Muslim demands is reproduced in Lasahido et al., Suara dari Poso, pp. 75-76 and Damanik, Tragedi Kemamisian Poso, pp. 82-83.
may have facilitated the drafting of an accord that each group could sign, but in fact
indicated how far apart the two delegations were. Each side sought to position itself
solely as the victims of violence and unjust treatment, when in fact both had acted as
aggressors at different times during the conflict.

The two delegations did little to bridge the gulf between them during the plenary
session on 20 December 2001. Christians spoke first and asked for forgiveness, but
undermined this apology by stating that they also forgave Muslims for their
wrongdoings.\(^{28}\) (Such “forgiveness” was most likely intended to emphasise that
Muslims had also perpetrated violence.) The Muslim delegation also started with an
apology, which they described as their religious obligation. Subsequently, by one
account, several Muslim delegates described the violence that had taken place against
their co-religionists, as well as the principles of jihad. By this same account, Kalla
hardly acted with the requisite sensitivity to foster dialogue between the two
delegations. After the Muslim presentations, he remarked, “I agree, if Christians start it
[i.e. violence after the talks], Muslims should feel free to declare a *jihad fisabilillah*.\(^{29}\)
How about the Christians, if Muslims start it will you wage a crusade (*perang salib*)?”
Kalla’s question was met with silence, but the meeting moved on nonetheless and a few
of the delegates drew up the text of the ten point Malino Declaration.\(^{30}\)

**MALINO DECLARATION FOR POSO**
(preamble and concluding remarks abridged)

With God’s mercy, we, the representatives of the Muslim and Christian communities of
Poso ..., agree:

1. To stop all forms of conflict and dispute
2. To obey all forms and efforts of law enforcement and to support legal sanction
   against any offenders
3. To request that the state apparatus take firm and just action to maintain security
4. To maintain the creation of a peaceful atmosphere, to reject the enforcement of a civil
   emergency, as well as to reject interference by foreign parties
5. To dispense with all slander and dishonesty directed at any party and to uphold a
   stance of mutual respect and mutual forgiveness, for the sake of living together in
   harmony
6. The Land of Poso (Tana Poso) is an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia. As
   such, every citizen has the right to live, arrive and reside peacefully and respect local
   customs.

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\(^{28}\) In offering an apology, the Christian delegation had also sought prior assurances from the government mediators that Muslims would also apologise.

\(^{29}\) *Jihad fisabilillah* - jihad in the path of God with death leading to martyrdom. See Chapter Four, footnote 67.

\(^{30}\) Details of the talks in this paragraph drawn from Lashido et al., *Suara dari Poso*, p. 79-80.
7. All rights and property must be returned to their rightful owners, in accordance with the situation before the conflict and disputes
8. To return all IDPs to their original place of residence
9. Together with the government, to comprehensively rehabilitate economic infrastructure
10. To implement the respective laws of each of our religions guided by the principle of mutual respect, and to obey all the regulations that have been agreed upon, be they legislation, government regulations or other stipulations.

We state our agreement on these matters sincerely and with genuine intention of implementing them.

Drafted in: Malino
Date: 20 December 2001

A timetable was also agreed upon for several follow-up programs in Poso. “Socialisation” efforts would commence almost immediately after the agreement to inform communities of the outcome of the talks and make them aware of follow-up programs. A period where weapons could be handed over without penalties for their owners was set for 7 January – 7 February 2002.31 This period would be followed immediately by a five month law enforcement operation, as well as a one month period during which migrants without appropriate documentation to live in Poso could voluntarily depart.32 Infrastructure and housing reconstruction, resettlement of displaced persons and compensation payments to the families of those killed were each set to start in January or February 2002.33

Despite all of the problems inherent in the process – in particular the failure to involve direct representatives of all combatants, and the lack of dialogue during the talks, meaning that many difficult issues were not addressed - the accord did bring about some significant short-term improvements in the atmosphere in Poso. The positive symbolism of the agreement - including what became an iconic image of Rinaldy Damanik and Sofyan Lemba holding hands – generated a degree of goodwill around the district.34 Reinforcing this positive symbolism, some of the signatories, whose local prestige now depended largely on the success and continuing relevance of the accord, spoke

34 The image is not without its problems. Damanik is pictured with a beaming smile, but Lemba’s expression is somewhat less enthusiastic. Moreover, many community members in Poso would not readily have recognised Lemba, who lived in Palu. Whether for these reasons or because of other artistic considerations, the image often appeared as a silhouette on posters promoting peace in Poso after the accord. Image reproduced in “Deklarasi Malino, Riwayatmu Kini”, Media Sangkompo, October 2002, pp. 13-14 and Damanik, Tragedi Poso, p. 88.
enthusiastically of what had been achieved in Malino. The agreement also provided combatants with a formal avenue to cease violence: they could commit to the agreement rather than continue to fight.

The improvement in atmosphere produced some concrete results. Security in Poso was much-improved during the period after the talks: a bombing in Palu and a beating in Poso notwithstanding, there was only one fatal incident in the first four months after the talks. As a consequence of the safer situation, some roads that had been effectively closed to one or the other religious group could now be used by all. The lessening of tensions also opened a space for non-government organisations to begin peace-building activities such as community discussions to discourage community members from taking part in future clashes and to attempt to re-establish interaction between different religious groups. The central government sought to consolidate the short-term improvements by channelling large sums of assistance to Poso for post-conflict reconstruction: the initial post-Malino budget commitment alone included almost Rp 2

36 I am not sure of the exact process for the “opening” of a road, although I would guess that the police or military escorted the first vehicles through after which others began to follow. As one example of a road opening, Muslims had been afraid to use the inland road from Poso to Ampana, which passed through Sepe village, and instead used a badly damaged coastal road. They started to use the inland road again in the weeks after the accord was signed.
billion (approximately $300,000) just for socialisation and coordination, Rp 24.5 billion for housing reconstruction, Rp 11 billion for IDP relief programs and compensation payments, Rp 3 billion to rebuild places of worship and almost Rp 2 billion for education and health.\(^{37}\) The government subsequently allocated many times this initial amount for further reconstruction and social rehabilitation programs in Poso.

In the longer term, however, the agreement was undermined by the failure of the government and each community to ensure that all key combatant groups were represented at the talks. Even during the period of much improved security following the signing of the Malino Declaration, it was readily apparent that some combatant groups were disappointed that an agreement had been reached, or at the very least that they expected that violence in Poso would eventually resume. Of the groups excluded from the talks or represented only indirectly, the outside mujahidin from Java and Sumatra were the most significant. Among these groups, ICG indicates that Jemaah Islamiyah as an organisation were happy with the Malino Declaration, as its leaders perceived that more peaceful conditions in Poso could be more conducive to proselytising than continued conflict.\(^{38}\) The commentary on the accord in the publications of jihadist networks, however, made it clear that some members of these networks were rather less happy with the settlement. For instance, reflecting the fact that the talks were convened at a point when Muslims had established a clear military advantage over the district’s Christians, the now defunct jihadist website mubarizin.net described the post-Malino period as “A new episode [for Poso’s Muslims] as a player who is forced into a draw, when he had previously almost won.”\(^{39}\) In another example, Malino Declaration signatory Adnan Arsal, in an interview with BUNYAN conducted immediately before the Malino talks but published in January 2002, asserted that Poso’s Christians had often betrayed previous agreements, and that it would be better if residential settlements were no longer mixed. He concluded with the following remark, which does not give the impression that he felt the conflict was drawing to a close:


\(^{39}\) The item’s author then asserted that the lesson Poso’s Muslims could take from the conflict was that the best way to earn respect was through jihad. The research report of a Yogyakarta-based NGO quoted a local Muslim man expressing similar sentiments to those of the *Mubarizin* article: “Before we had won, they asked for peace.” See mubarizin.net dated 13 January 2002, accessed via www.waybackmachine.org on 16 June 2007; La Ode Arham et al, *Laporan Investigasi Sosial: Live in Poso* (Yogyakarta, Komunitas Tikar Pandan, 2002), p. 15.
My message to members of the Muslim community, wherever they may be, is that we are caught between strong enemies who are helping each other to break our struggle. We can often win battles, but then lose the war. It is bitter ... but this is our situation, and we must foster *ta'awun* (Muslim solidarity) and be more patient. Don’t forget us in your prayers, information and help. If you do, there may be no Muslims left in Poso.  

The statistics on weapons collected immediately after the accord was signed provide a general picture of community expectations regarding the possibility of further violence. Among the several thousand weapons collected under the follow-up program to the talks, there was only one factory-standard firearm. More expensive to obtain and more reliably lethal than homemade firearms, these factory-standard guns were seemingly still needed by their owners.

This dissatisfaction with the Declaration and uncertainty as to whether the agreement would hold did not immediately result in renewed large-scale violence. There were several impediments that discouraged those dissatisfied with the Declaration from immediately perpetrating further violence. The increased goodwill between communities was one impediment. There also appeared to be a reluctance among some combatants for their community to be the first to strike after Malino, and thereby be perceived to have betrayed the agreement. Perhaps the most significant impediment, however, was the swathe of new security measures introduced by the central government to coincide with the accord, including the deployment of 4,100 police and military in the district in early 2002. The next section will discuss the impact of these security measures on the pattern of violence in Poso after Malino. In particular, I will seek to explain how violence could again escalate in Poso in August 2002 - a mere eight months after the Malino Declaration – despite these security measures.

40 Given the general phrasing of much of this comment, which contrasts with the Poso-specific content of the interview, it is possible that this passage was added to embellish the interview. Even if this was the case, however, the comment reflects the message the magazine wished to convey regarding Poso. See “Adnan Arsal (Panglima Mujahidin Poso): ‘Mereka Mau Menang Sendiri’”, BUNYAN, January 2002, p. 22.

41 For a list of the weapons collected, see Damanik, *Tragedi Kemanusiaan Poso*, p. 127. Damanik and Human Rights Watch each quote a figure of 39,000 weapons handed in, but most of the “weapons” on the list are ammunition or arrows. The one factory-standard weapon was reportedly an SS-1 rifle, Human Rights Watch asserts it was found under a bridge. See Human Rights Watch, *Breakdown: Four Years of Communal Violence in Central Sulawesi*, p. 31; Harley, *Penembakan Misterius, Kekerasan di Poso: Ada Korupsi di Balik Berbagai Proyek Kemanusiaan*, unpublished manuscript, no date.

42 Christians may have been additionally constrained by the calculation that they would lose in any renewed fighting.
Security after the Malino Talks

The massive security force deployment that accompanied the Malino Declaration may have initially convinced those intent on perpetrating further violence in Poso to lie low. The death toll in the immediate aftermath of the Declaration suggests as much, with only one fatality in the first four months of 2002, although two more people were then killed in May. But by mid-2002, it had become clear that the central government was not devoting the sustained attention to Poso that may have made its security intervention a comprehensive success. Programs that could have weakened the military capacity of combatant groups were not thoroughly implemented, and few of the incidents of violence that did occur were properly investigated. As the perpetrators of violence became more sure of the limits of the action security forces would take against them, the number and seriousness of sporadic incidents of violence in Poso gradually increased in June and July. After the security forces took no stern action in response to these disturbances, violence escalated further in August 2002 and reached an intensity and scale similar to the major periods of fighting in 2001.

The rhetoric of senior government officials in December 2001 gave the impression that a crackdown on perpetrators of violence in Poso was imminent. On 12 December, the head of Indonesia’s State Intelligence Agency (BIN – Badan Intelijen Negara), Hendropriyono, told the press that Poso had become a site for “international terrorists and domestic [Islamic] radical groups” to link up, and that “a training camp used twice by al Qaeda members from Spain” had been found in the district. Hendropriyono’s statements were met with great public scepticism, even from members of the security forces and the government. The provincial police chief in Central Sulawesi, for instance, all but contradicted the intelligence chief, saying that he personally had turned the area upside down in a search for the camps, but had found nothing. The Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono also immediately qualified the BIN chief’s remarks, saying the government was still in

43 Hendropriyono’s statements appear to have been based on a Spanish judge’s description of the interrogation depositions of captured al Qaeda members; his remarks also came after several senior US officials had commented on the importance of combating terrorism in Indonesia. See “Kepala BIN Hendropriyono: Poso Jadi Ajang ‘Link-Up’ Teroris”, Kompas, 13 December 2001; “Sidang Kabinet: Sedang Diteliti, Keberadaan Jaringan Terorisme di Poso”, Kompas, 14 December 2001. On the comments by U.S. officials, see van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 86; Sidel, Riots, Pogroms, Jihad, p. 214.
the process of confirming this “intelligence information”. Nevertheless, Yudhoyono made it clear that the government was ramping up its security efforts in Poso, as he announced a multi-part conflict resolution effort including reconciliation, social rehabilitation, security restoration and law enforcement components. The latter two components would include efforts to repatriate “outside groups from Poso” and to disarm the parties to the conflict, both measures that might have been intended to specifically target outside mujahidin.

The government began to implement its repatriation and disarmament measures after the Malino Declaration was signed, as both measures were included in the work plan associated with the Declaration. Despite Hendropriyono’s statement, there does not appear to have been concerted central government pressure to make either measure a success, as discussed below. There could have been several reasons for the government’s failure to firmly implement these measures: they may have feared that stern action against outside mujahidin would anger Muslims in Poso and undermine the apparent initial success of the Malino talks; they may not have appreciated that outside mujahidin were continuing to work with local Muslims to prepare for violence even after Malino; it also simply may have been that Poso district did not remain the focus of attention once the Malino Declaration was signed, particularly as the central government had commenced new efforts to broker peace in Maluku province by early 2002.

I have already discussed the poor implementation of the weapons collection program, in which only one factory-standard firearm was recovered. The repatriation of outsiders was even less well implemented. Under the Malino work plan, repatriation was initially to be achieved by a one month voluntary departure period from 7 February – 7 March 2002 for those without valid permission to reside in Poso. The spokesperson for the provincial police, Agus Sugianto, threatened that those found in Poso without a “clear aim” after this period would be subject to Article 505 and 515 of the Criminal Code.

47 The central government brokered a round of peace talks for Maluku in Malino in February 2002.
48 A police document faxed to me by the Central Sulawesi Provincial Police in 2004 indicates that only six factory-standard firearms had been recovered in Poso between December 1998 and 31 January 2003, compared to 1,751 homemade guns. The first major seizure of factory-standard weapons in Poso took place when seven factory-standard guns were recovered in police operations after major attacks in October 2003. The next major cache of factory-standard firearms was not recovered until two police raids in January 2007. See Sangaji, Peredaran Ilegal Senjata Api di Sulawesi Tengah, p. 45; ICG, Jihadism in Indonesia: Poso on the Edge, p. 17.
Anyone who read the text of the two articles would have seen that Sugianto’s statement was a particularly empty threat. Article 505 stipulates a few months imprisonment for vagrants who do not have a job; by contrast, outside mujahidin were able to live with local residents in Poso, and many of them also engaged in petty trades while in the district. Article 515 potentially was more readily applicable, threatening penalties against persons who had moved residence without informing authorities in either their place of origin or their destination. Outside mujahidin were unlikely to have attended to all of the bureaucratic requirements of moving to Poso, but the penalties under this article were extremely light: a maximum of six days imprisonment or a fine not exceeding Rp 750 (approximately ten cents), less than the cost of a single bullet.  

Moreover, in reality, Article 515 was completely unenforceable. Anyone could obtain a local identity card from corrupt or sympathetic local officials, who would readily issue a card in any name for a small fee. Many outside mujahidin in Poso in fact had several different identity cards. The ease of obtaining an identity card was widely known, and whoever formulated the Malino work plan could not have been ignorant of this practice. In addition, Point 6 of the main text of the Malino accord — “every citizen has the right to live, arrive and reside peacefully and respect local customs” — appeared to affirm the right of outside mujahidin to remain in Poso. In light of the weak formulation of the repatriation provision, and the equivocal stance of the main text of the accord regarding the right of outsiders to remain in Poso, I believe it is unlikely that anyone genuinely expected that the provision to remove outsiders could be enforced.

Given that the failure of weapons collection and repatriation programs had left the military capacity of Poso’s Muslims undiminished, the main restriction on violence in early 2002 was the sheer number of security forces personnel deployed in the district. The Sintuwu Maroso I operation, which ran from 1 January – 31 July 2002, involved more than 4,000 police and soldiers, with many of these personnel placed in guard posts along the main road in each village in the district. These guard posts made it more difficult for crowds to gather and clash; the presence of so many security forces

50 Most fines in the Indonesian Criminal Code have not been updated to account for inflation, and as such are comically small.
personnel may also have convinced those intent on perpetrating violence that it would be prudent to lie low in the short term while waiting for the deployment to be reduced.

Once sporadic individual shootings and bombings resumed, however, it quickly became evident that the guard posts were not well placed to prevent these incidents, apprehend the perpetrators or even to subsequently investigate each attack. When a Christian man was shot dead near Malei village in Lage-subdistrict on 16 January 2002, for instance, the police did not identify or arrest the perpetrators. The murder of two Christian men in Poso Pesisir sub-district in mid-May was also not successfully investigated. These murders were followed by the bombing of a bus plying the Palu-Tentena route on 5 June, in which four people were killed, and a murder in Kayamanya four days later.51 Indeed, some observers questioned whether the security forces had any interest in preventing these attacks, given the financial rewards units deployed in Poso could reap from illegal businesses and security payments.52 Whether or not such suspicions were justified, the failure of the security forces to take action over these incidents must have emboldened the perpetrators.

Although jihadist networks perpetrated little violence in Poso during the early months of 2002, they nevertheless continued to try to consolidate their support base and build the military capacity of Poso’s Muslims. Both Laskar Jihad and JI/Mujahidin Kompak established anti-vice (anti-maksiat) squads in Poso shortly after Malino. Laskar Jihad called its squad Satgas Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Mungkar (Embracing Virtue and Rejecting Vice Task Force), whereas JI/Mujahidin Kompak called its unit Satgas Khoirul Umah.53 Most of the members of each squad were local men.54 The squads beat those whom they found drinking or gambling, and they were a crude instrument to “promote” the moral standards outside mujahidin demanded. The beatings had an ironic side to them,

51 An anonymous list titled “Pelanggaran Terhadap Deklarasi Malino untuk Poso”, the copy of which in my possession was faxed from a number in Tentena, indicates that one suspect was arrested for the murder in Kayamanya.
52 On the financial opportunities in Poso for the police and military, see Sangaji, “The Security Forces and Regional Violence in Poso”, pp. 276-279.
54 One local combatant who fought with Laskar Jihad asserted that all locals recruited by Laskar Jihad became members of Satgas Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Mungkar rather than Laskar Jihad members per se, which would imply that the task force has a broader set of activities than just moral policing. Unfortunately, I do not have sufficient comparative information to judge the validity of this account. Interview with a Poso man, July 2007.
however, given that many of the task-force members themselves had an all too recent
background in petty thuggery and “vice”.

Outside mujahidin in Poso also continued to help local Muslims organise for violence, despite the apparent efforts to repatriate them and the heavy deployment of police and soldiers. ICG reported that Jemaah Islamiyah set up a “special forces” unit in Poso called the “Team of Ten” (Tim Sepuluh) in early 2002, although the unit was disbanded after only a few months. Kompak followed JI’s lead, according to same report, setting up its own local special forces team in August 2002.

With the security forces not making a concerted attempt to prevent violence, and some of the district’s residents still intent on perpetrating attacks, it is not surprising that violence eventually escalated to a level similar to the clashes in late-2001. This escalation took place in August 2002 and lasted for approximately two weeks, during which at least 14 people were killed. Each of the attacks that targeted villages during this period were perpetrated by Muslims, but Christians also murdered several individuals and ambushed several buses as they passed through Christian territory. The largest attack during this period was the 12 August attack on Silanca village, one of the last Christian strongholds in the district that had not been attacked and burned after the May-June 2000 violence. Five Christian villagers were killed in the attack, and an estimated 400 houses were burned. Contemporary press reports suggest that both Muslim and Christian residents re-established guard posts and road-blocks around the district in response to this violence, and maintained these road blocks for some weeks after the violence ended.

The first man killed in August 2002 was Sukiman, a Muslim resident of Tegalrejo ward, who was found beheaded on 3 August after he had been missing for several days. Police

55 For instance, Yusman Said alias Budi, arrested in connection with a February 2006 armed robbery, gave the following description of what he termed the Tanah Runtuh group: “The Tanah Runtuh mujahidin group was established a fair while ago. The members I know of are Ipong, Bojel, Yusuf, Basri, and their activities are conducting roving operations to beat up people who they find drinking alcohol, gambling or engaging in other forms of vice (maksiat).” Among these men, Ipong is renowned to have had a premanistic background, whereas Basri told interviewers after his arrest that he continued to drink regularly during the conflict. It is possible his remarks were tongue-in-cheek. See Interrogation deposition of Yusman Said alias Budi in interrogation dossier of Opo alias Ustad Aan, 24 March 2006, p. 3. Coincidentally Budi is the brother of Dedi and Didi, the twins imprisoned for faking injuries in the early moments of the second phase of the conflict.


did not identify the perpetrators, but ICG suggests that Sukiman was killed by co-religionists after being mistaken for a Christian.\textsuperscript{58} Next, before dawn on 4 August, a crowd of Muslims attacked Matako village in Tojo sub-district, approximately twenty kilometres east of the city. Two churches were burned, seven villagers were injured, and dozens of houses were burned.\textsuperscript{59} Contemporary press reports noted that the village was a surprising target because its Christian and Muslim residents lived together in relative harmony (membaur).\textsuperscript{60} But an outside mujahid said that the village was in fact attacked precisely because it was a symbol of peace (much as the Baku Bae market in Maluku, which served as a meeting point between Muslims and Christians, was burned down in renewed violence in the province in 2004\textsuperscript{61}):

The Muslim community was disappointed in Muslims [in Matako] themselves, because they had engaged in what in Ambon would be called pela gandong, brotherhood, brought together by the district head. There was a pilot project between Muslims and Christians, who had begun to establish one community together, whereas our friends with their uncontrolled idealism hated this arrangement, and so the village was attacked.\textsuperscript{62}

Adding further weight to the interpretation that Matako was attacked in order to make a point about peace, the attack on the village took place the morning after Malino signatories had held a meeting with provincial and district authorities in Palu. One of the Muslim signatories who attended the meeting, Sulaiman Mamar, subsequently told the press that the delegates had spoken of an improving situation in Poso, “but the reality out in the field [i.e. the Matako attack] has now told a different story”.\textsuperscript{63} Whether by coincidence or design, the largest attack of the August 2002 violence also coincided with another Malino evaluation session held in Palu a week later on 11 and 12 August 2002.

\textsuperscript{58} See ICG,\textit{ Jihad in Central Sulawesi}, p. 29. The ICG account states that the perpetrators were returning from an attack on a Christian village. It is not clear what attack this might have been.

\textsuperscript{59} “Panglima TNI Heran Masih Ada Kelompok Pendatang di Poso”,\textit{ Kompas}, 30 August 2002; “Warna Sepia di Desa Matako”,\textit{ Media Sangkompo}, December 2002, p. 18; “Serangan Fajar di Matako”, LPSHAM Investigative Report, 4 August 2002. The Media Sangkompo account asserts that five villagers were killed, but this assertion is doubtful as it is not repeated in other accounts.


\textsuperscript{61} See Abubakar Riri and Mashudi Noorsalim, “Peace Market”,\textit{ Inside Indonesia}, 82, April-June 2005.

\textsuperscript{62} Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, May 2004. The interviewee actually mentioned Malitu as the village attacked for these reasons, but other details of the interview lead me to believe he confused Malitu and Matako. For instance, he asserted that Malitu was attacked before Matako (the reverse is true) and had elsewhere confused the names of villages.

\textsuperscript{63} “Deklarator Malino Mengutuk Penyerangan Desa Matako”,\textit{ Sinar Harapan}, 6 August 2002. See also HRW,\textit{ Breakdown}, p. 36.
On 6 August, two days after the Matako incident, Malitu and Betania (neighbouring Christian-populated villages in Poso Pesisir sub-district) were attacked. In all, 21 houses were burned.\(^{64}\) Then on 8 August, Muslim combatants based around Pendolo in the south of the district fired on a bus as it passed through nearby Mayo village, killing an Italian tourist. The tourist was apparently deliberately targeted as a suspected foreign spy, although four other passengers also suffered gunshot wounds.\(^{65}\) In what appears to have been tit-for-tat retaliation, Christians stopped and attacked two buses on the next two days, in Taripa village in the south of the district on 9 August, and in the vicinity of Watuawu and Tambaro villages, not far south of the city, on 10 August. Different reports state that either two passengers were injured or one passenger was taken hostage in the latter attack; no information is available regarding the former.\(^{66}\)

On 10 August, the violence continued in Lage sub-district, with a clash in the vicinity of Malei-Lage and Tongko villages, near the border of majority-Muslim and majority-Christian areas. One Christian was killed.\(^{67}\) Whether because of this clash or by chance, on the same day a crowd of Christians in nearby Silanca village stopped a motorcycle taxi (ojek) carrying a Muslim paramilitary policeman (Brimob) and another passenger. The driver escaped and reported the incident to the police, but the policeman and the other passenger disappeared. Security forces tried to reach Silanca village on 12 August to look for the men (whom it was presumed had been murdered), but Christians blocked their path close to the southern fringes of the city in Ranononcu village.\(^{68}\)

This abduction was the direct pretext for the largest incident during August 2002, namely the 12 August attack on Silanca village (neighbouring Sepe and Bategencu were also attacked as part of the same incident).\(^{69}\) Five Christians were killed, 400 houses were burned and thousands were forced to flee in what was another cooperative attack between outside mujahidin, local Muslims whom the mujahidin had trained, and a


\(^{65}\) ICG, Jihad in Central Sulawesi, p. 13.


\(^{69}\) In between the abduction and the Silanca attack, two more murders took place in the city on 11 August and a bus was stopped and burned in Tentena on 12 August, although the passengers escaped. "Kekerasan
crowd of hundreds of other Muslim men. A local Muslim villager who took part in the
attack on Silanca indicated that Brimob personnel were present as Muslims were about
to commence their attack. Angered by the death of their comrade, they gave Muslims
the green light to attack the village where the culprits lived, the man said, telling the
attackers only that they should not burn the church. Even given the clear link to the
abduction, it is too simplistic to say that Muslims attacked Silanca as revenge for the
disappearances. The reasons to take revenge on Silanca had roots earlier in the conflict:
the village was one of the last specific targets of revenge for the May-June 2000
violence that Muslims had not by then reached.

The attack on Silanca (and indeed the previous attacks on Matakko, Betania and Malitu)
again underlined the military superiority that Muslims had established at this point of
the conflict. Christians could do little to repel the attack on Silanca, and for a time that
night reportedly feared that Muslims would continue further along the road and also
attack Tagolu village. Christians did retaliate for the attack on Silanca later in the
night, however, by burning two mosques located in Christian-populated areas. On the
same night, Muslims also burned a church in the city ward of Gebangrejo and
reportedly also stopped traffic in the city to look for Christian passengers.

There were no further clashes in Poso immediately after these incidents, but Mayumba
village in neighbouring Morowali district was attacked on 15 August. Three Christians
were killed.

The escalation of violence in August 2002 did regain the central government’s
attention, with the national police chief promising to send more personnel to the district

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70 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003. Brimob’s reported behaviour in Silanca in August 2002 appears
similar to the actions of soldiers in the December 2001 Toyado abductions, who took revenge for the
death of their platoon commander by handing over Muslims to local Christians to be murdered. The same
pattern of behaviour was earlier evident in the October 2001 Mapane incident, when police fatally shot
one local Muslim and tortured others as revenge for the death of one of their comrades (See Chapter Four
for the 2001 incidents).


72 One mosque was burned in Tentena, and different reports state the other was located either in
Sintuwulemba or Ranononcu. “Poso Tegang: Sepe, Silanca dan Bategan Diserang”, LPSHAM report,
Poso Kembali Rusuh”, Media Indonesia, 14 August 2002.

and Kalla labelling the violence the work of “outside terror”.\textsuperscript{75} But I have not found any reports of arrests after this violence. Despite the absence of an immediate stern response, the Sepe and Silanca and Mayumba attacks turned out to be the last attacks before a narrowing in the forms of violence in Poso. After these incidents, many local Muslim combatants became increasingly reluctant to continue to fight, and there were no further attacks perpetrated by crowds during the Poso conflict. The few subsequent attacks on villages were perpetrated by smaller teams of men, and most sporadic violence instead consisted of shootings, other murders and bombings.

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that the August 2002 period of violence was by no means the end of conflict in Poso. In the remainder of 2002 alone, there were at least seven fatal shootings, which between them caused eight fatalities, as well as several bombings in Poso and Palu in which no-one was killed.

The pattern of the decline of violence in Poso – an overall decline in conflict but with sporadic violent incidents persisting – requires us to examine the motivations of two different groups. First, in the following section, I will consider why many local Muslim combatants chose to stop fighting at some time after the August 2002 escalation of violence. Second, I will discuss the motivations of the local Muslim men and outside mujahidin who continued to perpetrate violence in Poso.

\textbf{After August 2002 – The De-escalation}

In the previous chapter, I described 2000-2001 as the “good times” for perpetrators of jihadist violence in Poso. Fatalities among Muslim ranks when Muslims were the aggressors were rare, there were few arrests, there was a strong perception that fighting was necessary and strong peer pressure to participate in attacks. By late 2002, however, many local Muslim combatants appear to have judged that the good times were coming to an end. There were several reasons. Many local Muslims perceived that the risk of arrest was beginning to increase in late 2002, or else were concerned that continued large-scale violence may lead the security forces to intervene more sternly in Poso. At

\textsuperscript{74} Some reports say there were four fatalities. See “Kerusuhan Poso Merembet ke Morowali”, satunet.com, 20 August 2002.

\textsuperscript{75} See “Kapolri Akan Kerahkan Pasukan ke Poso”, Pos Kupang, 13 August 2002; “Turis Italia Tewas Tertembak, Ada Upaya Kobarkan Lagi Konflik Poso”, Sinar Harapan, 10 August 2002. Kalla’s claim that the violence was the work of ‘outside terror’ was intended to make the point that the local communities were no longer fighting and, presumably, that the local reconciliation programme had
the same time, the decision of Christians to cease large-scale attacks in the face of the military advantage that the district’s Muslims had established meant that fighting was no longer viewed as the necessity that it had been during 2001. Once fighting appeared a choice rather than a necessity, some local Muslim combatants and their communities preferred to try to re-establish a more routine life.

In hindsight, few perpetrators of violence were apprehended in Poso during late 2002 and 2003, but several developments may have contributed to an impression that the risk of arrest had increased. First, police did make some high-profile arrests in Poso. For instance, Rinaldy Damanik was taken into custody in Jakarta in September 2002 after police had found fourteen home-made guns in his vehicle on 17 August 2002 while he was assisting with the evacuation of Christian villagers from Peleru village in Morowali district. He was sentenced to three years in prison. Around a month after Damanik was taken into custody, outside mujahid Farihin Ibnu Ahmad was arrested in October 2002 as he disembarked from a passenger ship at Pantoloan port in Palu. Police found several thousand rounds of ammunition intended for use in Poso in Farihin’s luggage, and he received a two and a half years’ sentence. Subsequently, in April 2003, Andi Ipong and Nanto Bojel were arrested in connection with an armed robbery in neighbouring Parigi-Moutung district in April 2003. Both men were local Muslims who had trained and fought with outside mujahidin; one of the men was sentenced to two and a half years’ imprisonment, the other received a two year sentence.

Second, the October 2002 terrorist bombings in Bali spurred a nation-wide manhunt for the perpetrators and conspirators. This man-hunt impacted on Central Sulawesi in a number of ways: several Jemaah Islamiyah members were arrested in Palu in April 2003; the man who had led JI’s presence in Poso until late 2002, Mustofa alias Pranata Yudha was arrested in Java on explosives charges in July 2003; Mustofa’s replacement worked, Although he was correct to identify a major role for the outsiders, local men were nonetheless significantly involved in the violence.

77 Decision of Palu District Court No. 90/Pid.B/2003/PN.PL in case of Farihin Ibnu Ahmad alias Yasir.
78 “Dua Pelaku Penembakan Divonis”, Radar Sulteng, 4 November 2003. For commentary on the overall pattern of arrests following the Malino Accord, see McRae, “Criminal Justice and Communal Conflict”, pp. 111-112. Ipong was re-arrested in 2005 and is now serving a nine year sentence for the 2001 murder of a Hindu journalist, Bojel is wanted in connection with the October 2005 beheading of three Christian schoolgirls.
as head of the JI division responsible for Poso, Nasir Abas, was also arrested near Jakarta in April 2003. In addition to hunt for the perpetrators of the Bali bombing, the December 2002 bombing of a McDonalds restaurant and a car showroom in Makassar, South Sulawesi, triggered another extensive police investigation. Several of the men arrested in connection with the Makassar bombing had fought or trained in Poso.

Third, in June 2003, the Central Sulawesi police announced that they were seeking men on a list of 38 suspects for (post-Malino Accord) violence in Poso. The police did not disclose who was on this list of 38 men, leaving local men to guess whether they might be being pursued. One local combatant, who suspected he may have been on the list, acknowledged that these developments had led him and his friends to try “not to be too active, [so that we can] evade [capture/detection]”. In an indication of the impact of the Bali bombing and Makassar manhunts on Poso, the man said that he thought that the police were looking for links between Mujahidin (his generic term for jihadist groups in Poso) and Jemaah Islamiyah. As such, he guessed the primary targets for arrest would be mujahidin from Java or men from Poso who had gone with outside mujahidin to train in Ambon.

The police response to two serious violent incidents in October 2003 also may have served as a further warning against larger-scale attacks. In the first of these two incidents, a group of around 30 Muslim men attacked Beteleme village in Morowali district on 10 October, killing two people and burning 36 houses. The men appear to have targeted Beteleme because a key Christian combatant, Fabianus Tibo, had lived in the village prior to his arrest in 2000. Two nights later, before dawn on 12 October, a separate group of Muslim men attacked several Christian-populated villages in Poso Pesisir sub-district. In these attacks, nine people were killed as a result of gunshot or

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82 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
83 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
knife wounds. The police took swift and severe action, particularly against the perpetrators of the Beteleme attack. By mid-November they had shot dead seven suspects for the two attacks in the course of a determined man-hunt, and had also arrested at least seventeen suspects. Those arrested were brought to trial under Indonesia’s anti-terrorism law, the first time the law had been applied to violence in a conflict area. Although we do not know for certain why police acted more sternly in response to these attacks than to previous violence, several factors may have contributed to their response: the police reaction may have been a product of greater attention to Poso after the arrests of JI members in Palu earlier that year; the high death toll in the Poso Pesisir attacks may have increased the attention of senior police and the central government to the case; the police may also have acted more sternly because the attacks, although large-scale, were perpetrated by relatively small groups of assailants, making the scale of the required man-hunt manageable.

At the same time that intermittent stern action by the security forces began to make the risks of perpetrating violence appear higher, the pattern of violence in Poso in late-2001 and particularly 2002 may have made violence seem less necessary. Christians in Poso were no longer perpetrating large-scale attacks, whether because they lacked the capacity to do so in the face of the military advantage Poso’s Muslims had established, feared possible reprisals or were otherwise disinclined. Most often, violence perpetrated by Christians after Malino took the form of reprisal murders or arson attacks shortly after attacks on their co-religionists. Without much of a threat that they would themselves be attacked, and having already struck back against most local Christian strongholds, some local Muslims began to question what they would gain out of continuing to fight. One popular saying captured this mood, “Win and you’re charcoal, lose and you’re ash.” After four years of conflict, communities needed to begin to rebuild livelihoods, and some villagers began to see outside mujahidin as an impediment to efforts to generate income.

We became aware that it was us who would suffer the fall-out (imbas). They [outside mujahidin] would just come, and after causing something to happen [i.e. an attack], they would go back to their home towns.

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86 “Menang jadi orang, kalah jadi abu.”
87 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
I said if they [outside mujahidin] are always wanting to make things chaotic [through attacks], when are we going to go to our gardens, to our cocoa plants. If things are chaotic, with attacks, it's clear that they [Christians] will think that if they can't face up to us along a front [of battle], then they will wait in our gardens, and when we go to pick cocoa beans, knife us from behind. Who wants that!\textsuperscript{88}

Such disillusionment with the continuing sporadic violence in Poso was compounded when local combatants saw that other people were profiting from the unrest. In particular, local officials from the provincial right down to the village level were widely suspected to have been embezzling assistance funds intended for displaced communities at least since the Malino Declaration, if not even earlier.\textsuperscript{89} Another popular saying summed up the difference in fortunes between local communities and government officials as follows: “We get supermie (instant noodles), they get superkijang (sports utility vehicles).”\textsuperscript{90}

An awareness of the irritation some local Muslims expressed at the insecurity generated by protracted low-level violence balances accounts that adopt an instrumental interpretation of this violence. As an example of the instrumental perspective, ICG has observed that sporadic attacks on Christian populations in Poso may have suited Jemaah Islamiyah’s leadership, because these attacks could serve as a tool “to keep the jihad spirit strong”.\textsuperscript{91} Certainly, the opportunity to perpetrate sporadic violence did help to retain some local recruits and attracted new youths to the cause, as will be discussed further in the next section. But as this insecurity lasted longer and longer, the sporadic attacks also appear to have driven a wedge between some Muslims and outside mujahidin. The irritation of some local Muslims at these attacks highlights the importance not only of the experience of violent incidents, but also the times in between these violent incidents, to the decision of combatants as to whether to keep fighting. Even a “victorious” combatant in a protracted conflict may look at what he experiences in between the violence – the state of his day to day life - and decide that the incentives to continue to perpetrate violence are outweighed by the personal costs of doing so.

Once the threat from Christians lessened, the outside mujahidin’s commitment to continue to perpetrate sporadic attacks was not the only the source of tension between

\textsuperscript{88} Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
\textsuperscript{89} On suspicions of profiteering from assistance funds see, for instance, “Ada Madu di Dana Pengungsi”, \textit{Media Sangkompo}, October 2002, pp. 11-12; Lorraine Aragon, “Profiting from Displacement”, \textit{Inside Indonesia}, January-March 2004.
\textsuperscript{90} “Kami dapat supermie, mereka dapat superkijang.”
\textsuperscript{91} ICG, \textit{Jihad in Central Sulawesi}, p. 16.
them and local Muslims. The puritanical lifestyle that outside mujahidin demanded of local communities also began to cause divisions. Many local youths had accepted the moral and religious teachings of outside mujahidin at the peak of the fighting, as part of overall instruction on jihad. The standard of behaviour that outside mujahidin required – no drinking, regular prayer, regular religious study sessions - was antithetical to the pre-conflict lifestyle of many local Muslim youths. Once the situation became more secure, several of these youths indicated that they began to return to their old habits:

We told them to go home, we didn’t want to be annoyed (diganggu) [anymore], they came with a million rules, whereas in the village we had never had all those rules, and they [outside mujahidin] made the situation unstable.92

Some local financial donors also appear to have been less willing to support further jihadist activities once the threat posed by Poso’s Christians decreased significantly. These donors had been interested in protecting Poso’s Muslims while the conflict was at its peak, but were not so committed to longer-term proselytisation or the ambitions of some jihadist organisations to make Poso a “beach-head” in a struggle to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia.93 As an outside mujahid recalled,

The help people will give is limited. At first they say they will help continually, but then in the middle of the road, they tire of it. “What for now [more donations]? The riot in Poso is already over!”94

What was the extent of the split between outside mujahidin and local Muslims, and what were the implications of this split? I cannot quantify precisely how many people decided to stop fighting: one estimate provided to the press in late 2003 by a local combatant was that more than 75 per cent of Muslim combatants had “tobat” (literally, repented, i.e. stopped fighting).95 Because of their objections to continued instability and the moral standards demanded by outside mujahidin, some local men said their communities eventually asked outside mujahidin to leave their villages. Other men simply noted that the outside mujahidin had left by mid-2003, although one man said that some mujahidin still periodically came to his village to proselytise.96 For its part, Laskar Jihad, disbanded at the beginning of October 2002 after internal divisions led some of the organisation’s members to seek a fatwa (non-binding religious ruling) from

92 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
93 On these ambitions, see Fealy, “Radical Islam in Indonesia, p. 32; ICG, Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks, p. 3.
94 Interview with a Mujahidin Kompak member, April 2004.
96 Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.
a Saudi scholar which recommended that the militia should disband.97 Most of those members of Laskar Jihad who were still in Poso then left the district later that month.98

But in general, the unwillingness of the majority of local Muslim combatants to participate directly in violence did not equate to active opposition to those who continued to do so. Many Muslims in Poso appear to have continued to support violence against Christians tacitly, primarily because of anger at the scale of violence perpetrated by Christians in 2000-2001. Other Muslims who did oppose the violence may not have known the identity of the perpetrators of sporadic attacks, or otherwise not have been in a position to try to stop these attacks from continuing. Alternatively, even opponents of the violence may have been reluctant to assist police with their enquiries, because of anger at past inaction on the part of the security forces, wrongful arrests or the common practice of beating of suspects. Without widespread active community opposition to their activities, those intent on perpetrating violence were still able to do so.

**Continuing the Fight – Sporadic Violence after August 2002**

The second part of an explanation of the decline of violence is to examine why some local Muslims continued to perpetrate violence after August 2002, how they organised this violence and what form attacks during this period took. As a result of police investigations and other research, in particular the work of the International Crisis Group, we have a good idea of the identity of the perpetrators of many of the violent incidents that took place from 2002-2006. Overwhelmingly, the sporadic attacks during this period were perpetrated by outside mujahidin from Darul Islam-derived networks in cooperation with local Muslims youths. Laskar Jihad and the local Muslims who were once affiliated with them played little or no role.

Once attacks by crowds stopped, outside mujahidin from the DI-derived groups could no longer command all of the men whom they had trained, but a core group of local Muslims continued to collaborate with them. There were three main centres where jihadist activity continued long after 2002. Two of these centres were in the city, namely Kayamanya ward and Tanah Runtuh sub-ward. The third was in the south of the district near the shore of Lake Poso, specifically in the area around Pendolo and

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98 “Muslim Poso Kecewa dengan Pembubaran Laskar Jihad”, *Republika*, date not recorded.
Pandajaya village. Of these areas, it was in Tanah Runtuh where jihadist groups remained most active for the longest - locals from the sub-ward and their JI trainers were in fact responsible for the majority of the violence in Poso from late-2004 onwards. Indeed, precisely at the moment that the conflict in Poso began to wane in late-2002 and many local combatants became less interested in fighting, the groups based in Tanah Runtuh were consolidating their core membership and preparing to perpetrate further violence. The catalyst for this consolidation was the arrival in October 2002 of a Javanese JI member, Hasanuddin alias Slamet Raharjo, to lead the organisation’s operations in Poso.

A glance at the list of incidents of violence from late-2002 to early-2007 indicates that those outside mujahidin who remained in Poso and the local men who continued to work with them had sufficient manpower to ensure that the district was never entirely secure. Although there were generally fewer violent incidents in each successive year, at least 30 people were killed in each of 2002, 2003 and 2005. The violence from January-August 2002 has been described above; following the August 2002 period of violence, a further eight people were killed in Poso from September to December, all of them fatally shot. Overall, at least 36 people were killed throughout the year.

In 2003, there were at least 33 fatalities. After several individual murders in 2003 during the first half of the year, the most severe cluster of incidents in 2003 took place in October, when several Christian villages in Morowali district and Poso Pesisir sub-district were attacked. After the October attacks, several shootings and mob killings took place during the remainder of the year.

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100 After arrests in 2006 and January 2007, the police announced that they had solved 32 cases, most of which they specifically attributed to members of the Tanah Runtuh-based group. (One of the 32 cases – the murder of two Muslim fish traders, was perpetrated by Christians. In a February announcement, the police increased their estimate of solved cases to 46.) The men held in custody have confessed to involvement in many of these incidents, but most of these men were only tried for a small selection of the attacks they confessed to. See “Polisi Ungkap 32 Kasus Kekerasan di Poso”, *Media Indonesia*, date not recorded; “Polri Tahan 56 Tersangka Kekerasan di Poso”, *Antara*, 20 February 2007.
101 ICG, *Jihadism in Indonesia: Poso on the Edge*, p. 5. Hasanuddin lived in Tanah Runtuh and in 2003 married the daughter of Adnan Arsal, a key local Muslim leader. Immediately prior to his arrival in Poso, he had trained and fought in the Philippines for several years.
102 Fairly complete lists of incidents are provided in appendices of ICG, *Jihad in Central Sulawesi*; ICG, *Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks*. The 2004 ICG report contains at least one erroneous incident - a 28 August 2002 attack on Sepe - which appears to be a repeated reference to the 12 August 2002 attack.
2004 was an exception to the overall pattern of fatalities from 2002-2005, with “only” fifteen people killed.\textsuperscript{104} After smaller clusters of murders in March and July, the highest intensity sequence of violence coincided with the fasting month. In the worst incident of the year, six Christians were killed when a bomb was detonated in a public transport van parked outside Poso’s central market on 13 November.

The death toll rose sharply again in 2005, with at least 40 people were killed in seven different fatal incidents.\textsuperscript{105} Most of those killed died in two major bombings: two explosions in Tentena on 28 May killed 23 people, and another bombing in Palu on 31 December caused nine fatalities. Both bombings targeted markets where the attackers could be sure that most shoppers would be Christians. There were also two high-profile attacks on school-girls in October and November; each perpetrated by men from Tanah Runtuh. First, three Christian schoolgirls were beheaded on a foot-track near the city several days before the end of the fasting month; just over a week later a Christian and a Muslim school-girl were both shot in the head (each girl survived).\textsuperscript{106} In another new pattern of violence, between August and October men from Tanah Runtuh also executed three Muslim men who they suspected were police informers as well as a Muslim policeman.

\textsuperscript{103} See Darwis Waru, “Potret Poso Pasca Malino”, \textit{Radar Sulteng}, 19 December 2002. Waru provides a figure of 33 dead, between May and 6 December 2002, to which I have added one man killed in January 2002 and two men killed in the remainder of December.

\textsuperscript{104} This figure includes two people shot dead in Palu, because the perpetrators in each case were local men from Poso.

\textsuperscript{105} In his discussion of religious violence throughout Indonesia, Sidel insists that by 2005, religious violence in Indonesia had been reduced to a “single annual explosion”. The data from Poso demonstrates clearly that his statement is false. There were also several deadly incidents in Maluku in the first half of 2005. See Sidel, \textit{Riots, Pogroms, Jihad}, p. 210. On the Maluku violence, see ICG, \textit{Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks}, pp. 4-9, 29.

\textsuperscript{106} The perpetrators may not have realised they were shooting a Muslim girl. Each of the perpetrators asserted in their court trials that they had intended to target Christian men who frequently drank alcohol in the vicinity of the shooting, but that by chance the men had not been at the planned site of the shooting when the attack was to take place. In explanation of why he proceeded with the shooting if the intended target was not present, one of the perpetrators asserted that he had thought “Rather than go home empty handed … [better to shoot at the two girls and a man sitting in front of the house]”. This version of events does not ring entirely true, and it is possible the perpetrators were concerned that the judges would consider a deliberate attempt to target the girls to be more incriminating. See recording of testimony of Rahman Kalahe alias Wiwin and Yudi Heryanto Parsan alias Udit and response of Basri and Ardin to this testimony in the trial of Muhammad Basri alias Ayas alias Bagong and Ardin Djanatu alias Rojak, South Jakarta District Court, 4 October 2007; recording of testimony of Rahman Kalahe alias Wiwin in his own trial, South Jakarta District Court, 10 October 2007.
The October 2005 beheadings spurred a renewed central government intervention in Poso, with the result that the first eight months of 2006 were relatively peaceful. The main exception was a failed attempt to assassinate the Poso police chief in January, and the robbery of a gold shop in Palu in February in which the shopkeeper was shot dead. The execution of three Catholic men in September for their role in the May-June 2000 violence then aggravated existing enmities. Clashes between crowds were narrowly averted in the south of the city, and Christian youths killed two Muslim fish traders who happened to pass through their village near Taripa, southeast of Tentena. Soon after these murders, there were several violent incidents during the fasting month. First, a Palu-based JI member shot dead the acting head of the Central Sulawesi Christian church in mid-October. A week later, a police operation near Tanah Runtuh quickly escalated into clashes between police and local Muslims, in which police shot dead a local youth. Despite these incidents, the death toll for 2006 was much lower than in previous years, with a total of seven fatalities.

The only attacks in Poso in 2007 were several non-fatal bombings. Nevertheless, at least 17 people were killed, but in two police raids on Tanah Runtuh sub-ward in January. The raids were the culmination of an effort to apprehend those who continued to perpetrate violence that was initially spurred by the October 2005 beheadings, but only re-intensified after the violence in Poso in October 2006. In the first raid on 11 January, police fatally shot a local man and a Javanese mujahidin, while arresting seven other men. The fatalities in this raid led to several days of clashes between police and local Muslims who were angered by the attacks. Such clashes ceased after a second, larger raid on 22 January, in which 13 Muslim men were killed along with one policeman.

Many of those responsible for the incidents described in the preceding paragraphs have now been arrested, and their court testimony and interrogation depositions provide an indication of the motivations of the men who continued to perpetrate violence in Poso

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107 Coincidentally, the man killed was the younger brother of Lilik Purnomo, one of the perpetrators of the October 2005 beheadings.
108 One of these seventeen people was actually a policeman who was killed on 11 January when he was beaten to death by members of the funeral procession of one of the men killed during the police raid that day. See “Densus 88 Periksa Dua Tersangka Teror Poso”, Sinar Harapan, 12 January 2007.
109 One of the seven men, Thoyib alias Ibnu Tsalits, was shot in the stomach and taken to the Poso hospital. He escaped from the hospital after two days, but was then re-arrested during the 22 January 2007 raid described below. See deposition of Thoyib alias Ibnu Tsalits alias Ustad Ibnu in his own dossier, 24 January 2007, p. 3.
even after the conflict waned. In contrast to most local Muslim combatants’ perception that the threat of Christian violence had lessened markedly, these men continued to view Poso’s Christians as an ongoing threat to the district’s Muslim population. Both outside mujahidin and local Muslims thus justified attacks on Christians as a preventive measure to ensure that Muslims remained safe. For instance, a perpetrator of the beheadings told the court that the attack was intended to “warn Christians in Poso not to plan, let alone perpetrate, massacres of Muslims”\(^{110}\). The men who have stood trial have also expressed their frustration that the Christian perpetrators of violence in earlier periods of the conflict have not been brought to account, and have identified this frustration as part of their motivation to continue to perpetrate attacks. The men’s statements also revealed their perception that Muslims in Poso had still perpetrated less violence than Christians, “What pushed me to perpetrate the bombing was a feeling a solidarity with my fellow Muslims in Poso, who have been tyrannised, whereas there has not been reprisal in equal measure against those responsible for this tyranny.”\(^{111}\) Such statements corroborate anecdotal information that some Muslim combatants hoped to trigger renewed large scale violence in an attempt to “even up” the number of fatalities each religious community had suffered. Other anecdotal reports suggest that some local Muslims continued to perpetrate violence simply because they had become accustomed to fighting, and found it hard to stop when the conflict waned. As ICG has observed, for some of these men, “the combination of military training and active combat may have been the most meaningful experience of their lives”.\(^{112}\) An Indonesian observer familiar with the motivations of some of these men also suggested violence could serve as a way to atone for lapses in behaviour, such as drinking, by demonstrating their continuing commitment to jihad.\(^{113}\)

The perpetrators of at least a few of the incidents of sporadic violence also had financial motivations. As violence in Poso began to wane, some local officials began to use their funds to attempt to influence combatants to direct violence at targets of the donors’

\(^{110}\) Testimony of Lilik Purnomo alias Haris in trial of Hasanuddin alias Slamet Raharjo, Central Jakarta District Court, 17 January 2007 (direct observation by author of trial).

\(^{111}\) See personal defence plea of Syaiful Anam alias Mujadid alias Idris alias Joko alias Deni alias Brekele, submitted to South Jakarta District Court, 14 November 2007. The personal defence plea of Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano provides another example: “The armed conflict has caused social, economic and psychological problems. In particular, these problems have been very severe for Muslims, because the number of Muslims killed was far greater.” Personal defence plea of Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano, submitted to Central Jakarta District Court, 5 March 2007.

\(^{112}\) For more discussion of this point, see ICG, *Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks*, p. 3. Also c.f. Horowitz, The Deadly Ethnic Riot, pp. 409-411.
choosing, particularly in relation to corruption cases. The clearest instance of an attack ordered by a local official was the detonation of bombs outside the offices of two local NGOs in Poso in April 2005. The NGOs had been campaigning for the arrest of the acting district head, whom they believed to have embezzled IDP assistance funds in his capacity as head of the Provincial Social Office. It was widely suspected that the district head used an intermediary to pay a local man from Tanah Runtuh to place the bombs. The intermediary admitted as much to police, but no charges were ever laid. The other incidents in 2004 also raise particular suspicions of a link to local embezzlement of IDP assistance funds. In the first incident, one of the men convicted of corruption over the embezzlement, Andi Makassau, took part in an October 2004 shooting outside a church in Poso. Next, a Christian village chief who received some of the August-September 2004 funds on behalf of his village was beheaded in November 2004, although it is not certain the killing was linked to the embezzlement. Beyond these incidents, the number of incidents of violence linked to corruption in Poso remains unclear, with more rumours than solid proof. The number of incidents directly linked to corruption is likely to have been much smaller than those linked to the desire for revenge or religious motives.

Financial motives of a different type were responsible for a proliferation of armed robberies perpetrated by Muslim combatants. These robberies were referred to as *fa'i –

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113 Personal communication with an Indonesian observer, 2005.
114 This intermediary, Mad Haji Sun alias Ahmad Ali, admitted to police that he had been contacted by the caretaker district head of Poso, Andi Asikin Suyuti, who requested that he put a stop to NGO protests regarding suspected corruption. Sun told police that he then met with a Poso man, Andi Ipong, and they agreed that the NGOs “needed to be taught a lesson”. Two days after this meeting, Sun told police, the bombs exploded outside the two NGO offices. Neither Sun nor Ipong were charged with the bombing, although Ipong is currently serving a nine year sentence for the 2001 murder of Hindu journalist I Wayan Sumariasa. See deposition of Ahmad Hi. Ali alias Mat Sun, 22 September 2005.
115 For details of this embezzlement, see McRae, “Blood Money”.
116 Makassau was originally arrested in 2004 in connection with the shooting but was “released” without charge and immediately re-arrested on corruption charges. After the October 2005 beheadings in Poso, the investigation into the case was re-opened and Makassau was convicted to six years imprisonment in 2006 in a trial held at the Central Jakarta District Court. See McRae, “Blood Money”; “Saat Ditahan Mabes Polri Ditawari Uang: Pelaku Penembakan Poso Divonis Enam Tahun”, vhrmedia.com, date not recorded (probably 11 September 2006).
117 The first suspect arrested for the beheading was one of the men later convicted in the corruption case, but he was never charged with the beheading. An alternative explanation suggested the village chief was killed because he was believed to be spying on Muslims in his village. The two explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. See McRae, “Blood Money”; deposition of Subur Sugiyarto in the case of Sunarto alias Ustadz Sahl alias Ustadz Athoillah, date not recorded. Thank you to Sidney Jones for providing this deposition.
118 Apart from the cases listed in the main text, rumours in Poso have linked both the October 2003 Beteleme attack and the May 2005 Tentena bombing to corruption, although neither interpretation may be
the targeting of non-Muslims to finance jihadist activities. *Fa’i* took place at least as early as 2003, but there appears to have been a particular concentration of incidents in 2005-early 2006:

- Men carrying the payroll of the Poso district government were held up in April 2005, with the robbers seizing Rp 583 million in cash.  

- On 4 October 2005, the treasurer of Poso Pesir sub-district was shot and killed. This time the robbers stole approximately Rp 54 million.

- On 28 February 2006, robbers followed a cocoa bean buyer to her parents’ house in Bugis village, Parimo district and robbed her at gunpoint.

- On 10 February 2006, a gold shop on one of Palu’s main commercial streets was robbed. The owner of the shop was shot several times during the robbery and later died.

These robberies varied in the extent of their direct links to jihadist organisations in Poso – all of the perpetrators described them as *fa’i*, but in some of the robberies all of the proceeds appear to have been kept for personal enrichment. In others, such as the payroll robbery, it is clear that a proportion of the funds were used to finance jihadist activities, although I do not have reliable information on the breakdown of the funds.

Who did outside mujahidin and local Muslims consider to be legitimate targets for sporadic attacks? Clearly one group were Christians with a link to Poso or to the conflict in the district. Sometimes this meant targeting ministers of the church or shooting at church congregations, but often targets appeared to be selected just because they were Christian. Locations may have been attacked because of an association with previous violence, but there does not appear to have been a special effort to target key...
Christian perpetrators. In some attacks – for instance, the bombing of a market selling pork in Palu on 31 December 2005 and the armed robberies that took place outside Poso district – being Christian alone, without any link to Poso, appeared to make the victims legitimate targets. For a brief period, Muslim combatants even targeted fellow Muslims, specifically several community members who were suspected to have been passing information to police. There were also a handful of incidents where combatants targeted individual prosecutors or police.

Although we know the identity of many of the perpetrators of violence between 2002-2006, and some of their motivations, it is important to acknowledge that there are many aspects of the sporadic violence that we can not yet satisfactorily explain. For instance, we do not yet understand what factors, if any, distinguished local Muslims who continued to perpetrate violence from those who had stopped fighting by late 2002. At the time of writing, there was no good dataset to evaluate whether there was a correlation between continuing participation in violence and factors such as the background of local Muslim combatants, their social networks prior to the conflict, the degree of training each combatant had received, the number of their relatives killed or injured or their own personal experience of earlier periods of violence. Were such a dataset available, it may still emerge that chance personal decisions rather than quantifiable background factors account for local Muslim combatants’ continued involvement.

Nor do we know in most cases why perpetrators selected particular forms of violence – why on occasion they bombed targets, at other times shot their victims or shot at churches, and sometimes even used knives or machetes to murder their victims. Observers also have not been able to explain in detail the considerations that determined how frequently sporadic attacks were carried out, why the perpetrators chose to attack precisely when they did. For instance, we can see that the number of incidents generally decreased from year to year – despite no apparent decrease in military capacity - but we cannot yet explain why this reduction took place. Nonetheless, there are several patterns regarding the timing of sporadic violence that we can identify from the information available at the time of writing:

124 For instance, local Muslims and outside mujahidin consistently called for the arrest of the sixteen men named by Tibo and his co-defendants, rather than attempting to murder the men on the list.
- The coincidence of attacks with Ramadan, which outside mujahidin considered to be a particularly auspicious month for jihad, and other religious occasions. There was also a bombing on New Year’s Eve or New Year’s Day every year from 2001-2005, although among these bombings only the 31 December 2005 bombing of a pork market in Palu caused fatalities.

- The May 2005 bombing of a market in Tentena appeared to be an anniversary attack, as it took place exactly five years after the 28 May 2000 Walisongo massacre (see Chapter Three). No other violent incident readily stands out as an anniversary attack — there have not been large-scale incidents to mark the anniversary of the 3 July 2001 Buyung Katedo massacre, for example.

- There is a weak correlation between sporadic incidents of violence and moments of political transition or opportunity. Several violent incidents immediately preceded each of the two main moments of political transition in Poso. There was a sequence of three shootings spread over four days roughly a week prior to the legislative elections on 5 April 2004, in which the composition of the district, provincial and national legislatures were determined. There were also two small bomb explosions immediately prior to the 30 June 2005 election of a new district head in Poso, including one explosion outside a campaign office of one of the candidates. Neither bomb contained shrapnel, indicating that the intention was to scare or provoke rather than to kill. Although these incidents did coincide with elections, and may have been intended to influence voter intentions, in neither case were the pre-election incidents the major periods of violence for the year. Although some individuals may have been seeking political gain from violence, these individuals do not appear to have been in a position to control the majority of sporadic attacks.

To further illustrate what may have motivated some men to continue to perpetrate sporadic violence, and what the interaction was between the agendas of local men and outside mujahidin in these attacks, I will conclude this section by discussing one case of violence in some detail, namely the October 2005 beheading of three Christian schoolgirls. The attack provides a good opportunity to explore the relative authority of

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125 In an alternative explanation, one of perpetrators asserted in court testimony that they had chosen to bomb the market on a Saturday simply because it was the busiest market day.
locals and outside mujahidin and how their interaction was manifested in violence, because the successful criminal investigation and prosecutions that followed this incident have placed a wealth of information on how the attack was planned and executed on the public record. The attack demonstrates several features that I believe to be common to the violence in the later years of the conflict: a high degree of planning; the belief that any Christian was a legitimate target of violence; selection of target to maximum provocative effect rather than to maximise casualties; and the importance of revenge as a motive, seemingly even for outside mujahidin.

The October 2005 beheadings

In the early morning on 29 October 2005, five days before the end of Ramadan, a group of seven local Muslim men ambushed four female Christian high school students as they walked to school along a foot track down to the city from Bukitbambu village in the hills on the eastern fringe of Poso town. Wielding half metre long machetes, the men beheaded three of the girls; the fourth girl suffered a deep gash wound to her right cheek but was able to jump down a steep embankment and escape. The attackers took their victim’s severed heads back to Tanah Runtuh sub-ward, where outside mujahidin were waiting. These outsiders then arranged for the heads to be dumped by the roadside in two different Christian villages, along with notes threatening that Poso’s Muslims would still take another 100 Christian heads. News of the brutal attack drew immediate condemnation throughout Indonesia and abroad, and spurred genuine political will from Jakarta to track down the perpetrators. Three of the perpetrators were arrested in May 2006: they were Hasanuddin, the Javanese Jemaah Islamiyah member who had headed the organisation’s operations in Poso since late-2006, and two Poso men, Lilik Purnomo alias Haris and Irwanto Irano alias Iwan. Three more local men, Mohamad Basri, Agus Nur Muhammad alias Agus Jenggot and Rahman Kalahe alias Wiwin, were arrested in January – February 2007. All six men received sentences of between fourteen and twenty years, among the heaviest prison terms handed down for violence in Poso.¹²⁷ At the time of writing, police were continuing to seek three outside mujahidin and three local men in connection with the attack.

¹²⁶ A Christian man was shot dead on 3 July 2002, the first anniversary of the Buyung Katedo massacre, but given the small scale of the attack and the number of violent incidents that took place in July 2002, the precise timing of this shooting may have been a coincidence.
¹²⁷ The men received the following sentences: Hasanuddin – twenty years, Haris – fourteen years, Iwan – fourteen years, Basri – nineteen years, Wiwin – nineteen years, Agus Jenggot – fourteen years. The punishment meted out to Basri and Wiwin was not solely for the beheadings, as the two men were also convicted of involvement in several other violent incidents.
The JI member, Hasanuddin first broached the idea of an attack to coincide with the fasting month, which he described as a “Ramadan gift” for Poso’s Christians. He raised the idea in early October 2005 with a few local local men who had previously trained and cooperatively perpetrated violence with JI. In suggesting a “Ramadan gift”, Hasanuddin was copying an established practice from the southern Philippines, where jihadist forces had often attacked military posts during the fasting month. The local context of inter-religious conflict added an additional dimension to the idea in Poso. By perpetrating a provocative attack near the end of Ramadan, the perpetrators could ensure that any immediate Christian retaliation would coincide closely with the Idul Fitri festival, also known in Indonesia as Lebaran. A Christian attack at Idul Fitri would be particularly poorly received by Poso’s Muslims, and could help to build wider support for jihadist activities. The perpetrators may even have hoped to trigger renewed open conflict, which would give them the opportunity to “even up” the death tolls suffered by the two religious communities.

It is difficult to assess who came up with the idea for the Ramadan attack to be a beheading. In their trials, Hasanuddin and Iwan accused each other of first making this suggestion. What was not disputed in the trial was that Iwan came up with the idea to target the Christian schoolgirls, after he saw the girls walking to school one day near his home in Sayo ward. (Sayo ward is at the bottom of the hill below the girls’ village.) Iwan informed Hasanuddin of his suggestion; Hasanuddin then turned to another local man, Haris, to arrange the details of the attack. By 2005, attacks in Poso were typically preceded by an extensive survey of the intended location and target. In the case of the beheadings, Haris and Iwan undertook this survey, watching covertly on at least four separate locations as the girls walked to school each morning.

128 Hasanuddin had trained and fought for several years in the Philippines immediately prior to his arrival in Poso. During his trial, Hasanuddin denied that he had introduced the idea of a Ramadan gift to Poso or that he had suggested the idea to the local men. He alleged that another Indonesian veteran of the Philippines, Sanusi, had raised the idea and that he had merely asked the local men what they thought of the suggestion. One of the local men who stood trial for the beheadings contradicted this testimony, however, saying that it had been Hasanuddin who raised the idea. Testimony of Irwanto Irano in trial of Hasanuddin and Hasanuddin’s response to this testimony, Central Jakarta District Court, 17 January 2007 (direct observation by author of trial).
129 Testimony of Irwanto Irano in his own trial and testimony of Hasanuddin in his own trial, Central Jakarta District Court, 24 January 2007. Haris told a different version – he said Iwan brought the idea to him and that he had taken the idea to Hasanuddin.
130 As another example, according to the court testimony of the perpetrators, the 28 May 2005 bombings in Tentena were preceded by three separate surveys of possible locations to place the bombs. See record of testimony of Ardin Djanatu, Irwanto Irano, Amril Ngiode alias Aat and Mujadid alias Brekele in
watching the girls, the two men planned how they could conduct the attack and monitored who else besides the girls used the foot-track.\footnote{Iwan testified that he and Haris conducted four “surveys” of the foot-track prior to the attack. Testimony of Irwanto Irano in trial of Hasanuddin, Central Jakarta District Court, 17 January 2007.}

In between conducting surveys, the two men also bought six new machetes, all from the one Muslim trader, bought twenty plastic bags to use to collect their victims’ severed heads, and recruited five other local Muslim combatants, initially telling them only that they would take part in an unspecified attack. In his trial, Haris asserted that he kept Hasanuddin informed of these preparations, an assertion which Hasanuddin denied.

This denial notwithstanding, Hasanuddin admitted to making two contributions to the planning of the attack. Just before the attack was to take place, Hasanuddin met the team of local men whom Haris and Iwan had assembled and provided them with religious guidance (\textit{tausiah}) concerning the attack. A key topic of this tausiah was to address the permissibility of attacking females, and female children at that. It must have been clear to the perpetrators that their choice of target would be controversial.\footnote{As a comparison, part of the reason that the July 2001 Buyung Katedo massacre became a particular symbol of injustice among Muslims in Poso was that most of the victims were women and children.} Jihadist doctrine normally forbade the targeting of women or children, a point that local Muslims indicated had been conveyed during \textit{ta\'lim} sessions. One of the local Muslim combatants whom I interviewed told me in 2003 that he had withdrawn from perpetrating violence after he saw that the victims of a particular shooting attack in Poso were all women.\footnote{Interview with a Poso man, July 2003.} Hasanuddin’s \textit{tausiah} that preceded the beheadings thus explained to the local men why it was permissible to attack young girls in this particular instance. Different men who were present have given different versions of who spoke and what was said; here I will analyse a hand-written statement Hasanuddin read out and then submitted to the court during his trial. Hasanuddin’s version of his \textit{tausiah} asserts the advice was much less specific than what some other men present have indicated, but his version is sufficient to illustrate how the attack was justified, and his statement is a convenient source because it is clear that it was not made under duress.\footnote{Hasanuddin read the statement out with some gusto, and also brought along photographs to attempt to illustrate his claims regarding Christian violence. Direct observation by author of trial of Hasanuddin alias Slamet Raharjo, Central Jakarta District Court, 15 November 2006.}
asserted that the *tausiah* was merely general advice regarding the “rules of war” and “jurisprudence of jihad” in Islam. He said he made the following points:

- It is permissible to kill in the same form/to the same level/to achieve balance during war, as is stated in the Qu’ran (An Hahl: 126): “And if you strike back, strike back in the same [form] as the torture visited upon you.”
- Do not wage war based on [a desire for] vengeance, but truly because of Allah.
- Do not cut up your enemy [into small pieces].
- Increase your *dzikir* [chanting in praise of Allah] to Allah while waging war.  

Even if Hasanuddin’s *tausiah* was as general as he maintained, the significance of his first point on striking back in equal measure would have been clear to all present. In the context of their plan to behead the schoolgirls, Hasanuddin’s advice could only be interpreted to mean that it was permissible to attack and behead women (normally proscribed), because Christians had also beheaded women in the past in Poso.

The choice of beheadings as the form of this Ramadan attack indicates that the attack was intended to provoke and send a message, rather than to maximise casualties. Hasanuddin’s second contribution to the planning contributed to this end: he admitted to giving Haris several hand-written notes to put in the bags that the severed heads would be stored in. The police recovered four of these notes, three of which had slightly different text and different handwriting. The following is the text of the note that matched Hasanuddin’s hand-writing:

At no time can we [illegible word], perhaps because our [desire for] vengeance has not been healed. We are still looking for 100 Christian (Kongkoli) heads, be they children, youths, adults, men or women. Those heads will be for Lebaran gifts/Lebaran presents for our party at Lebaran. Our [desire for] vengeance still burns as you sadistically, cruelly and barbarically slaughtered our fathers/mothers and our fellow Muslims. You cut open our fellow [Muslims] stomachs and took their genitals in front of our eyes. Blood must be avenged through blood, a life for a life, a head for a head. You still [owe us] a great debt. We are not afraid to die, to at any time and any place defend our rights, our [desire for] revenge, our dignity (harkat dan martabat). We have suffered, we had to flee, we were

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135 Personal Surat Eksepsi (Response to Indictment) of Hasanuddin alias Slamet Raharjo submitted to Central Jakarta District Court, 15 November 2006, p. 2.
136 The more detailed account of Hasanuddin’s *tausiah* in his interrogation deposition suggests that he specifically raised this point: “In truth, basically this deed - to murder women and children - is not permitted by Islamic law ... but ...but it certain circumstances such a deed is permitted, to strike back against what they have done and we are permitted to do [to them] what they have done [to us], as set out in the verse of the Quran which permits [us] to strike back in equal form ... the aim of this activity is to demand justice for our fellow [Muslims] who were sadistically and inhumanly slaughtered, such as happened at Buyung Katedo and at the Walisongo pesantren (boarding school) and in other places, which deeds have not been fully investigated. Do this deed sincerely and not with thoughts of revenge and frequently [chant in praise of Allah].” Deposition of Hasanuddin alias Slamet Raharjo in his own dossier, 12 May 2006, pp. 7-8.
137 Hasanuddin nonetheless maintained that another outside mujahid, Sanusi, had provided the text for the notes and that Hasanuddin had only copied an example that Sanusi gave to him.
cheated, because of the massacres perpetrated by Christians. This reprisal is nothing compared to your sadism, your barbarism. You will not be safe or calm until our [desire for] vengeance has been healed. Before [we?] feel safe and calm. At any time and any place we will [continue to] strike back until our grandchildren’s [generation]. We have a lot more heads, and we are spreading them in other places, in part as a party and in part to inflame our burning [desire for] revenge. We are everywhere and we are ready to heal (mengobati) our [desire for] vengeance. Pass on this message to Piet [Inkiriwang, the Poso district head], Damanik, Irianto Kongkoli [a prominent Christian minister who was murdered in 2006] and S. Pelima [a Malino signatory and the head of Poso legislature].

The most interesting feature of the note is its emphasis on “dendam” – vengeance or revenge. One of the basic tenets of jihadist doctrine is that attacks must not be motivated by a desire to satisfy revenge. The item on jihad published in a Palu tabloid in mid-2000 made this point; Hasanuddin asserted that he advised that revenge could not be the motive during his tausiah. Yet the description of motives in this note is not confined to the permissible notion of striking back in equal measure, which is nonetheless mentioned. Instead, there are three references to healing (mengobati) a desire for revenge, two references for a burning desire for revenge, and an additional reference to a desire for revenge. In fact, the focus on revenge was noted in the interrogation deposition of one of the local perpetrators of the attack, Lilik Purnomo alias Haris. The deposition records Haris as telling police that he did not approve of the notes’ text because “it gave the impression that there was an element of revenge [in the motivations for the attack].”

The attack on the girls was intended to take place on 26 October, the morning after Hasanuddin gave his tausiah. Early that morning, the seven local men who had been selected to perpetrate the attack set out for Iwan’s house in Sayo ward. Their plan did not go smoothly: when they walked up into the hills behind Iwan’s house intending to ambush the girls, they were spotted hiding in the bushes by a woman who happened to walk along the foot-track that morning. Consequently, the men fled and aborted the attack. After they had retreated to Tanah Runtuh, Iwan was sent back to the vicinity of Sayo to see if there were now more police or military deployed to the area. After he saw no sign of increased vigilance, Haris and Iwan conducted a fifth early-morning survey of the foot-track to check that their plan was still feasible. The men then repeated their
attempt on 29 October. This time there were no last-minute surprises, and when four school-girls – aged sixteen, nineteen, fifteen and sixteen - walked down the foot-track, the men killed three of the girls and wounded the other.140

What broader insights can we draw from the beheadings attack to help us to understand how and why sporadic violence was perpetrated in Poso? First, the attack was highly premeditated – the idea for the attack came weeks before the actual incident, and the preparation involved at least four surveys as well as the purchase of specific equipment for the attack. The extent of preparations evident in this attack may have been one limiting factor on the number of sporadic violent incidents in Poso.

Second, the organisation of the attack involved both outsiders and locals, but it was locals who carried out the attack. This division of labour appears to have been a common feature of many of the sporadic attacks perpetrated by this group. The May 2005 Tentena bombing was one exception, as there was one outside mujahid among the four men who transported the bombs to the Christian town and placed them in the market there.

Third, the men did not kill with the deadliest weapons available to them. It is clear that the group responsible for the beheadings had extensive stocks of firearms – when Tanah Runtuh was raided twice in January 2007 police recovered nineteen factory-standard firearms, including a grenade launcher, and they continued to find more factory-standard weapons in the days after the raids. The men’s choice to behead the girls cautions us against adopting any simple analytical framework such as that the availability of more sophisticated weapons will result in increasingly high numbers of fatalities.141 Some sporadic attacks in Poso – particularly the major bombings – were aimed to maximise casualties. But the perpetrators of this attack chose a specific form of violence to maximise the provocative effect of the attack, and because they believed beheadings were justified because Christians had killed in the same way earlier in the Poso conflict.

literally "conspicuous""). Direct observation by author of trial of Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano, Central Jakarta District Court, 24 January 2007.
140 Based on their surveys of the location, the men had actually expected a group of six girls, but by chance only four of the girls walked to school together that morning.
Fourth, the perpetrators were unconcerned about the specific identity of their victims as long as they were Christians. The fact that they killed schoolgirls makes the logic of their target selection particularly clear – it is of course nonsensical to suggest that the girls had contributed to violence against Muslims in Poso in any way. A judge challenged Haris during his trial regarding the selection as targets of people “who did not know [you], did not know what the problem was”. His reply was that when his house had been burned, and Muslims had been slaughtered, he had also not know what the problem was. 142

Each of the two previous points highlights the perpetrators’ keen awareness of violence earlier in the conflict [or at least a version of this violence], including for men such as Hasanuddin who arrived in Poso after large-scale attacks against Muslims had ceased. The emphasis on previous violence in Poso makes this particular attack appear local in scope, and an act of revenge; it is difficult to discern how the attack served any particular strategic agenda. Indeed, a senior JI leader disowned the beheadings as an example of the Java-based leadership’s “lost [sic] of command” in Poso, although we must evaluate this statement critically given that the leader made the comment only after he was himself arrested, and as such he may have been mindful of avoiding legal sanctions. 143

Another feature of the beheadings was the absence of reprisal attacks on Muslims after the incident, even if the attack reportedly generated fears among some Muslims that their children would become victims of retaliation. The decreasing community response to major attacks over time – communities stopped establishing road-blocks after attacks, and there were no reprisals after major bombing attacks in Poso in 2004 and 2005 - is a clear sign of the lessening of conflict between communities, and suggests that to some extent, Christians did not hold the entire Muslim community responsible for the actions of those continuing to perpetrate violence. 144 The trend also reflects the efforts of NGOs and some community leaders to channel anger over attacks towards the security forces.

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142 Direct observation by author of trial of Lilik Purnomo alias Haris and Irvanto Irano alias Iwan, Central Jakarta District Court, 24 January 2007.
144 By contrast, there were two apparent reprisal attacks after the October 2003 attacks on Beteleme and Poso Pesisir. A Muslim fish trader, Susanto Jafar went missing on 12 October after he had set off to sell fish in a Christian area – his body was found several days later. In what appears to have been another reprisal, shots were fired at several houses near the Al Amanah pesantren in Tanah Runtuh on 17
and the government for their failure to prevent violence - after the beheadings, Damanik commented that the perpetrators may not have been civilians. Whatever the causes of the trend, the lack of reprisals meant that the hopes of some perpetrators that sporadic attacks could generate renewed open conflict were disappointed.

Finally, the attack also highlights the poor capacity of the security forces in Poso to detect preparations for attacks or to prevent violent incidents. A key part of the eventual fruition of this plan was the lack of increased vigilance around the site of the attack after the failed attempt on 26 October – a visible increase in the deployment of personnel may have deterred the attack. The confidence of the perpetrators in returning to the same site three days later to carry out their attack highlights the space that even a large scale deployment of police and soldiers still left for sporadic attacks.

Even if the security forces were not able to prevent the beheadings, this attack was the most important trigger for a renewed central government intervention in Poso that eventually brought sporadic violence to at least a temporary end.

**Conclusion**

This chapter set out to explain the process by which violence declined in Poso, as well as the reasons for the decline. I have focussed on two factors: first, the central government intervention in late-2001 that marked the start of the decline and reduced the space available to local actors to perpetrate attacks; second, the differing response of different parts of the alliance of outside mujahidin and local Muslims in Poso to the space left for violence.

The sections of this chapter that specifically addressed the government interventions were largely confined to the initial effects of the Malino talks and the increased deployment of troops. In conclusion, I would like to employ a wider-angle lens to examine the overall pattern of central government interventions in Poso from late 2001 until 2007, as well as the motivations for and the effects of these interventions.

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One interpretation of the December 2001 intervention has been that the security force deployments and Malino talks were symptomatic of a closing of the “opportunity structure” for violent inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflict in Indonesia. Van Klinken and Sidel, who are in their own ways both advocates of this interpretation, each identify the impeachment of President Abdurrahman Wahid and consequent rise of Megawati Soekarnoputri to the presidency as the crucial political development behind this closing. Their explanations of the importance of the Megawati presidency nonetheless differ slightly. Van Klinken sees the initial temporal context of the post-Soeharto conflicts to have been a “weakening of the repressive capacities of the state and the fragmentation of its ruling elites as a result of the multiple crises of 1998”: the Megawati presidency was thus important because her rise to power signalled the emergence of a new ruling coalition in Indonesia.\(^{146}\) With her government stronger than her predecessor’s as a consequence, she was also better placed to take repressive action to counter violence in the sites of conflict. For Sidel, Megawati’s presidency was important because her rise to power had entailed the cooptation of Islamic parties that had opposed her run for president in 1999. With these parties on board, Sidel argues, Megawati had a free hand to extend protection to non-Muslims in sites of conflict by cracking down on jihadist networks and their supporters.\(^{147}\)

Throughout this dissertation I have argued that we must make a place for the national context in our analysis of Poso. I do not intend to argue against Van Klinken and Sidel’s identification of the importance of the Megawati presidency as one background factor to the December 2001 intervention in Poso. But there are two aspects of the central government intervention that we tend to underplay if we adopt the interpretation that this intervention marked a closing of the opportunity for further conflict.

The first aspect is local motivations for security force behaviour. In Chapter Four, I gave two examples of the security forces taking severe action against men they suspected to be perpetrators of violence before there was strong pressure from the central government to intervene. Each case was an illegal reprisal. In this chapter, the example was reversed – with a police unit wanting revenge for the murder of their

\(^{146}\) Van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*, pp. 33, 141.

\(^{147}\) Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*, pp. 212-213. Sidel describes violence perpetrated by jihadist networks as essentially separate from conflicts between communities in Poso, which he argues also stopped in late-2001 because three years of fighting had re-established clear boundaries between religious communities and consolidated each community’s internal hierarchy.
comrade near Silanca village, they reportedly let an attack happen on 12 August 2002 despite increased pressure from the government for effective intervention. Although each phenomenon is difficult to quantify, there are two other ways the local context may have lessened the resolve to act of security forces posted to Poso, except when central government pressure was particularly strong. The first was the opportunity for local units to profit from their posting in a conflict area, a point which van Klinken himself discusses. The second was a tendency identified by a senior police figure in Central Sulawesi for rank-and-file personnel to become bored and lose motivation to intervene, particularly during a long-term posting in Poso. A reluctance to intervene was a particular problem when such intervention could involve risking becoming a target themselves.

The second aspect is the uneven character of the government intervention in Poso over time. When viewed over the time period covered in this chapter, the government response to Poso appears crisis-driven. That is to say, the government did not take concerted action to halt violence in Poso unless it was affected by a sense of crisis. Such a sense of crisis on occasion may have been sparked by events outside the district – for instance when the manhunts that followed the Bali and Makassar bombings also impacted indirectly on Poso. More typically, however, each sense of crisis was generated when violence in Poso crossed an invisible psychological line. Once each sense of crisis faded, the space for violence re-opened.

The October 2003 attacks in Beteleme and Poso Pesisir crossed this line. The police immediately launched a determined manhunt, arresting 18 suspects and shooting seven others dead. But the government response did not extend beyond these short-term efforts to catch the perpetrators to a more systematic attempt to investigate violence in Poso and bring those most responsible to account. The result was that most of the networks perpetrating violence were left intact. The May 2005 Tentena bombings – the deadliest bombing in Indonesia since the 2002 bomb attacks in Bali - also crossed the unseen line. Jusuf Kalla, who was by that point vice-president, set police a seven day deadline to apprehend the perpetrators. Kalla’s deadline soon generated more than a dozen arrests, but none of those in custody were the perpetrators of the attack, and government pressure relented amid criticism over the wrongful arrests.

148 Interview with Central Sulawesi police chief, February 2006.
The October 2005 schoolgirl beheadings and subsequent shooting of two other schoolgirls took a giant stride across the invisible line. The widespread condemnation of the two attacks spurred senior police to become personally involved in Poso and resulted in the establishment of two ad hoc security bodies to tackle the violence in Poso. As a result, the beheadings prompted a much more concerted intervention than the response to the Beteleme/Poso Pesisir or Tentena attacks. Police rounded up suspects for some of the many unsolved cases that had occurred during the preceding two years – including the arrest of three of the perpetrators of the beheading. They also announced their intention to more systematically investigate twelve priority cases, including some of the more prominent incidents of violence perpetrated by both Muslims and Christians. Nevertheless, even after the beheadings the government’s resolve to act appeared to fade once the initial crisis had passed, and the ad hoc security bodies were disbanded. Not until after the heightened tensions caused by the September 2006 Tibo executions and the murder of the acting head of the GKST the following month did the police finally acted decisively to bring sporadic violence in Poso to at least a temporary end. They first announced a list of 29 men wanted over recent violence, all Muslims, and when only a handful of these men turned themselves in, police launched two raids on 11 January and 22 January in an attempt to capture the rest.150

With the exception of the January raids, these periodic interventions did not significantly restrict or directly reduce the capacity of those responsible for attacks to perpetrate violence – although the arrests and seizure of weapons were nonetheless a blow. Instead, the limiting effect of these interventions on violence in Poso is better thought of as a caution to perpetrators not to go too far. The uneven pattern of intervention thus helps to explain why the decline of violence was also uneven – to some extent it was left to perpetrators to judge what space was still available to them to perpetrate violence. We know that this judgement differed between different local Muslim men who had joined with outside mujahidin to perpetrate violence in 2001 and 2002. With a slightly elevated risk of arrest (and many of the main targets for retaliation already attacked) many men began to perceive perpetrating violence to be no longer

150 Police also arrested and charged sixteen Christian suspects for the reprisal murder of two Muslim fish traders after the Tibo executions.
worth the costs. For another group, we are left to assume that they would have continued to perpetrate violence indefinitely if their network had not been forcefully dismantled in 2007.

Government security interventions were not the only factor that contributed to the decline in violence in Poso. A reduction in the threat to Muslims posed by the district’s Christians was also an important limiting factor. On the one hand, the absence of further large-scale attacks by Christians by 2002 meant that violence no longer appeared to be a necessity to many local Muslim men, who consequently stopped fighting. But the absence of large-scale reprisals arguably also limited the amount of violence that outside mujahidin and the local Muslims still working with them could perpetrate. Without a descent into renewed open conflict that large-scale reprisals would have constituted, manhunts became an increasingly important component of successive government interventions, even if significant resources continued to be devoted to establishing guard posts throughout the district.

The passage of time, and in particular community fatigue after the experience of years of instability, also played a factor. The role of fatigue is an important counter-point to my focus in this chapter on the ways in which earlier incidents of violence generated further violence and even sometimes affected the specific forms that later violence took. While earlier violence can be an important source of motivations to seek revenge, the experience of the costs of violence can also be an incentive to seek to avoid further fighting in the future. When violence began in Poso in December 1998, local communities probably had only a very partial understanding of just how high the costs of fighting could be. By the time violence began to decline in 2002, many members of both communities had personal experience of being forced to flee from their homes or even seeing their homes burned, losing access to fields, their businesses or their jobs, and seeing family members of friends killed or injured. Such concrete experience can easily make conflict intractable, and may at some point in the future serve as renewed motivation for some people in Poso to fight. But when winning means becoming charcoal, and losing ash, lived experience of conflict can also serve as a disincentive to taking up arms again.
CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

This dissertation has examined the escalation of the Poso conflict from 1998 to 2002, and the decline in violence from 2002 to 2007. In the preceding chapters, I have focused on the processes by which the escalation and decline took place, arguing that we must focus on these processes not only to understand why the violence followed a particular course in Poso, but also to understand why violence took place at all in the district.

The fighting in Poso started with two riots in December 1998 and April 2000, which each occurred before the escalation of the Poso conflict to mass killing. This escalation took place during two weeks in May-June 2000 in which several hundred people, mostly Muslims, were killed as the violence spread beyond the city limits to other parts of the district. This period of violence marked the shift to protracted conflict in Poso, and spurred the entry of outside mujahidin into the district. Together with these newly arrived outside mujahidin, the district’s Muslims then established a military advantage over Poso’s Christians over the course of two major periods of fighting in June-July 2001 and particularly in November-December 2001. Although the central government intervened in the conflict in late 2001, another major period of attacks followed in August 2002. Thereafter, most perpetrators decided that it no longer served their interests to continue to fight, and most violence from late 2002 until the end of 2006 was perpetrated by outside mujahidin together with a core group of local Muslims who continued to collaborate with them.

In the body of this dissertation, I have treated this violence in chronological order. In this Conclusion, I will change tack and focus on the six elements of analysis that I introduced in the Introduction: how the violence was organised, the role of identity, the relative importance of national and local contexts, the forms of violence, the effect of previous violence on local actors, and the motivations of perpetrators of violence.

In addition to appraising the findings of each element of analysis, this conclusion will also address two other interpretive issues. First, I would like to return to a point raised in the Introduction regarding the shortcomings of structural analysis, and seek insights regarding the agency of local actors and its limits in the Poso conflict. The chapter will then conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of the analysis of this dissertation for future developments in Poso.
SIX ELEMENTS OF ANALYSIS

How Violence Organised

Overall in the Poso conflict, at least 600 people were killed, thousands of houses were destroyed and tens of thousands of people were displaced. Perhaps the most sobering detail to arise from this dissertation is that the majority of this violence, including the periods of mass killing and protracted communal fighting, took place without being underpinned by a permanent organisation or by particularly long-term planning.

The violence of December 1998 and April 2000 appeared the least organised. In contrast to later periods of fighting, rival crowds in the first two periods lacked a group of core combatants who had trained together. To follow a leader’s directions in these periods did not bind a crowd member thereafter to continue to recognise the leader’s authority; each individual retained considerable autonomy to act on their own initiative. After these two initial periods of violence, Christians swiftly assembled a more organised combatant entity – the kelompok merah – to coordinate clashes and provide key combatants for the May-June 2000 fighting. Some of the members of the kelompok merah had trained for up to several weeks and manufactured rudimentary weapons to prepare for the fighting, but these core combatants remained weak without large numbers of ad hoc recruits to either fight alongside them or to cause the general breakdown of law and order that allowed core combatants to operate. After the May-June 2000 period of violence, outside mujahidin and local Muslims began to establish an alliance that over time achieved a greater degree of organisation than the kelompok merah. Nevertheless, ad hoc recruitment remained a crucial part of large-scale attacks by Muslims in 2001 and August 2002. Only after the majority of combatants stopped fighting during 2002 was violence primarily organised by a more permanent organisation, consisting of outside mujahidin and those local Muslims who were still prepared to fight. This more permanent organisation was still capable of perpetrating attacks that inflicted significant casualties – causing up to 40 fatalities each year – but nonetheless never expanded to become a fighting force of similar size to the crowds that gathered when ad hoc recruiting was still possible.

If not by means of a permanent organisation, how did the violence in Poso take place? I indicated in the Introduction that the role of leaders would be an important part of the
explanation. The leaders identified in the body of this dissertation were not confined to the political and religious establishment and their business cronies, nor to challengers of the local establishment. During the conflict various other individuals were able to draw on different sources of authority to exercise leadership:

- martial prowess and a willingness to perpetrate violence could both become sources of authority when the community perceived there to be a need to fight – in this way, individuals could emerge as leaders on account of their actions during the conflict;
- certain individuals could lead by giving orders to family members – consider the family clusters at the core of the kelompok merah during the violence in May-June 2000 - or by virtue of their family connections;
- the training that each side began to organise in 2000 also reinforced a hierarchy between trainers and trainees.

This dissertation also demonstrated that “leaders” was not a category with fixed membership during the conflict. Several factors caused changes in leadership. Some leaders were arrested - such as Herman Parimo in 1999 and Hasanuddin in 2006 – or even killed – for instance A. L. Lateka in 2000 and the outside mujahid Abdullah in 2001. When misfortune befell a particular leader, family members were sometimes motivated to step into positions of authority, for instance when A. L. Lateka emerged as a kelompok merah leader after his brother-in-law Parimo died in custody. As mentioned above, individuals could become leaders or increase their prominence as leaders on account of their actions during the conflict. For instance, both Rinaldy Damanik and Adnan Arsal gained much greater authority within their communities because of their perceived boldness in stepping forward or in remaining in Poso during times of peril to represent their communities. The entry of new actors into the conflict could also cause shifts in leadership, with the clearest example being the arrival of outside mujahidin in Poso.

The experience and preferences of the rank-and-file also drove changes in leadership. Although leaders exercised greater influence as individuals on the course of violence than did members of the rank-and-file, the rank-and-file were able to exercise agency through their choice of whom they would follow as a leader. In the body of this dissertation, I have challenged the “big fish” metaphor for the organisation of violence,
in which the rank-and-file are largely duped into violence by clever leaders. While acknowledging that some leaders did consciously attempt to frame their appeal for action in terms that would suit the rank-and-file, I have called in general for a shift in our understanding of the relation between leaders and rank-and-file towards the model of a coincidence of interests. Under this model, we would understand the rank-and-file to have chosen to fight because doing so suited their interests. The model did not require an absolute coincidence of interests: instead, both leaders and the rank-and-file needed to perceive that their interests were in some way being served.\footnote{In the context of Islamist social movements, Bayat proposes the concept of an “imagined solidarity” between social movement leaders and their followers. He suggests that the unity of social movements arises from partially shared interests between different actors, and that in an information poor environment, actors will “tend to converge on the generalities [of their shared interests, e.g. a movement’s slogan], but are left to imagine the specifics, to envision commonalities.” One of his key examples is the 1979 Iranian revolution, in which different actors converged on the need for “change”, with many groups discovering only after Ayatollah Khomeini had gained power that they had different understandings of what change should entail. The idea of different actors imagining at the time of fighting that they shared greater commonality than what they later discovered seems applicable in broad terms to the coincidence of interests in Poso. There is a difference, however, with Bayat’s example of the Iranian revolution: leaders in Poso did not attain institutionalised power that would have left them able to exert authority without the continued cooperation of the rank-and-file. If the rank-and-file in Poso realised that they did not share interests with leaders, then the leaders were unlikely to remain as leaders. On “imagined solidarities” see Asef Bayat “Islamism and Social Movement Theory”, Third World Quarterly 26,6 (2005): 891-908 (particularly pp. 901-905).} I will discuss the question of how individuals assessed their interests in Poso in the section on motivations below; here we might briefly note that some of these interests may have included enmity towards the other religious community, responding to perceived affronts, the desire to loot, a desire for revenge and an interest in perpetrating violence in response to the perceived threat of themselves being attacked. The importance of a coincidence of interests between leaders and rank-and-file was perhaps plainest in its absence: during the decline of violence, leaders promoting violence lost much of their authority once community members decided that it was no longer in their interests to fight.

Thus far this section has dealt with the question of how authority was exercised in the absence of a permanent organisation; I would like to conclude by considering how the organisation of violence enabled the escalation to large-scale killing. In the body of this dissertation I have emphasised the importance of crowds to each of the major periods of violence. Crowds did not themselves kill large numbers of people, but the breakdown of law and order precipitated by the mobilisation of large numbers of people created a space for core combatants more intent on killing to operate. (The mobilisation of
crowds also increased the chance of anonymity – and with it impunity - for perpetrators.) In the context of the third period of violence, for example, I argued that as many as half of those killed in May-June 2000 may have been prisoners murdered by the kelompok merah, and suggested that it would more likely be core combatants rather than ad hoc recruits who perpetrated most of these murders. In the context of the protracted communal fighting from mid 2000 to 2001, we saw that clashes between crowds continued to cause only a few fatalities even when increasing numbers of more reliably lethal factory-standard firearms became available. Outside mujahidin or the local men who had trained with them would have been the most likely to have been holding these factory-standard firearms; although I do not have firm data for many of the sporadic incidents of violence, it might be assumed that core combatants on each side were likely to be behind many of the sporadic individual killings as well.

The different roles and levels of participation within combatant entities and crowds meant that many community members could have participated in clashes without being required themselves to kill. As an example, we might recall the comment of a local Muslim combatant in Chapter Four that many youths were satisfied simply to hear the sound of their (often wildly inaccurate) home-made gun firing a shot. I would argue that the different available roles – only a few killers among a much larger crowd, and core combatants perhaps doing much of the killing outside of large-scale clashes - aided the rapid escalation to widespread killing, because the majority of each community needed only to tacitly approve of killing, without themselves directly confronting the reality of murdering an opponent. It is likely only a small sub-section of each community – in total amounting to a few hundred individuals at the most – personally perpetrated murders.

Identity
As a general pattern, “Christian” and “Muslim” became sole and sufficient identity markers to determine whether an individual was friend or foe during the Poso conflict. This observation is not to say that Christians and Muslims fought each other because they were in some way natural enemies - the “totalisation” of these identities took place only over time. I must stress, however, that totalisation is an abstraction to help us trace trends in the salience of identity to violence at a community level. The concept does not provide an accurate description of the salience of religious identity for every individual
in Poso – we should expect to see variance between individuals and even in the
behaviour of a single individual over time.\(^2\)

From the outset of the fighting in Poso, religious identity determined which side an
individual could be on, but did not oblige individuals to take sides. In the first period of
violence and most of the second period, a person’s status as a Muslim or a Christian
generally was not sufficient reason for that person to be attacked. An additional factor
was required: the individual may have chosen to come to a site of confrontation, or may
have lived in a particular ward of the city, or else may have been a member of a certain
family. By the May-June 2000 period of violence, alternative identity markers such as
location of residence were almost irrelevant. Any Muslim who remained in Poso, with
the possible exception of women and children, could be deemed a “rioter” and thereby a
legitimate target of violence. During the reprisals perpetrated by Muslims after the
May-June 2000 violence, villages renowned as Christian strongholds were particular
targets, but any Christian in Poso was a legitimate target for violence (again, generally,
with the exception of women and children). For those Muslims who continued to
perpetrate violence after the conflict had waned, the group of legitimate targets
broadened further to include Christians with no apparent connection to Poso or to the
conflict in the district, as well as Muslims who were believed to be passing information
to the police or who were agents of the law.

During the conflict, certain in-group identities also developed that provided positive
reinforcement for perpetrators of violence. On the Christian side, the revival of the
symbol of the long defunct youth movement, GPST, may have helped to motivate some
combatants to mobilise in December 1998 in loose emulation of the imagined deeds of
their elders. In the May-June 2000 period of violence, various oft-repeated phrases
promoted the idea of “the stoic Christian” pushed over the edge by what was now
imagined as repeated Muslim attacks. This identity construct neatly cast previous
defeats as the result of stoic restraint, while providing justification for an all-out attack.

\(^2\) On the point of variation in the behaviour of a single individual, see Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary
against totalised identities at times when these identities were most strongly formed. Just one example is
the categorisation by a Christian minister of individuals planning to attack Muslims as “GPK” (See
Chapter Three).
On the Muslim side, the clearest example was the promotion of a notion of the conflict as an arena for jihad and more particularly of an obligation for a Muslim to become a mujahid and fight. Various actors raised the idea of jihad in each of the first three periods of violence, but it was not until after the third period and the great losses suffered by Poso’s Muslims that the notion that jihad was obligatory was greatly strengthened. Outside mujahidin in particular promoted the idea that all Muslims in Poso were obliged to become mujahidin; the effects of their proselytising were evident in repeated recollection of local Muslims that they newly understood that it was haram to flee.

Van Klinken calls such in-group identities “prototypes”, and in his discussion of violence in West Kalimantan in 1997 and 1999 proposes the concept of “frame alignment” to explain why these prototypes only sometimes lead to violence. The concept, taken from social movement theory, is that leaders must “frame the contemporary problem in such a way that it [i.e. the leaders call to action] resonates” with what the audience already believes, thereby motivating their audience to act. Under the concept of frame alignment, leaders determine the success of mobilisation: either they are clever enough to frame their interests appropriately or they are not. For the Poso case, I would like to build on the concept of coincidence of interests, described in the previous section, to shift the focus away from leaders. My reason for doing so derives from the observation that the same people responded to the same frame differently over time. For instance, local Muslims found the identity of mujahid compelling when the cost of fighting was low and their desire to fight was strong, as was the case in 2001. Many of the same local Muslims found the same identity far less compelling, however, when the costs associated with fighting increased and when they perceived that they were gaining little from continuing unrest in Poso. If we consider what may have motivated the rank-and-file to align themselves with a particular frame at a particular time, then the mobilisation for violence of the rank-and-file appears less the result of skilful manipulation and more the result of decisions made by the rank-and-file.

Before proceeding further, it is worth emphasising the limits of the totalisation argument, as raised most explicitly in the context of the violence in May-June 2000.

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3 Van Klinken, Small Town Wars, p. 66.
The information gathered for this dissertation suggests that there was widespread adherence to totalised identities at the peak of the fighting in Poso. Nevertheless, this dissertation found that at local level, individuals' new perception of their neighbours as a threat did not in itself lead them to perpetrate violence. It appears to have taken an additional stimulus for villagers to perpetrate violence – in the third period typically the arrival of co-religionists from elsewhere in the district.

Having established that totalisation approximates the process of increasing salience of religious identity to violence in Poso, we are left to question what drove totalisation. Overall, I do not believe we have a comprehensive answer to this question, but a number of factors can be identified. Violence raised the stakes for misidentification of one's foe – it was safer to consider a member of a different religious group to be an enemy than to wrongly trust them and by so doing risk falling victim to an attack. When certain individuals from one community perpetrated attacks and few co-religionists spoke out in condemnation, their silence also may have encouraged the targeted group to perceive the entire religious community of which the perpetrators were members to be complicit in the violence.5 To the extent that perpetrating violence became a "habit", individuals may also have become less sensitive to the individual identity of their victims as a result. Peer pressure also supported the development of an in-group identity that made violence appear obligatory, as discussed most explicitly in the context of violence during 2001.

**Forms of Violence**

This dissertation has set out the diverse forms of violence that were perpetrated during the Poso conflict, and noted the points at which the forms of violence changed. To recap some of the patterns that were observed, murder became a feature of the conflict in the April 2000 violence, after which murder escalated to become mass killing a month later in the May-June 2000 violence; clashes between crowds were a common form of violence from December 1998 until August 2002, but then ceased after the August 2002 period of violence.

4 Van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*, p. 69.
5 Thankyou to Robert Cribb for pointing out this interpretation. The January 2000 riot in Mataram in West Nusa Tenggara province may provide a comparative example of this phenomenon. Immediately prior to this riot, according to an ICG report on the violence, Muslims in Mataram circulated a petition demanding that local Christians publicly condemn the actions of their co-religionists in Maluku. See ICG,
The aim in highlighting these and other patterns in the form of violence went beyond merely recording each violent event. For instance, we were able to derive insights from the forms of violence regarding the meaning of each violent act to the targeted community. For instance, revulsion at the killing of women and children in the July 2001 Buyung Katedo massacre gave this an attack a significance over and above what might be expected from the simple number of deaths. This attack, and others in which people were brutally killed with machetes or in which the bodies of victims were haphazardly disposed of, became particular motivations for revenge for the targeted community.

Brutal violence could also produce imitation: for instance, the perpetrators of the beheading of three schoolgirls in October 2005 justified their choice of target and method of killing because Christians had also sadistically killed women and children earlier in the conflict. In instances such as these beheadings, the form of violence had meaning to the perpetrators as well as to the targeted group. Indeed, attacks such as beheading, and the absence of a pattern in Poso of perpetrators always using the most sophisticated weapons available to them, cautioned against interpreting the escalation of violence in Poso by the sort of general pattern identified by Horowitz of the availability of modern firearms leading to greater numbers of fatalities. An alternative pattern that better describes the Poso violence might be that the more organised the violence became, the more thought was given to form.

In examining the violence from May-June 2000 until the end of 2001, we were also able to derive another insight regarding the motivations of combatants by observing that most clashes between crowds led to only a few deaths, even after increasing numbers of factory-standard firearms were available for use in these clashes. By considering this feature of the violence in comparison with Horowitz’s observation of the “risk aversion” of rioters, we were able to conclude that in general, combatants in Poso stayed and fought only when they felt they had a reasonable chance of winning. Absent this chance, most people fled.

Attention to forms of violence also enabled us to trace shifts in the set of actors responsible for attacks in Poso, even if the forms of violence was not the only method by which such shifts could be traced. To recount several examples:

- the killing of prisoners and disposal of bodies in mass graves in the May-June 2000 violence was one sign of the operation of a more organised core of Christian combatants at the heart of the fighting;
- the arrival of mujahidin in Poso starting in mid-2000 could be traced through observing new forms of violence, particularly the bombings of public transport vehicles and public places that began in early 2001, but also the increasing use of factory-standard weapons in clashes between crowds and sporadic attacks;
- the disappearance of attacks by crowds after August 2002 marked a narrowing of the set of people in Poso willing to directly perpetrate violence. Thereafter, the perpetrators of most attacks were drawn exclusively from the ranks of outside mujahidin and a limited subset of local Muslim youths.

**Effects of Violence**

As noted in the Introduction, observers of ethnic and religious conflict in South Asia have asserted that in sites where riots “persist”, “form a series” or “recur”, the effects of each riot are observable in subsequent incidents. Poso did not form a series of riots – the violence became protracted rather than persistent – but tracing the effects of previous violence on subsequent incidents has been an important element of analysis in this dissertation. There was no simple pattern to the effects of violence in Poso – in the preceding chapters we have observed examples both of violence producing and also inhibiting further violence. The common significance to both the productive and inhibiting effects of violence, however, is that the effect of violence was to alter the motivations and priorities of local actors.

Violence in Poso had “productive” effects both for the group responsible for each incident as well as for the targeted group. The experience of perpetrating violence generated further violence when the success of the initial enterprise encouraged a repeat performance, or when perpetrating violence became habitual, as it may have done for some of the local Muslims who continued to perpetrate violence long after the level of conflict in Poso had declined. The Poso case also appears to bear out the phenomenon observed in larger scale incidents of mass killings, in which perpetrators become
desensitised to the act of perpetrating violence and so are able to perpetrate bloodier and bloodier acts. I explicitly raised this phenomenon as a possible part of the explanation for the Sintuwulemba and Buyung Katedo massacres; it may also help account for the beheading attacks in November 2004 and October 2005. Violent acts also motivated the targeted group to themselves perpetrate further violence when earlier incidents became a source of indignant anger, convinced local actors that it was necessary to perpetrate violence to head off possible future attacks, or when violence generated a desire for revenge.

Conversely, violence inhibited further participation in attacks by the perpetrators when they became convinced that violence perpetrated by their side was not legitimate, became disillusioned by the experience of violence, or even by the experience of the effects of violence on their everyday lives. Much as the fear of attack caused by violence became a motivation for some people to perpetrate attacks, violent incidents also inhibited further violence when attacks generated what appeared to the targeted group to be insurmountable fears, or when perpetrators became fearful for their lives after perceiving that they had survived a near miss during an attack.

Once we recognise that violence affected the motivations of actors in Poso, and in fact of itself became a new motivation to perpetrate violence, we must question accounts that explain the conflict through a single model. For instance, Wilson has identified a tendency in certain studies of violent conflict to identify the prominent characteristics of the conflict at the peak of fighting and deduce from these characteristics a causal model for the entire conflict; other studies similarly extrapolate from the initial circumstances or prior tensions in a site of conflict. The overall models that have been proposed to explain the violence in Indonesia that followed Soeharto’s fall – local politics by other means, fighting structurally determined by two shifts in the position of Islam in public life, violence as the result of renewed competition over the terms of access to and inclusion in the state for ethnic and religious groups – have proved inadequate to explain the motivations behind the escalation and decline of violence in Poso. This dissertation instead suggests that the factors that initially stimulate or enable violence may not be those that sustain it or determine its changing character. Close study of the

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7 Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God*. 
processes by which violence escalates and declines within a conflict situation is thus necessary to explain why violence occurred.

**National and Local Contexts and Actors**

The Poso conflict was overwhelmingly the result of the actions of local actors, with the obvious exception of the operations of outside mujahidin in the district. This dissertation has found unconvincing the schools of analysis that interpret the violence in Poso as the result of the clandestine manipulation of national level actors. Nevertheless, I have considered the influence of the national context on developments in Poso, and have discussed three key mechanisms by which external actors and developments could influence the escalation and decline of violence in Poso. The national structural context could have played a determining role in producing violence in Poso; outside interventions could have determined the course of the conflict; or the violence in Poso could have snowballed from elsewhere in the country.

Throughout this dissertation I have acknowledged the role of the structural context Poso shared with many other parts of Indonesia in enabling violence, but I have also set out at some length how local actors determined that violence would take place. A key factor that opened a space for local actors to exercise agency, even in defiance of national trends, was Poso’s peripheral position in Indonesia. The district was peripheral geographically – a remote district in a remote province – and, in part as a result of its geographical position, peripheral in perceived importance to national affairs. News of the worst violence in Poso in 2000 and 2001 did not always generate particular coverage in the national media; it was only during the post-conflict phase of violence from 2002 onwards that large attacks in Poso were more likely to grab the attention of Jakarta-based news outlets.

Nevertheless, there were two important instances of outside intervention in the Poso conflict. Awareness of the importance of these interventions means that we cannot explain the Poso conflict entirely by examination of Poso alone. First, outside mujahidin came to Poso in response to the May-June 2000 violence, a consequence of this period that the district’s Christians had not anticipated. Thereafter these outside mujahidin greatly increased the military capacity of local Muslim youths and it is not possible to discuss the conflict from 2001 onwards without considering the interaction of these two
groups. Second, the central government's intervention in the conflict contributed to a marked decline in violence starting in 2002, as the government brokered peace talks, maintained a significant security force deployment and provided recovery funds. The late-2001 government intervention and those that followed were in part triggered by major attacks in Poso, but these interventions were also enabled by changes in the national context such as the consolidation of power by President Megawati Soekarnoputri and the increased attention to terrorist networks generated in particular by the October 2002 Bali bombing. But the central government intervention in Poso is also one example of how the peripheral position of the district created space for actors in Poso to act. Jakarta-based officials typically exerted strong pressure for action in Poso only in the aftermath of serious incidents of violence. Once the perception of a crisis faded, security forces posted in Poso were able pursue local initiatives or otherwise tend to inaction. The absence of concerted and constant national pressure left a space for perpetrators in Poso to continue to carry out attacks, and indeed to guess where the limits of their impunity lay.

The snowballing of violence from other conflicts to Poso, or the borrowing of tactics from elsewhere by actors in Poso appears to have been very limited. The most significant effect of another conflict on the violence in Poso arose from a coincidence of timing: outside mujahidin had been prepared by their experience in the Maluku conflict, where a serious escalation of violence took place sooner than in Poso, to mobilise to travel to Poso after the third period of violence in May-June 2000. Outside mujahidin continued to move back and forth between Maluku and Poso after their arrival in the district, and even took a few local Muslim combatants from Poso to Maluku. Nevertheless, outside mujahidin in general could not be said to have travelled to Poso because of the Maluku violence: their reasons or coming to Poso still primarily related to attacks perpetrated by members of the district's Christian community.

**Motivations**

A key feature of protracted conflict is the shifting nature of and lines of confrontation. Leaders, actors, the salience of identity and forms of violence all change over time. Although the motivations of perpetrators are harder to observe than some of these other aspects of the Poso conflict, this dissertation indicates that the motivations for violence also changed over time. If we accept that different individuals perpetrated violence for
different reasons, and that the motivations of each individual changed as they accumulated experience of the conflict, then it appears unlikely that any single idiom will adequately capture the motivations for violence in Poso. In this dissertation I have argued that a more promising approach is to develop a model of motivations that explains how individuals continually reached and reappraised their decision to fight. I set out this model most explicitly in the context of the violence in May-June 2000, arguing that we must refrain from imposing a dichotomy between “rational”, cool-headed interests and “irrational”, emotional feelings when examining individual motivations. Instead it is more effective to analyse how individuals constantly reassess their interests and reorder their priorities by incorporating emotional responses to their circumstances into their rational decisions.

Although my key conclusion in this element of analysis is that individuals incorporate different motivations in constant reassessment of their interests, I have not abrogated the task of identifying various motivations that were relevant to perpetrators’ decisions to fight. Without asserting that the following is a comprehensive list of motivations, nor proposing an exact “calculus” of the contribution of each of these motivations to the violence in Poso over the duration of the conflict, let us briefly recap some of the insights we have gained during the preceding chapters regarding each of these motivations:

- **Pre-existing enmities** in themselves did not explain the occurrence of violence, but these enmities were not irrelevant as a motivation once the violence began.

- Throughout the Poso conflict, certain individuals were seeking **political gain**, which is not to say that these individuals were in a position at all times to control the course of the violence. As discussed in the context of the December 1998 and April 2000 riots, however, political gain is often an incomplete explanation even of the actions of politically-interested individuals.

- **Indignant anger** exposed the role of violence in generating further violence and shifting the priorities of actors. The **desire for revenge** was another motivation spurred by previous violence.

- The **fear** of being attacked was one motivation for actors to launch pre-emptive attacks or to prepare defences. Horowitz’s concept of “risk aversion” contributed to an important insight on fear in the Poso conflict – that fears would
typically lead individuals to prepare to fight or stay and fight only if they perceived that their fears were surmountable.

- Religious identity, as discussed in a separate section above, provided impetus and a source of courage to fight. Religious identity could also spur indignant anger when places of worship or other symbols of religion were attacked or denigrated.

- Peer pressure, including that exerted by family members, increased the costs of choosing not to fight when support for violence was widespread.

- Impunity, or at least a reasonable chance of not facing legal sanctions, is most apparent as a motivation by the effect of its absence. When combatants perceived the risk of arrest was increasing, many became reluctant to fight.

- Certain individuals could gain financial profit if further violence ensured that the government would continue to remit assistance funds to the district, if the individuals were paid to perpetrate specific incidents of violence, or if the conflict situation provided an opportunity for armed robbery.

AGENCY AND ITS LIMITS

This dissertation has placed the actions, choices and motivations of local actors in Poso at the centre of its explanation of the Poso conflict. Despite the focus on the role of local actors in bringing about the escalation an decline of violence, it has not been my intention to propose a model of unlimited agency. Throughout this dissertation I have acknowledged a role for the structural context – in enabling certain actions, contributing to motivations or contributing to the consequences of a particular act – without subscribing to a structural determinist position. In this section, I would like to explore to other aspects of agency and its limits that this dissertation has raised, but which bear further elaboration: the implications for agency of the collective character of the organisation of violence in Poso, and the importance of circumstances to the decisions that actors in Poso made.

Petersen provides us with a straightforward definition of agency to aid this discussion: “Actors possess a range of options and they actively and consciously choose among this range of options.”8 For the purposes of this dissertation we can enhance Petersen’s

8 Petersen, “Review of Paul Brass”, p. 110.
definition by adding a condition paraphrased from Pomper – that the choices and actions of actors must effect change. From Petersen we also gain three simple tests to establish if actors do not have agency: “[i]f actors have only one realistic option, if they follow one option unconsciously or if the options have been obfuscated or manipulated”.  

This dissertation’s rejection of the idea of an unseen manipulator as the author of the conflict leads to the first constraint on agency: that the Poso conflict in its entirety was not a pre-conceived plan – the violence escalated and declined as a collective enterprise in which actors could only make their decisions in response to the actions of others. Under such circumstances, Sewell reminds us that the agency each individual is able to exercise varies greatly: by virtue of their social position, their position within collective organisations (or in the Poso case, the more fluid combatant entities formed for each period of violence), their geographic location and their personal characteristics, people have different capacities to “coordinate ... [their] actions with others and against others, to form collective projects, to persuade, to coerce, and to monitor the simultaneous effects of .... [their] own and others' activities.”  

During the Poso conflict, many or most people in the district were making decisions not in the attempt to persuade or to coerce large numbers of people or to direct the overall course of the conflict, but on whether or not to fight at times and even sometimes places not of their choosing. And yet, while the agency of these individuals was consequently reduced, in most instances they still retained at least a limited range of options and their actions and decisions had significance. For instance, the many combatants who fought in local clashes, or who gathered in Tagolu during the third period, made an important contribution to the escalation of the violence because they helped create a space for combatants bent on larger-scale violence to operate. Similarly, whereas the decision of a single combatant to stop fighting may have been insignificant, when the majority of community members became reluctant to fight their decisions were an important factor in the decline of violence.

10 Petersen, “Review of Paul Brass”, p. 110. 
12 It could be argued any violent act is significant in its own right, but here I will focus on significance to the escalation and decline of violence.
Nor should we conceive of leaders and core combatants as having been in complete control of the course of the conflict. During major periods of violence, leaders admittedly did achieve notable successes in mobilising rank-and-file or in influencing those who had mobilised, and in so doing exercised significant agency. But a range of factors limited the agency of leaders. Their reliance on ad hoc recruits presented a constraint on their agency, even if the decision of the rank-and-file to mobilise created a space for core combatants to organise. Bound primarily by a coincidence of interests, rather than organisational ties, leaders could not exercise particularly direct control over the actions of the ad hoc recruits that made up crowds, nor could they be sure that these recruits would mobilise day after day.

Leaders were also not able to develop a strong enough organisation to resist the power of the state, with the result that their interests were always vulnerable to central government and security forces intervention. This weakness meant that although each side developed a clear military advantage at different stages during the conflict – Christian combatants during the May-June 2000 violence and Muslim combatants in late 2001 – each side was forced to halt or greatly reduce violence before their leaders may have chosen to do so.\(^\text{13}\)

The circumstances of violent conflict affected the decisions that actors made and formed part of the motivation for perpetrating violence, a point I made explicitly as a part of the “effects of violence” element of analysis. Individuals in Poso did not decide to fight in a vacuum, nor in general did they fight entirely because of motivations that they held prior to the start of violence.\(^\text{14}\) Indeed, the contribution of circumstances to their decision to fight has been raised in their defence by some of the men who have stood trial for violence in Poso. In a personal defence plea, for example, two of the perpetrators of the October 2005 beheadings of three Christian schoolgirls asserted that they “WOULD NEVER have conceived of let alone BE PREPARED to perpetrate this

\(^{13}\) Leaders also may have been forced to stop in any case because rank-and-file combatants were most strongly committed to violence when they perceived fighting to be necessary.

\(^{14}\) A similar point in the context of an altogether different episode of violence is made by Moses in his illuminating review of Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. Moses refutes Goldhagen’s thesis that the extreme circumstances under the Nazi regime during the Second World War released the inhibitions that had previously prevented Germans from acting on what Goldhagen asserts was their long-held desire to murder Jews, instead arguing that “these extreme circumstances are not the occasion for the release of pre-existing preferences, but the occasion for the development of new ones.” See A. D. Moses, “Structure and Agency in the Holocaust: Daniel J. Goldhagen and his Critics”, *History and Theory* 37, 2 (1998): 216.
violence [i.e. the beheadings; capital letters in original]" but for the violence against Muslims in 2000:

We had no thoughts of breaking the law, let alone murdering or perpetrating other violent acts. But the conflict in 2000, of which to this day we do not know the cause and of which it is clear that the two of us were NOT the cause, changed our mental state and our way of thinking. 15

The purpose of the two men in raising this point, of course, was to absolve themselves of responsibility for their actions. Although I think we need to acknowledge the contribution of circumstances to the decisions of actors in Poso, we go too far if we concur with these men and see these circumstances as removing their agency. The emotional responses evoked by violence and the circumstances of violent conflict – such as indignant anger, fear, the desire for revenge, and, over time, fatigue – affected the choices that actors made and may have limited the number of options they were likely to choose, but they did not generally reduce the options available to an actor to a single course of action. Instead, numerous authors have noted that individuals interpret the one situation differently, and so decide upon different courses of action. 16 In the variety of responses to the circumstances of the conflict in Poso lies evidence of individuals’ retention of agency.

Violence in Poso thus was a collective enterprise, mostly perpetrated by local actors, for which individuals bear responsibility but in which no-one was in complete control. The lack of complete control is not to say that the escalation of violence was the result of unimagined consequences – I have attempted to demonstrate that those leading attacks at the times that violence escalated intended to effect an increase in the scale of the

15 Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano, Pembelaan Prihadi Personal Defense Plea read out by Lilik Purnomo during trial at Jakarta District Court, 5 March 2007 (capital letters in original).
16 Sewell makes this observation in the context of explaining how changes in structure are possible. Arguing that structures consist of schema (generalisable procedures) and actual resources, and that schema and resources mutually reproduce, Sewell introduces the concept of the "polysemy of resources" to describe the ability of human actors to derive different meanings from a single array of resources. (To use Sewell’s example of such an array, "the new prestige, wealth and territory gained from the brilliant success of a cavalry charge" might be interpreted as the success of the entire cavalry officer core, or be attributed to a single general.) Reddy makes a similar point in the course of refuting a determining role for culture over human action. The susceptibility of any rule or term to multiple interpretations makes it impossible for culture to play such a role, Reddy argues. To assert otherwise would be "as if there were a set of rules so clear that everyone judged their application to specific action situations in the same way. It is as if there were a magical set of laws for which the interpretive problems of jurisprudence did not
conflict – but the motivations of both leaders and rank-and-file derived in part from their experience of the conflict and not simply from pre-existing interests and intentions. This conclusion derives from the six elements of analysis outlined above. It is not my contention, on the basis of this dissertation, that this model will also adequately explain the escalation and decline of the other inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts that took place after Soeharto resigned. Nevertheless, the six elements of analysis that I propose in this dissertation are not derived from specific events in Poso, and it should be possible to apply this approach to other conflict settings. Similar histories of the Maluku, North Maluku and possibly the West and Central Kalimantan conflicts, produced by attention to these six elements of analysis, could provide a stronger basis to understand the extent to which these conflicts share similar reasons for and processes of escalation and decline.

THE FUTURE FOR POSO

In the previous section, I argued that the constraints on individual choice and action during the Poso conflict were not sufficient to render the agency of individuals in Poso insignificant in the escalation and decline of violence. In many circumstances, the granting of agency to a group of people – particularly the rank-and-file – is taken to be an empowering process, because to do so brings the masses back from “outside history”. In Poso, however, it is unlikely community members would see the granting of agency in an analysis of the conflict to a broad group of individuals as empowering. Emphasising the space for individuals in Poso to make choices that contributed to the escalation of conflict potentially opens questions of responsibility for the past violence that few in the district would necessarily welcome.

But if agency potentially implies unwelcome responsibility in the context of past violence, the recognition of the agency of local people may be more empowering when we turn our gaze to the future. If we limit the influence of structural factors to something less than a determining role, and reject the idea that invisible and powerful conspirators were responsible for past violence, the implication is that whether or not violence again escalates in Poso is largely within the control of local people. The

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conclusion that local people will determine whether they again engage in a large-scale violent conflict is in turn cause for guarded optimism, in the light of two trends identified in Chapter Five. The judgement of many combatants that they were gaining nothing from continued fighting, as well as the lack of reprisals for even the most provocative attacks both suggest that a renewed escalation to widespread fighting is unlikely in the short-term.

The conclusion of this thesis regarding the potential impact of the central government interventions in Poso is another cause for optimism. The crisis-driven pattern of interventions in Poso left a space for perpetrators to continue to organise attacks, but this pattern also suggested that concerted intervention could stop the violence. Two sets of arrests in May 2006 and then November-February 2007 represent the most concerted central government intervention to date. Through these sets of arrests, the police have broken down much of the network of outside mujahidin and local Muslims who were responsible for most of the violence since at least 2004. The courts have handed down stern sentences to many of those arrested – taking these men out of the conflict and providing a disincentive to others considering violence.

We can gain a comparative insight on the possible slightly longer-term effects of such an intervention from the Maluku conflict, where police launched a similar round-up of perpetrators and planners of sporadic violence in May 2005. The arrests and trials in Maluku came at the end of twelve months of violence in which at least thirteen people were killed, with this year-long sequence of violence itself immediately following the most recent riotous episode in that province in April 2004. At the time of writing, there had been no conflict deaths in Maluku since the arrests were made (with the exception of a bombing suspect shot dead by police), with only a handful of minor bombings causing injuries during that period.

The initial signs of the effect of the arrests and trials in Poso have also been good. Shortly before this dissertation was completed, the pattern of recurrent attacks in Poso each Ramadan was broken, as the Islamic fasting month in 2007 passed without a single violent incident. At the time of writing, just over a year with no fatalities in Poso had passed since the January 2007 police raids. The people of Poso still live every day with the long-term impacts of eight years of fighting, and renewed sporadic attacks are
always possible, but such a long period free of violence is a significant step in the right
direction for the district’s future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adat</td>
<td>custom, customary law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.P.</td>
<td><em>Berita Acara Pemeriksaan</em>, police interrogation dossier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bappeda</td>
<td>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah – Regional Development Planning Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIN</td>
<td>Badan Intelijen Negara – State Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brimob</td>
<td>Brigade Mobil, police paramilitary unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da’i</td>
<td>Islamic preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dakwah</td>
<td>Islamic proselytising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Darul Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRD</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah – district or provincial level legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dum-dum</td>
<td>a home-made bazooka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’i</td>
<td>robbery targeting non-Muslims to finance jihadist activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatwa</td>
<td>non-binding religious advice issued by an Islamic religious scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKASWJ</td>
<td>Forum Komunikasi Ahus Sunnah Wal Jamaah - Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah Communication Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKMTP</td>
<td>Forum Komunikasi Masyarakat Tana Poso – Communication Forum of the Community of the Land of Poso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKST</td>
<td>Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah – Central Sulawesi Protestant Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golkar</td>
<td>Golongan Karya – Functional Groups, the regime political party during Soeharto’s rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPK</td>
<td><em>Gerombolan Pengacau Keamanan</em> – Security Disturbing Gang, or <em>Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan</em>, Security Disturbing Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPST</td>
<td>Gerakan Pemuda Sulawesi Tengah – Central Sulawesi Youth Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally displaced person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JI</td>
<td>Jemaah Islamiyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jihad</td>
<td>In the context of this dissertation, a holy war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kelompok merah</td>
<td>red group, a name for the Christian side in the Poso conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kelompok putih</td>
<td>white group, a name for the Muslim side in the Poso conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNPI</td>
<td>Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia – Indonesian National Youth Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodim</td>
<td>Komando Distrik Militer – District Military Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komnas HAM</td>
<td>Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia - National Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kompak</td>
<td>Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisi – Action Committee to Overcome the Impact of Crises, an Islamic charity, sometimes written Komite Penanggulangan Krisi – Committee to Overcome Crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPPSI</td>
<td>Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam – Committee for the Preparation of Implementation of Islamic Law, a South Sulawesi based organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laskar Jihad</td>
<td>a Java-based Islamic militia that brought several hundred people to Poso in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malino Declaration</td>
<td>government sponsored peace accord for Poso signed in December 2001 in the South Sulawesi hill town, Malino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mujahid</td>
<td>fighter in a holy war (plural is mujahidin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Indonesian Democracy Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI-P</td>
<td>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan – Indonesian Democracy Party-Struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasukan merah</td>
<td>red force, see kelompok merah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasukan putih</td>
<td>white force, see kelompok putih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peluncur</td>
<td>launcher, a weapon used to fire arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pesantren</td>
<td>Islamic boarding school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polda</td>
<td>Kepolisian Daerah – provincial-level police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polri</td>
<td>Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia – Indonesian police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Translation/Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posko</td>
<td><strong>pos komando</strong> – command post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan – United Development Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preman</td>
<td>thug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salafist</td>
<td>a strict adherent of Islam as practiced by the early generations of Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satgas Khoirul Umah</td>
<td>anti-vice squad in Poso formed by JI/Mujahidin Kompak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satgas Amar Ma’ruf</td>
<td>anti-vice squad in Poso formed by Laskar Jihad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahi Mungkar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSK</td>
<td>Satuan Setingkat Kompi – company equivalent unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senjata rakitan</td>
<td>homemade firearm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulawesi Tengah</td>
<td>Central Sulawesi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tadrib</td>
<td>physical training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta’lim</td>
<td>Islamic religious instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taudiah</td>
<td>Islamic religious guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNI</td>
<td>Tentara Nasional Indonesia – Indonesian armed forces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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- Record of testimony of Jabar A. Salam
- Record of testimony of Nasirun
- Record of testimony of Sutarmin
- Record of testimony of Siti Munawarah
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- Record of testimony of Taiyeb Lamello
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   - Testimony of Lilik Purnomo

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   - Testimony of Irwanto Irano and Hasanuddin’s response to this testimony
   - Testimony of Hasanuddin

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   -

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**Interviews**

Many of the people interviewed for this dissertation requested that their name not be mentioned, and in numerous other cases I have chosen not to disclose the interviewee’s name due to concerns over the sensitivity of information provided. More than 70 formal interviews were conducted for this dissertation; a characterisation of the interviewees is provided in the Introduction chapter.

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