



## INDONESIA – Special Report

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### RAMADAN SPECIAL ADVISORY

**The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan was expected to start on Monday 6 June and last for 30 days, culminating in the two-day public holiday of Idul Fitri on Wednesday 6 July and Thursday 7 July.** The Ministry of Religious Affairs was due to confirm the start and end dates of Ramadan, which vary year-to-year depending on the lunar calendar. Indonesia's second largest mass Muslim organisation, Muhammadiyah, has typically chosen to mark the fasting month a day prior to the government and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the country's largest religious group. NU and Muhammadiyah use different methods to determine the beginning of Ramadan, with the former observing the first natural sighting of the crescent moon.

### HILL & ASSOCIATES ASSESSMENT

#### THREAT OF TERRORISM

This June marks the second anniversary of the Islamic State (IS) declaration of a "caliphate" over large parts of Iraq and Syria. An audio recording released online on 21 May 2016, reported to be IS spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, called for further strikes against the West and urged followers to carry out attacks during the holy month of Ramadan. In an interview with *BBC News* last year, Maajid Nawaz, a British-born Muslim and author, explained that terror attacks during Ramadan were seen as honouring the anniversary of the "caliphate" and IS leaders believed that attacks during the holy month commemorated famous battles fought by Mohammed and the early Muslims.

Indonesia witnessed its first IS-linked terror strike in 2016. Four men attacked a Starbucks cafe and police post near Sarinah Plaza on Jl. M.H. Thamrin in Central Jakarta on 14 January, detonating bombs and exchanging gunfire with police. Eight people were killed, including the four terrorists and one foreign national, while 17 others were injured. The assault was organised locally and carried out by a group called Partisans of the Islamic Caliphate (Jamaah Ansarul Khilafah Islamiyah, JAKI). The group is reported to be led by pro-IS cleric Aman Abdurrahman, who is serving time in a prison on Nusakambangan Island for his role in setting up a jihadi training camp in Aceh in 2009.

A crackdown on terrorist activity by the National Police counter-terrorism unit (Densus 88) has, however, reduced the capacity for militant groups to carry out attacks in Indonesia. In recent years, targets have comprised the police, government buildings and officials, non-Muslim houses of worship as well as figures associated with liberal or secular tendencies. It should be noted that terrorist groups have previously shown that the sanctity of the fasting month was no barrier to attacks. On 5 December 2002, during Ramadan, terrorists attacked a McDonald's outlet at a mall in Makassar, South Sulawesi in which three people were killed and 11 injured. Nevertheless, threats against specific targets are thought to be unlikely.

#### RAIDS ON ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

Jakarta Deputy Governor Djarot Saiful Hidayat has warned hard line Islamic organisations against raiding entertainment venues during Ramadan, even if the establishments had violated regulations. "Only the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and police personnel are allowed to sweep or raid entertainment hubs that violate limitations," he said, as quoted by *tribunnews.com*. Jakarta Police Chief Ir. Gen. Moechgiyanto called on mass organizations to comply with the law. "We will deal with them (the businesses), so we hope there will be no raids on them during Ramadan," he said.

#### H&A ADVICE TO CLIENTS

Clients should be aware of the increased potential for violence from hard line groups making punitive sweeps of entertainment venues that remain open during the fasting month. Clients should take care to respect religious sensitivities, norms and customs in relation to fasting. Clients should also exercise increased vigilance, maintain a low profile and be aware of their surrounding environment.

Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama said that he would hand over security during Ramadan to the police. "The police chief has already guaranteed it. If they do any raids, they will be arrested. All of them arrested. The chief of police has already affirmed it. So there will be no raids, that is the task of the police," Purnama said on 2 June, according to *Berita Jakarta*. Purnama said that the city's Office of Culture and Tourism had sent a circular to entertainment and nightclubs defining when they were allowed to operate during Ramadan. The rules required that most close at midnight and Purnama said that those who did not abide by the rules would be punished. In previous years, hard line groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) have conducted illegal raids in urban areas during Ramadan, targeting prostitution and the consumption of alcohol. Little action was taken against them.

Tangerang Regent Zaki Iskandar announced that the satellite city would close all bars and nightclubs as well as massage parlours during Ramadan to respect Muslims who wanted to focus on religious worship. Iskandar told *Okezone* that the opening hours of restaurants and other eateries would also be regulated to respect Muslims who have to abstain from food and drinks during the day. "In addition, we're also stopping the circulation of alcohol in the fasting month," he said. Similarly, the Depok city administration has instructed all bars and nightclubs to close and it has prohibited the sale of alcohol in cafés and karaoke venues until three days after Idul Fitri celebrations. "If we find any places that disobey the rules, we will revoke their license and seal the place," said Depok Police Chief Nina Suzana, according to *Koran Tempo*.

Moechgiyanto also called on people to show religious tolerance towards those who choose to drink alcohol. "Religious tolerance is needed. That's what I'm asking for. Don't force our religion's will upon others," he told *Merdeka*. He said that respect should go both ways, and those who drink alcohol shouldn't get in the way of people who wanted to perform their religious rites.

### ANNUAL EXODUS | CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

The Ministry of Transportation has estimated a big jump in the number of travellers using motorcycles to return to their hometowns for the Idul Fitri holidays. The Director General for Land Transportation, Pudji Hartanto Iskandar, said that authorities predicted 5.6 million motorcycles would be on the road this year, up 50 percent compared to last year. The number of private vehicles on the road was expected to peak at 2.4 million, an increase of just 5 percent on 2015.

#### Public transport passenger numbers

<b>Air travel</b>	4.6 million		7.6%
<b>Buses</b>	4.5 million		2.7%
<b>Trains</b>	4.1 million		4.6%
<b>Ferries</b>	3.7 million		3.5%

Millions of travellers are also expected to make use of public transport to return home for Idul Fitri and as a result airports, bus terminals, train stations and ports are placed under extreme pressure. The Ministry of Transportation has predicted a jump in the number of passengers across all modes of transport. Airlines are expected to see an increase of close to 8 percent in passenger numbers compared to last year. The number of people catching trains and ferries across the archipelago is also predicted to increase. Demand for buses, a cheaper but equally popular option, was expected to decline 2.7 percent from 2015.

Jakarta Police typically warn of a potential increase in clashes involving youth groups during the fasting month. Brawls are likely to increase because groups usually hang out after having pre-dawn meals, and clashes can happen when they have gathered.

Source: *Berita Satu | Merdeka | Tempo*

Critical areas in recent years have included Kali Baru and Cilincing (North Jakarta), Jl. Menteng Tengkulun and Jl. Gadjah Mada (Central Jakarta), Blok M, Mampang Prapatan, Manggarai, Pasar Rumpit, Manggarai and Tebet (South Jakarta), Tambora (West Jakarta), and Pasar Rebo and Cawang (East Jakarta).

The fasting month is a period of heightened security and Muslim leaders in Indonesia typically condemn acts of violence. While there does not appear to be any indication of an increased risk to the public during Ramadan or Idul Fitri celebrations this year, there is nonetheless a precedent for increased violence and a heightened sense of caution is advised.

### CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Levels of observance of Ramadan vary from country to country but most Muslims observe the fast, which requires that they do not eat or drink between dawn and sunset. Non-Muslims, pregnant women and the sick are not under the same obligation to fast. Even if not prohibited, Clients should avoid eating, drinking or smoking in public. As this is a holy month for Muslims, Clients should also be particularly mindful of behaviour or dress that may cause offence. Business hours – including for restaurants – may also be subject to change, and there may be additional pressure on public transport at certain times of day, particularly in the lead up to the end of the fasting day.

In order to accommodate those conducting the fast, Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama announced that working hours for civil servants in the capital would be changed during Ramadhan to help Muslims reach home earlier than usual. He said civil servants would start work at 0700hrs, an hour earlier than regular working days, and finish at 1400hrs, two hours earlier than usual.

## HILL & ASSOCIATES ADVICE TO CLIENTS

- Clients should take care to respect religious sensitivities, rules and customs. In particular, those not fasting are advised to avoid eating, drinking and smoking in the presence of those who are conducting the fast. Clients should also be particularly mindful of any behaviour or dress that may cause offence.
- As noted, the potential for violent behaviour remains. At the time of writing, police had not reported any specific threats, though increased vigilance and caution are warranted.
- Business hours, including those of restaurants, may also be subject to change, and there may be additional pressure on public transport at certain times of day. Clients are reminded that discretion is advised when visiting entertainment venues during Ramadan. Should Clients choose to visit entertainment venues, those within five-star hotels are likely to be a more secure choice, as restrictions on them are less stringent.
- Western expatriates and foreigners should maintain a low profile and be aware of the surrounding environment, particularly in public places, hotels, shopping centres, clubs, restaurants, apartment complexes, schools, and outdoor recreation areas, airports, on transportation systems and at places of worship. Clients should also avoid large crowds and known crime hot spots.

When Ramadan ends and the Idul Fitri celebrations begin, millions of residents in Jakarta and other urban centres will travel to and from their hometowns across the archipelago. Bus terminals, train stations, airports and sea ports are likely to be extremely crowded. Clients are advised to plan meetings ahead of Idul Fitri accordingly. Clients should also monitor access to Soekarno-Hatta International Airport and any obstruction on the outer ring (toll) road that serves it.

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