

Student Terrorist Targets Churches with 'Mother of Satan' Bombs

Authorities in Indonesia last week arrested a 19-year-old member of an Islamic extremist group and his parents, foiling a plan to suicide bomb two church sites, officials said.

The high school student, identified only by his initials, , was arrested on Wednesday (July 31) at about 7:15 p.m. as he was on his way dispose of evidence in Jalan Langsep, Sisir village, Batu City, in Malang Regency, East Java, said Anti-Terror Special Detachment 88 Spokesperson Aswin Siregar at a press conference in Jakarta on Sunday (Aug. 4).

The Special Detachment 88 squad and Batu police were involved in the arrest.

". is a supporter of ISIS or Dawlah Islamiyah," Aswin told reporters on Thursday (Aug. 1) in Jakarta.

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Aswin said had become a member online of Philippines-based Dawlah Islamiyah, said to be affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS), and that he and accomplices were planning to carry out suicide bombings using Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) explosives at two Christian churches in Malang Regency, East Java.

TATP, widely known as the "Mother of Satan," is one of the most powerful and dangerous explosives. Preliminary investigations indicated that . often accessed various websites containing Dawlah Islamiyah propaganda that led him to try to carry out suicide bombings, Aswin said.

"He accessed various sites containing recommendations or

propaganda from Dawlah Islamiyah,” Aswin reportedly said. “Then he also got information from social media, so that he felt like carrying out the suicide bombing.”

The suspect bought explosives and other necessary tools for the attack with savings from school allowances, according to .

.’s parents were also arrested on Wednesday (July 31), and police detained several other people for questioning.

“Densus 88 is still investigating the possibility of his links to other ISIS support networks,” Aswin said. “Indeed, there were several people who were questioned, including his parents or family.”

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The parents were arrested from a train, he said.

“The parents of the alleged terrorist were arrested on their way to Jakarta on a train,” Aswin said. “This also confirms that there were no explosives or bombs carried by the suspect’s parents.”

His statement corrected a prior, mistaken report that the parents had been arrested in their temporary, rented house in Bunga Tanjung Housing Complex Kav, 34, Jeding Village, Junrejo District, adjacent to Islamic boarding school As Sunnah in Batu City, Malang, East Java.

Aswin said police had arrested another suspected terrorist in Solo, Central Java, who was on his way to Jakarta by train.

. and his family are residents of Jakarta but have rented a house in Batu twice over the past few years.

The head of the local neighborhood association in Batu, identified only as Yulianto, told that the family was

secretive, hardly associating with neighbors.

Muslims account for 83.3 percent of Indonesia's population, while percent identify as Christian, with the evangelical population estimated at percent, according to the Joshua Project.

Indonesia ranked 42nd on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. Indonesian society has adopted a more conservative Islamic character, and churches involved in evangelistic outreach are at risk of being targeted by Islamic extremist groups, according to the WWL report.

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