

Jemaah Islamiyah (a.k.a. Jemaah Islamiyah)

A profile of the Southeast Asian terror group Jemaah Islamiyah, the group allegedly responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings.

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Introduction

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is a militant Islamist group active in several Southeast Asian countries that seeks to establish a pan-Islamic state across much of the region. Jemaah Islamiyah ("Islamic Organization" in Arabic) is alleged to have attacked or plotted against U.S. and Western targets in Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines. JI's most notorious attack occurred in 2002 when three bombs were detonated on the Indonesian island of Bali, a beachfront city and international tourist destination. The most recent attack believed to have been carried out by JI operatives came on October 1, 2005, when a series of suicide bombings killed twenty people and wounded 129 in Bali. After the 2002 Bali attack, the United States-which suspects the group of having ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network-designated Jemaah Islamiyah a foreign terrorist organization.

When was Jemaah Islamiyah founded?

The name Jemaah Islamiyah dates to the late 1970s, but experts aren't certain if the name referred to a formal organization or an informal gathering of like-minded Muslim radicals-or a government label for Islamist malcontents. The group has its roots in Darul Islam, a violent radical movement that advocated the establishment of Islamic law in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country and also home to Christians, Hindus, and adherents of other faiths. Darul Islam sprang up as the country emerged from Dutch colonial rule in the late 1940s, and its followers continued to resist the postcolonial Indonesian republic, which it saw as too secular. Some experts say JI was formed by a small handful of Indonesian extremists exiled in Malaysia in the late 1980s. In its early years, JI renounced violence, but the group shifted tactics in the late 1990s because of suspected links with al-Qaeda figures in Afghanistan.

