



ICCE 2011, held on 21-22 September 2011, was organised by the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), a specialist centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. The conference provided a good opportunity for security specialists, psychologists and scholars active in both research and in the process of community engagement to discuss community engagement methodologies and concepts developed to build social resilience in their respective countries. Prof. H. Abd. Rahman Mas'ud, Ph.D, Head of Center for Research and Development of Religious Life, became one of the panelists at the conference.

Prof. Mas`ud examined the role of the pesantren, Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, in the context of the issue of radicalisation. He argued that the pesantren operated as a moderating influence that teaches the correct and peaceful interpretation of Islam.

Prof. Mas`ud began his presentation by describing a recent workshop held on the role of leaders in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools or pesantren. The workshop intended to build a cooperating network among pesantren with regards to tackling radicalisation and sharpening existing ideas about de-radicalisation. From the perspective of pesantren leaders, the culture of radicalisation fundamentally opposed that of the pesantren. Terrorism was not jihad; terrorism contradicted the peaceful nature of Islam. He reminded the audience that while jihad was a struggle, pesantren leaders considered jihad to be a struggle against ignorance, poverty and underdevelopment.

He then explained how the pesantren could emerge as an effective institution to counterradicalisation. The pesantren did not separate Islam from the cultural roots of Indonesia and therefore were less susceptible to foreign and extremist interpretations of Islam. According to Prof. Mas`ud, the pesantren could and had to fight radicalisation in a variety of ways. Firstly, the pesantren must lead the way in teaching its students the value of peace, brotherhood, and love. Therefore, the pesantren must revise their curricula accordingly to promote these virtues.

Second, pesantren teachers can detect early on which students may be susceptible to extremist ideologies. Third, the pesantren also must teach self-dependence and entrepreneurial skills to all students as these skills will help them become more financially secure and therefore less susceptible to radicalisation. After which, he concluded by recommending the study of peace assistance, promoting a guide book Assistance and Strengthening Peace, and expanding formal peace education in schools.