

- A: I don't know exactly what the stand of the government is. I think it doesn't matter for Indonesia if it is Bush or Kerry, but probably among some Muslims there is a lot of resentment towards Bush and they wish for Kerry to win the election. But basically there is not much difference between Bush and Kerry, as far the foreign policies of the US are concerned.
- Q: From my experience in dealing with the Canadian Parliament, I have found it is difficult to define who is a terrorist. When I asked the question of what is a terrorist, I was told it is up to the politicians to define who is a terrorist, so this becomes a political struggle. In the name of terrorism, we point fingers to people who are then challenged to prove they are innocent. And I feel very strongly that we need to look at the cause of why people act the way they do. Terrorism is evil. Whoever practices it is an evil person. But we must first of all recognize why people take to the evil and do these things.
- A: Thank you very much. I think this question is quite complex and it is very difficult to answer. I think there are a lot of definitions of terrorism depending on the context. If you talk about whether a suicide bombing or a political abduction by Palestinian people, for example, is terrorism or it is a just war. There are I think debates about such things among Muslim scholars. But my perspective is we have to look at this kind of suicide bombing in a much wider perspective, not only political context - conflict between Palestinians and Israelis - but also into a much larger context. Let's say an Islamic context and the context of Islamic teaching. One of the most important contexts is the fact that Islam prohibits Muslims to commit suicides in whatever way. To bring a bomb and explode yourself is basically prohibited for whatever reason. So I myself believe that this kind of suicide bombing cannot be justified. You have to find some other means. Muslims should find some other means to control injustices, the experience of almost everyday for the Palestinian people. But in the context of Indonesia, we should not hesitate to say what terrorists have done is indeed terrorism. Many of the people who become victims are in fact Muslims. Of course most of the victims of the Bali bombing are Australians. They are innocent. And the bombing in front of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, some of the victims were in fact very pious Muslims. In fact some of the victims were students who were always fasting during Sundays