The Role of the New Zealand Government in Restoring Peace and Unity After the Christchurch Tragedy

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Abstract

The role of the New Zealand government in restoring peace and unity after the Christchurch tragedy is an important matter to study. What is unique about the role of the country's government is that its response is inclusive and flexible, focusing on healing and progress rather than revenge. This study uses qualitative analysis methods, including data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data was obtained through literature study and interviews or interactive discussions during Overseas Work Lecture activities. This study aims to provide a description of the government's role in restoring peace and unity after the tragedy. The New Zealand government's response involved collaboration between three levels of the conceptual approach to peacebuilding proposed by Lederach in 1997. These levels include the Top-Level Approach, the Mid-Level Approach and the Grassroots Approach. The findings of this study are that the government's response included the Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines and Parts) Amendment Bill, which became the Arms Legislation Bill on 23 June 2020 the Governor-General formally signed the Bill into law, and the implementation of the Christchurch Call, while the community provided support and initiatives for mental health and solidarity. This article also suggests that Indonesia could learn from New Zealand's response and recommends implementing a national security law. This research emphasizes the importance of coordination and collaboration between actors at various levels in building peace and unity after a tragedy.

Keywords: Government Role, New Zealand, Peace, Unity, Tragedy, Christchurch, Lederach.

INTRODUCTION

As a country in the Asia-Pacific region, New Zealand is better known for its good qualities, especially in terms of peace. In fact, according to data from the 2019 Global Peace Index (GPI), among the top 25 countries in the world, five are in the Asia-Pacific region. New Zealand secured first place in the region and second place globally in Institute for Economics & Peace (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019).

Tabel 1. Global Peace Index (GPI) 2019

However, a dark tragedy that was even called the worst in the history of terror in New Zealand also occurred in that year. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand, described the incident as one of the darkest moments in the country's history. On Friday, March 15 2019, at the same time as Friday prayers, there was a mass shooting attack in Christchurch at the Al Noor Mosque and Islamic Center Lindwood. This incident occurred at 13.40 and occurred when the two mosques were busy (BBC News Indonesia, 2019). The shooter is known to have the name Brenton Harrison Tarrant, a 28-year-old man from Australia. Apart from carrying out physical attacks, he also directly broadcasts his actions through platform social media Facebook. Brenton had prepared a camera that he put on his head to record the action. In his attacks, he used semi-automatic firearms and targeted men, women and children who were at the scene. Shootings started in the area industry to the west of the Al-Noor Mosque which is located on Leslie Hills Drive (Yunus, 2019). As a result of the man's actions, there were 101 fatalities consisting of 51 people who died and 50 others were injured. This incident sparked a fundamental shift in New Zealand's views on guns, safety and gun control (Every-Palmer, Cunningham, Jenkins, & Bell, 2021).

Although it is not the first time in the history of extremism cases in New Zealand, this case is the first time for New Zealand to face terrorism cases. In New Zealand, there is a minority of individuals who hold extremist views in Islam and provide support to groups such as al-Qaeda, ISIS and other Islamic extremist groups. Despite this, the country has not experienced an extensive history of extremism (Counter Extremism Project, 2022). Also, despite the increasing trend of gun ownership in New Zealand, which has seen a significant 62% increase in the number of firearms in the country since 2008, cases of gun-related violence remain rare. An illustrative example of this rarity is the fact that there is only one recorded death as a result of a school shooting, an event that occurred almost a century ago, specifically in 1923 (Alpers, Philip, Lovell, & Picard, 2022).

Apart from the various data presented previously, there were unique things that were done by New Zealand in responding to and dealing with this case. That matter is reluctance in the New Zealand media to portray the shooter as a central figure or reveal his identity, the New Zealand government focused directly on the victims and the concerns of the wider community, they also played an important role in developing a shared responsibility to bring about change. Political leaders provide strong examples in this regard. As a result, within weeks, new gun control laws were introduced that garnered support across New Zealand's party lines (Every-Palmer, Cunningham, Jenkins, & Bell, 2021). This certainly shows that the first response and collaboration between stakeholder is very much needed in dealing with cases of extremism. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's initial response to the shooting was one that was inclusive and flexible. He acknowledged the importance of dialogue between various interest groups and expressly condemns any repeated update attempts. Rather than promoting revenge, Ardern focuses on healing and progress to support New Zealanders today and protect them more comprehensively in the future (Monin, 2020).

Quoted from the article entitled Anxious and in pain, survivors of Christchurch massacre call for new approach by Charlotte Graham-McLay, she wrote an interesting statement namely “What happened is unusual, and for unusual things, there should be unusual rules.” What's more, victims who experience injury and grief, are also faced with financial burdens, physical challenges that last throughout their lives, and mental trauma, and hope for a more adaptive response from the government (Graham-McLay, 2019). This shows that the steps taken by the New Zealand government must be right on target. Not only that, more comprehensive measures are also needed such as international cooperation and a review of New Zealand's counter-terrorism laws. Two months after the Christchurch area mosque shooting tragedy, a commitment was formed by the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the President of France, who convened...
a meeting of Heads of State, Government officials and technology industry leaders to express their support, the commitment was named Christchurch Call.

The phenomenon described above is related to peace building efforts by the New Zealand government. This is in line with the Peace Building Concept initiated by Lederach in 1997. In his book entitled Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (1997), Lederach suggests that there is an approach to achieve peacebuilding namely the three levels of approach that includes Level 1: Top-Level Approaches, Level 1: Top-Level Approaches, dan Level 3: Grassroots Approaches. Judging from this concept, the shooting tragedy that occurred in Christchurch can be analyzed using the 3-level approach above. The relevance of the phenomenon that occurs with the use of the 3-level approach concept by Lederach can be used as a tool to dissect how the response and role of the government in dealing with and building peace after the shooting tragedy which left more than 51 people dead and 50 others injured.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a qualitative descriptive analysis design, namely this research will provide a careful description of individuals and certain groups regarding the circumstances and phenomena that occur. The object of research in this study is the role of the New Zealand government in its efforts to restore peace and build unity after the tragedy Christchurch. While the subject of this study is The New Zealand Government, in this case the New Zealand Embassy in Indonesia, with competent sources in their fields, namely Dr. Giselle Larcombe, Deputy Ambassador of New Zealand to Indonesia. The interview revealed that they have a national research centre that aims to bring together different opinions, so that it is not just the government that is doing this work of restoring peace, but also research between academics and community perspectives. In addition, there are often discussion meetings between the government, academics and business parties. In this way, academics can become parties that contribute in the form of thoughts and policy recommendations that are useful to policy makers in terms of appropriate handling actions. In this study, researchers used data collection techniques through literature studies such as books, journals, scientific reports and interactive interview processes via zoom with related sources, namely Dr. Giselle Larcombe, Deputy Ambassador of New Zealand to Indonesia. In this study, data analysis used data analysis techniques according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana which included Data Condensation, Data Display, dan Drawing and Verifying Conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The role of the New Zealand Government in restoring peace and unity after the Christchurch tragedy has an important role. Following the terrorist attack on March 15 at the Christchurch Mosque, the Government has created the Royal Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of investigating whether public sector agencies are doing everything they can to keep New Zealanders safe from terrorist attacks, and to evaluate possible further action. The goal is to achieve Aotearoa New Zealand that is diverse, inclusive and safe. The government has agreed on a set of principles that will guide its response to the report, taking into account the interests and perspectives of various parties. Some of the response principles include:

1. Responses will be guided by Waitangi Street and its principles.
2. The focus of the response will be on the survivors of the attack and the affected families.
3. Our goal is to create a safer and more inclusive society in New Zealand, with equal protection for all individuals.
4. We will take responsibility and look to the future.
5. We will actively communicate and interact with the community.
6. Concrete actions will be taken to make a significant difference in people's lives.

In addition, there are several agencies involved in this response, namely 44 recommendations covering the broad work of more than 17 government agencies (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2023).

To analyse the Role of the New Zealand Government in Restoring Peace and Unity after the Christchurch Tragedy, researchers will use the concept of restoring peace from (Lederach, 1997).

An explanation of the Lederach Peace Restoration Concept is as follows:
1. Level 1: Top-Level Leadership, composed of the main political and military leaders in the conflict. In interregional battles, these people are the supreme representative leaders of the government and opposition movements, or they present themselves as leaders as such. It is important to recognize that in most cases they represent several key actors within the broader context. Several common features are present at this leadership level. First, these leaders are highly visible. Much attention is paid to their gestures, statements, and positions. Second, because of their high public profile, these leaders are generally tied to positions taken regarding perspectives and issues in conflict. Finally, these leaders are seen and characterized as having significant, if not exclusive, power and influence. Indeed, as individuals, top-level leaders tend to have more influence and power than other individuals.
2. Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership, at the centre of this ranks are individuals who function in positions of leadership in situations of protracted conflict, but their positions are not necessarily associated with or controlled by the authorities or formal government structures or major opposition movements. Middle leadership can be described through several different approaches. One approach is to focus on individuals who are highly respected as individuals and occupy formal leadership positions in sectors such as education, business, agriculture or health. The second approach is to consider the main networks of groups and institutions that may exist in a context, such as networks linking religious groups, academic institutions, or humanitarian organizations (both formal and unofficial). A third approach is to focus on the identity groups involved in the conflict, and find middle-level leaders among people who are known to be members of ethnic minority groups, or who come from a particular geographic area in conflict and gain the respect of the population of the region but also known outside the region. Another approach is to focus on people who come from within the context of the conflict but who have much broader prestige—for example, a famous poet or a Nobel laureate.

The essential features of this level characterize the key actors within it. First, mid-level leaders are in a position where they are likely to know and be recognized by top-level leadership, but they have significant connections to the wider context and constituencies claimed by top-level leaders. Second, mid-level leader positions are not based on political or military power, and such leaders do not always seek to acquire such power. Third, mid-level actors tend to have pre-existing relationships with peers that cross conflict lines in the context. Overall, the middle level actors far outnumber the top-level leaders and are connected through networks with many influential people across the human and physical geographies of conflict.

3. Level 3: Grassroots Leadership, this level represents the masses, the basis of society. Life at this level is marked, especially in situations of prolonged conflict and war, by a survival mentality. In a worst-case scenario, populations at this level are engaged in daily efforts to find food, water, shelter and safety. Leadership at the grassroots level also operates on a daily basis. Leaders here include people involved in the local community, members of indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing assistance projects for local populations, health officials, and refugee camp leaders. They intimately understand the fear and suffering that experienced by the majority of the population; they also have expert knowledge about local politics and get to know local government leaders and their opponents face to face. Identity lines in conflict often tie directly to local communities, dividing them into mutually hostile groups. However, in contrast to many actors at higher levels in the pyramid, grassroots leaders witness firsthand the hatred and animosity that is deeply embedded every day.

Meanwhile, if viewed from the side Approaches to Peacebuilding, the following results were obtained:

1. Level 1: Top-Level Approaches, focused on high-level negotiations, emphasized a ceasefire, led by a single, highly visible mediator.
2. Level 2: Middle-Range Approaches, problem solving workshops, training in conflict resolution, peace commissions, insider-partial teams.
3. Level 3: Grassroots Approaches, local peace commissions, grassroots training, prejudice reduction, psychological work, in post-war trauma.

The shooting tragedy that occurred in Christchurch is a form of terror that has caused many fatalities and is one of the biggest in New Zealand. However, the response and participation of the New Zealand Government shows that the steps taken are problem oriented, not actors. As well as efforts taken to restore peace using a comprehensive approach, namely an approach that includes various levels starting from Top-Level Approaches, Middle-Range Approaches, Grassroots Approaches.

1. Level 1: Top-Level Approaches

Assessing from Lederach's concept of peace building, this top-level approach is carried out by people who come from the highest representative leaders from the government and opposition movements. Researchers find that at this level, the Prime Minister, Government and Political Parties have a role in top-level approach. The election of the Prime Minister in this study is based on a very crucial role. Some of her roles namely Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern have produced and released at least seven official statements in the week following the shooting. In her speech, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern paid special attention to Muslims, victims of immigrants and the impact of the trauma they have experienced. He described New Zealand as a friendly, diverse and cooperative community with zero tolerance for extremist terrorism. In addition, he immediately took reform measures, including a ban on military-style assault weapons, as well as introducing a government-administered buy-back program.

Then from the Government and Political Parties, they showed a role that was in line with that played by Jacinda Ardern, after the shooter, namely Brenton Tarrant, was charged with assault and pleaded not guilty, the government received almost unanimous support in parliament when they previously passed a law banning semi-army-style automatic (MSSA) as the first step in the reform process, just weeks after the terror attack which was the worst mass shooting in New Zealand's peaceful history (Menon, 2019). This is in stark contrast to the history of the Gun Bill in New Zealand, the proposed revision of the Gun Law put forward in 2005 also did not find strong support and was eventually removed from the program in 2012. Since 2010, the government has proposed changing the law every year, but these proposals were not successfully processed further. In 2017, a parliamentary select committee on the issue of illegal firearms made 20 recommendations, but most of them were rejected (Every-Palmer, Cunningham, Jenkins, & Bell, 2021). The government's response included the Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines and Parts) Amendment Bill, which became the Arms Legislation Bill on 23 June 2020 the Governor-General formally signed the Bill into law (New Zealand Parliament, 2023).

In addition, in the context of international cooperation, a top-level approach that focuses on high-level negotiations has been carried out by the Prime Minister in collaboration with the Canadian Prime Minister gathering Heads of State and Government together with technology industry leaders to accept and implement Christchurch Call. In principle, Christchurch Call is a joint effort of the Government and service providers online to remove terrorist and violent extremist content from platform online. This commitment is based on the belief that a free, open and secure internet provides significant benefits to society as a whole. In doing so, it is important to respect the principle of freedom of expression as the main foundation. By collaborating with civil society organizations and other partners, they form a community that actively cooperates in efforts to remove terrorist and violent extremist content in Indonesia. Platform online (Christchurchcall, 2019).
2. Level 2: Middle-Range Approaches

At this middle level, their role in the middle of the ranks lies with individuals who function in leadership positions in protracted conflict situations. However, their positions are not always associated with or controlled by the authorities or formal government structures or major opposition movements. In this approach, researchers get three actors who play a role, namely the religious community, ethnic community, and academics. Several religious figures including Peter Carrell, Bishop of Christchurch, Church leaders in the city of Christchurch and the province of Canterbury issued statements conveying their dismay at the unprecedented situation in Christchurch. They also conveyed that their hearts and prayers were with all involved. The statement emphasized that no organization or religious group deserves to be the target of someone's hatred, no matter what the creed (Anglican Communion Office, 2019).

In addition, the attitude of religious figures can also be seen in the actions of the Precentor of St. Paul in Wellington, Canon Simon Winn, who has compiled a series of prayers and liturgies that churches can use on Sundays in response to the worst mass shooting in New Zealand history. In this situation, he acknowledged the challenges that exist in knowing what to pray or how to pray after a terrorist attack. Role and sympathy did not only come from New Zealand, but also from thousands of people around the world, including Australian Christian leaders, expressing their solidarity with the Muslim community following the terrorist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. They make visits to the mosque over the weekend as a concrete form of support (Eternity News, 2019).

From the side of the ethnic community, participation Community hui, The Hui Community was organized with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the community's main issues and priorities, responding to inquiries regarding the report and its implementation, providing information on ongoing initiatives, and explaining how the community can participate in future responses. The Hui community is also an integral part of Māori culture and organization in New Zealand. Quoted from page website Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, there are several chronological orders of the Hui Community, namely:
1. In May 2021, Tony Lynch, Lead Officer for Government Response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry, hosted a hui involving participants from Disability, Pacific, and Rainbow organizations.
2. In January and February 2021, a total of 33 regional huis took place in Auckland, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Napier, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Ashburton, Dunedin and Invercargill, involving the Muslim community and wider ethnicity and faith community.
3. In December 2020, a hui was held with the Muslim community in Christchurch immediately after the release of the report (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022).

The next actor is academia, quoted from the discussion with Dr. Giselle Larcombe, Deputy Ambassador of New Zealand to Indonesia, mentioned that they have a national research centre that aims to unite various opinions so that it is not only the government that is carrying out this peace restoration work, but also research between academics and community perspectives. Apart from that, discussion meetings are often held, between the government, academia and business parties. Thus, academics can become parties who contribute in the form of thoughts and policy recommendations that are useful for policy makers regarding appropriate handling actions.

3. Level 3: Grassroots Approaches

At this level, the actors represent the masses and the basic level of society. Life at this level is marked, especially in situations of prolonged conflict and war, by a survival mentality.
approach can also take the form of grassroots training, prejudice reduction, psychological work, and post-war trauma. This is relevant to what happened in New Zealand after the shooting tragedy which caused dozens of fatalities and deep trauma for the victims and their families. The researcher found the actors involved in this third level, namely the Nawawi Centre and the community.

Quoted from Nur Diyanah Anwar and Cameron Sumpter's research (2020), titled Societal resilience following terrorism: community and coordination in Christchurch, research using qualitative narrative interviews and ethnographic observation got some results namely during activities at the mosque and during iftar at the local youth centre Nawawi Centre, they saw active engagement and relaxed interactions between social service workers and local police with congregations and community leaders. A number of initiatives from the Christchurch Muslim community have been given a focus on addressing mental wellbeing issues. As an example, Nawawi Centre have strengthened their youth program by ensuring regular social activities for the victim's children and other youth in the community. Realizing that frustration and sadness can be expressed in many ways, Nawawi's volunteers have provided access to trained psychologists who regularly interact with children, and inform authorities of any possible red flags (Anwar & Sumpter, 2020).

In the community, something new has also happened, namely that after reopening, mosques throughout the country held special events and invited all members of the community to attend. Schools held ceremonies the Monday after the shooting to acknowledge the tragedy and encourage tolerance. Not only that, despite facing prolonged horrific experiences and trauma, the victims' families and individuals who were present during the attack still visit the mosque which is the main source of support and "family" for those who have lost their loved ones. Local police, city officials and government-assigned case managers are considered “brothers and sisters” for their prompt and sustained assistance (Anwar & Sumpter, Christchurch Terror Attack: New Zealand’s Multi-Faceted Response, 2019).

Volunteers also often join activities to break the fast together (iftar) and ready to help after Friday prayers. Social support workers actively engage with community members, which strengthens trust between the local Muslim community and the authorities. There were also many individuals - both Muslims and non-Muslims, locals and foreigners - who volunteered at the support centre in Hagley College, or assist in the funeral of the victim. Thus, it can be concluded that at all levels of society, there is strong trust and good cooperative relations between central and local authorities and the general public, as well as between individuals and groups with diverse beliefs. This trust and solidarity have great meaning in society, and reflects the level of resilience needed not only to recover from this act of terrorism, but also to move forward towards greater strength.

**CONCLUSION**

The research on the role of the New Zealand Government in restoring peace and unity after the Christchurch tragedy reveals that government involvement goes beyond high-level coordination, encompassing three levels of approaches based on Lederach's concept of restoring peace. At the top level, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern played a crucial role by issuing official statements, focusing on post-terror recovery efforts, implementing reform measures such as the ban on military-style assault weapons and the government's response included the Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines and Parts) Amendment Bill, which became the Arms Legislation Bill on 23 June 2020 the Governor-General formally signed the Bill into law. International cooperation was also pursued through high-level negotiations, as demonstrated by

https://ijhess.com/index.php/ijhess/
the Christchurch Call initiative. Middle-range approaches involved the participation of the religious community, ethnic community, and academics. The religious community expressed support and sent prayers, while the Hui Community engaged in discussions on important issues. Academics provided policy recommendations for effective handling actions. Lastly, grassroots approaches involved actors like the Nawawi Centre and the community itself. Initiatives focused on mental well-being support, with trained psychologists assisting children and alerting authorities when necessary. The community contributed through solidarity actions, messages of mourning, flower laying, and volunteerism. In conclusion, effective coordination and collaboration across the three levels—top-level, middle-range, and grassroots approaches—are essential for restoring peace and unity following the Christchurch tragedy. So, it can be concluded that coordination and collaboration from various levels is good Top-Level Approaches, Middle-Range Approaches, Grassroots Approaches needed in efforts to restore peace and build unity after the Christchurch tragedy.

REFERENCES


