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Could Mas Selamat attack?

By Sujin Thomas



Mas Selamat received help from two Malaysian friends who were ordinary JI members, after he escaped from Whitley Road Detention Centre on Feb 27 last year and escaped to Johor. --
PHOTO: THE STAR

THE disclosure that Mas Selamat Kastari was plotting against Singapore while on the run did not surprise terrorism experts but they doubt that he had gathered enough resources to launch a large-scale operation.

Ms Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group, who has closely tracked extremist groups in the region, said a critical mass of people is key.

TERRORISM THREAT 'REMAINS REAL': SM GOH
SENIOR Minister Goh Chok Tong, who is currently
warded in the Singapore
General Hospital for chicken
pox and is expected to be
discharged later this week,
commented in a statement
on Sunday on the re-arrest
of Mas Selamat Kastari.

'Despite Mas Selamat's re-arrest, the threat of terrorism remains very real. The fact that he was able to swim away despite our tightened border security following his escape from Whitley Road Detention Centre shows that it is not impossible for a very determined and trained terrorist to enter or leave Singapore

undetected.

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**STRONG COOPERATION
BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES
HELPED
COMMENTS by Foreign
Affairs Minister George Yeo
on the re-arrest of Mas
Selamat.**

**He spoke to reporters on the
sidelines of a Vesak Day
celebrations at the Fo Guang
Shan Buddhist centre in
Punggol on Saturday:**

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'You can't just carry out an attack by yourself even for somebody who is a committed suicide bomber. You need people to do the surveying, to help prepare materials and to be look-outs.'

She added: 'So far, there isn't an example in the region of something that's worked with just two or three people. It would have been very hard.'

Dr Kumar Ramakrishna, head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), said: 'Mas Selamat is a

strategic personnel whose strengths lie in planning and training people in basic bomb-making and surveillance.

'But even with his ability, he may not be able to launch an attack if he does not have the manpower, money and support to do so.'

However, it is his nature to plan attacks while staying under the radar, said Dr Rohan Gunaratna, head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at RSIS. 'Even if he had limited resources, he is in touch with the Indonesian and Malaysian branches of Jemaah Islamiyah and is an Al Qaeda-trained operator.'

Mas Selamat received help from two Malaysian friends who were ordinary JI members, after he escaped from Whitley Road Detention Centre on Feb 27 last year and escaped to Johor.

They gave him shelter for free for more than a year in a secluded kampung house in Skudai, Johor. All three were arrested on April 1.

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak told Malaysian reporters last week that when he was caught, 'his main focus was Singapore' and that 'he was planning a lot of things in Singapore.'

Read the full report in Monday's edition of The Straits Times.