

Social Work In Handling Terrorism: Roles And Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Social work is a profession that has been doing social work which since the 20th century has expanded not only to social issues but also to terrorism. This article discussed the role of social worker in handling terrorism based on the international experiences and the challenges faced by social worker. The study was primarily based on the desk review of the credible and up to date literatures. There are few roles that can be done by social worker in handling terrorism such as being the community assessment and social brokerage, direct planner, direct implementation of team assistance, direct implementation of crisis services, support and assistance, assist in in community intervention, evaluator, expert, broker, mediator, counsellor, advocate, motivator, educator. Though there are few challenges faced by social worker in carrying out their role, there is also alternative solution that can be done to face this existing challenges. The experiences social worker had in several countries shows that this profession should be involved in handling terrorism.

Keywords:

Roles; Social Work; Social Worker; Handling Terrorism; Challenges; Ethical Dilemma

INTRODUCTION

Social work is a profession that do social work. The scope of social work includes responsibility in handling and preventing various problems in individuals, groups, and society. The essence of social work is to build relation with client¹. Social work push encourage social changes, problem solving to improve social welfare². Social work focus on the interaction between people and their environment, help people to be empowered by maximizing their capacities, help reduce problems and achieve client expectation³. According to International Federation of Social Workers⁴, social work involves recognizing client problems and needs, help in empowering client, encourage diversities and promote social justice. Sundayani⁵ explains that professional social worker have the skill to work in groups, communities and individuals.

The root of social work starts in the 17th century. It is often associated with poverty legislation by the British government in 1601 known as the Elizabeth Poor Law^{6,7}. Elizabeth Poor Law classified poor people into three groups: first, the able bodied poor are those that is physically strong. They are given rough jobs and if they do not want to do it, they will be placed in the workhouse without being paid, but still being given food and shelter. Second, the impotent poor are those that are not physically strong, such as elderly or people with disabilities, both physically and mentally, as well as single mothers with children. Those that did not have shelter would be placed in almshouses and would be provided help in

the form of food, clothing and fuel for cooking. As for those who have a place to live, help is given to their respective homes. Third, dependent children, that is orphans, abandones babies, children whose parents are very poor and unable to pay for their children's needs. These children will be offered to local residents for employment. For boys, it will be until their reach 24 years old and for girls it will be until they reach the age of 21.

During the 17th century, the focus of social work is to handle poverty as a result of economic industrialization and urbanization⁸. Poverty handling by social workers at that time was still in the form of activities such as charity and philanthropy⁹.

Since the 20th century, the scope of social work has begun to expand, become more complex, significant and varied. Social work start to not only focus on handling poverty but also extends to issues of health, education, community empowerment, social entrepreneurship, children and family problems and even terrorism issues.

Terrorism is a global issue with a large number of events. According to Global Terrorism Database, there were more than 9,600 terrorist attacks worldwide in 2018. Two countries that held first and second place for the most terrorist attacks that is 1,776 and 1,362 were Afghanistan and Iraq. While the Global Terrorism Index 2020¹⁰ noted that Afghanistan and Iraq remained in the first and second positions in the number of terrorist attacks in all countries worldwide, with 1,422 and 495 attacks in 2019.

Terrorism is an act of planned and structured violence, and is an extraordinary crime because it causes fear, is a threat and has an impact on physical harm that could led to death^{11,12,13}. According to Global Terrorism Database in 2019, expalined that in 2018, terrorist attacks worldwide killed more than 22,980 people, with 7,290 being perpetrators and the other 15,690 being victims. The highest number of deaths due to terrorism attacks since 2001-2019 occurred in Iraq with 66,689 people, followed by Afghanistan 39,358, Nigeria 22,441, Pakistan 17,510 and Syria 10,831¹⁰. Not only resulting in death, terrorism also causes economic losses due to damage given to buildings and public facilities¹⁰.

Various countries have made efforts to handle and prevent terrorism by involving various professions, and one of which being social workers. Recognition of the need for social workers in tackling the impact of terrorism on the psychosocial dimensions and functioning of individuals, groups and communities has increased since the terrorst attacks in the United States in 2001¹⁴.

In the international world, the involvement of social workers in dealing with terrorism is considered important to build a comprehensive counter-terrorism system¹⁵. The involvement of social workers in handling terrorism can be found in developed countries such as United States¹⁴, United Kingdom^{16,17}, Norway^{18,19,20}, Israel^{21,22,23,24} and Denmark²⁵. Meanwhile, the involvement of social workers in dealing

with terrorism in developing countries since this article was written, has only been found in Indonesia^{26,27}.

1. The Role of Social Worker in Handling Terrorism

Role is an act that is a duty or obligation attached to a person related to their position, status and position in the family, community, work environment or organization^{28,29,30,31,32}. Meanwhile the role of a social worker is a duty or obligation that needs to be carried out by social worker as a professional.

In carrying out their duties, social worker are required to carry out various roles in accordance with the case they handle. Sometimes, in carrying out one case, the social worker can perform more than two roles. The role of social workers in general, according to Zastrow³³, Adi³⁴ and Suharto³⁵, is as an enabler, broker, educator, expert, social planner, advocate, activist and mediator.

Working alongside various professionals certainly requires clear job descriptions to avoid confusion and role uncertainty³⁶. It is important to know the role of social workers to emphasize the position of social workers when working in a team of various professionals. As an enabler, social worker help clients explore the potential they have and motivate them so they can realize that every group, community, or individual has the ability and strength to bring themselves to change for the better. Social worker also explains that every change that happens depends on the hard work and the will of client, so client needs to maximize their strength to make a change. As a broker, social worker connects client with resource that cannot or are hard to reach by the client itself. Often times, the problems that occur to clients are due to the client's inability to access resource, so as a broker, a social worker becomes a link between the client and the social service agency or institution needed by the client. Social workers also create networks with service providers to be able to control the social services provided in order to maintain service quality. As educators, social workers provide information needed by clients and become good communicators so that the information conveyed can be easily understood by clients. As an expert, social worker is a professional that has ethical principles and regulated by law. Social workers graduated from social welfare education or social work major that has the knowledge, skill and value. As a social planner, social worker seek to present the results of assessments of problem faced by individuals, groups, or communities, as well as presenting the potential and existing resource to formulate various alternative rational actions that can be taken by clients. As an advocate, social worker act as representative of the community to defend people who experience injustice by voicing the interests of the community and criticizing policies that discriminate against the community. As an activist, social worker give out stimulus that can move community or client to empower themselves. As a mediator, social worker act to link parties that have conflict or in dispute. By using specific techniques

adapted to existing values, social worker seek agreement, negotiate, compromise, carry out persuasion and meditation, improving reconciliation in every differences to reach agreement and consensus.

Itzhaky and York²³ explained that in a situation of terrorism, social worker have an essential role. Social worker not only give help and support needed but also lead the professional team and service providers. Social worker can organize, train and also create and lead team made of interprofessional. Itzhaky and York²³ divided the role of social worker in the situation of terrorism under three phase, that is the preparation phase or when the threat of terrorism comes, then the phase when a terrorist attack occurs and finally the occurrence of terrorism. For further explanation can be seen through tabel below:

Table 1. The phases in Interventions around Terrorist Attack and the Roles, Goals, Focal Systems, and Tasks of Social Workers

Phases				
	Role	Goal	Focal System	Tasks
Preparation (Warning)				
1.	Community assessment and social brokerage	Identify needs and develop systems	Residents, leaders, service providers	Referring brokerage, researching, disseminating information
2.	Community coordinator	Organize system (interdisciplinary teams)	Volunteers and service providers	Coordination, enabling, catalysing, mediating, consulting, negotiating
3.	Direct planner	Provide services	Residents and service providers	Planning, managing, brokerage, facilitating, training
Terror Attack (Shock)				
4.	Direct implementation of team assistance	Implement system and support logistically and psychologically	Service providers and volunteers	Managing, brokerage, encouraging cooperation, activating
5.	Direct implementation of crisis services	Locate victims, provide aid to victims, locate victims' families, provide information for victims' families	Victims and their families	Identifying problems and needs, supporting, first aid, logistic support, providing information, counselling, locating sources of support (culturally sensitive), accompanying families, coordinating, referring for additional aid
6.	Support and assistance	Give support and assistance	Victims', victims'	Locating those needing help,

			families, residents, helpers	activating aid, providing information, updating service providers, activating volunteers, coordination
Aftermath (Organizing and Change)				
7.	Assisting in community intervention	Maintenance of support and assistance services	Populations at risk (for example, helpers, elderly victims and their families), other residents	Mapping and locating needs, assisting and motivating service providers and volunteers, counseling on methods and resources for aid
8.	Evaluation	Improving quality of service delivery	Residents, leader, volunteers, service providers	Evaluating, helping to accept and apply findings

The handling and prevention of terrorism in various countries is not always the same because it adapts to conditions and needs as well as different causal factors³⁷. This makes the role of social workers in dealing with terrorism different because they are adapted to the challenges, needs and carrying capacity of each country.

In the United States, social workers act as a frontliner to handle trauma of terrorism victims¹⁴. Through NASW as the national association of social workers, more than 1,000 social workers were deployed directly to overcome the impact of the terrorist incident on September 11, 2001 in New York. Social worker involvement is carried out by:

- (1) Assisst the Red Cross Organization by setting up a dedicated national help and information hotline to find needed volunteers.
- (2) Act as a mental health counselor.
- (3) Help exhausted firefighters cope with their difficult jobs.
- (4) Helping children who have lost their parents.
- (5) At the hospital, helping families who are looking for family members by providing information by telephone.
- (6) At school, as a counselor helping students deal with tragedy and counseling about their feelings.
- (7) Conducting home visits in hospital for elderly immigrants who experience chronic pain, depression, disappointment with the decision to leave their homeland, as well as experiencing anxiety and frustration³⁸.

Social workers in the United States take a variety of actions with different beneficiaries. They consist of children, teenagers, adults, to the elderly. The involvement of social workers in the United

States in the field of terrorism is placed in various agencies such as the Red Cross Organization and Hospitals.

In the United Kingdom, social workers are involved in giving counseling to the wives of terrorist who are depressed because their husbands are suspects, as well as being ostracized. Counseling are also given to the children of terrorist victims who have mental health issues because these conditions destroy family life and affect the continuity of their schools¹⁶. Social workers are involved in doing intervention through government program such as prevent that aim to prevent radicalization of children, adolescents and adults who are at risk of being exposed. Meanwhile channel is a government program that aim to provide intervention to suspects who have been referred in the institution and evaluate and calculate criminal cases or possible risks of terrorism in the future. In channel, social workers are involved in case evaluation and calculating the possible risks of terrorism¹⁷.

In Israel, social workers plays an important role in providing humanitarian aid services to both children and the elderly²¹. Social workers often accept assignments that go beyond their formal responsibilities and personal capacities. However, the emergency situation made social workers ready to help and heal individuals. Professionally, social workers carry out a framework both through formal and informal processes according to the needs in the assistance process. Social workers are employed in various human service agencies and they form networks to provide interventions when clients need instant referrals²². Social workers also carry out direct and coordinated community-based interventions for victims consisting of children and adults²³. Social workers bring together the injured victims with their families. They visit the victim's family and inform them that the victim was killed or injured. Social workers visit the hospital and strengthen the families of the victims to assist in the funeral of the deceased²⁴. Social workers build relationships, empathize, entertain, and provide various information needed by victims or victims' families with a full sense of humanity³⁶.

In Norway, in the area of radicalization and violent extremism, social workers are involved in the national strategy. Social workers play a role in preventing radicalization among youth and adults. Social workers also practice directly by providing follow-up services to extremists who have returned from Syria and Iraq. The strategies adopted by social workers against extremists include:

- (1) Conducting meetings with the parents
- (2) Conduct follow-up guidance
- (3) Support access to public and family services
- (4) Conduct motivational interviews
- (5) Give questions in the form of socrates
- (6) Conducting family intervention, and
- (7) Conducting strength based approach.

In Indonesia, the role of social workers in dealing with terrorism is more devoted to assisting children who are victims of terrorism. Social workers play an important role in handling child victims of terrorism to overcome trauma that makes children unable to socialize comfortably in their social environment, be it in the family, school or community environment. Social workers carry out psychosocial rehabilitation with various treatments needed to help restore the psychosocial condition of children victims of terrorism so that they can restore their social functioning in society²⁶.

In handling terrorism, social worker work alongside other professionals. Itzhaky and York²³ stated that in Israel, social worker has treatment team, in which consisting of psychologists and doctors. According to Guru¹⁶, social workers in the United Kingdom work with professionals from a wide range of fields such as educators, law enforcement, religious groups, health professionals and charities. Meanwhile Koehler²⁵, explains that social worker in Denmark work closely with police officers who are stationed in a structure called an infohouse. Whereas in Israel, social workers are affiliated with the Police Information Centre which works with other professionals to assist the police in providing information, and counseling²². In Indonesia, social workers work together in a team consisting of psychologists, psychiatrists, clergy and social humanists to deal with terrorism²⁶.

According to the experience of social workers in the United States, Israel, United Kingdom, Norway and Indonesia in handling terrorism, it can be identified that the role of social worker are as follows^{14,16,21,22,23,24,17,19,20}:

- (1) Expert, social worker is a professional social worker who has been equipped with knowledge and skills regarding the handling of terrorism.
- (2) Counselor, social workers conduct counseling for victims of terrorism to explore feelings, emotions, psychosocial conditions and mental health issues.
- (3) Motivator, social workers conduct motivational interviews with victims of terrorism and their families.
- (4) Brokers, social workers become the link between victims of terrorism with the necessary access, such as facilitating meetings with families to obtain support, referring to hospitals or health facilities for medical and psychological treatment, as well as the link for victims to be able to access educational institutions.
- (5) Educators, social workers provide information related to the prohibition and danger of terrorism, as well as other information needed by the victim or the victim's family.
- (6) Advocates, social workers voice justice against existing injustice. As when a very aggressive counter-terrorism policy emerged in America, social workers fought for justice by trying to criticize policies that were against human rights and civil liberties³⁹.

2. Challenges of Social Workers in Handling Terrorism

The role of social worker in handling terrorism prove that the scope of social work has expanded not only in handling poverty. Social work also has proven that this profession has good prospects as a qualified profession to take part in overcoming terrorism that has happened in several countries such as United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Israel, Denmark and Indonesia. However,

when carrying out their role in handling terrorism, of course there are challenges faced by social workers, both personally and intellectually.

Taking part in handling terrorism makes social workers has to face a complicated and not easy decision-making process, because various activities that need to be carried out by social workers are required to be done quickly, responsive and precise in taking a stance in the midst of a tense terrorism incident⁴⁰. On the other hand, social worker are also strongly involved emotionally in the process of handling as can be seen in Israel, when social worker help survivors to accompany their families to the morgue, making this helping process to be more complex because it is infused with subjective feelings that can weaken social workers in providing services so that it can affect the effectiveness of the services³⁶. Social worker also experience professional ambiguity and confusion when witnessing the suffering and trauma of family members waiting to hear from their loved ones that gone missing during a terrorist event⁴¹. The death and loss of a family member of terrorism victim can also evoke secondary trauma in social workers related to their personal experiences in the past so that this can weaken social workers²⁴.

The terrorism situation can also confuses social workers because they are also a citizen that has family, siblings and friends that needs to feel safe. The turmoil between their personal and professional life makes social workers feel depressed, afraid and stressed so that it can reduce some of their ability to function optimally^{22,24}.

Often times, ethical dilemma happens to social workers that are involved in handling terrorism, where social workers is faced with two choices that are both morally right and based on ethics, but because the necessity to choose makes the social worker feel guilty for the impact that has occurred and feel they have violated the other choices even though, of course, the choices they have made has been through considerations based on knowledge and reasoning. For example, on the principle of maintaining confidentiality. The Israeli government has established procedures to provide news about the death of family members of victims of terrorism by assigning doctors, social workers and police. However, in the interest of providing support to family members, social workers may find professional reasons to violate the confidentiality principle but on the other hand feel bounded by the law or the obligation to maintain confidentiality inherent in the social work profession that must be obeyed⁴⁰. In the rules set by the International Federation of Social Work⁴ it is explained that confidentiality is a moral code that requires social workers to maintain client rights to relationship of trust, privacy and confidentiality, and responsible use of information. There is no information released without prior knowledge and informal consent from client. Moreover, IFSW⁴ stated that disclosure is justifiable when it prevents foreseeable or imminent serious harm to clients or others or when required by law.

The participation of social workers in handling terrorism in a government institutions also often creates inner conflicts because it is not in accordance with the principles of social work, for example regarding the concept of justice, as in United States, when the government introduced counter-terrorism policies aggressively and focused too much on certain groups. In this case, social workers as advocates advocate for a change in anti-terrorism policy that is not biased and would not violate human rights³⁹.

The collaboration between social worker with interprofesionals who have different professional values, different interests, different ways of working, different principles and jargon, can also cause tension, friction, and competition within the team that can even lead to conflict. Profession that seem similar to social worker regarding its values, goals, jargon, and technology such as psychologists are also very likely to find reasons for conflict²³.

These are the various challenges faced by social workers in handling terrorism. These various challenges can be findings for future social workers who are also concerned with the field of handling terrorism. The experience of social workers in several countries can be a lesson for social workers in other countries in handling terrorism.

CONCLUSION

The field of social work has expanded into the field of handling terrorism. The experience of several countries shows that social workers deserve to be taken into account to participate in handling terrorism. The readiness, alertness, and ability of social workers in handling terrorism such as in Israel, United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, and Indonesia can be lessons for other countries to help open up space and opportunities for social workers to participate in handling terrorism.

Multiple role can be done by social workers in accordance to the function of social work and the need of the country. In handling terrorism, social worker also act as community assessment and social brokerage, direct planner, direct implementation of team assistance, direct implementation of crisis services, support and assistance, assist in community intervention, evaluator²³. Meanwhile according to the experience in United States, United Kingdom, Israel, Norway, Denmark, and Indonesia, it has been identified that the role of social worker in handling terrorism is as an expert, broker, mediator, counselor, advocate, motivator and educator.

Knowing the role of social worker in handling terrorism is very important for social worker or other professional that works in the same field as social worker in team. With knowing the role of social worker, it emphasizes the position of social worker and can minimize the overlapping and ambiguity of the role of social workers in handling a case.

Although the experience of several countries shows that social workers have played a large role in handling terrorism, in carrying out this role, there are various challenges. Challenges faced by social workers involved in handling terrorism as well as possible solutions, including:

- (1) The internal turmoil within the social worker when terrorism occurs, such as feeling helpless, afraid, anxious, stressed, worried about oneself, family and friends. Social workers are like other people or individuals who also have concerns for their loved ones. Until they lose this kind of emotion, social workers cannot be effective in providing services. Therefore, the prerequisite for social workers to be able to help victims of terrorism effectively at the time of the disaster is to free themselves emotionally to be able to meet the needs of others, so social workers need to meet their personal needs by ensuring that they and their families are safe. Then, social workers can continue with their responsibilities only after making sure that themselves, their family, friends, or loved ones are safe^{22,24}.
- (2) Ambiguity, confusion, about the action that required to be done quickly and precise can lead to doubt and confusion in determining the course of action. Therefore, the lines of communication remain open for coordination during emergencies. There are professionals who are always ready to be contacted with their questions and concerns^{36,22}.
- (3) Emergency situation often require social worker to act beyond their abilities as well as physical and psychological readiness that can weaken social workers in providing services. Therefore, it is important to provide knowledge and motivation before entering the field. In addition, it gives confidence to social workers that they are not alone. Knowledge that social workers are not alone can lighten the burden and free social workers to work professionally. The presence of other professionals can help overcome times when the social workers feels weak so that they can return to social functioning when expected. Sharing work and experiences with coworkers in real time is very important. Having a team is not only important to help the victims but also to support each other when carrying out difficult tasks so that the difficulty of the work feels lighter. In addition, social workers also need full support from the office/institution for their actions^{36,22,24}.
- (4) Social workers are also faced with ethical dilemmas, including those related to the principle of maintaining confidentiality. Maintaining confidentiality about the condition of victims of terrorism to their closest family because they have to obey the law even though social workers know the real situation, is a very difficult condition for social workers and this is considered an unethical ethical dilemma. To deal with ethical dilemmas related to the principle of maintaining confidentiality, clear and detailed protocols are needed (e.g protocols for giving condolences to the victim's family) so as not to cause confusion when faced with a dilemmatic situation. Social workers are also given access to be able to discuss with colleagues or supervisors³⁶.
- (5) The role bias in handling terrorism can also occur in teams consisting of interprofessionals. Thus, when working alongside other professionals in a team, social workers need to socialize within the team about the role of social workers and the values of social work⁴².
- (6) Another thing that is important is to pay attention in order to maintain the physical and mental health of social workers, not only about the condition of social workers when handling terrorism but also after completing their role in handling terrorism, that is "pause". After carrying out their duties, social workers need space to escape from the experience of handling terrorism. In various ways that make the social worker feel comfortable, for example sleeping, turning off their cellphone, or not coming to work. As Fitzgerald and Gonzales⁴³ suggest that dissociation can occur as a defense mechanism against painful feelings associated with traumatic memories.

The experience of social worker in several countries regarding challenges they have to face when handling terrorism can be learnt as an anticipation in future events. To prepare social workers who

are more physically and psychologically prepared in the event of an emergency so that they can provide effective services, some of the things that can be done by social work institutions are:

- (1) Study the roles of social workers that have been carried in several countries in handling terrorism.
- (2) Identify the challenges faced by social workers in terrorism situations from previous cases and evaluate and identify service gaps and find solutions to problems that arose in the past.
- (3) Analyzing the solutions offered by researches related to the challenges faced by social workers in handling terrorism.
- (4) Provide special knowledge and skills related to emergency conditions.
- (5) Conducting emergency simulation as a training program.
- (6) Partnering with other institutions to provide human services in certain fields to make it easier for social workers to make referrals when needed.

To get more comprehensive explanation regarding social work in handling terrorism, further research is needed. This is because there is very little research regarding this topic, while the issue of social work with terrorism is very complex.

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