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Thousands of Muslims are continuing their call for Jihad

By Richard Galpin in Jakarta

Leaders of a militant Islamic organisation in Indonesia say they still plan to send thousands of recruits to fight a jihad, or holy war, in the Moluccan Islands, despite being forced to close down their training camp near Jakarta.

A spokesman for Laskar Jihad said they had decided to obey the police orders to shut the camp as they wished to abide by the law.

It is expected all 3,000 recruits who have received military training will leave by Sunday and return home, the date by which the training was due to finish anyway.

They will also hand over the swords and machetes used at the camp.

But leaders of Laskar Jihad have now made it clear they still plan to send the recruits to fight Christians in the Moluccan Islands at the end of this month.

A spokesman said it would be easy for them to buy new weapons in the area. He also said they intended to regroup soon in another city on the central island of Java before the fighters leave for eastern Indonesia.



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State of alert

The security forces have said they will intercept any ships found carrying members of Laskar Jihad to the Moluccan Islands.

The Navy has already been put on a heightened state of alert.

The government knows it will be disastrous if significant numbers of Islamic militants did arrive in the region.

Already at least 2,000 people have died in the clashes between Christians and Muslims in Maluku since the beginning of last year.

Although the area is quieter now, the situation remains very tense - it would take little provocation to spark yet another outburst of violence.

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