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## Southeast Asia

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# CENTER ON IRREGULAR WARFARE AND ARMED GROUPS READING LIST 2018

## Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand

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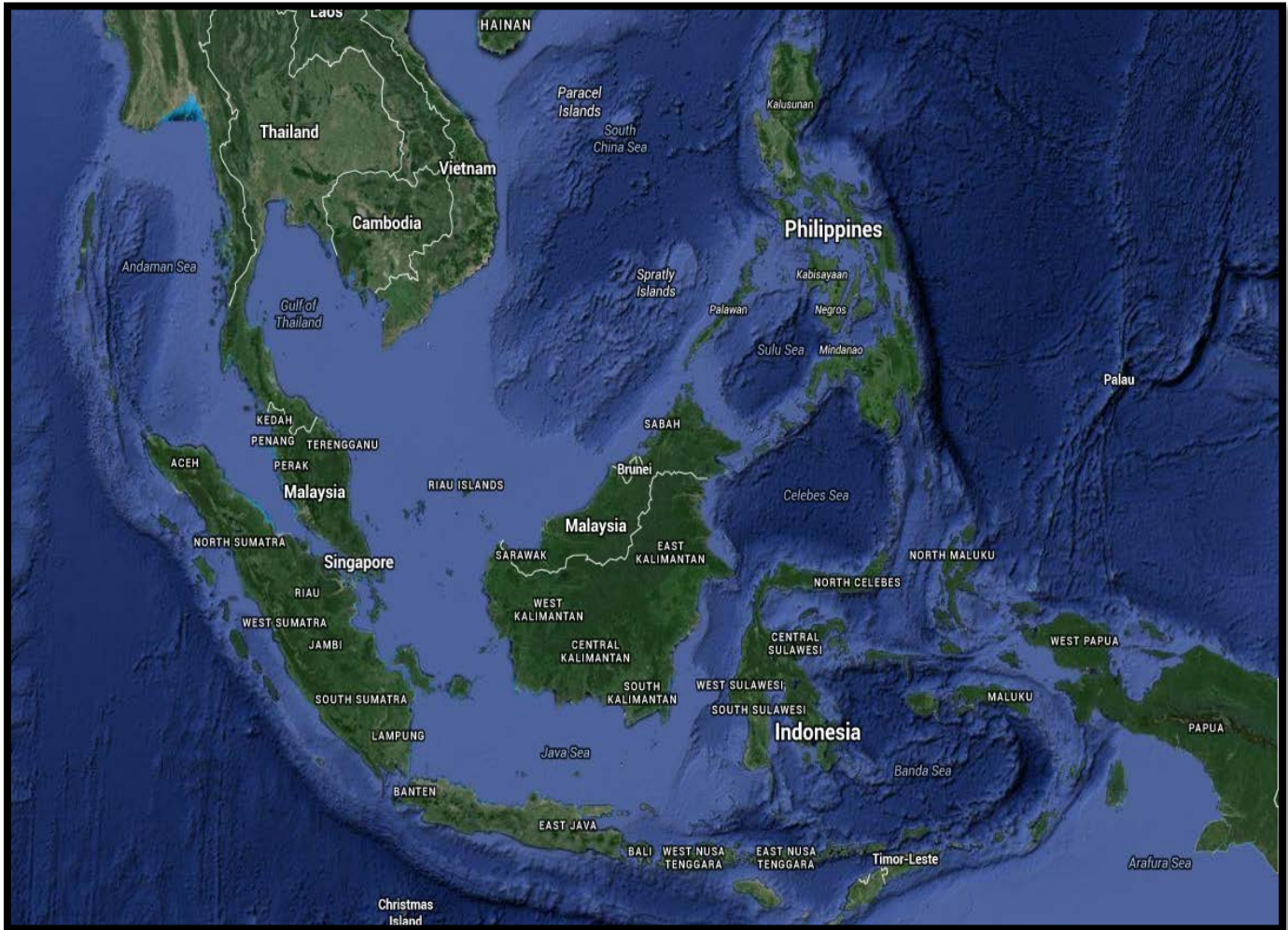
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Updated as of: February 6, 2018.

## General Overview of Area Covered



Java Sea. (13 Nov. 2014). Google Maps. Google. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/@-3.5501863,118.9849733,8983666m/data=!3m1!1e3>



## Map of Indonesia



Indonesia. (13 Nov. 2014). Google Maps. Google. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/@-1.297215,113.400645,4499316m/data=!3m1!1e3>



## Conflict Overview

### OVERVIEW

"CrisisWatch Indonesia." International Crisis Group. January 2018.  
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia>.

The International Crisis Group provides analysis of ongoing political and violent strife all over the world. Their Indonesia country profile includes the latest reports and briefings of terrorist activities and government counterinsurgency operations in the region.

"Aceh: A timeline of insurgency." *CNN*, May 19, 2003.  
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/05/19/aceh.timeline/>

The article consists of a brief timeline chronicling important events in the Aceh province of Indonesia. The timeline lists selected events showing Indonesian independence from the Netherlands and the formation and actions of rebel groups in Aceh.

Gershman, J. "Indonesia: Islands of conflict." *Asia Times*, October 26, 2002.  
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast Asia/DJ26Ae05.html>

The article begins with a description of Indonesia's demographic makeup. The article then lists what the author sees as the two major points of conflict in Indonesia, self-determination and communal. Each type of conflict is explained followed by the toll they have taken with a focus on factors believed to have contributed to escalations in violence. The article ends with the author analyzing the role of the United States in the region in regards to policies and economic and strategic interests.

### MILITANT GROUPS

"Indonesia." *International Crisis Group*, 2014. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia>

The International Crisis Group is an independent organization that provides reports, analysis and recommendations regarding different trouble areas/hot spots in the world. Their mission statement is to help prevent and resolve deadly conflict. The website allows the user to obtain region and country specific reports through the menu bars along the top and left side of the page. The reports range in topic from terrorism and violent attacks to government instability and other factors that could lead to or contribute to violent conflict or outbreaks. Recent reports made by the International Crisis Group are listed on each page and contain an overview of the situation and in some cases provide additional information and recommendations. An additional resource on the page, the crises watch database allows the user to search by country and access a compilation of news reports from outside sites pertaining to a particular

country or multiple countries. All articles are presented chronologically with a summary of their content.

The site provides a series of in-depth reports on Indonesian security issues, including:

- *Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's publishing industry*, (2008, February 28)
- *Indonesia: Jihadi surprise in Aceh*, (2010, April 20)
- *Indonesia: The dark side of Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)*, (2010, July 6)
- *The ongoing extremist threat in Indonesia*, (2011, June 15)
- *Indonesia: From vigilantism to terrorism in Cirebon*, (2012, January 26)
- *How Indonesian extremists regroup*, (2012, July 16)
- *Indonesia: Dynamics of violence in Papua*, (2012, August 9)
- *Papuan 'separatists' vs jihadi 'terrorists': Indonesian policy dilemmas* (2013, January 22)

## **Regional Terrorist/Insurgent/Militant Groups**

### **JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH (JI)**

"Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)." Terrorism Research & Analysis Center. 2017.  
<https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/jemaah-islamiyah-ji>.

The Terrorism Research & Analysis Center (TRAC) is among the premier groups in tracking and studying extremist groups. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is an Islamist extremist group active in Southeast Asia that became emboldened during the rise of ISIS in the Middle East. The group's predominant area of operations is in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Their Indonesian cell due to counterinsurgency operations and the prevalence of other extremist groups in the region centralized and consolidated within the Abu Sayyaf Group. Many of its members also joined the Islamic State when it formally entered the region in strength 2015 - 2016.

"Jemaah Islamiyah (a.k.a. Jemaah Islamiah)". *Council on Foreign Relations*. June 19, 2009.  
<http://www.cfr.org/indonesia/jemaah-islamiyah-k-jemaah-islamiah/p8948>

In this article, the Council on Foreign Relations provides a background on Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) divided into different individually accessible topics. The topics included regarding JI are, JI foundations, leadership, recorded attacks, pursuit of, threat to Americans and American interests, links to other terrorist groups, size of the organization, efforts by Indonesia and neighboring countries against JI, and the impact of security measures against JI.

For additional overviews of the group, see the 2011 profile by the Center for International & Strategic Studies (*Jemaah Islamiyah*: <http://csis.org/publication/jemaah-islamiyah>) and the profile by Stanford's "Mapping Militant Organizations" research

project, updated in 2012 (*Jemaah Islamiyah*:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/251>).

Golburt, Yanina. "An in-depth look at the Jemaah Islamiyah network." *Al Nakhlah*, 2004.  
<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Al-Nakhlah/Archives/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/al%20Nakhlah/archives/pdfs/golburt.aspx>

This article, written for the Fletcher School (Tufts University) Online Journal for issues related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization, provides a look at the formation and structure of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The article covers the follow topics regarding JI, structure, training, financing, links with Al-Qaeda, and threat assessment. It concludes with the author's policy recommendations for Indonesia and the United States.

### **JI LEADERSHIP/HIGH-PROFILE MEMBERS**

#### UMAR PATEK

Abuza, Zachary. "JI operative Umar Patek arrested in Pakistan." *CTC Sentinel*, 4 no. 4 (April, 2011): 16-17. <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/ji-operative-umar-patek-arrested-in-pakistan>

This article provides a brief profile Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) senior member, Umar Patek. The profile provided chronicles his activities within JI and the impact of his arrest in 2011. Patek's arrest was a setback to JI due to their dwindling amount of first generation leaders and the resulting splinter groups that form during a leadership vacuum. The author states that with additional splinter groups forming off of JI it hampers their ability to launch any large-scale attacks; however it allows them to more easily avoid detection.

#### RIDUAN ISAMUDDIN

"Hambali: 'Asia's Bin Laden.'" *BBC*, September 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2346225.stm>

This BBC news article provides a background on Hambali (Riduan Isamuddin) the former operations chief of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). He is believed to have been connected to the attack on the USS Cole, the Bali Bombing, and the attack on the Marriott hotel in Jakarta.

#### ABU BAKAR BASHIR

McCoy, Clifford. "Old and new faces of Indonesian terror." *Asia Times*, August, 2010.  
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast Asia/LH20Ae02.html>

The Asia Times article describes the impact of the arrest of Abu Bakar Bashir, the former spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and founder of the Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid

(JAT). He was also involved in a training camp in Aceh consisting of seven groups referred to as lintas tanzim (cross-organizational project). Bashir's influence on JAT and groups associated with it exhibit what is seen by the author as a new form of militant Islam in Indonesia, with a focus on establishing Islamic law throughout all of Indonesia and avoiding the killing of other Muslims. Bashir's high profile presence with this group may have led to it becoming a focus of counter-terrorism officials. He lost favor with some groups due to what they viewed as his recklessness regarding planning and operations but he could still exert an influence while in prison. The main concern as seen by the author is the alteration of existing groups' motivations to a singular goal of establishing Islamic law in all of Indonesia and focusing attacks on non-Muslims and anyone who obstructs the implementation of Islamic law.

Teslik, Lee Hudson. "Profile: Abu Bakar Bashir (a.k.a. Ba'asyir)." *Council on Foreign Relations*. June, 2006. <http://www.cfr.org/indonesia/profile-abu-bakar-bashir-k-baasyir/p10219>

This report by the Council on Foreign Relations from 2006 provides a background on Abu Bakar Bashir (a.k.a Ba'asyir). The topics covered in the report are, Abu Bakar's bio, personal history, what terrorist acts he is linked to, any associations with al-Qaeda or other groups and the dangers he poses.

#### NOORDIN MOHAMED

"Obituary: Noordin Mohamed Top." *BBC*. September, 2009.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4302368.stm>

This article from the BBC provides a brief overview of Noordin Mohamed, believed to have been a recruiter and financier associated with Jemaah Islamiah (JI) before forming his own group. He was suspected in assisting with the planning and financing of several attacks in Indonesia. During this time he was believed to have operated under an assumed name, Abdurrachman Aufi. Indonesian security forces killed Noordin in September of 2009.

#### **JI AND EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS/ASSOCIATIONS**

##### CONNECTIONS TO IS AND AQ IN SYRIA

"Indonesians and the Syrian Conflict." *IPAC Report No. 6*. January 30.  
[http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2014/01/IPAC Indonesians the Syrian Conflict.pdf](http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2014/01/IPAC%20Indonesians%20the%20Syrian%20Conflict.pdf)

This report, provided by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) examines the impact that the conflict in Syria has had on Indonesian extremist groups. Due to the location and continued fighting, Syria has been a lodestone for different radical groups to send fighters and monetary aid to. The appeal of Syria to these groups is also extended due to several books, especially *Tumult at the End of Time* written by a

company affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah, predicting Syria as being the final conflict that leads to the end of the world. Indonesian groups have provided support to Syrian terrorist groups through medical, financial, and material aid in areas that support their cause and are also believed to have sent at least 50 fighters over as well. The article then provides a description of the different factions within Syria and Indonesia. The author concludes that the conflict in Syria does impact Indonesian terrorist groups to a degree but the majority of their motivation and focus will come from local issues.

#### GHURABA CELL AND PAKISTAN

Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda cell targeted by Treasury Department tied to multiple terror groups." *The Long War Journal*. August, 2011.

[http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the\\_treasury\\_departm.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_treasury_departm.php)

This article covers the addition of three members of Jemaah Islamiyah's (JI), by the Treasury Department to its global terrorist list in 2011. Two of them, Abdul Rahim Ba'asyir (Abdul Rahim) and Muhammad Jibril Abdul Rahman (Jibril) are considered senior members with the al Ghuraba cell of JI, located in Karachi, Pakistan. The Ghuraba cell is a group connected to both al Qaeda and JI with the goal of training additional terrorists. The article continues to describe the identification of the Ghuraba cell and several of its members in 2003 by the CIA through information gathered from detainees. The article concludes with providing additional information on the group regarding arrests, intelligence and whereabouts of the particular members as of 2011.

#### **JI PLEDGE TO ISIS**

*For more information on ISIS operations in Southeast Asia view their other sections in this document on page 21, 38, and 55.*

"Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)" *Counter Extremism Project*, 2016.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/jemaah-islamiyah-ji>

Even though he is continuing to serve his 15 years jail sentence following his arrest in 2010, Abu Bakar Bashir still plays a major leadership role. In 2014, he directed his followers to pledge themselves and the group to ISIS and ordered that 200 JI members go to Syria to train. The immigration laws in Indonesia do not impose any criminal charges against returnees who have fought for a foreign entity. In a time where JI is seeking to become a relevant threat again, returning fighters could provide the impetus for new attacks. (See the following article regarding the later withdrawal of support for ISIS)

#### WITHDRAWAL OF PLEDGE

Soeriaatmadja, Wahyudi. "Bashir Withdraws Support for ISIS." *The Straits Times*, January 9, 2016. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/bashir-withdraws-support-for-isis>

Abu Bakar Bashir announced his withdrawal of support for ISIS based on new information he has received. According to his lawyer, Bashir sent a team of associates to Turkey to meeting of Syrian and Turkish Islamic leaders and groups and at this meeting Bashir's team was counseled against supporting ISIS. In addition, his research team reviewed ISIS social media posts and that influence their decision to withdraw support as well. Bashir claims that even though ISIS is not the group to establish this, he still wants sharia law established around the world and will support any group that believes this as long they follow certain guidelines.

### **Jl REBUILDING EFFORTS**

"Indonesian Police Announce Arrests of Jakarta Terror Attack Suspects." *Deutsche Welle*, January 16, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/indonesian-police-announce-arrests-of-jakarta-terror-attack-suspects/a-18983999>.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack in the heart of Indonesia's capital of Jakarta. The attack killed seven and wounded over thirty. This attack marks the first large scale act of terror in Jakarta carried out by the Islamic State. The governments of Indonesia and Malaysia responded quickly by removing extremist social media posts and radical websites. The intelligence sharing by both governments led to a number of arrests in Indonesia and Malaysia connected to the attack in Jakarta.

Fabi, Randy., and Kanupriya Kapoor. "As Indonesia Hunts Down Islamic State, Homegrown Jihadis Regroup." *Reuters*, February 16, 2016. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-indonesia-security/as-indonesia-hunts-down-islamic-state-homegrown-jihadis-regroup-idUKKCN0VN12A>

Jl has shifted its strategy to focusing on obtaining its goals in Indonesia before looking to the grander plan of world-wide sharia law. Abu Rusydan, the on the ground leader who some think plays a comparable role to Abu Bakar Bashir is working to garner support from the public in order to gain more recruits. He stated that they "must be peaceful up to a certain point" and that if the government will listen to their words then they do not need to conduct large scale attacks like the Bali bombing. According to former members and deradicalization organizers Jl is regrouping, seeking to build up while staying under the radar and then strike when conditions are optimal for them to have the most impact.

Jenkins, Nash. "Indonesia's Jihadi Extremist Group Is Rebounding, Experts and Members Say." *Time*, February 14, 2016. <http://time.com/4224585/jemaah-islamiyah-indonesia-terrorist-ji-islamist/>

Following a series of large-scale arrests and schisms within the group, Jemaah Islamiyah had become mostly stagnant and attacks had lessened. In 2014, the group pledged to ISIS and maintains close ties to Abu Sayyaf. In January of 2016, the once dwindling group launched an attack in Jakarta and former members of the group stated that the group preparing for a resurgence. Jl is in the rebuilding and recruiting stage, they are



sending people to Syria to train with ISIS and increasing their recruiting efforts at home. As of the time of this article publication (Feb, 2016) JI is believed to be at around 2,000 members, which is similar to its strength before the arrests and forming of various splinter groups.

### **ISLAMIC STATE IN INDONESIA**

Chan, Francis. "Efforts Under Way to Verify Chatter About Death of Indonesian ISIS Leader Linked to Marina Bay Plot." *The Straits Times*, December 4, 2017.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/efforts-underway-to-verify-chatter-about-the-death-of-indonesian-isis-leader-linked-to>.

A multi-agency effort is underway to verify the veracity of the claims that Bahrin Naim, the ISIS affiliated terrorist who was the orchestrator of the 2016 attack in Jakarta, was killed in Syria. Naim's lawyer stated that he received word of his death and several analysts had seen it communicated on several communication platforms that terror groups often use but officials are waiting for visual or DNA proof from local authorities before issuing an official confirmation of Naim's death.

Quinones, Michael. "Inside the Khilafah 4, "Hijrah Will Not Cease"." Terrorism Research & Analysis Center. September 24, 2017. <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/chatter/video-al-hayat-media-center-islamic-state-releases-inside-khilafah-4-24-september-2017>.

A propaganda and recruitment film released by ISIS's Al Hayat Media Center calls for an influx of foreign fighters to come to the Philippines and Indonesia to fight the "crusaders." The speaker, known as Abu Uqayl also directs would be adherents to go fight in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Africa or Libya.

Edwards, Will. "ISIS' Reach Extends to Southeast Asia." *Cipher Brief*, August 20, 2017. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/asia/isis-reach-latches-southeast-asia>.

The ongoing siege of the Philippine city of Marawi, occupied by the ISIS affiliated Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups, has called attention to the growing threat of ISIS funded and affiliated groups in Southeast Asia. Recently, a plot by ISIS-affiliated Jemaah Ansharut Daulah in Indonesia attempted to conduct a chemical explosive attack in Jakarta was foiled and showcased the encrypted messaging services groups are using to coordinate attacks. A cooperative task force of Malaysian, Philippine, and Indonesian forces will start operations against these groups, with Sayyaf in particular since its maritime attacks threaten all three nations.

### **FREE PAPUA ORGANIZATION (ORGANISASI PAPUA MERDEKA OPM)**

"Insurgencies and Peace Processes." *Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict*. 2013. <http://www.understandingconflict.org/conflict/index/5/Insurgencies>

This Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) article describes the different insurgencies in Indonesia's history. They are presented chronologically and by region. The Free Aceh Movement is covered along with the Free Papua Organization (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, OPM) which is a small rebel group that has been in conflict with government forces since 1964. The goal of the OPM is to acquire complete independence from Indonesia.

### **MUJAHIDIN INDONESIA TIMOR (MIT) AND THE HARAKAH SUNNI UNTUK MASYARAKAT INDONESIA (HASMI)**

Zenn, Jacob. "Next Generation Radicals in Indonesia. *Asia Times*. June, 2013.  
[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/SEA-01-120613.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-01-120613.html)

This article describes what the author sees as the newest homegrown threats to Indonesia. Several of these groups have followed the examples set by JI, JAT, and Abu Bakar Bashir. The two groups focused on by the article are the Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT) and the Harakah Sunni untuk Masyarakat Indonesia (HASMI-Sunni Movement for Indonesian Society). The MIT has ties to JAT especially through its leader, Santoso, who was a former leader in JAT. The article continues to describe the motivations of each group, the planned attacks and actual attacks associated with the groups and the level of impact they have had. The author proposes that these new groups have yet to make any significant impact on Indonesia's reputation and that it is vital for the Indonesian government to utilize democratic practices

### **Smuggling/Drug Trafficking/Criminal Activity**

Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Indonesia Field Reports." *The Brookings Institution*, 2013.  
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/02/06-indonesia-gangs-felbabbrown>

This report provides an overview of the various gangs active in Indonesia, their structure, evolution, connections to certain political parties and the government's response/interactions with them. The author reports that connections between the gangs and organized terrorist groups so far are low and infrequent. However, they could escalate if left unchecked.

See the author's series of reports on illicit economies and organized crime in Indonesia. Sample titles:

- *Crime as a mirror of politics: Urban gangs in Indonesia*
- *Bali high, rainforest low: The illicit drug trade in Indonesia*
- *The last twitch? Wildlife trafficking, illegal fishing, and lessons from anti-piracy efforts*

## Malacca Straits and Maritime Security

Mathews, Alfred Daniel. "Indonesian Maritime Security Cooperation in the Malacca Straits." Thesis,

Naval Postgraduate School, 2015. *Calhoun Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School*, June 2015.

[https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/45897/15Jun\\_Matthews\\_Alfred.pdf?sequence=1](https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/45897/15Jun_Matthews_Alfred.pdf?sequence=1).

This thesis from the Naval Postgraduate School examines the relationship between Indonesia's desire for regional security cooperation and their political relationship with their neighbors who share the waters. The resulting relationship and need for security in the face of growing threats created the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy. The balance between sovereignty of waters and the need for security and cooperation is the primary question examined in this thesis.

Chalk, Peter "Assessing the Recent Terrorist Threat to the Malacca Strait. *CTC Sentinel*, 3(4): (April, 2010):8-10. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/assessing-the-recent-terrorist-threat-to-the-malacca-strait>

This report by Dr. Peter Chalk, a Senior Policy Analyst with the Rand Corporation and an Adjunct Professor with the Naval Postgraduate School, evaluates the threat of terrorist attacks on shipping in the Malacca Strait by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The most likely types of attack scenarios and the vulnerabilities of different crafts are examined. The likelihood of a maritime attack at the Malacca Strait by the JI is deemed low by the author due to the JI's lack of maritime operations, the existing level of security at the Strait, and the availability of higher profile targets elsewhere.

## Counter-Terrorism/Law Enforcement

### SCHSIM FOLLOWING ARRESTS

Abuza, Zachary. "New Directions for Indonesian Militants after Successful Counterterrorism Operations." *Terrorism Monitor*, 8 no. 41. November, 2010.

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4cdce1682.html>

Indonesian counter-terrorism police forces led several successful operations against Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) resulting in over 450 arrests from 2003-2009. In response to these arrests, JI split off into different groups who espoused conflicting ideologies regarding the focus of their mission and where attacks should be concentrated. The article provides additional examples of how this sequence of events repeated itself with leadership being removed and group members joining other organizations or forming new ones. Despite the initial successes of Indonesian counterterrorism forces they have faced setbacks due to criticism regarding aggressive tactics.

## **RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS**

Aspinall, Edward. "Aceh/Indonesia: Conflict Analysis and Options for Systemic Conflict Transformation." Berghof Foundation for Peace Support. August, 2005.  
[http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/SCT\\_Aceh\\_Conflict\\_Analysis\\_and\\_Systemic\\_CT.pdf](http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/SCT_Aceh_Conflict_Analysis_and_Systemic_CT.pdf)

This report for the Berghof Foundation for Peace begins by the author presenting the events and issues that he views as contributed to the growth and development of the Free Aceh Movement also known as the GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka). These factors include religion, human rights issues, and availability of natural resources, government corruption, and poverty. The report continues to provide information on all of the different groups involved on both sides of the conflict while also identifying possible challenges to the peace process. The author provides two possible avenues to increase dialogue and potentially lead to resolution of the conflict. The first option is a series of dialogues and workshops based off of similar processes conducted in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and Mindanao. The second option focuses on using the post-tsunami rebuilding process as a unifying factor.

## Map of the Philippines



Philippines. (13 Nov. 2014). Google Maps. Google. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/@11.6978351,122.6217543,2203499m/data=!3m1!1e3>

# Philippines

## CONFLICT OVERVIEW

"The Philippines: Extremism & Counter-Extremism." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018. <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/philippines>.

This report from the Counter Extremism Project is an in-depth overview of extremist groups and counterinsurgency operations within the Philippines. Since the turn of the century, the Philippines have been in constant strife with Communist Rebel separatist groups and Islamic extremist groups that have participated in bombings, kidnappings, organized criminal activity, and guerilla tactics against government forces. In the last few years, since the rise of the Islamic State and globalization of extremist ideologies, the Philippine government has been forced to face an emboldened and stronger insurgency presence that has captivated much of Southeast Asia.

"Philippines Profile - Timeline." *BBC News*, January 9, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15581450>.

This BBC article makes available a chronology of key conflict events in the Philippines dating back to 1896. It offers a screenshot of the significant events that have shaped the modern Philippines and also provides additional links to articles about select contemporary events.

## OVERVIEW OF MILITANT GROUPS OPERATING IN PHILIPPINES

"Guide to the Philippines Conflict." *BBC*, December 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7887521.stm>

This BBC article from 2009 provides a description of four different groups operating out of the Philippines. This article presents the different groups' existence, background, goals and interactions with the Philippine government. The groups described are the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf, and the New Peoples' Army (militant wing of the Philippines Communist Party).

Bhattacharji, Preeti. "Terrorism Havens: Philippines." *Council on Foreign Relations*. June, 2009. <http://www.cfr.org/philippines/terrorism-havens-philippines/p9365>

This report from 2009 by the Council on Foreign Relations provides background information on terrorist groups in the Philippines. The topics covered after the initial introduction are whether the Philippines are considered a terrorist haven, the existing terrorist groups in the Philippines, connections to al-Qaeda, steps taken by the Philippine government to combat/contain terrorist activity, responses by the Philippine government to the September 11 attacks, and the role of the United States in combating terrorism in the Philippines.



Hedman, Eva-Lotta. "The Philippines: Conflict and Internal Displacement in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago." Report Commissioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Emergency and Technical Support Service. 2009.

[http://www.observatori.org/paises/pais\\_63/documentos/UNHCR.pdf](http://www.observatori.org/paises/pais_63/documentos/UNHCR.pdf)

This 2009 report by E. Hedman examines the background of the conflict in the Philippines. The report begins by describing the movement by the Muslim minority in the Philippines for an independent homeland and its escalation. The Philippine government has been forced to combat the threat of what are seen as "Moro homeland separatists" and Islamist terror groups. The report further examines the roots of the conflict and offers that the previous forced displacement of the Muslim minority can be seen as an important factor in regard to the separatists turning to violence and being more open to radicalization. Hedman predicts based on past events and the events leading up to 2009 that there will be continued violence in the region.

## **Regional Terrorist/Insurgent/Militant Groups**

### **ABU SAYYAF GROUP (ASG)**

Sarmiento, Bong S. "Philippines Vows to Crush 'Weakened' Abu Sayyaf Terror Group." *Asian Correspondent*, February 5, 2018. <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2018/02/military-abu-sayyaf/#JJuwphE6C3M4ofTJ.97>.

Government operations against a weakened Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines will continue in an effort to eradicate the remaining ISIS affiliated militants. The government killed over 350 members of the militant group since last year and have taken back much of the territory that ISIS and ASG held. The five-month war against ASG and ISIS displaced more than 350,000 Philippine citizens and claimed over 1,000 lives.

"Abu Sayyaf Group" *Council on Foreign Relations*. May, 2009.

<http://www.cfr.org/philippines/abu-sayyaf-group-philippines-islamist-separatists/p9235>

The Council on Foreign Relations created a report in 2009 on the background of Abu Sayyaf. The report provides a report on the group. The report covers the origins of Abu Sayyaf, its leadership, terrorist acts it is responsible for, its operations area, size, and the level of threat it pertains to Americans.

For additional overviews of the group, see the 2011 profile by the Center for International & Strategic Studies (*Abu Sayyaf Group*): <http://csis.org/publication/abu-sayyaf-group>)

The case study on Abu Sayyaf by the Center for International and Strategic Studies provides a look at the foundation of the group, its connections, resurgence and

fragmentation. The document concludes with predictions of the future of the group and what its presence/impact could be by 2025.

And the profile by Stanford's "Mapping Militant Organizations" research project, updated in 2013 (*Abu Sayyaf*: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/152>).

This report begins by providing a summary of the organization and then details its progression of leadership, goals, names changes, size, influence, targets, and locations. This information is presented in numbered and bulleted lists and short paragraphs. There is a menu on the right of the page that allows for quick navigation to individual topics in the report.

### *Abu Sayyaf Activities*

Chan, Francis. "Abu Sayyaf Free Two Indonesian Fishermen." *The Straits Times*, January 21, 2018. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/abu-sayyaf-free-two-indonesian-fishermen>.

Two Indonesian fisherman captured by Abu Sayyaf militants off the coast of Sabah were released from captivity. Abu Sayyaf has increased their presence at sea, committing acts of piracy and robbing ships at port.

Boyd, Alan. "Anti-Piracy Patrols Adrift in Terror-Targeted Waterway." *Asia Times*, August 30, 2017. <http://www.atimes.com/article/anti-piracy-patrols-adrift-terror-targeted-waterway/>

Seaborne attacks, with a focus on abduction and ransom, by the Abu Sayyaf group in the Sibutu Passage between Malaysia and the Philippines have shifted from fishing vessels to large-scale commercial ships. As a result of Abu Sayyaf's shift in targets, there have been 59 abductions and four murders in over the course of 18 months, as compared to 5 abductions in all of 2015. The Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia jointly patrol this area with the goal of countering Abu Sayyaf but coordination and communication issues have impacted their response times.

Jannaral, Julmuniri I., and Al Jacinto. "Abu Sayyaf Member, 7 Others Nabbed in Sulu." *Manila Times*, August 20, 2017. <http://www.manilatimes.net/abu-sayyaf-member-7-others-nabbed-sulu/345709/>.

Several raids were made over the weekend by local law enforcement and the Philippine Marines in order to capture Abu Sayyaf members wanted for murder and piracy. The operations captured leading figure Fajar Ismael (aks Putoh Taron) and but failed to capture Tenti Taup Mangarin. Several of their associates were captured along with a cache of small arms and ammunition.

Fonbuena, Carmela. "Notorious Abu Sayyaf Sub-Leader Killed in Sulu, Says Military." *Rappler*, August 13, 2017. <http://www.rappler.com/nation/178558-abu-sayyaf-killed-muktadil>

Badong Muktadil, a high-ranking Abu Sayyaf member, was killed by the Philippine Navy after residents provided a description of the boat they saw him boarding. Muktadil was wanted for the hijacking of the Vietnamese ship *MV Giang Hai* along with several abductions and murders. He and his followers were also wanted by Malaysian authorities for multiple hijackings and attacks.

### Abu Sayyaf Pledges to ISIS

"Abu Sayyaf Group" *Counter Extremism Project*. December, 2017. <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/abu-sayyaf-group>

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) originally formed in 1991 after a split from the Moro National Liberation Front in 1989. The majority of the group remained as an al-Qaeda affiliate, but in 2014 the faction based out of Basilan, led by Isnilon Hapilon, pledged itself to the Islamic State. This detailed Counter Extremism Project report continues to provide an in-depth look at the group's funding, targets, training, recruitment tactics, doctrine and leadership.

### FACTIONS LEADER: ISNILON HAPILON (KILLED OCTOBER 2017)

France-Presse, Agence. "IS Southeast Asia Chief Killed in Philippines." *Jakarta Post*, October 16, 2017.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/10/16/is-southeast-asia-chief-killed-in-philippines.html>.

Isnilon Hapilon, emir of IS in Southeast Asia, and Omar Maute, one of the two leading Maute brothers of the Maute group were killed by Philippine government forces during operations to retake Marawi. The size and scope of the attack caused concern that the city would be used as a base of operations for ISIS in the area. Hapilon had a \$5 million bounty on him and DNA testing is being conducted to completely confirm his death.

Laccino, Ludovica. "Who is Isnilon Hapilon? The Charismatic ISIS Emir at Heart of Philippines' Marawi Siege." *International Business Times*, June 13, 2017. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/who-isnilon-hapilon-charismatic-isis-emir-heart-philippines-marawi-siege-1626101>

Isnilon Hapilon joined Abu Sayyaf sometime in the late 1990's, possibly 1997. He climbed the ranks through his involvement in abduction for ransom of civilians and military members including the 2001 abduction of 20 civilians from a private resort. In 2014, he and his followers split from the main Abu Sayyaf Group and pledged to ISIS.

## **ISIS AFFILIATED GROUPS:**

*For more information on ISIS operations in Southeast Asia, see their other sections on page 10, 38, and 55.*

### IS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Cigaral, Ian Nicolas. "Military Sees ISIS-inspired Turaife Group as Major Threat." *The Philippine Star*, December 15, 2017.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/12/15/1768672/military-sees-isis-inspired-turaife-group-major-threat>.

Esmail Abdulmalik, who goes by the name Abu Turaife, could be selected to take over as the lead ISIS commander in the Philippines. After the defeat of the Maute group and the death of Isnilon Hapilon, the self-styled Turaife group, though few in number, has already been suspected of planning several bombings and has the potential to become a serious threat in the region.

Sarmiento, Bong S. "Islamic State Lurks in Philippine Shadows." *Asia Times*, November 7, 2017.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/islamic-state-lurks-philippine-shadows/>.

Despite the siege of Marawi being over and the deaths of former Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute of the Maute Group, there is still a serious militant threat in the Philippines. Amin Baco, a bomb-maker who is affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah, is believed to be next in line to take over for Isnilon Hapilon and Puruji Indama, another Abu Sayyaf leader, is believed to be planning new attacks. There are at least four ISIS affiliated groups operating in the Philippines, though several are numerically diminished after losses in Marawi, they still pose a serious threat.

Kugelman, Michael. "Filipino ISIS 'Not a Rag-Tag Group of Rebels.'" *Cipher Brief*, October 5, 2017.

[https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/asia/filipino-isis-not-rag-tag-group-rebels?utm\\_source=Join+the+Community+Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=2fecf5ef03-TCB+October+5+2017&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_02cbee778d-2fecf5ef03-122455129](https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/asia/filipino-isis-not-rag-tag-group-rebels?utm_source=Join+the+Community+Subscribers&utm_campaign=2fecf5ef03-TCB+October+5+2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_02cbee778d-2fecf5ef03-122455129)

The actions and tactics of the ISIS affiliated groups caught the Philippine government by surprise due to their different tactics and technological advancements compared to other regional insurgent groups. Normal counterterrorism efforts dealt with groups using small arms and operating out of remote bases in the jungles and rural areas. Urban warfare against a highly organized group that uses drones for reconnaissance and encrypted messaging apps to coordinate attacks was a departure from past operations. The responding actions by the military against the group may serve as propaganda for recruits and analysts believe that ISIS backed groups have found a fertile area to grow in the Philippines and will be a problem for some time.

#### ABU SAYYAF AND OTHERS

"Islamic State Philippines (ISP, ISISP)-Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)." *TRAC*, 2016.

<https://www.trackinterrorism.org/group/islamic-state-philippines-isp-abu-sayyaf-group-asg>

Four different groups have pledged their allegiance to ISIS in the Philippines. Isnlon Hapilon's Basilan based faction of Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), a faction of the Bansamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), the Maute Group, and the Ansarul Kilafah Philippines. This piece provides a brief distinction between the ASG faction that support ISIS and the faction that supports AQ and provide several videos on the groups allegiance to IS along with a list of arrested members, past leaders, areas of operations and photos of the group. The Ansarul Kilafah is a group that splintered off from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) when the main group entered into a peace deal with the government and the BIFF was the armed wing of the MILF that split during the peace process as well.

#### MAUTE GROUP

"Maute Group." *TRAC*, 2016. <https://www.trackinterrorism.org/group/maute-group-islamic-state-lanao-daulat-ul-islamiya-daulah-islamiyah>

The Maute Group is led by two brothers, Omar Maute and Abdullah Maute, who started off minor-criminals and moved on to start a militant group in 2012, the Khalifa Islamiah Mindanao. Their group expanded and established strong ties to Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia but then pledged to ISIS in 2015. The group is connected to regional drug trafficking and is believed to have a high number of college educated individuals as a by-product of its recruitment actions targeting Mindanao State University.

## **Marawi Siege**

"The House Behind the Philippine Rebel Siege of Marawi." *Reuters*, October 30, 2017.

<https://reuters.com/video/2017/10/30/the-house-behind-the-philippine-rebel-si?videoid=372842695>.

A look into the building where Isnlon Hapilon and his followers planned the attack on Marawi shows how well prepared they were. When security forces first tried to capture him before the siege, Hapilon escaped through a hole blasted in the back of the house and then gathered his followers for the attack on Marawi. Locals claim to have had no idea there were extremists living nearby and claimed they would have turned him in if they knew. With Isnlon and Omar Maute's deaths, the inhabitants of Marawi hope to begin the long process of rebuilding.

Gunaratna, Rohan. "Manila Scores a Victory against ISIS but More Battles Loom." *Cipher Brief*, October 5, 2017. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/asia/manila-scores-victory-isis-battles-loom>

The Philippine security forces along with international assistance have defeated the majority of the IS affiliated forces in Marawi, with up to 700 militants being killed during the four month long siege. There is still resistance but many of the surviving militants have left the city and are in the process of joining up with other pro-ISIS groups and are believed to be plotting attacks on several other cities in the area.

"Women and Children Fighting Alongside Islamic State Militants in Marawi." *Asian Correspondent*, September 5, 2017. <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2017/09/women-children-fighting-alongside-islamic-state-militants-marawi/-YWdcU37b6psDB5tf.97>

The Philippine military began what it announced as a final push into Marawi to force out the Maute Group and Abu Sayaff members who have besieged the city since May. The military reports not only encountering snipers and the expected IED's and traps but also being shot at by women and children. Lieutenant General Carlito Galvez, of the Philippine forces in western Mindanao claimed that the city should be secure soon but expects the fighting to become over more intense as the militant groups become desperate. *Asian Correspondent*, September 5.

"Fighting Reignites near Marawi Mosque." *ABS-CBN*, August 25, 2016. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/25/17/fighting-reignites-near-marawi-mosque>

The Grand Mosque of Marawi was utilized as the main base of operations by the Maute group. Security forces carefully recaptured the mosque to avoid damaging it yet within a day fighting renewed as Maute forces moved back into nearby buildings. Marawi has been under the control of ISIS affiliated militants since May 23 and the death toll has climbed over 770.

Ness, Marielle. "Beyond the Caliphate: Southeast Asia." *CTC*. June 2, 2017. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/programs-resources/beyond-the-caliphate-2>

West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) series, *Beyond the Caliphate*, provides a comprehensive look at ISIS affiliated groups operating beyond the central ISIS areas in the Middle East. This entry looks at the militant groups operating out of Southeast Asia that have pledged to ISIS, including the Maute group that recently invaded and seized Marawi.

Goldman, Russell. "The Latest Unrest in the Southern Philippines, Explained." *New York Times*, May 25, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/25/world/asia/philippines-martial-law-marawi-mindanao.html>



The southern city of Marawi was besieged and occupied by militants linked to ISIS. The Maute group and Abu Sayyaf launched an attack on the city after the failed attempt by Philippine security forces to capture Abu Sayyaf's leader, Isnilon Hapilon. The city is has been damaged by the groups and several hostages have been taken.

Goldman, Russell. "The Latest Unrest in the Southern Philippines, Explained." *New York Times*, March 25, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/25/world/asia/philippines-martial-law-marawi-mindanao.html>.

The southern city of Marawi was besieged and occupied by militants linked to ISIS. The Maute group and Abu Sayyaf launched an attack on the city after the failed attempt by Philippine security forces to capture Abu Sayyaf's leader, Isnilon Hapilon. The city is has been damaged by the groups and several hostages have been taken.

### **MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF)**

"Moro Islamic Liberation Front." *New York Times*, October 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/topic/organization/moro-islamic-liberation-front>.

This piece from the New York Times is a chronological compendium of all articles, commentaries, and analyses published in the New York Times related to MILF.

"Moro Islamic Liberation Front.", *Mapping Militant Organizations Project*. Stanford University, 2013. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/309>

This report provides a brief overview of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). After an opening summary regarding the group, the topics covered are the leadership, ideology and goals, estimated size of the group, resources, external influences, locations, targets and tactics, political activities, major attacks, connections with other groups and relations with the community. This information is presented in numbered and bulleted lists and short paragraphs. There is a menu on the right of the page that allows for quick navigation to individual topics in the report.

### **MILF Fights Against Islamic Extremism**

Sarmiento, Bong S. "Strange Bedfellows in Philippine-Islamic State Fight." *Asia Times*, October 1, 2017. <http://www.atimes.com/article/strange-bedfellows-philippine-islamic-state-fight/>

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a once active militant group in the Philippines for decades had withdrawn from fighting following a peace agreement in 2014 with the Philippine Government, has joined forces with government troops to fight against the IS-affiliated Maute Group. With government forces and the MILF have not been fighting alongside each other they have been coordinating attacks and providing fire support. A

regional military official stated that the current cooperative actions may serve to prevent another Marwari scenario

France-Presse, Agence. "10 MILF Fighters Dead in Clashes with ISIS-linked Groups." *Rappler*, August 23, 2017. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/179780-moro-islamic-liberation-front-isis-alarm-philippines>.

Following the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's commitment to combatting Islamic extremism in the Philippines, the group has engaged in armed conflict with associates of ISIS. The Mindanao Island is considered to be the home of MILF, and ISIS is now challenging that claim. In clashes against ISIS supports, MILF lost 10 of their over 10,000-strong fighters.

"Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Philippines' Biggest Muslim Rebel Group, Supports 'Fatwa' Against Violent Radicalism." *The Straits Times*, July 4, 2017. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/moro-islamic-liberation-front-philippines-biggest-muslim-rebel-group-supports-fatwa>.

MILF leadership has publicly supported a fatwa against violent radicalism. Groups such as ASG and ISIS are now in the crosshairs of the largest rebel group in the Philippines. MILF has participated in the liberation of Marawi City, and has vowed to keep extremism out of their communities.

#### *Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)*

Chalk, Peter. "The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters: The Newest Obstacles to Peace in the Southern Philippines?" *CTC Sentinel* 6 no.11-12 (November, 2013): 15-17. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-bangsamoro-islamic-freedom-fighters-the-newest-obstacles-to-peace-in-the-southern-philippines>

This article from the Combating Terrorism Center's monthly publication, provides the background and known capabilities of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The BIFF had been involved in a coordinated attack with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) against government troops in September of 2013 in the village of Lamitan on Basilan Island. The BIFF emerged as a faction of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front due to the concern of Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato that the MILF was more open to compromise with the government. The BIFF is believed to number around 300 members and possess a sizable array of pistols, machine guns, sniper rifles, heavy weapons, mortars, IED's and landmines. The author concludes that BIFF could be a threat to the peace process due to their mission statement, armament and capabilities and past coordination with ASG

#### *PEACE DEAL WITH GOVERNMENT*

"Philippines Signs Landmark Deal to End Muslim Uprising." *BBC*, March 27, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26766215>

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed a peace deal with the Philippine government that have originated in 2001, following an initial cease fire in 1997. The deal sought to provide a greater sense of autonomy to the Muslim areas of Mindanao in a bid to end the multi-decade long conflict where over 120,000 people had been killed.

#### DISARMAMENT

“MILF Rebels hand Over Arms in the Philippines” *BBC*, June 16, 2015.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33144749>

Following in the wake of the 2014 peace treaty with the government, members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIFF) surrendered their weapons and began the process of being reintegrated into society. They each were given limited funds in order to obtain education and employment. Only some members of the group disarmed.

#### BIFF REJECTS PEACE PROCESS

Manlupig, Karlos. “The BIFF-ISIS Connection and Social Media.” *Rappler*, September 19, 2014.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/69590-biff-isis-connection-social-media>

The BIFF separated from the MILF during the 2014 peace treaty and following disarmament and continued to launch terror attacks. The BIFF spokesperson, Abu Misry Mama claims that they are in regular contact with ISIS through social media and has an “alliance” with the group.

#### **MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)**

“Moro National Liberation Front.” *Mapping Militant Organizations Project*. Stanford University. July, 2014. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/379>

This report provides a brief overview of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). After an opening summary regarding the group, the topics covered are the leadership, ideology and goals, name changes, estimated size, resources, external influences, locations, targets and tactics, political activities, major attacks, relationships with other groups and relationships with the community. This information is presented in numbered and bulleted lists and short paragraphs. There is a menu on the right of the page that allows for quick navigation to individual topics in the report.

#### **RAJAH SOLAIMAN MOVEMENT (RSM)**

Roggio, Bill. “Philippines Police Detain Terror Group Leader.” *The Long War Journal*. August, 2009. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/08/philippine\\_police\\_de.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/08/philippine_police_de.php)

This article in the Long War Journal begins by provides a background on the Rajah Solaiman Movement. The leader of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, Dinno Amor

Rosalejos Pareja (aka Khalil Pareja and Abu Jihad) was captured by Philippine police in 2009. The Rajah Solaiman Movement, was founded by Catholic converts to Islam and while it remains small in numbers it has been responsible for several deadly attacks in the Philippines. The group has a wider range of movement in highly Catholic areas and is receiving funds from both the Abu Sayaff Group and Jemaah Islamiyah. In addition, it is believed that they are sponsored by Saudi sources as well.

“Philippines Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts.” *International Crisis Group, Asia Report* 110 (2005):1-35. <https://www.hsd.org/?view&did=474136>

This report conducted by the International Crisis Group on militant Islamic converts begins with provided a history of Islam in the Philippines arranged by its location. A few examples of converts carrying out attacks are provided in the next section of the report and then the Moro Islamic Liberation Front’s (MILF) factionalism and connections to outside terrorist groups are discussed. The value seen in converts is that they have a wider network to operate in and can more easily reach out to past Christian associates. They are able to blend in with the majority population of the country. A primary example of this presented is the Rajah Solaiman Movement, a group founded by Catholic converts to Islam. In the conclusion of the report, the International Crisis Group reiterates the appeal of converts to the MILF and other organizations and offers recommendations on how to implement counter-terrorism operations while respecting and preserving human rights.

### **NEW PEOPLE’S ARMY**

Sarmiento, Bong S. "Duterte's Peace Try Falls to Pieces." *Asia Times*, November 27, 2017. <http://www.atimes.com/article/dutertes-peace-try-falls-pieces/>.

The New People’s Army (NPA), a communist militant group that has been operating in the Philippines for decades, was in peace negotiations with the Philippine government until they were broken off on November 23. Progress in the negotiations was limited and the NPA had conducted several attacks during the process as well. The NPA used the Marawi siege to its advantage, launching attacks and expanding its territory while the military was occupied.

Spillius, Alex. “Typhoon Haiyan: The Philippines’ Communist Insurgency Explained.” *The Telegraph*, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/philippines/10447524/Typhoon-Haiyan-the-Philippines-communist-insurgency-explained.html>

This article reports on a series of attacks on aid convoys, in response to Typhoon Haiyan, by the militant communist group the New People’s Army (NPA). A history is provided of the origins of the NPA and the government’s crackdown on the organization. The NPA was greatly reduced but has recently undergone a small resurgence. Current attacks are mainly limited to small engagements with government troops, occasional kidnapping

and murders and a destruction of government equipment. The author believes that even though the NPA is greatly diminished, it still has the ability to continue launching new attacks and disrupt the aid and rebuilding process.

“New People’s Army.” *Mapping Militant Organizations Project*. Stanford University. August, 2012. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/149>

This report provides a brief overview of the New People’s Army, the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The topics covered are a summary of the organization, leadership, ideologies and goals, estimated size of the organization, influence, targets, locations, political activities, and relationship with the community and with other groups. This information is presented in numbered and bulleted lists and short paragraphs. There is a menu on the right of the page that allows for quick navigation to individual topics in the report.

## **Counter-Terrorism/Law Enforcement**

### **LOCAL RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS**

“Philippines.” *International Crisis Group*. 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines>

The International Crisis Group is an independent organization that provides reports, analysis and recommendations regarding different trouble areas/hot spots in the world. Their mission statement is to help prevent and resolve deadly conflict. The website allows the user to obtain region and country specific reports through the menu bars along the top and left side of the page. The reports range in topic from terrorism and violent attacks to government instability and other factors that could lead to or contribute to violent conflict or outbreaks. Recent reports made by the International Crisis Group are listed on each page and contain an overview of the situation and in some cases provide additional information and recommendations. An additional resource on the page, the crises watch database, allows the user to search by country and access a compilation of news reports from outside sites pertaining to a particular country or multiple countries. All articles are presented chronologically with a summary of their content.

The site provides a series of in-depth reports on security issues in the Philippines.

Sample titles:

- *The Philippines: Counter-insurgency vs. counter-terrorism in Mindanao*, (2008, May 14)
- *The communist insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and talks*, (2011, February 14)

- *The Philippines: Indigenous rights and the MILF peace process*, (2011, November 22)
- *The Philippines: Dismantling rebel groups*, (2013, June 19)

Poling, Gregory B. "Manila and Moro Rebels Strike a Deal." *Center for Strategic & International Studies*. October, 2012. <http://csis.org/publication/manila-and-moro-rebels-strike-deal>

This article written in 2012 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies describes the preliminary agreement made in 2012 between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). This new agreement is seen by the author as an update on the previous one made in 1989. The previous agreement provided for the creation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is viewed by the author as dysfunctional, whereas the current one created a self-governing polity. The article concludes with an evaluation of what this new agreement means for the U.S. and others.

Ahmed, Akbar. and Frankie Martin. "Deadly drone strike on Muslims in the Southern Philippines." *The Brookings Institution*. 2012. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/03/05-drones-philippines-ahmed>

This opinion piece examines the US' first strikes in Southeast Asia using Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles. Targeting the heads of the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah organizations on the Southern Philippine island of Jolo, the expansion of the US' drone war risks enflaming the ongoing conflicts in southern Muslim communities. The Tausug, a tribal group rooted in honor, revenge, loyalty, and hospitality, has historically been subordinated by colonialists and the Philippine central government. After 9/11, Manila labeled the Tausug as having relations with the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group. Relationships through clans, local religious leaders, and international bodies are integral to reconciliation and peace.

### **U.S. COUNTER-TERRORISM/INSURGENCY POLICY**

Watts, Steven., Jason H. Campbell, Patrick B. Johnston, Sameer Lalwani, and Sarah H. Bana. *Countering others' Insurgencies: Understanding US Small-Footprint Interventions in Local Context*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. 2014. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR513.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR513.html)

This report by the RAND Corporation evaluates the success rate of U.S. "small-footprint" programs based on a quantitative analysis of past counter-insurgency programs and comparison to counter-insurgency programs in the Philippines and Pakistan. Key findings of the report were that U.S. counter-insurgency programs that are partnered with local governments work best when the local governments do not operate counter to U.S. policies/character. An inclusive local government that does not rely on excessive force was found by the report to have resulted in a more successful program. The



report also provides advice on how to manage ineffective local partnerships. Additional findings and recommendations are provided in which it is identified that “small-footprint” counter-insurgency operations will be long-term and often have to be augmented with large scale aid programs. It was also advised that local government security forces need to include members of all local ethnic groups and religions in order to operate effectively and avoid excessive/abusive actions during counter-insurgency programs. Recommendations listed in the report for U.S. programs included the need to find areas of agreement with local governments/partner nations, focus training of local security forces on quality, not quantity, and make civilian safety a priority.

## **Operations Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P)**

### **ROLE OF U.S. MILITARY**

Maxwell, David S. “Partnership, Respect Guide U.S. Military Role in Philippines. *World Politics Review*, February, 2013.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12685/partnership-respect-guide-u-s-military-role-in-philippines>

David S. Maxwell is a retired Army Special Forces member and is the associate director for the Center for Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. This article describes the role of United States in the Philippines through Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P). He discusses the supporting role of U.S. forces and evaluates the primary role of Philippine armed forces in local counter-terrorism operations. The next phase of the article covers the importance of the assessment by Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) of the area and the situation there and its role in forming the OEF-P campaign plan. Maxwell then covers the importance of understanding unconventional warfare in order to combat it and the challenges OEF-P faced when dealing with the local media and government.

### **NON-COMBAT OPERATIONS**

Boot, Max., and Richard Bennet. “Treading softly in the Philippines.” *The Weekly Standard*, January 5, 2009.

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/956zznwj.asp>

This article recounts the successes of the Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) and offers it as a case study of low-profile, non-combat operations. The authors, Max Boot, a senior fellow in national security studies at the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and Richard Bennet, a research associate, also at the CFR spent time in the Philippines and met with members of OEF-P. The article begins by provided a history of the conflict by between the Philippine government and the MNLF and its offshoots. The percentage and geographic concentration of the Muslim population is provided along with their living conditions. The extreme poverty is seen as a factor in their radicalization and largely Muslim areas tend to blame the mostly Catholic government for failing to improve their living conditions. OEF-P faces several obstacles since all U.S. forces are

prohibited from any combat role whatsoever by the Philippine government. Instead, the goals of OEF-P, in addition to traditional advisory roles to Philippine armed forces, are to wean the local population away from insurgent groups. This is completed through countering insurgent propaganda, providing medical and civil aid and local development. Overall, the authors conclude that this form of operation has several advantages in regards to counter-terrorism especially the ability for it to continue on indefinitely if needed due to the little attention it draws.

### **ANALYSIS**

Munson, Mark. "Has Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines been a success?" *Small Wars Journal*. April 5, 2013. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/has-operation-enduring-freedom-philippines-been-a-success>

The Small Wars Journal is a non-profit group designed to enhance knowledge and ideas for those prosecuting small wars. The article evaluates Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) and provides the author's view as to whether it was a success by detailing the advisory role of U.S. forces during the operation and making arguments both for and against its effectiveness. The article concludes with the author describing the impact of OEF-P.

### **WHOLE-OF-NATION APPROACH**

Beaudette, Fran. "JSOTF-P Uses Whole-of-Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines." *Special Warfare*, 25 no. 3. (July-September, 2012). <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/SWmag/archive/SW2503/SW2503BringStabilityToThePhilippines.html>

This report by Col. Fran Beaudette who commands the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group and JSOTF-P describes the impact of the "whole-nation" approach of the U.S. presence in the Philippines. Col. Beaudette notes that this style of engagement in protecting the local populace has received approval by both the government and people. The impact of the 1960 Muslim insurgency is recounted and how its aftermath created a terrorist haven in the Philippines allowing for unchecked training camps. However, the close partnership between U.S. forces and Philippine military and security forces has resulted in an effective force to combat terrorist/insurgent threats. Aspects of this approach include the collaboration of forces along with the sharing of ideas, information, and training has led to what is described as impressive results. Col. Beaudette maintains that despite the progress made in the Philippines it is essential that the Philippine government and military forces keep continued pressure on terrorist groups in the region and areas that serve as training facilities.

## **Regional Counter-Terrorism/Counter-Insurgency**

## **REGIONAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO INSURGENCIES**

Chalk, Peter., Angel Rabasa, William Rosenau, and Leanne Piggott. *The Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. 2009.

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG846.html>

This report by RAND Corporation analyses the underlying motives and historical roots of militants, as well as national and international responses to insurgencies in Southeast Asia. Taking into account the historical relationships between the central governments and non-state actors, this report emphasizes the need to enhance local governance in regions prone to fundamentalism, effectively identify and enact information campaigns to counter radical ideologies, and to root CT assistance in regional institutions such as ASEAN. Through these means and by focusing on “smart power” such as public diplomacy and empowering moderate Muslim leaders, counterterrorism in Southeast Asia can effectively be understood and implemented to be seen as in the host country’s own national interest and not just as an extension of US policy interests.

Pauker, Guy J. *Government Responses to Armed Insurgency in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Examination of Failures and Successes and Their Likely Implications for the Future*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. 1985. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P7081.html>

This paper, presented at a Regional Strategic Studies Program Workshop at the institute of Southeastern Asian Studies in Singapore. The efforts of various Southeast Asian governments to deal with Communist, Islamic, and other insurgency groups are examined. The author determines that counter-insurgency military operations are successful if paired with social and economic incentives. A history of the conflict in the area and the local governments’ policies is provided with arguments for both the perceived success and failures of these policies.

## **U.S. Policies and Regional Programs**

### **MILITARY**

Chang, Felix.K. “Sideways: America’s Pivot and its Military Bases in the Asia-Pacific.” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. April, 2013. <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2013/04/sideways-americas-pivot-and-its-military-bases-asia-pacific>

This report examines the historical developments leading towards to the forward presence of American military personnel in the Asia-Pacific. In particular, this showcases the Obama administration’s decisions to “pivot to Asia”, although forces in the political and security realms have been drawing the US’ engagement in the region for quite some time. The potential for maritime disputes amidst China’s recent assertive behavior for territorial and resource control caused Southeast Asian governments to welcome an increased American military presence, as well as regional and bilateral security assistance agreements. While budget constraints in the near- and long-terms may cause consolidation and reconfiguration of American force posture in its overseas military

installations, it is integral to continue multinational exercises in the region to enhance interoperability and fluidity during an era of uncertain financial constraints and an increasingly assertive Beijing attempting to exert regional dominance over its neighbors.

Parthemore, Christine., Jay Gullede, Michael Horowitz and Nirav Patel. "Uncharted waters: The US Navy and Navigating Climate Change." *Center for a New American Security*. 2008. <http://www.cnas.org/publications/working-papers/uncharted-waters-the-u-s-navy-and-navigating-climate-change#.UxSuJMqwWrE>

This brief delivers insight on the need for the US Navy to adjust to operational and strategic environments due to climate change over the next 30 years. Policies of energy efficiency and alternative fuel sources may affect design, operations, and installations of existing and new vessels. Changes in the littoral operating environment will require frequent mapping, sampling, and maintenance. Sea-level rises and increased severity of tropical storms may increase threats to naval bases and other coastal facilities. Additionally, naval and resource competition may arise as the Arctic's shipping lanes begin to develop. The US Navy is capable of benefitting from planning now for the mid- and long-term effects of climate change and enacting strategic approaches with its allies to adapt to the changing security environment.

## **Maritime Security**

"Expanded U.S. assistance for maritime capacity building." U.S. Department of State. December 16, 2013. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/218735.htm>

This fact sheet addresses US Secretary of State John Kerry's commitment of \$32.5 million in regional and bilateral assistance to improve Southeast Asia's maritime capacity building. Through strengthening information sharing agencies, advancing training programs, and countering transnational threats, the US is investing in a new era of regional cooperation for maritime security and law enforcement. The maritime capacity building project in Southeast Asia will provide the region with adequate equipment, education, networks, and information resources to ensure the US' steadfast commitment as it pivots to Asia. Operating in an area of intensified resource and geographic disputes, the US' assistance measures will provide an avenue to ensure international peace and security where tensions run high.

## **TRI-BORDER AREA (TBA)**

Rabasa, Angel., and Peter Chalk. *Non-Traditional Threats and Maritime Domain Awareness in the Tri-Border Area of Southeast Asia*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. 2012. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/OP372.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP372.html)

The RAND National Research Institute created this report originally for the Secretary of Defense and it was later approved for public release. The report covers the tri-border area (TBA) between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia is a major area for terrorist

and criminal activity. It is a known transit zone for local and national terrorist groups. The report provides geospatial and demographic characteristics and a threat assessment of the TBA. The Philippines Coast Watch System (CWS), which involves U.S. and Australian assistance, is described and evaluated along with the feasibility of a tri-state maritime security system. The report concludes with recommendations for the future development of the CWS.

Comer, Charles. "The Parting of the Sulawesi Sea: U.S. Strategy and Transforming the Terrorist Triangle." *Military Review*. May-June, 2010.

[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20100630\\_art012.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20100630_art012.pdf)

This review investigates the T3- "Terrorist Transit Triangle"- around the Sulawesi Sea on the tri-border region of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Due to the lack of governance in the island chains throughout the T3, these provide natural transit routes for weapons and militants to Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines. The lack of coordination between Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia to formulate an official multinational effort of interdiction and maritime law enforcement are attributed to distrust, corruption, inter-service rivalries, and a lack of resources both between and among the three governments. All three governments heavily rely on US assistance for counterterrorism purposes, although aid distribution has been uneven. Through the political will from the US, as well as among the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the geospatial challenges of the T3 region can be addressed through an efficient multinational effort.

### **STRAITS OF MALACCA**

Umana, Felipe. "Threat convergence: Transnational security threats in the Straits of Malacca." *The Fund for Peace*. 2012. <http://library.fundforpeace.org/ttcvr1213>

The Fund for Peace (FFP) is a non-profit research and educational center. This report discusses the importance of the Straits of Malacca in regards to maritime trade and commerce and the security concerns associated. Additional concerns are regional sovereignty and environmental protection. In addition to legitimate commerce, the Straits of Malacca have become a haven for piracy, black market goods and terrorist and militant organizations. The report examines the regional and national significance of the Straits of Malacca, the extent of the threats in the area, local security-measures taken and recommendations by the FFP.

## **Smuggling/Drug Trafficking/Criminal Activity**

### **DRUG TRAFFICKING**

Chouvy, Pierre-Arnaud. Southeast Asia's thriving drug trade. *World Politics Review*. October 25, 2011. <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/10442/southeast-asias-thriving-drug-trade>

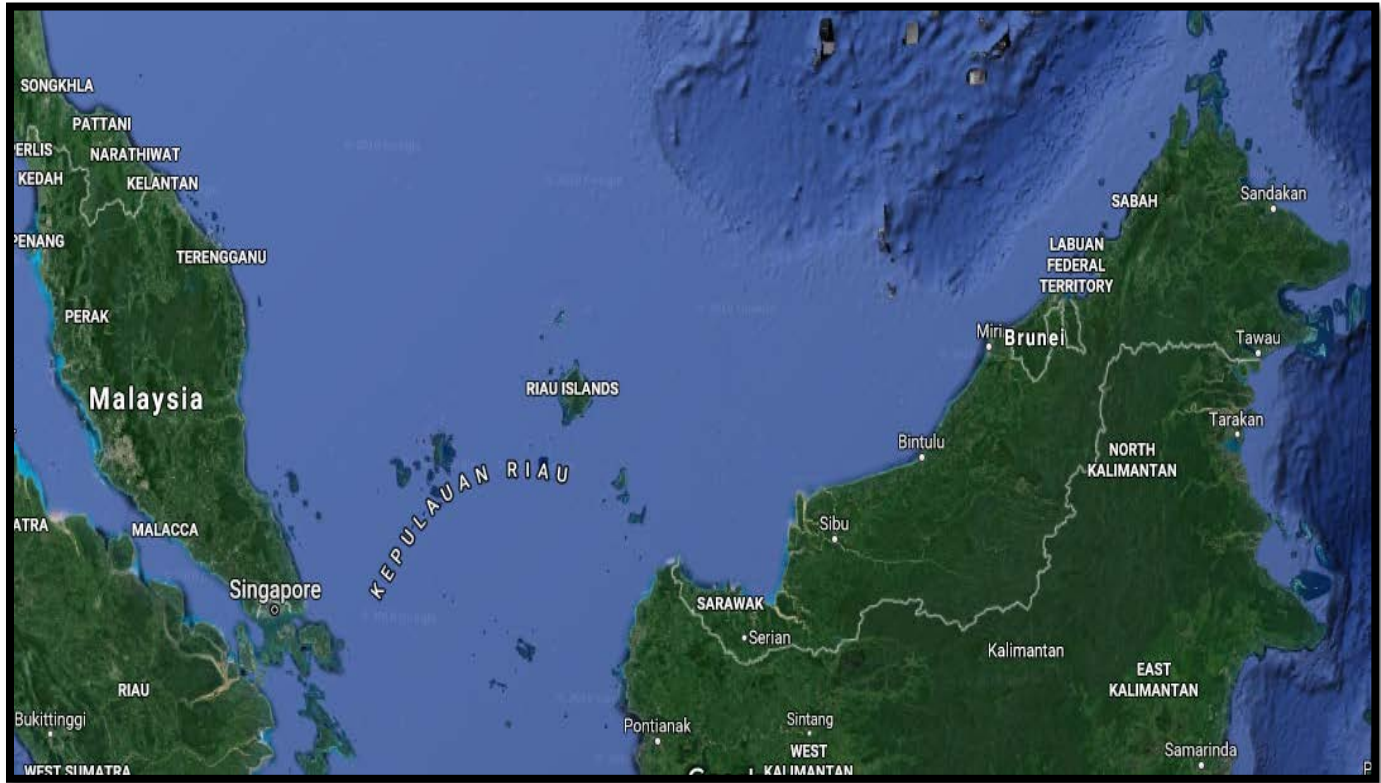
This article surveys the oscillations in illicit opium production in Southeast Asia throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Due to environmental and geopolitical factors of favorable weather, rugged mountains, and lack of power projection from central governments, the illicit poppy cultivation and insurgents have been sheltered from national and international interdiction operations. The beginning of the 21st century saw a steady decrease in cultivation until a significant resurgence in conflict paired with rising opium prices caused a rise in production. Because of opium's unique quality of being the only cash crop in several regions without adequate compensation, bans from the central government were only effective in the short-term and caused widespread debt, food insecurity, and poverty. In the absence of alternative crops and avenues to economic prosperity, not addressing poverty and corruption- the main drivers of opium production- leads to the ineffectiveness of international counter-narcotics policies in Southeast Asia.

#### **ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE/ANIMAL SMUGGLING**

Fuller, Thomas. "Notorious Figure in Animal Smuggling, Beyond Reach in Laos." *The New York Times*. March 3, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/04/world/asia/notorious-figure-in-animal-smuggling-beyond-reach-in-laos.html>

This article examines the notion of environmental crime and trafficking of wildlife from Laotian businessman Vixay Keosavang. One of his companies, Xaysavang Trading, smuggles wildlife from other countries into Laos to merit the legality of their sale as if the animals were bred in captivity in accordance with Laotian law. The main problem in enforcing the rule of law in Laos is due to Mr. Vixay's connections and the larger trafficking community's links to influential people. Because of the levels of corruption and economic benefits for those involved in the trade and laundering of wildlife, law enforcement agencies in Southeast Asia are inherently at a disadvantage to gather sufficient evidence and ensure fair judicial proceedings against the perpetrators.

## Map of Malaysia



Malaysia. (30 Jan. 2018). Google Maps. Google. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/@7.4277549,110.3184221,1853765m/data=!3m1!1e3>



# Malaysia

## OVERVIEW

"Malaysia: Extremism & Counter Extremism." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/malaysia>.

The Counter Extremism Project identifies four main insurgent forces that have been active since 2000. Formerly active Kumpulan Mujadin Malaysia (KMM), the Islamic State, small cells of the Indonesian based Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), and the Philippines based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Due to Malaysia's high Muslim population, analysts believe that it is at an elevated risk for radicalization and terror threats. Malaysia has partnered with the United States, United Nations, and regional partners in a formal effort to combat insurgent forces on land, online, and the against the growing threat of piracy at sea.

"East & Southeast Asia: Malaysia." CIA World Factbook. January 23, 2018.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>.

The CIA Factbook on Malaysia is a thorough encyclopedia of information on the state. It identifies Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as foreign terrorist organizations whose aims are to establish networks in Malaysia, maintain recruitment and safe havens, prey upon weak communities, and hinder the Malaysian government. The LTTE are an organization based out of Shri Lanka who is attempting to extend their reach beyond their territory in Shri Lanka and into other coastal states. The Factbook also identifies via the International Maritime Bureau that the waters offshore from Malaysia are "high risk for piracy and armed robbery against ships."

"CrisisWatch Malaysia." CrisisWatch. January, 2018.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/malaysia>.

The International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch Malaysia is a compilation of reports, analyses, and articles that follow the events related to insurgency and terrorism unfolding in Malaysia. The ICG also rates each country's status based on the current events and trending politics of the state. As of January 2018, the ICG assess that the situation in Malaysia remains "unchanged." The most recent development was a December video released by ISIS featuring Muhammad Aqif Heusen Rahizat urging Muslims to attack their native lands if they cannot join the fight in the holy lands (Syria and Iraq).

## TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

"Major Extremist and terrorist Incidents." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

[https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/malaysia#major\\_extremist\\_and\\_terrorist\\_incidents](https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/malaysia#major_extremist_and_terrorist_incidents).

This section of the Malaysian Counter Extremism Project Report provides an interactive scrolling timeline of terror activities starting in 1950. Terror activities in Malaysia pick up around 2016 when the Islamic State became prevalent in the region.

## **Regional Terrorist/Insurgent/Militant Groups**

### **ISLAMIC STATE (IS)**

*For more information the Islamic State in Southeast Asia please see the section on the Philippines on page 21, and the section on Thailand on page 55.*

"ISIS." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/taxonomy/term/3>.

The Counter Extremism Project is one of the leading organizations that provides comprehensive analysis on the state of extremism and militarized armed groups across the globe. This report, provides an overview of the Islamic State, analyzes its places of operation, leadership, recruitment strategies, and violent activities. The report also outlines how foreign nations perceive and interact with the group transnationally.

Fealy, Greg, and John Funston. *Indonesian and Malaysian Support for the Islamic State*. Report. January 6, 2016.

<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2016/PBAAD863.pdf>.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the federal government that focuses on U.S. national security and driving the development of democratic states while improving the quality of life for people around the globe. USAID commissioned this report on Indonesia and Malaysia to determine the population's susceptibility to the ideologies of ISIS and the impact that the group may have on the countries. Due to Malaysia and Indonesia's predominately Muslim population, the states' may be at a higher risk of ISIS influence. The report breaks down risk factors, impacts, counter-terrorism operations, and U.S. interests as a result of the ISIS threat in Indonesia and Malaysia.

### **IS RECRUITMENT OPERATIONS IN MALAYSIA**

Mohd Sani, Moh Azizuddin. "ISIS Recruitment of Malaysian Youth: Challenge and Response." Middle East Institute. May 3, 2016. <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/isis-recruitment-malaysian-youth-challenge-and-response>.

In 2015 and 2016 the Malaysian Police had arrested more than 160 people suspected of having ties to ISIS. With the rapid global growth of the Islamic State since 2013, the Malaysian government-a state with a Muslim majority population-has become increasingly vigilant about removing extremist propaganda and launching public education campaigns aimed at preventing radicalization. ISIS' main target is the disenchanting impressionable youth of Malaysia. As with many other countries, ISIS had

seen success recruiting young Muslims through social media campaigns and community outreach. The daunting challenge for the Malaysian Police and regional counter-terrorism outfits is preventing ISIS from indoctrinating citizens before they have further conflict.

Palansamy, Yiswaree. "In Hunt for Malaysians Joining Islamic State, a Faceless Menace." *Malaymail Online*, October 6, 2014.

<http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/in-hunt-for-malaysians-joining-islamic-state-a-faceless-menace#m7Fodk6KQJ40Sq8Y.97>.

This article from a local Malaysian publication discusses the vulnerability of Malaysia's Muslim population to the extreme rhetoric of the Islamic State. The article discusses the use of social media as a tool to cultivate extreme ideologies and recruit new members to ISIS. During 2014, ISIS was calling on Muslims from around the globe to come and fight in Iraq and Syria.

#### FALLOUT FROM JAKARTA ATTACKS

"Malaysia Says Arrests 7 Islamic State-Linked Militants Suspected of Planning Attacks." *Reuters*, January 24, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-malaysia-arrests/malaysia-says-arrests-7-islamic-state-linked-militants-suspected-of-planning-attacks-idUSKCN0V20E1>.

Seven Malaysian members of the Islamic State were arrested for planning to launch attacks across Malaysia at the instruction of a well-known Syria based Malaysian Islamic State recruiter. One of the arrested members was Bahrun Naim, the mastermind behind the suicide attacks in Jakarta which killed seven and wounded over 30 people.

Ngui, Yantoultra, and Celine Fernandez. "Malaysia Arrests after Jakarta Attack Fuel Fears of Islamic State's Reach." *Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2016. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/malaysia-arrests-suspected-islamic-state-militants-1452931418>.

Following the arrest of four suspected Islamic State associates whom were planning an attack in Malaysia, government officials now fear that the Islamic State's reach has made it to Southeast Asia. The country's population, the majority of whom are Muslim, have long been impacted by Islamic extremism. JI and Abu Sayyaf Group cells have targeted nations such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines for their extensive networks because of the religious associations. Similarly, the Islamic State has regional governments vigilant as they try to capitalize on their success following their statement attack against Jakarta.

#### **JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH (JI)**

*For more information on Jemaah Islamiyah, please see the section on Indonesia on page 7.*

"Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/taxonomy/term/152>.

The CEP identifies JI as an Indonesian based Islamic insurgency that has operational ties to Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. Their primary motivation is to establish an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia through violence. JI seeks to accomplish this goal through what CEP identifies as a "three-phase strategy of violent jihad." First, destabilize the local government. Second, undermine the efforts of regional governments and infrastructure. Third, use its extensive networks with other terrorist organizations with similar ideologies to launch a global jihad. The organization is primarily funded through donations, criminal enterprises, and money laundering through front companies. The organization has a history of violent aggression since the mid-nineties until it pledged its allegiance to ISIS (see previous sections on JI activities that details the relationship and fallout with ISIS).

Golburt, Yanina. "An In-depth Look at the Jemaah Islamiyah Network." *Al Nakhlah*, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 1-9.

<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/~/media/Fletcher/Microsites/al%20Nakhlah/archives/pdfs/golburt.pdf>.

JI, established in 1995 (according to this source – others suggest 1993) by Abdullah Sungkar created the organization to create an Islamic State in Southeast Asia that included the territory of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore. The organization was founded off of the radical Saudi Arabian tradition of Wahhabism, similar to that of al-Qaeda, and other radical Islamic movements founded in the Middle East. The article discusses the structure of the organization as one that is compartmentalized and able to "regenerate" to ensure longevity. Many of the leadership are former Afghan fighters and with them, came experienced leadership and training. The group maintained ties with Al Qaeda and put value on maintaining relationships with other organizations across Asia that had similar ideologies. This made them able to easily recruit new members across borders, and establish themselves as a serious player among radical insurgent groups.

### **ABU SAYYAF GROUP (ASG)**

*For more information on ASG please visit the section on the Philippines on page 18.*

"Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/taxonomy/term/409>.

The Counter Extremism Project is one of the leading organizations that provides comprehensive analysis on the state of extremism and militarized armed groups across the globe. This report, examines the prevalent threat of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) an Islamic extremist group based in the Philippines and Malaysia. ASG's main goal is to

establish an Islamic State in Southeast Asia. ASG makes much of its income through organized crime, kidnapping, foreign funders such as Al-Qaeda and JI, and extortion. ASG's known activities date back to the late 80's and the group became increasingly active in 2014 during the rise of the Islamic State.

### **KUMPULAN MUJAHIDIN MALAYSIA (KMM)**

"Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) Malaysian Mujahideen Movement." Global Security. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/kmm.htm>.

The report by Global Security details the basic structure and events associated with the KMM in the early 2000's. The KMM is a formerly active insurgent group that operated out of Malaysia and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. The group, similar to JI wanted to create a caliphate in Southeast Asia. The KMM was likely absorbed by other groups such as the JI and the Islamic State, but were an active and disruptive insurgent group until the mid-2000's.

Aslam, Mohd Mizan. "Cross Border Terrorism: The Link Between Malaysia Militant Group (KMM) & Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) - Connection and the Implications for Regional Security." LinkedIn Article. April 17, 2016. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cross-border-terrorism-link-between-malaysia-militant-aslam/>.

This article written by Universiti Malaysia Perlis Scholar Mohd Mizan Aslam details the relationship between the KMM and JI in Indonesia and Malaysia. The article discusses how Indonesia and Malaysia became footholds for extremism in Southeast Asia. The relationship between JI and the KMM was born out of the close proximity, similar ideologies, and JI's desire to maintain an extensive network of partnerships with other insurgencies. Both groups were encouraged to train with Afghans who had been battle tested by years of conflict with Russia and JI had much of their leadership from that legacy group of Afghan fighters. These relationships allowed for both groups to participate in cross border activities and the task was made easier by the ability to move freely between Indonesia and Malaysia by virtue of being Muslims due to the Immigration Law of the two countries. Until recently, cooperation between the two countries made cross border insurgency even more possible. The growth of groups such as JI and the Islamic State has forced the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia to participate in regional counter-terrorist operations and extensive intelligence sharing.

### **COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN MALAYSIA – COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYSIA (CPM)**

Kheng, Cheah Boon. "The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-90: Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change." *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 11, no. 1 (June 2009): 132-52. [http://www.nzasia.org.nz/downloads/NZJAS-June09/14\\_Cheah\\_3.pdf](http://www.nzasia.org.nz/downloads/NZJAS-June09/14_Cheah_3.pdf).

This publication in the New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies examines the communist insurgency in Malaysia from 1948 – 1990. The article covers the political events and turmoil that led to the domestic strife and riots that eventually became the insurgency

in Malaysia. The role of the education system, foreign politics, and economic struggles are also explored as motivations for the violent communist insurrection that unintentionally helped create an authoritarian regime and lasting impact on the nation of Malaysia.

### **ORGANIZED CRIME ACTIVITIES**

*Trafficking in Persons Report*. Report. U.S. Department of State. June 2017.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271343.pdf>.

This report by the U.S. State Department outlines the prominence of human trafficking in Malaysia. Trafficking takes many forms in Malaysia, forced labor and sex trafficking are the two most common. The trafficking problem is exacerbated by the over 150,000 registered refugees that have no formal status in Malaysia. This is the population that many of the traffickers prey upon. Additionally, traffickers are used by extremist groups for funding their insurgency operations and as labor. The state department profiles Malaysia as a tier two country that is trending upwards due to international cooperation and increased emphasis on policing trafficking.

Haas, Brenda. "Unexplained Abductions in Malaysia Raise Concerns." *Deutsche Welle*, May 23, 2017. <http://www.dw.com/en/unexplained-abductions-in-malaysia-raise-concerns/a-38954316>.

One of the main threats to foreign travelers and business people in Southeast Asia has been kidnapping for ransom. It is one of the main means that many criminal organizations and extremist groups fund their operations in the region. Malaysia has recently been the victim of a new wave of disappearances. Four pastors and local community workers have gone missing. What sets these kidnappings apart is that there is rarely a ransom asked, and there appears to be a distinct pattern. Malaysians in the effected community believe the kidnapped to be targets of "religious vigilantism," one pastors family claims that his desire to preach Christianity may be the reason he was taken.

## **Malaysian Counter-Terrorism Operations**

### **MALAYSIAN CT OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES**

Mazumdaru, Srinivas. "Malaysia Steps Up Security to Counter Terror Threat." *Deutsche Welle*, January 21, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/malaysia-steps-up-security-to-counter-terror-threat/a-18996395>.

Following the attacks in Jakarta, Malaysia raised their alert level to its highest possible level in expectation of a regional wave of attacks from other members of the Islamic State and its associated groups. Regional groups such as IS, JI, Abu Sayyaf, and MNLF pose a significant threat to Malaysia, and the attack on Jakarta demonstrated a security vulnerability in their counterinsurgency efforts that the government wants to defend

against. In addition to added security and more vigilant checkpoints Malaysia is also actively defending against extremist propaganda and website that may try to incite action against the state. This is done not just by taking down jihadist literature from websites, but also by promoting an “enlightened version of Islam.”

Singh, Bilveer. "Prevention of Terrorism: Relevance of POTA in Malaysia." RSIS Commentary. March 31, 2015. <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CO15075.pdf>.

This commentary examines the effectiveness of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in Malaysia. Proponents of the act appreciate that the act gives the government the ability to only detain suspected terrorists and foreign fighters returning home following their time fighting for groups such as ISIS. The act also gives Malaysian CT forces the ability to act proactively rather than react to events after they happen. Opponents suggest that the POTA gives the government too much power to arrest and detain political opponents and not just members of the Islamic State and other Malaysian extremists.

#### **INTERNATIONAL-MALAYSIAN CT OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES**

Leong, Trinna . "Malaysia Creates Anti-terror Force for Quick Response." *The Straits Times*, October 28, 2016. <http://www.straitstimes.com/world/malaysia-creates-anti-terror-force-for-quick-response>.

A new 170 member joint anti-terror unit comprising police officers, armed forces, and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency will form the National Special Operations Force (NSOF). It will act as the nation’s primary deterrent against terrorist activities in the land, air, and water. NSOF is a reaction to the increased threat of ISIS violence and lone-wolf terror attacks in Malaysia and throughout Southeast Asia. The NSOF is the first anti-terror force in Malaysia to involve multiple agencies.

Ray, Bihu. "Malaysian Police Arrest 16 Terror Suspects in Nationwide Crackdown." *International Business Times*, October 10, 2016. <http://www.ibtimes.sg/malaysian-police-arrest-16-terror-suspects-nationwide-crackdown-3827>.

Sixteen suspected terrorists associated with the Islamic State were arrested by Malaysian Police and anti-terror forces. Fourteen of the individuals were in a cell headed by Muhammad Wannady Muhammad Jedi. The arrests come following nationwide security enhancements after an attack by ISIS militants in Jakarta.

European Union. EU External Action. "European Union-Malaysia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement Initialed Today." News release, June 04, 2016. European Union. [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/5348/European%20Union%E2%80%93Malaysia%20Partnership%20and%20Cooperation%20Agreement%20initialled%20today](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/5348/European%20Union%E2%80%93Malaysia%20Partnership%20and%20Cooperation%20Agreement%20initialled%20today).



The European Union and Malaysia agreed to a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) that would provide a legal framework for strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two entities. One of the PCA's main foci was on counter-terrorism operations and intelligence sharing. Additionally, the PCA would cover issues such as human rights, international justice, cybersecurity, combating organized crime, and the illegal drug trade.

United Nations. Security Council. "Action against Threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters Must Be Ramped Up, Security Council Urges in High-Level Meeting." News release, May 29, 2015. United Nations. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11912.doc.htm>.

The United Nations Security Council met with foreign leaders to address the growing threat of international terrorism and foreign fighters. Malaysia addressed the council, presenting the effective methodology they had used to prevent, detain, and monitor those that had engaged in terrorist activities or were leaving to fight for ISIS in the Middle East. The Malaysian counter-terrorism efforts were not just focused on engagement; much of their effort was proactive and focused on the prevention of radicalization.

*BACKLASH AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF ENHANCED SECURITY MEASURES*

"Creating a Culture of Fear: The Criminalization of Peaceful Expression in Malaysia." Human Rights Watch. October 26, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/10/26/creating-culture-fear/criminalization-peaceful-expression-malaysia>.

This report from the legal team at the Human Rights Watch is intended to shed light on the policies targeting speech and expression in Malaysia. According to the report, freedom of expression in Malaysia is under attack by legislation intended to limit the ability political opposition groups and Islamic extremists to spread propaganda and undermine the government. Critics claim that the Sedition Act is a tool of repression, wielded by the government to silence and limit political opposition groups. These groups were not the only ones impacted under the guise of protecting against extreme rhetoric according to the article, journalists and scholars were also at the mercy of the Sedition Act. The report ends with recommendations to each of the concerned parties based on the current legal framework in Malaysia. The recommendations shed light on the position of each group, and policy guidelines that may improve the deteriorating situation in Malaysia.

## **Maritime Security**

Espenilla, Jacqueline. "Abductions at Sea: A 3-Way Security Challenge for Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines." *The Diplomat*, May 05, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/abductions-at-sea-a-3-way-security-challenge-for-indonesia-malaysia-and-the-philippines/>.

Piracy in the tri-border area of Southeast Asia continues to be a problem. A large majority of this activity occurs in the Straits of Malacca (SOM). The lack of information sharing and regional cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines may be to blame. Abductions at sea, piracy, and armed robbery against ships at port committed by members of Abu Sayyaf pose significant problems to the economic and political stability of the region. The security challenges posed by Southeast Asian waters in the tri-border area limit the ability of any one state to effectively police piracy alone. The insurgency at sea is a problem that all three states must face, and may only be effectively mitigated together.

Moss, Trefor. "Indonesia Calls for Joint Maritime Patrols to Combat Islamic Militants." *Wall Street Journal*, April 26, 2016. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/indonesia-calls-for-joint-maritime-patrols-to-combat-islamic-militants-1461672113>.

The capture and beheading of a Canadian citizen spurred Indonesia to call on its neighbors to participate in joint maritime patrols and anti-piracy operations. Violence in the waters of the tri-border area highlighted by kidnappings by Abu Sayyaf has spurred the need for enhanced maritime security. The waters are also known to be used for the trafficking of persons and drugs as it is a source of income for many of the insurgent organizations operating out of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

## Map of Thailand



Thailand. (1 Feb. 2014). Google Maps. Google. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Thailand/@15.3968588,98.6666411,1638177m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x304d8df747424db1:0x9ed72c880757e802!8m2!3d15.870032!4d100.992541>.

# Thailand

## CONFLICT OVERVIEW

"CrisisWatch Malaysia." CrisisWatch. January, 2018.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand>.

International Crisis Group's (ICG) CrisisWatch identifies Thailand as a country with an "Unchanged Situation" since the summer of 2017. The country still battles issues such as human trafficking, the illegal drug trade, a southern umbrella organization insurgency, and recent political corruption that has led to riots and protests in January 2018. The Thailand profile offers latest news, reports and briefings, and commentary by ICG analysts.

"Thailand: Extremism & Counter Extremism." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/Thailand>.

The Counter Extremism Project identifies that there are multiple regional and global insurgency groups operating in Thailand at varying levels of activity. The most prominent anti-government insurgency group is the Malay-Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand. The century old conflict between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai government stems from ethnic fractionalization, strong nationalism, and a desire for the southern provinces to gain independence from the Thai government. Global terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyyah, Hezbollah, and ISIS have also operated in a limited capacity out of Thailand. "The insurgency is believed to lack centralized leadership and organization structure" there are instead small sub factions that operate under an umbrella organization. Thailand runs extensive counterextremism operations in an effort to prevent groups such as ISIS and AQ from establishing a base of operations out of Thailand. This effort has been largely successful as few foreign fighters have come from the state that has declared martial law on the southern provinces where the Muslim separatists operate out of.

Abuza, Zachary. "No End in Sight for Thailand's Deadly Southern Insurgency." *The Diplomat*, July 18, 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/no-end-in-sight-for-thailands-deadly-southern-insurgency/>.

This article by well-known Southeast Asia scholar and Jamestown contributor Zachary Abuza examines the trends of violence in Thailand's southern provinces. His conclusion is that while attempts at peace have repeatedly failed in the past, without a formal agreement the resolve of the Malay-Muslim insurgents will remain unwavering. The BRN insurgents will continue to launch attacks against Thai government forces and key infrastructure, and escalate violence until a peace agreement (usually a cease fire with mutually agreeable terms) is formed between the two groups. If the Thai government decides to forgo another attempt at peace, the BRN may be forced to leave their

homelands in the south and take the fight to neighboring provinces where they have less influence.

Nurakkate, Chumphot. "The Conflict in Southern Thailand." *Center for Defence and Strategic Studies*, March 2012, 1-20.

[http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/Shedden/2012/SheddenPapers12\\_120306\\_ConflictinThailand\\_Nurakkate.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/Shedden/2012/SheddenPapers12_120306_ConflictinThailand_Nurakkate.pdf).

This publication claims that the southern Malay-Muslim insurgency is about two things, "territory and identity." A desire to reclaim their lost independent Patani state driving the insurgency. The BRN insurgents representing the Muslim minority in Thailand are the most influential and largest actor in the region. Most splinter insurgency groups operating in Thailand such as JI cells and others fall under the BRN umbrella and share their ideological goals. This article breaks down the causes of conflict between the BRN and the Thai government, and the challenging future that an entrenched insurgency poses to Thailand.

Abuza, Zachary. "The Ongoing Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Trends in Violence, Counterinsurgency Operations, and the Impact of National Politics." *Strategic Perspective* 6 (September 01, 2011): 1-48.

<http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/717913/the-ongoing-insurgency-in-southern-thailand-trends-in-violence-counterinsurgenc/>.

The Malay-Muslim insurgency in Thailand's southern provinces has been the source of armed conflict and political strife since the early-2000s. Attacks targeting government forces, political opposition groups, and state sponsored infrastructure in an effort to destabilize the Thai governance in the south has highlighted the effort of the southern separatists. Counterinsurgency operations launched by the Thai government have been largely ineffective due to the Muslim majority in southern Thailand. The author suggests that U.S. objectives in Thailand should start with assisting counterinsurgency and stability operations, and through careful economic investment.

#### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

Bajoria, J., & Zissis, C. "Backgrounder: The Muslim insurgency in Southern Thailand."

Council on Foreign Relations. September, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/thailand/muslim-insurgency-southern-thailand/p12531>

Since the insurgency official began in 2004, the conflict has been responsible for the deaths of over 3,000 people. This article examines the history of the Malay-Muslim population in Thailand, their tenuous relationship with the Thai government, and their motivations for forming the separatist movement.

Houben, V. J. H. (2003). Southeast Asia and Islam. *Annals of the American Academy of Political*



*and Social Science*, 588, 149–170.

Seeks to identify the characteristics of Islam in Southeast Asia. Reviews the spread of the religion in the region and the modern political contexts in which it exists there, giving particular attention to developments in Indonesia, Malaysia, South Thailand, and the Philippines. Addresses some of the most pressing aspects of modern Southeast Asian Islam, including “the nature of Islamic revivalism, current outbreaks of ethno-religious conflict, and the possible threat of extremism.”

#### TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

"Thailand profile - timeline." BBC News. January 09, 2018.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15641745>.

This article from BBC is a chronology of key events from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD to 2017. The events covered are the rise of modern Thailand, post-ww2 uncertainty, political and financial turmoil, coup, and peace movements.

"Thailand: Conflict Timeline." Peace Insight. 2011.  
<https://www.peaceinsight.org/conflicts/thailand/conflict-profile/conflict-timeline/>.

Peace Insight takes key events from BBC and Reuters to compile a chronology of conflict in Thailand from 1902 to February of 2011.

## **Regional Terrorist/Insurgent/Militant Groups**

### **MUSLIM SEPARATISTS AND THE SOUTHERN INSURGENCY – UMBRELLA FOR MALAY-MUSLIM INSURGENCY**

"Jihadism in Southern Thailand: A Phantom Menace." International Crisis Group. November 8, 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/291-jihadism-southern-thailand-phantom-menace>.

This analysis by ICG is a holistic contemporary review of the Malay-Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand. The article explains the reason behind the Malay-Muslim immunity to transnational Jihad influence from groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, and attributes it to the difference in goals and ideology. For the Malay-Muslims, they pursue “self-determination over a specific territory, seeking to join, rather than destroy, the international system.” Using tactics such as those employed by AQ or ISIS would discredit their legitimacy in the international community. The Malay-Muslims in Patani are driven by a strong sense of community and nationalism. Their unique resistance to Islamic extremism in a region where ISIS has infiltrated many of the neighboring Muslim communities speaks to the resolution of the Malay-Muslims. Risk still exists, Malaysian jihadists and ISIS supporters could see southern Thailand as a safe haven from counterinsurgency efforts, and more exposure to radical groups could cause splinter factions from the Malay-Muslim insurgency to form.

"Thailand: Malay-Muslim Insurgency and the Dangers of Intractability." International Crisis Group. July 20, 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/thailand-malay-muslim-insurgency-and-dangers-intractability>.

This commentary from experts at the ICG examines the potential link between the Malay-Muslim insurgency and foreign jihadist ideologies. ICG cautions that instability and dissatisfaction from Thailand's use of martial law in its predominantly Muslim southern provinces may result in openings for foreign jihadists associated with ISIS, JI or AQ who seek to capitalize on populations that may have vulnerabilities to radicalization. Malay-Muslims have seldom resorted to tactics used by jihadists, and with the threat of transnational terror higher than ever, ICG is urging the European Union to encourage the Thai government to restore civil liberties in the southern provinces and seek peace.

"Violence in Southern Thailand - BRI." *Thompson Reuters Foundation News*, August 8, 2013. <http://news.trust.org//spotlight/Thailands-southern-violence/?tab=briefing>.

Violence among Thailand's southern Muslim Separatist movement which started in the mid-2000s has flared once more as bombings, targeted attacks, and assassinations have led to the Thai government declaring martial law. Muslims, while the minority population to Buddhists in Thailand, largely dominate the southern provinces of Thailand where cultural ties are closer shared with neighboring Malaysia. Poverty in the southern provinces and accusations against the government of unequal treatment and brutality has only furthered the divide between the Muslim minority and the government. The Muslim minority that held onto its independence for nearly 500 years, in what is now the southern provinces of Thailand in a sultanate called Patani. It is this alienation and desire to be independent under Muslim authority that drives the southern separatist movement.

Liow, Joseph Chinyong, and Don Pathan. *Confronting Ghosts: Thailand's Shapeless Southern Insurgency*. Report. Lowy Institute for International Policy. Longueville Media, 2010. 1-66. [https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/pubfiles/Liow\\_and\\_Pathan\\_Confronting\\_ghosts\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/pubfiles/Liow_and_Pathan_Confronting_ghosts_web_1.pdf)

This monograph analyzes the Malay-Muslim southern insurgency during its height and transformation in 2010. The article argues that while the insurgency continues to be motivated by a historical pursuit of independence, the Malay-Muslim insurgency has changed from a hierarchical structured organization to a "fluid and shapeless" one. This, coupled with individual provincial motivations and self-interests has led to the Malay-Muslim separatists away from being a "monolithic insurgent movement" and towards an umbrella organization with separate divisions and sub-factions.

Chalk, Peter. *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand -- Understanding the Conflict's*



*Evolving Dynamic*. Report no. Paper 5. Rand Corporation. 2008.  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/OP198.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP198.html).

This report by the Rand Corporation describes the unrest in the provinces of southern Thailand caused by the Malay-Muslim insurgency and retaliatory actions by the Thai government. While the violence by the southern insurgents is being committed by the Muslim minority population, there appears to be no indication that transnational jihadism has found a new foundation in Thailand among the Malay-Muslims that is spurring the attacks. The conflict though growing in scale and sophistication, has not migrated north, targeted tourists or noncombatants, or the U.S. it appears to be a civil conflict between the government and a population that feels underrepresented.

Storey, Ian. "Malaysia's Role in Thailand's Southern Insurgency." Jamestown Foundation. March 15, 2007. <https://jamestown.org/program/malaysias-role-in-thailands-southern-insurgency/>.

The southern separatist insurgency by the Muslim minority population in Thailand has ushered in a cooperation resolution between the Malaysian and Thai governments. The insurgency in the southern provinces of Thailand share a land border with the Malaysian states of Kelantan, Perak, Perlis and Kedah. Even though the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand are ethnically similar to the Muslim majority of Malaysia, the Malaysian government seeks to stabilize its neighbor to prevent further conflict from spilling over into their territory. Due to their close cultural ties with the southern separatist population, Malaysia in addition to counterinsurgency cooperation and border security, may be a powerful mediating force between the Thai government and the insurgents.

#### **SOUTHERN INSURGENCY MAJOR SUB FACTIONS AND LEADERSHIP**

Abuza, Zachary. "A Breakdown of Southern Thailand's Insurgent Groups." The Jamestown Foundation. September 8, 2006. <https://jamestown.org/program/a-breakdown-of-southern-thailands-insurgent-groups/>.

#### *ISLAMIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PATANI (BIPP)* *LEADERSHIP*

"Islamic Front for the Liberation of Patani (BIPP)." Tracking Terrorism & Analysis Center. 2017. <https://www.trackinterrorism.org/group/islamic-front-liberation-patani-bipp>.

BIPP the umbrella organization for six factions of the southern Thailand Insurgency. The groups associated with BIPP are the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK), Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani (GIMP), Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO), Barisam Islam Pembebasan Patan (BIPP), and Jemaah Islamiyah. The group's founder is identified as Tengku Abdul Jalal aka Adul na Saiburi.

BARISAN REVOLUSI NASIONAL (BRN) AND RUNDA KUMPULAN  
KECIL (RKK) LEADERSHIP

"Ex-Headmaster Becomes Top BRN Rebel Leader in Deep South: Thai Officials." *Benar News*, March 20, 2017. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/brn-leader-03202017163737.html>.

Following the death of Sapae-in Baso, Doonloh Wae-mano aka Abdullah Wan Mat Noor was selected as the new leader of the largest rebel group in the Malay-Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand. He will take over the militant group of over 6,000 following his unanimous selection by the BRN council. Doonloh is considered to be a hardliner who may not be able to control the Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) the frontlines combat unit of the BRN.

"Thai Deep South: An elusive Leader, an Enduring Narrative." *Benar News*, February 28, 2017. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/commentaries/far-south-view/pathan-leader-02282017114138.html>

The article explores the impact of the death of BRN leader Sapae-ing Baso. According to BRN leadership, nothing changes. The narrative and motivation of an independent Patani state which drives the group will continue to live on, and new elections will bring a leader that will carry on that legacy. The question is, who will the new leader be?

"Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)." Tracking Terrorism & Analysis Center. 2017. <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/barisan-revolusi-nasional-brn>

BRN is the largest armed rebel group that is part of the umbrella southern Malay-Muslim insurgency. The organization's founder is Abdul Karim Hassan. Unlike many of the other organizations, BRN is considered to have a distinct hierarchy and strong centralized core leadership. The leadership reportedly consists of Abdullah Wan Mat Noor, Jekupeng Buraso, Harun Yaacob, Amin Tohmeena, Yalan Abdulroman, and Masae U-Seng.

PATANI MALAY NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (BRN-  
AFFILIATE) LEADERSHIP

"Patani Malay National revolution Front-Coordinate / BRN-Coordinate." Tracking Terrorism & Analysis Center. 2017. <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/patani-malay-national-revolutionary-front-coordinate-brn-coordinate>

The BRN-Coordinate is one of many groups that is made up of multiple underground cells that assist the RKK and BRN leadership. Their known leadership is made up of Ustaz Karim Haji Hassan, and Rosa Burako.

**PEACE TALKS**

Bodetti, Austin. "Will Southern Thailand Turn to Jihad?" *The Diplomat*. November 20, 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/will-southern-thailand-turn-to-jihad/>.

The article from the Diplomat builds off of a previously mentioned article from the ICG *Jihadism in Southern Thailand: A Phantom Menace*. The continuing conflict with the Malay-Muslim insurgency has only created more discontent and widened the divide between the government and the minority population. As the contempt for the government grows, transnational jihadist groups could exploit this relationship to encourage Malay-Muslims to turn to jihadist tactics. With the growth of ISIS into neighboring Malaysia and the Philippines, southern Thailand remains vulnerable to extremism. The solution to this problem, may be through peace rather than continued conflict. Each side in the conflict has a vested interest in keeping AQ and ISIS out of the conflict, and to ensure that jihadism does not expand into southern Thailand the two sides must bridge the gap.

Phaicharoen, Nontarat, and Mariyam Ahmad. "Peace Negotiations with Southern Separatist Rebels Will Proceed." *Tracking Terrorism & Analysis Consortium*. November 1, 2017. <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/chat/peace-negotiations-southern-separatist-rebels-will-proceed-bangkok-thailand-01-november-2017>.

Two-year old peace negotiations between the southern Malay-Muslim insurgents and the Thai government are set to continue despite resumed hostilities between militants and government forces. The Malay-Muslims have been through peace talks with the Thai government in the past, but there has been no lasting resolution to the conflict that satisfies both sides. Cease fires, safety zones, and agreements over ensuring noncombatants remain unharmed has deescalated the conflict, but, in the year since last October 223 government soldiers, policemen, and defense volunteers have been killed in insurgent attacks in the southern provinces. In decade since the conflict was renewed, nearly 7,000 people have been killed in the southern Malay-Muslim provinces.

*This article is also available via:*

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/thailand-bombings-11012017164103.html>

Hariraksapitak, Pracha. "Thai Junta Rejects Conditional Peace Talks with Muslim Insurgents." *Reuters*, April 11, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-insurgency/thai-junta-rejects-conditional-peace-talks-with-muslim-insurgents-idUSKBN17D137>.

In the wake of an upsurge of attacks across Thailand's three volatile southernmost border provinces, the region's foremost Malay-Muslim separatist faction, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional, has declared ongoing peace talks null and void - and that international mediation is the only path to a resolution. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-

ocha rejected the offer and said peace talks were an internal matter and required no international mediation or observation.

"Southern Thailand's Peace Dialogue: No Traction." International Crisis Group. September 21, 2016. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/southern-thailand-s-peace-dialogue-no-traction>.

This article from ICG takes a chronological approach to the peace process in Thailand. It identifies the events in the conflict between the Thai government and southern insurgents that have acted as the causal mechanisms for the groups to engage in peace talks. ICG breaks down each event and treats them as case studies for how each party's action created a reaction in the other. The findings suggest that the decade old conflict shows no sign of stopping. Perhaps the best approach to peace with the southern separatists is for the Thai government to decentralize power and allow for regional governance in the Muslim minority provinces to avoid the divisions caused by ethnic fractionalization.

Abuza, Zachary. "The Upcoming Peace Talks in Southern Thailand's Insurgency." *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 6, no. 3 (March 2013). <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-upcoming-peace-talks-in-southern-thailands-insurgency/>.

As the southern separatists and government of Thailand approach the negotiating table following a political agreement that temporarily ends the violence in southern Thailand, this CTC Sentinel article looks to where the peace process is going. Formal talks between the leadership of the Thai government and Malay-Muslims are set to begin March 28<sup>th</sup>, and there still exist a number of challenges that may prevent negotiations from making headway. Continued violence since the February cease fire will need to stop in order to make any headway. The problem facing BRN leadership is that the southern separatists are an umbrella made up of many organizations, each with their own unique motivations that may be difficult for the BRN to control. Another challenge is that the militants are succeeding in their efforts to hinder military and government operations, which lessens the incentive to come to an agreement. What is significant for the progress of the conflict is that this is the first time since the conflict started that both sides will come to the negotiating table to discuss peace.

Davis, Anthony. "Thai Insurgency Enters New Phase." *Asia Times*, October 23, 2013. [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/SEA-01-231013.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-01-231013.html).

Violence across Thailand's southern provinces has indefinitely suspended the fragile peace talks between the southern separatists and the Thai government. The Patani Malay National Revolutionary Front (BRN) launched a wave of attacks against government facilities and outposts in the southern provinces in response to increased

operations against BRN leadership and communities. The BRN's willingness to engage in peace talks, consolidation and organization, and political campaign indicates that the separatist movement is looking to strategically change how it conducts its insurgency in order to achieve long-term gains.

### **ISLAMIC STATE (ISIS)**

*For more information on the Islamic State in Southeast Asia, please see the Philippines section on page 21.*

"ISIS." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018.

<https://www.counterextremism.com/taxonomy/term/3>.

*See the ISIS annotation on page 40 in the Philippines section of this document.*

Crispin, Shawn W. "Islamic State in Thailand a Phantom Threat." *The Diplomat*, March 4, 2016.

<https://thediplomat.com/2016/03/islamic-state-in-thailand-a-phantom-threat/>.

ISIS operations in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have led to speculation that Thailand may be the next target. Thailand is already engaged in conflict with a Muslim separatist insurgency at their southern borders and officials fear that they could be a vulnerable population for radicalization. Though the fear exists, analysts suggest that the Malay-Muslim population would not bend to ISIS. Their movement is based on their desire to be recognized by the international community, and affiliating with ISIS would jeopardize their claim over the southern provinces. It has been confirmed that foreign ISIS fighters have used Bangkok for transit to and from the Middle East; however, neither ISIS nor AQ are known to have any stronghold or safe haven in Thailand.

Arpon, Yasmin Lee. "Conflict in Thai South Could be Exploited by ISIS, Warn Analysts." *The Straits Times*, June 10, 2017.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/conflict-in-thai-south-could-be-exploited-by-isis-warn-analysts>.

ISIS, known for exploiting vulnerable populations where ethnic groups are in conflict with local government forces may try and prey on the opportunity presented by the southern Malay-Muslim insurgents that are fighting against the Thai government. Experts however, suggest that the southern insurgents would be resistant to ISIS involvement in their struggle. Even so, the threat of ISIS in the region remains, even if limited to hiding or acquiring fraudulent travel documents.

"ISIS In Thailand: An Unexpected Challenge." *Katehon*, September 12, 2015.

<http://katehon.com/agenda/isis-thailand-unexpected-challenge>.

Reports that Syrian members of ISIS had entered Bangkok to attack Russian tourists in the capital city changes the dynamics of international politics in Southeast Asia. Russia and China's vested interest in protecting their borders and citizens have led to an

increase in cooperation and rhetoric aimed at intelligence sharing and working together to ensure that transnational groups are unable to use Thailand as a safe haven or point of transit. Thailand is a strategic location for China and is a gateway to the Asia-Pacific. Closer cooperation with China and Russia alienates the relationship with the west and the U.S. Fear of sanctions and a desire to have continued cooperation with both the east and west will likely force Thailand to act on their own to combat insurgent threats while continuing to cooperate with international intelligence sharing efforts to defeat transnational groups such as ISIS.

#### IS OPERATIONS IN THAILAND

Robbins, Siobhan. "'IS-linked' Pakistani Passport Forger Caught by Police in Thailand." *Sky News*, January 19, 2018. <https://news.sky.com/story/is-linked-pakistani-passport-forger-caught-by-police-in-thailand-11213529>.

Thai police have arrested Mohammad Iqbal outside his home in Bangkok. Iqbal sold fake passports to militants of insurgent operations including ISIS, and organized crime groups. Iqbal was not known to be a member of any particular group, he sold passports to order for between 7,000 and 8,000 Thai Bhat.

"Islamic State agents from Syria 'in Thailand to target Russians'." *BBC News*, December 4, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/35003912>.

Thai police were tipped off by Russian intelligence that 10 Syrians working for the Islamic State entered Thailand to target Russia. The plan according to the memo was to target "Russians and Russia's alliance with Thailand." According to Thai officials, of the over 200 Syrians that traveled to Thailand, only 21 remain and there were "no irregularities." Thailand has been known to be used for transit for foreign fighters traveling to and from the Middle East.

#### JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH (JI)

*For more detailed information on Jemaah Islamiyah and their operations in Southeast Asia, please visit the Indonesia section on page 7.*

"Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)." Counter Extremism Project. January 2018. <https://www.counterextremism.com/taxonomy/term/152>.

The CEP identifies JI as an Indonesian based Islamic insurgency that has operational ties to Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. Their primary motivation is to establish an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia through violence. JI seeks to accomplish this goal through what CEP identifies as a "three-phase strategy of violent jihad." First, destabilize the local government. Second, undermine the efforts of regional governments and infrastructure. Third, use its extensive networks with other terrorist organizations with similar ideologies to launch a global jihad. The organization is primarily funded through donations, criminal enterprises, and money laundering

through front companies. The organization has a history of violent aggression since the mid-nineties until it pledged its allegiance to ISIS (see previous sections on JI activities that details the relationship and fallout with ISIS).

*This annotation is taken from the Indonesia JI overview section on page 7 of this document. JI has a limited operational environment in Thailand. Elements of JI have acted as part of the umbrella organization of southern separatists but carry out limited independent operations of their own in the country.*

#### **RECENT ATTACKS**

"Roadside Bomb Attack Injures Six Rangers in Pattani." *Thai PBS*, January 10, 2018.

<http://englishnews.thaipbs.or.th/roadside-bomb-attack-injures-six-rangers-pattani/>.

A roadside IED injured six Thai Army Rangers in Pattani's Non Chik district. The rangers were responding to a report that surveillance cameras were tampered with near a school in the southern provinces in Thailand.

Jirenuwat, Ryn, and Gerry Mullany. "Bangkok Hospital Bombing Wounds 24 on Anniversary of Thai Coup." *New York Times*, May 22, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/world/asia/thailand-bangkok-hospital-bomb-blast.html? r=0>.

Attackers struck Phramongkutklo Hospital on the third anniversary of the army's seizing power to derail a populist movement that had won several national elections over more than a decade. At least 24 people were wounded in the attack at the military-owned hospital in Bangkok.

Hincks, Joseph. "A Series of 15 Grenade, Bomb and Gun Attacks Rock Southern Thailand." *TIME*, April 20, 2017. <http://time.com/4747715/southern-thailand-bomb-attacks/>.

A series of 15 coordinated attacks launched by the Malay-Muslim separatists in Thai's southern provinces occurred within one hour of each other. In 12 of the attacks grenades were used against military personnel or police forces. Two of the attackers were killed when a bomb they were carrying fell and detonated. The attackers were the latest in the ongoing conflict between the Thai government and southern militants.

"Insurgent Bomb And Gun Attacks Kill Three In Southern Thailand." *Reuters*, November 3, 2016.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-south/insurgent-bomb-and-gun-attacks-kill-three-in-southern-thailand-idUSKBN12Y091>.

Three people died in attacks launched by Malay-Muslim separatists against military personnel in southern Thailand. The attacks come only a few months after failed peace talks where neither side could come to agreeable terms. The conflict remains in the southern provinces where separatists seek independence from the rest of Thailand.



Head, Jonathan. "The Surreal Investigations into Thailand's Unresolved Bombings." *BBC News*, August 17, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37091825>.

Following a series of attacks in Thailand's southern provinces the police and Thai anti-terrorism forces are still looking for answers. The police have continuously tried to suggest that the red-shirt movement is to blame, and any link to the separatist insurgency in the southern provinces was dismissed. The actions of the Thai government have been flippant and vague. They refuse to suggest that the separatists may be to blame, for the acknowledgement would indicate that they have lost containment on the southern insurgency. As of now, no group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Fuller, Thomas, and Edward Wong. "Thailand Blames Uighur Militants for Bombing at Bangkok Shrine." *New York Times*, September 15, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/16/world/asia/thailand-suspects-uighurs-in-bomb-attack-at-bangkok-shrine.html>.

After a deadly bombing that killed 23 and wounded over 120, the Thai government believes that a radical minority group from China, the Uighur militants are to blame. The attack according to government officials, comes as retaliation against Thailand's willingness to force repatriation of Uighurs back to China, and the disruption of organized crime and human trafficking that Uighur militants used for funding their operations. The methodology used in this attack casts doubts for some analysts who believe another insurgency group may be to blame. More unsettling, is that the attackers may have been aided by Turkey's Uighur population, and such accusations have put a strain on relations with Turkey.

Liow, Joseph Chinyong. "A Preliminary Analysis of the Bangkok Bombing." Brookings. August 19, 2015. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2015/08/19/a-preliminary-analysis-of-the-bangkok-bombing/>.

Downtown Bangkok experienced a remotely detonated IED attack that killed 20 and injured over 100 in a heavily tourist populated area of the city. The August attack on the religious shrine in downtown Bangkok is different than any other in recent history. The southern separatists have avoided attacking tourist areas due to the backlash their quest for independence would face from the international community. The police are still looking for suspects, and the Thai government is not limiting their search to local militant groups due to the deviation from their usual pattern of attacks. International religiously motivated groups such as ISIS, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Al-Qaeda, all of which have operated in some capacity in Thailand may be the culprit. But, AQ and ISIS are fighting in their own theaters and there is little to suggest that they are targeting Thailand. The question remains, who is attacking Thailand's capital city?

## **ORGANIZED CRIME ACTIVITIES**

Jones, Aidan, and Sally Mairs. "Rise and Fall of General Manas: Thailand's Top Trafficker." *AFP*, July 22, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4721810/Rise-fall-General-Manas-Thailands-trafficker.html>.

Lieutenant-General Mana Kongpan one of the most influential figures in southern Thailand turned himself into police and sentenced to 27 years in prison for trafficking. The general was responsible for one of the largest organized crime elements in Thailand and his operations specialized in human trafficking. His and other organized crime groups are taking advantage of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis that are fleeing their country to avoid the ongoing conflict in Myanmar. Victims were sold into forced labor and the sex trade.

*Trafficking in Persons Report*. Report. U.S. Department of State. June 2017.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271345.pdf>.

This report from the U.S. Department of State provides an analysis of trafficking in Thailand. The State Department report provides information on the prevention measures, prosecution for trafficking crimes, and recommendations for Thailand to improve upon their human trafficking problem.

Herman, Steve. "Thailand to Indict Human Trafficking Suspects." *VOA News*, July 24, 2015.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/thailand-to-indict-human-trafficking-suspects/2876684.html>.

In sweeping raids, Thai authorities arrested 72 individuals involved in human trafficking networks, including an Army officer and 4 policemen. The operation is seen as Thailand's biggest anti-human trafficking raid. Many Rohingya Muslims from Malaysia attempt to cross into Thailand by sea and sometimes traffickers abandon them instead of risking coming to shore with illegal migrants.

Naing, Saw Yan. "Illegal Log Trade Continues on Salween River." *KBZ Bank*, September 27, 2016.

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/illegal-log-trade-continues-on-salween-river.html>.

Despite a nationwide logging ban, the illegal logging trade continues. 25 Tons of teak logs were seized by the Thai military and Karen National Union (KNU). The logs were destined to a company in the Karen State. In the 2016 - 2017 fiscal year, 1,940 tons of smuggled logs and 104 units of heavy machinery were seized along with 117 smugglers arrested. In a five year period, over 26,000 tons and 1,600 units were seized while over 1,000 smugglers were arrested.

## Thai Counter-Terrorism and Counterdrug Operations

Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "What Colombia Can Learn from Thailand on Drug Policy." Brookings. May 4, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/05/04/what-colombia-can-learn-from-thailand-on-drug-policy/>.

The analysis from Brookings explores how Thailand's model on combatting drug trafficking and their drug policy should be used as a model for Columbia, a state that deals with similar issues of illicit crop cultivation and trafficking. Thailand's methodology for dealing with their drug trade problem was a holistic approach. The Thai government instead of pursuing crop eradication through violent counterinsurgency efforts used rural development and negotiation with local community and village committees to determine an agreement. Alternative livelihoods were designed as an income replacement and an emphasis on infrastructure development communal investment was supplanted to peacefully end widespread drug operations in Thailand.

Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Enabling war and Peace: Drugs, Logs, Gems, and Wildlife in Thailand and Burma." Brookings. December 7, 2015. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/enabling-war-and-peace-drugs-logs-gems-and-wildlife-in-thailand-and-burma/>.

This case study by Brookings explores the organized crime in Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) that funded insurgency operations and ethnic separatism. Similarly to the Brookings article by Vanda Felbab-Brown, this analysis heralds the Thai government's strategy for weaning local populations off of cultivating illicit crops and emphasizing rural development to explore methodologies to eradicate the illegal drug trade.

Parameswaran, Prashanth. "Australia, Thailand Mull New Terror Pact Amid Islamic State Fears." *The Diplomat*, January 24, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/01/australia-thailand-mull-new-terror-pact-amid-islamic-state-fears/>.

Thailand and Australia plan to sign an anti-terrorism pact as concerns about ISIS strongholds in the Asia-Pacific grow. Though ISIS does not currently have a presence in Thailand, neighbors Indonesia and the Philippines have had to deal with ISIS insurgencies. Nearly 800,000 Australians visit Thailand each year, and the two governments acknowledge that cooperation is necessary to prevent foreign fighters from leaving to assist ISIS abroad or from ISIS strengthening its presence in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Moore, Jeff M. "COIN in Thailand: Combining Security and Socio-economic Policies." International Institute for Strategic Studies. October 28, 2014. <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2014-0f13/october-b77b/coin-in-thailand-3a1d>.

This hour long video discusses the counterinsurgency operations in Thailand. Thailand has been fighting a separatist insurgency on its southern border for ten years, and has defeated two previous insurgencies. Dr. Moore discusses what tactics and operations have made Thailand's COIN operations successful.

### **U.S. INVOLVEMENT**

Cox, Dan G. "Signs of Growing Islamist Insurgency Create Apprehension in Thailand." Jamestown Foundation. March 4, 2010. <https://jamestown.org/program/signs-of-growing-islamist-insurgency-create-apprehension-in-thailand/>.

The U.S. and Thai governments are increasing their joint anti-terrorism presence in the provinces surrounding Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala where the Malay-Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand operates. Their main point of concern is the impact on the robust Thai tourist economy in and around Phuket. The complexity of the southern insurgency and use of IEDs and other guerrilla tactics have made the government's task of eliminating the insurgent threat nearly impossible and Thailand's ranking of "extreme" on the Terrorism Risk Index will likely dissuade U.S. travelers from visiting the country, where over 1,000 people die annually to the conflict.