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МАРМИТА Шармейн

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**Политика АСЕАН в отношении экспансии ИГИЛ  
в Юго-Восточной Азии: проблема безопасности**

**ASEAN Responses to the ISIS Expansion  
in the Southeast Asian Region: The Security Sector**

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Научный руководитель:  
канд. полит. наук, доцент кафедры  
американских исследований СПбГУ  
Голубев Денис Сергеевич

Рецензент:  
помощник генерального директора,  
ООО "Медстег"  
Борисова Дарья Сергеевна

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores the different measures and responses taken by ASEAN in countering the expansion of ISIS in the Southeast Asian region and aims to identify the factors that hinder effective international cooperation in the security sector. It first looks into the history and details of terrorism and violent extremism in Southeast Asia before proceeding to examine the different levels of responses and cooperation: national, regional, and global. ASEAN has developed several agreements and conventions to counter terrorism, mainly as responses to major incidents in the region. However, the different economic and military capabilities of ASEAN member states, along with the varying approaches of their designated authorities to combatting terrorism, ultimately hinder their efforts towards successful cooperation. The study concludes that a contingency approach employing law enforcement, military, and civilian authorities, depending on the incident's level of escalation, along with proper education and rehabilitation, will help ASEAN to gradually develop a better response system towards threats of terrorism.

**Keywords:** ASEAN, security sector, ISIS, terrorism, violent extremism, security cooperation, counter-terrorism

## **Аннотация**

В данной диссертации рассматриваются различные меры, принятые организацией АСЕАН, в связи с ростом влияния ИГИЛ в Юго-Восточной Азии (ЮВА). Цель исследования - определить факторы, мешающие развитию эффективного международного сотрудничества в сфере безопасности. Прежде чем приступить к изучению различных уровней сотрудничества (глобальный, региональный, национальный), в работе рассматривается исторический аспект развития терроризма и экстремизма в регионе ЮВА. В рамках АСЕАН было разработано несколько соглашений и конвенций по борьбе с терроризмом, главным образом в качестве ответных мер на инциденты, произошедшие в регионе. Тем не менее, успешное сотрудничество государств затруднено из-за различного уровня экономических и военных возможностей стран-членов организации АСЕАН и сильно варьирующихся подходов стран в

борьбе с терроризмом. В исследовании делается вывод о том, что гибкий ситуационно-обусловленный подход с использованием правоохранительных, военных и гражданских властей, в зависимости от уровня эскалации инцидента, наряду с надлежащим образовательным аспектом и программами реабилитации, поможет странам АСЕАН постепенно разработать более эффективную систему реагирования на угрозы, связанные с терроризмом.

**Ключевые слова:** АСЕАН, сфере безопасности, ИГИЛ, терроризм, насильственный экстремизм, сотрудничество в области безопасности, борьбы с терроризмом

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADMM</b>	ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting
<b>ADMM +</b>	ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting - Plus
<b>AMLATFA</b>	Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act
<b>AMMTC</b>	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>APSC</b>	ASEAN Political-Security Community
<b>ARSA</b>	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASEANAPOL</b>	ASEAN Chiefs of Police
<b>ATC</b>	Anti-Terrorism Council
<b>BNPT</b>	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terrorisme
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CT</b>	Counter-Terrorism
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>DI</b>	Darul Islam
<b>FTF</b>	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
<b>ISA</b>	International Security Act
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
<b>JAD</b>	Jamaah Ansharud Daulah
<b>JI</b>	Jemaah Islamiyah
<b>MILF</b>	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
<b>MNLF</b>	Moro National Liberation Front
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>POTA</b>	Prevention of Terrorism Act
<b>SAMMRRVE</b>	Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism
<b>SEA</b>	Southeast Asia
<b>TAC</b>	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

## INTRODUCTION

### **Relevance of the topic.**

Southeast Asia has a longstanding history of terrorism that continues until present day. The region has witnessed the evolution of terrorist groups from small independent organizations that have splintered into smaller cells through time, into a complex web of networks across the Southeast Asian region and distant territories such as the Levant. Along with the growing threats, the regional bloc, ASEAN, strives to keep efforts in mitigating these security risks and seeks to develop this cooperation into a strong security community. This is challenged, however, by the persistence of terrorism in the region through continuous waves of terrorist groups. Southeast Asia has witnessed tragic incidents instigated by major terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda. One of the biggest attacks carried out by these groups is the 2002 Bali Bombing in Indonesia. Responses have been taken by regional leaders through the years but recently, a new wave of terrorist threats has emerged: ISIS.

Various Southeast Asian pre-existing terrorist groups have sworn allegiance to ISIS since 2014. Despite the weakening of ISIS forces in the Levant, the threat remains in the Southeast Asian region in form of returning foreign fighters and their local contacts who are continuously facilitating arms exchange and trainings. This May 2018, a series of bombings<sup>1</sup> occurred in Surabaya, Indonesia. Perpetrators, reported to be supporters of ISIS, have introduced new tactics into the region which are observed by ISIS abroad—the use of children for violent suicide attacks. Five bombings in different locations were carried out in two days. Though initial police response was quick, the new tactic employed was not anticipated by the authorities. This prompted the government to reform its anti-terrorism law, continuously adjusting with every new terror attack arising. There is continuous development in the region's counter-terrorism but persistent terror attacks show that preventive measures employed are not sufficient. The inability of SEA countries' defense and security services to effectively prevent and confront this threat provides relevance and urgency to this research problem.

Terrorism is a phenomenon that cannot be permanently eradicated. Responses to terrorism are enforced in order to prevent it from happening, combat it when confrontation arises, and to protect people exposed to it. If the patterns of responses are analysed, recommendations for more

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<sup>1</sup> ISIL claims Surabaya bomb attacks.(14 May 2018). Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/indonesia-explosions-surabaya-church-attacks-180514052814649.html>. Accessed: 16 May 2018.

effective implementation could be developed and would aid involved authorities to plan out the mechanisms that they could utilize to ensure security for their citizens.

This topic is relevant since there is an impending need to identify which factors hinder the ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts and suggest actions that could be considered by policymakers to preempt further expansion and radicalisation in the region in the near future.

**The object and subject.** The object of the study are national policies and international cooperation in counter-terrorism and security in SEA region, while the subject are forms, mechanisms and practices of counter-terrorism and security cooperation, as well as governmental and intergovernmental institutions involved in it.

**Research questions.** The study revolves on these questions:

1. What are the responses and measures taken by the ASEAN to handle the threat of the ISIS expansion within the region?
2. What are the challenges faced by the ASEAN's security sector?
3. What are possible adjustments and its implementation that can be done to improve counter-terrorism in the region?

The **aim of this research** is to identify the gaps in the ASEAN security sector in relation to counter-terrorism on national and regional levels, and to design methods to strengthen it.

**Research Objectives.** To achieve the aim, the following **objectives** have been set:

1. To define on the concepts to be used in the study.
2. To conduct an analysis on how the different types of government and designated counter-terrorism entities among the ASEAN member states affect the response time and effectivity against terrorism and its threats.
3. To apply the Game Theory in analysing the action of states and other actors with regard to events related to terrorism and security issues in the Southeast Asian region, using the model as reference to the decisions being made by involved terrorist and security entities and how they affect the current counter-terrorism development, responses, and cooperation, showing possible outcomes of each choice taken.

4. To compare and analyze terrorism data and statistics among ASEAN member states in order to explain and interpret the growing level of threat.
5. To differentiate between effective and non-effective counter-terrorism and security practices per ASEAN member country and discern which can be applied at the regional level.

The **chronological framework** of this dissertation encompasses the period from 2002, following the Bali bombings which marked the beginning of the series of counter-terrorism efforts in the Southeast Asian region, until the present day. It is important to note, however, that in accordance with the theme of the dissertation that focuses particularly on ISIS, the paper indicates that Southeast Asian terrorist groups have begun to pledge allegiance since 2014.

**Methodology.** In carrying out this research *systems* and *comparative* analysis were mainly applied. *Interview* was also used for the case studies in the third chapter.

*Qualitative documentary analysis* is utilized in the second chapter. Gathered official documents are to be thoroughly reviewed to cite and show supporting data in explaining the region's laws, history, demographics, and relations. For the subchapters on the ASEAN member states' religions and current threats posed by ISIS, the events will be examined in the structure of national and then regional context, through *systems analysis*. The problem of combating Islamic extremism in SEA will be used as the system with elements including national actors, regional actors, and organizations. The factors include national policies, social and religious norms, unemployment, poverty, police and military power, corruption, national security, violent extremism, radicalisation, and cooperation.

The third chapter utilizes *interview*<sup>2</sup>. To better explain the Bali Bombing and Marawi Crisis cases presented in this chapter, an interview of the Philippines' Presidential Security Group chief-of-staff<sup>3</sup> was conducted and analyzed. Information regarding the situation of violent extremism and counter-terrorism in the Philippines and in the Southeast Asian region, including elements viewed as contributing factors to the susceptibility of the SEA region to terrorism was obtained. An overview of the Marawi crisis was also discussed and what problems have hindered the security responses and mechanism taken. In this chapter, graphs and charts will also be displayed to show visuals of the status of terrorism (incidents, casualties, response) in the region, using year and item

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<sup>2</sup> See: Appendix 1

<sup>3</sup> Name withheld by interview agreement.



count as variables. *Comparative analysis* is used in the third chapter to measure the differences of the actions taken on both major terrorist incidents. It is also used to demonstrate the differences of both countries on the entities involved in counter-terrorism and how this has affected the efficiency of their responses. It also shows the similarities of the modus operandi of different terrorist groups in both countries and how they are linked.

Lastly, to discuss the counterterrorism measures implemented, the elements will be structured on the national level, regional level, and the global level. *Systems analysis* will be used on the fourth chapter. The system of security mechanisms will be analyzed. It will look into the connection between national police and military power, financial capabilities of each member state, national laws implemented, agreements formed, and cooperation. Using *comparative analysis*, the responses and tactics used by each country will be compared and scrutinized in order to identify which ones have more effective counterterrorism measures, why it is so, and what is needed to be improved from the others. The different domestic and international cooperation strategies, whether bilateral or multilateral, will be scrutinized. *Systems mapping* will be used in the conclusion to demonstrate connection between the elements for causal loops that reinforce or counterbalance.

**Theoretical framework.** John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's *Game Theory* is applied on the analysis of the region's cooperation and security challenges. Looking at the different actors involved, there is uncertainty on the next moves to be done and strategic choices to be made. Governments and organizations involved may choose to trust or not to trust leaders of terrorist groups who engage in dialogues with them or statements given by apprehended members of these groups. Different combination of decisions lead to different results, making the process even more sensitive to deal with.

In terms of the responses and measure's taken by ASEAN's security sector to terrorism incidents, this study proceeds from Neo-liberal paradigm in International Relations (IR) theoretical thinking, considering that cooperation is strongly being taken into account and favored by the regional bloc and individual states, but the latter, so far, have not yet established proper cooperation mechanisms.

**Review of the literature.** A number of scholars have published works focusing on the issues of terrorism and major terrorist groups involved, particularly in Southeast Asia. While most of these studies explore the issue of terrorism and the responses taken by countries involved, a scrutiny of

ASEAN's security sector and the responses on three different levels: national, regional, and global, have not yet been addressed as an object of research. **Rommel Banlaoi**, Chairman of the Board of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, the effectivity of the Southeast Asian region's counter terrorism measures were examined.<sup>4</sup> In his study released in 2009, linkages among existing terrorist groups in Southeast Asia were outlined, and national responses from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore were subjected to assessment. Regional responses and cooperation were also discussed, as well as the impact of terrorism on the region's socio-economic development. The work provided various outlined explanations on how the system of Southeast Asian terrorist groups operate as well as the stakeholders behind them. However, the research presents available data until its year of release which limits the issue to longstanding terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah and Al-Qaeda. This research attempts to provide updated data for the past decade and specifically focus on the current issue of ISIS expansion.

Many studies have been dedicated to explaining terrorism and its political implications. American political scientists **Andrew Kydd** and **Barbara Walter** analyze the patterns of extremist violence and relates them the game theory, conceptualizing actions and subsequent decisions as factors that lead to the sabotage of peace.<sup>5</sup> The authors presented various models of the game and classified the standpoint of extremist and moderate parties in the field.

The Director of the Research and Publications division with the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, **Thomas Koruth Samuel**, published an updated study in 2016 about radicalisation in Southeast Asia, mainly focusing on Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> The work revolved on the emergence of ISIS in the Southeast Asian region and the response plans implemented by the three selected countries. The study also delves into the history of pre-existing terrorist groups in the subject states and how ISIS managed to gradually extend their influence, create linkages from the Levant to Southeast Asia through exchange of foreign terrorist fighters, and develop a network of terrorist groups for their operations. It does not, however, tackle the spread of

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<sup>4</sup> Banlaoi, R. (2009). Counter Terrorism Measures in Southeast Asia: How Effective Are They? Yuchengco Center: Philippines.

<sup>5</sup> Kydd, A., Walter, B.F. (2002). Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization*, Vol. 56 (No. 2). pp.263-296.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel, T.K. (2016). *Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism. p.116 [https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2016/Radicalisation\\_SEA\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2016/Radicalisation_SEA_2016.pdf)

ISIS influence in the Southeast Asian region as a whole, nor involve ASEAN's stand on this regional dilemma.

*Angel Rabasa, Stacie Pettyjohn, Jeremy Ghez, and Christopher Boucek*<sup>7</sup> wrote a comprehensive monograph concentrating on the deradicalization of Islamic extremists. The work surveys different deradicalization programs from different regions of the world and looks into other variables such as disengagement among fighters within terrorist groups and factors that influence them to leave and seek for reintegration into the society. In a section dedicated to the Southeast Asian region, it provides context on how Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand implement rehabilitation for apprehended militants. The work classifies approaches to deradicalization by two types: a government-led or national effort, which is observed systematically in Singapore and Malaysia, and Indonesia's ad hoc type of deradicalization which is mainly practiced by police officers who have access to the apprehended militants. The approaches mentioned cater to cases of extremists from JI groups, up until 2010, the year of the paper's publication. Eight years from then, our study looks into the progress of the Southeast Asian region as a whole, and reflects on what approaches to deradicalization would be more efficient in the context of evolving mechanism of counter-terrorism responses by the ASEAN's security sector.

To provide insight on ASEAN as a cooperative arrangement that aims to gradually evolve into an efficient security community, Post-Doctoral Fellow in Asian Security at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, *Ralf Emmers*, claims that mistrust among the members of ASEAN is a factor that prevents it from acting as a regional security body.<sup>8</sup> Though not entirely focused on the security issue of terrorism, a section of the work covers the past efforts by ASEAN to pen agreements and enhance cooperation to counter the threat of terrorism. The issue is then connected to other existing security problems such as transnational crime and border disputes. Emmers notes that, at the time of writing, the regional bloc still does not have the capacity to resolve internal conflicts and other controversial issues such as conflicts of interest. In this paper, we will examine how this has affected the security sector's progress in dealing with terrorism and how the varying intensity of terrorist incidents in the region until present day have influenced the leaders' attitudes towards these disparities.

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<sup>7</sup> Boucek, C., Ghez, J.J., Pettyjohn, S.L., Rabasa, A. (2010). Implications and Recommendations. *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*. pp.181-193.

<sup>8</sup> Emmers, R. (2017). Enduring Mistrust and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia: An Assessment of ASEAN as a Security Community. *Trans –Regional and –National Studies of Southeast Asia Vol. 5* (No. 1). pp.75-97

**Contribution to the field.** Based on the review of related literature presented, we observe that an updated study has not yet been centred on the response mechanisms of ASEAN's security sector particularly for the threat of ISIS expansion in Southeast Asia. As the issue is pressing and incidents have been taking place continuously, case studies have been included to demonstrate how the situation and responses have evolved over the recent years.

**Primary sources overview.** In conducting this research, different types of primary sources were analysed and categorized as follows:

**Official Documents** are classified under the first group of primary documents. This group branches out into five subgroups. First, there are *documents from national executive agencies* which are comprised of regulations<sup>9</sup>, resolutions<sup>10</sup>, orders<sup>11</sup>, memoranda<sup>12</sup>, and reports<sup>13</sup>. The second

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<sup>9</sup> See: Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam. (23 May 2013). [Press Release] Anti-Terrorism (Terrorist Financing) Regulations. <http://www.ambd.gov.bn/Lists/News/DisplayItem.aspx?ID=15>. Accessed: 7 February 2018

<sup>10</sup> See: Brunei A/RES/71/38: Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction. (5 December 2016) [https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/75506B23D97860BCC125815A0035463F/\\$file/BruneiDarussalam+Nuclear+Disarmament+Verification.pdf](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/75506B23D97860BCC125815A0035463F/$file/BruneiDarussalam+Nuclear+Disarmament+Verification.pdf). Accessed: 18 April 2018

<sup>11</sup> See: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) Declared as Terrorist Group.(25 August 2017). The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-terrorism Central Committee. <http://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/nrpcen/node/124>. Accessed: 16 April 2018.

<sup>12</sup> See: Thomas Jr., D.M. (30 October 2008). [Memorandum] Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control (CD) for Guantanamo Detainee (Hambali). U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay. Cuba: Department of Defense. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10019-hambali-riduan-isamuddin->. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>13</sup> See: Country Reports on Terrorism. (2006). U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/83383.pdf>. Accessed: 24 November 2017. ; State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Senior Leaders. (February 27, 2018). US Department of State. Washington, DC. <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/02/278883.htm>. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>14</sup> See: Terrorism in Southeast Asia. (November 2003). Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. Naval History and Heritage Command. <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/t/terrorism-in-southeast-asia.html>. Accessed: 19 February 2018.

subgroup is composed of *legislative documents* that include congress reports<sup>14</sup>, parliament statements<sup>15</sup>, Homeland Security hearings<sup>16</sup>, national laws<sup>17</sup>, and bills<sup>18</sup>.

*Documents from independent agencies of the government* form the third subgroup. This includes publicly accessible reports<sup>19</sup> from intelligence agencies. The fourth subgroup of official documents are from the *judicial* branch. Statements<sup>20</sup> made by the supreme court are classified under this group.

The fifth, and last, subgroup under official documents are those released by *International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations*. This subgroup is further divided into three classification of documents. Firstly, ASEAN documents which are composed of statements, both joint<sup>21</sup> and individual<sup>22</sup>. This sub-class also contains agreements, conventions<sup>23</sup>, and declarations

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<sup>15</sup> See: Rudd, Amber. Extremism: Written Statement. (2017). <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-12/HCWS39/>. Accessed 21 March 2018.

<sup>16</sup> See: Official Transcript: ISIS in the Pacific: Assessing Terrorism in Southeast Asia & the Threat to the Homeland. (27 April 2016). Homeland Security Committee. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg22758/html/CHRG-114hhrg22758.htm> or <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=798310>. Accessed: 24 November 2017.

<sup>17</sup> See: Vietnam Law On Anti-Terrorism. Lawyer's Chapter, Vietnam National Assembly Office. <http://iadllaw.org/files/Phan%20Quang%20Vinh%20VIETNAMESE%20LAW%20ON%20ANTI-TERRORISM.pdf>. Accessed: 24 April 2018

<sup>18</sup> See: Indonesian Counterterrorism Bill [Translation]. (2017). Revision on Law Number 15/2003/ [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/indonesia\\_counterterrorism\\_bill\\_2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/indonesia_counterterrorism_bill_2017_0.pdf). Accessed: 11 May 2018.

<sup>19</sup> See: CIA Report: ASEAN Security Cooperation: Problems and Prospects. (2006). Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80T00942A001200060001-4.pdf>. Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>20</sup> See: Philippine Supreme Court Opening Statement on Martial Law (May 2017). <http://www.osg.gov.ph/documents/officeupdates/Supreme%20Court%20Opening%20Statement%20on%20Martial%20Law.pdf>. Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>21</sup> See: Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Countering Terrorism in ASEAN. (February 2018). [https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/2018\\_Feb\\_ADMM%20Retreat\\_Singapore\\_6%20February%202018\\_ADMM%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20Counter-Terrorism\\_Final.pdf](https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/2018_Feb_ADMM%20Retreat_Singapore_6%20February%202018_ADMM%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20Counter-Terrorism_Final.pdf). Accessed: 23 April 2018.; Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Maintaining Regional Security and Stability for and by the People. (March 2015). <https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Joint%20Declaration%20of%20the%209th%20ADMM.pdf>. Accessed: 9 February 2018.

<sup>22</sup> See: ASEAN Chairman's Statement: Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism. (2015). <http://asean500.blogspot.ru/2015/10/special-asean-ministerial-meeting-on.html>. Accessed: 9 October 2017

<sup>23</sup> See: ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. (2007). <http://asean.org/storage/2012/05/ACCT.pdf>. Accessed: 22 April 2018.; The Bali Concord II. (2004). International Legal Materials, Vol. 43 (No. 1).

released by ASEAN. The second one includes documents from *other international organizations*. This contains speeches<sup>24</sup>, statements<sup>25</sup>, and reports<sup>26</sup> released by organizations such as United Nations and NATO. Lastly, information was also sourced from documents provided by non-governmental organizations such as statements<sup>27</sup> from Amnesty International.

**Digital Media' / News Agencies' Publications and Online Informational Material** are divided into two groups. The first group includes *news reports*<sup>28</sup> retrieved from news websites online such as The Straits Times, ASEAN Today, Channel News Asia, and Aljazeera. The second group is for *online publications* that is further classified into those published on *government websites*<sup>29</sup> and those from *international organization websites*<sup>30</sup>. These online publications may include announcement from embassies, information about counter-terrorism initiatives launched by

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<sup>24</sup> See: Robertson, G. (2002). "The Role of the Military in Combating Terrorism" [Speech]. NATO-Russia Conference, Moscow. <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021209b.htm>. Accessed: 28 April 2018.

<sup>25</sup> See: Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism Mr. Vladimir Voronkov at the Security Council meeting on the sixth "Report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat". February 2018. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/20180208-as-delivered-usg-voronkov-statement-on-sg-6th-isil-report.pdf>. Accessed: 26 April 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. (January 2018). [https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/S\\_2018\\_80.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/S_2018_80.pdf). Accessed: 27 April 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty International. (01 July 2016). [Public Statement]. Indonesia: Weak accountability systems and lack of respect for rights hampering police reform. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA2143902016ENGLISH.pdf> Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>28</sup> See: Edroos, F. (2017). ARSA group denies links with al-Qaeda, ISIL and others. Aljazeera News. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/arsa-group-denies-links-al-qaeda-isil-170914094048024.html>. Accessed: 25 April 2018.; Indonesia proposes 'mini-Interpol' plan to boost Asean counter-terrorism efforts. The Jakarta Post. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-proposes-mini-interpol-plan-to-boost-asean-counter-terrorism-efforts> . Accessed: 21 January 2018.

<sup>29</sup> See: ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018. (17 March 2018). Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism. <https://aseanaustralia.pmc.gov.au/news/combating-terrorism-and-violent-extremism>. Accessed: 1 May 2018.; Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States of America. (30 April 2018). Vietnam Strongly Condemns Terrorism [Statement]. <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/relations/vietnam-strongly-condemns-terrorism>. Accessed: 30 April 2018.

<sup>30</sup> See: UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism: Counter-terrorism Implementation Task Force. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>. Accessed: 16 January 2018.; ASEANAPOL Official Website. Objectives and Functions. <http://www.aseanapol.org/about-aseanapol/objectives-and-functions>. Accessed: 29 April 2018.

particular organizations such as ASEANAPOL and Interpol, and materials containing educational information for the public on the matter of human security.

**Statistics and Databases** used in this study were sourced from two groups. There are data gathered from *international organizations*<sup>31</sup> such as ASEAN and the International Labour Organization. This includes infographics and fact sheets containing figures necessary for the theme. And there are clusters of data from *independent organizations*<sup>32</sup> which contain country statistics of terror incidents and a database of existing terrorist groups per country.

**Transcripts and Video Materials of Raw Footage and Public Speeches** were also utilized as sources of information in this study. Sources of this type were divided into four groups. The first group consists of publicly available *video propaganda and footages*<sup>33</sup> particularly released by ISIS' media site. The second group includes *videos of speeches and interviews*<sup>34</sup> conducted by the media with government officials regarding the issue of terrorism. Third, videos of *hearings and conferences*<sup>35</sup> discussing security threats, particularly that brought by ISIS, were also gathered.

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<sup>31</sup> See: ASEAN Infographics. <https://aseanup.com/asean-infographics-population-market-economy/>. Accessed: 11 March 2018.;

International Labour Organization. (2014) Labour Standards, Myanmar. Counter-Terrorism Law. [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=100518&p\\_count=96298&p\\_classification=01&p\\_classcount=12520](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=100518&p_count=96298&p_classification=01&p_classcount=12520). Accessed: 17 March 2018.

<sup>32</sup> See: Global Terrorism Index 2017 Report. Institute of Economics and Peace. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%202017%20%284%29.pdf> Accessed: 14 March 2018.;

Emerging Areas of Terrorism in Southeast Asia. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/emerging-areas-of-terrorism-in-southeast-asia/> Accessed: 27 March 2018.

<sup>33</sup> See: Chris Tomson. "ISIS releases English-spoken video about Marawi, calls on foreign fighters to join battle, AMN. (21 August 2017). [www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-releases-english-spoken-video-marawi-calls-foreign-fighters-join-battle/](http://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-releases-english-spoken-video-marawi-calls-foreign-fighters-join-battle/). Accessed 14 April 2018.;

Released Footage of Training Camp in Philippines (in Filipino language): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hit9TtDb-Ho>. Accessed: 27 November 2018.

<sup>34</sup> See: Media Interview of President Rodrigo Duterte - Marawi City 9/21/2017. Presidential Broadcasting Staff, Radio Television Malacañang. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NhjTFM4B2s>. Accessed: 12 April 2018.;

President Rodrigo Duterte Speech. ASEAN Summit 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOamdAmvYSk>. Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>35</sup> See: Official Hearing: ISIS in the Pacific: Assessing Terrorism in Southeast Asia & the Threat to the Homeland. Homeland Security Committee. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbg7lRkCP3k&t=1879s>. Accessed: 16 March 2018.;

Talking ASEAN on Addressing Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia [Conference]. The Habibie Center. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8mAZTDBq6Q>. Accessed 27 November 2017.

**Interviews**<sup>36</sup> used for this study were those conducted by government or news agencies, and those personally done by the author. However, due to the sensitivity of the dissertation's theme on some aspect, certain information have been previously agreed not to be published for the public.

**The structure of the work** reflects the objectives set.

The first chapter discusses the concepts of terrorism, Islamic extremism, and counter-terrorism. It applies the Game Theory to analysing the dynamics of decisions taken by actors. This chapter clarifies the concepts that are used through the thesis. The second chapter examines the ASEAN as a regional bloc and identifies existing ISIS and other terrorist threats in the region through data acquired. It dissects and builds on information about records of terrorism and extremism in the region, and also discusses specific incidents related to the threat of impending ISIS expansion in Southeast Asia. The third chapter delves into ASEAN's security sector and scrutinizes responses based on reconstruction of two cases of major terrorist incidents in the region: the 2002 Bali Bombing and the 2017 Marawi Crisis. The chapter then provides comparative case studies and analyzes factors that surround the operation of terrorist groups who carried out the attack and the different forms of response taken by involved authorities. The fourth and final chapter of the dissertation reviews and assesses responses on the national, regional, and global (cooperation) levels vis-a-vis terrorism and ISIS threats. It seeks to identify their impact on the issue dynamics and to determine ways for enhancing counter-terrorism efficiency in accordance with the attained results and its interpretation.

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<sup>36</sup> See: Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammudin Tun Hussein Interview. (24 October 2017). Philippine Inquirer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzcQaUgNdRI>. Accessed: 16 January 2018.; Vietnam Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Pnan Thuy Thanh [Interview]. (28 April 2018). "Vietnam Strongly Condemns Terrorism". Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: USA. <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/relations/vietnam-strongly-condemns-terrorism>. Accessed: 28 April 2018.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Defining the Phenomenon**

#### **1.1 Characteristics of Terrorism**

The concept of terrorism has remained vague and debated by scholars and politicians through the years. There are different views as to which acts may be labeled as terrorism, who may be labeled as terrorists, and what are the motives behind acts of terrorism. To observe the consistency of terminologies mentioned in this study, this section shall define and distinguish correlated terms for the study's subject.

Richardson has distinguished terrorism as a politically driven phenomenon which is characterised by seven distinct traits.<sup>37</sup> It does not imply the perpetrators to cause direct harm to people without impetus but rather commit acts to express a standpoint. To narrow down the qualities in which it is possible to call an event an act of terrorism, first, it must be characterised as an act that involves threat and violence. Second, the committed act has to be politically motivated. This is one of the key distinguishers of the concept of terrorism from that of violence.

Third, the goal of terrorists is to plant fear and threaten the masses in order to let their messages be heard and achieve their goals. In this sense, the purpose of terrorism is to deliver a message and not exactly to subjugate the adversary. This is carried out easily at present times as a result of the ease of access to the internet, higher mobility of the media, and real-time news delivery which makes it easier for word of such incidents to reach all parts of the world.

The fourth distinguishing factor of terrorism is the symbolism attached to the event and its casualties. One of the illustrative examples is considered to be the 9/11 attack in the US. The Twin Towers are said to be viewed as political economic symbols<sup>38</sup> which adds to the shock value of the event. The intention of inflicting psychological damage is higher than the tangible havoc it has wrecked.

The fifth trait, which is still being debated, is that the acts of terrorism are usually carried out by sub-state groups, and not states. This is not to turn a blind eye on conceivably state-funded

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<sup>37</sup> Richardson, L. (2006). *What Terrorists Want*. New York: Random House Inc.

<sup>38</sup> MacDonald, A., Patrick, R. (2012). Symbolism and the city: From towers of power to 'Ground Zero'. *Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays* Vol. 15. pp.14-18. <http://pcag.uwinnipeg.ca/Prairie-Perspectives/PP-Vol15/PP-Vol15.pdf>

terrorist groups nor the actions of states that exhibit the characteristics of terrorism but for analytical purposes, it is necessary to understand that terrorist groups are mainly substate actors.

The sixth characteristic is the absence of relevant connection between the victims of the terroristic acts and its intended audience. The target audience of terrorists are of a larger scale compared to the victims they target. The victims do not necessarily need to be connected to those seen as adversaries by the terrorists. The terrorists do not carefully handpick them but rather attack at random circumstances as their identities may not hold any bearing to the assailants. This is what differentiates terrorism from other forms of violence that have fixed targets.

Lastly, terrorism is identified with the intentional targeting of innocent civilians. Though specific identities are not aimed at, as mentioned in the sixth characteristic, terrorists justify these attack on non-combatants by seeing them as taxpayers of the target political institution and thus as indirectly supporting the government they are against.<sup>39</sup>

In this paper, we will apply the concept of “terrorism” as a reference to politically driven acts of violence carried out by perpetrators to plant fear, intimidation, damage, and anxiety among the public and deliver a strong message to their political adversaries.

## 1.2 Extremist Beliefs and Purposes

It is important to remember that the term “terrorism” does not equate to “extremism”. Extremism, whether religious or political, asserts the idea that “the more, the better”.<sup>40</sup> This leads its some followers to go into extremes and resort to fanaticism.

Religious extremism indicates an enormous sense of ideological devoutness that lead to carrying out of constant activities by an individual or a group of devotees to manifest their allegiance to the pertained religion or belief. The term could refer to the action or to an organisation. Often confused with radicalism, religious extremism could also be organised into a set of focused activities. Extremism is one of the means of achieving radicalism. In this sense, the concept of “religion” should be used inclusively, not only as reference to belief in deities or supreme beings, but also counting the sanctification of other non-spiritual phenomena, people, entities, and even

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<sup>39</sup> Richardson, L. (2006). *What Terrorists Want*. New York: Random House Inc. pp.4-6

<sup>40</sup> Liebman, C.S. (1983). *Extremism as a Religious Norm*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 22 (No.1). pp. 75-86.

governmental maxims. Since religions incorporate moral viewpoints, believers follow particular sets of ideologies which include goals and practices required for them to be classified as faithful to their doctrine. There could be instances for claims of more substantial authenticity within groups leading them to compete for whose commitment is higher.<sup>41</sup> Thus, “terrorism” and “extremism” are concepts that should be distinguished from one another. Extremism may lead to terrorism should the beliefs of the perpetrators be entangled with political issues.

Opposite to religious extremists are religious moderates who are willing to adapt and accustom themselves to their surroundings based on the prevailing cultural norms, simply to maintain a harmonious relationship with their surroundings. A rise in extremism could mean having more people from this side switch to the rejecting party. Religious extremism as a phenomenon is the result of the weakening faction of religious moderation. Liebman argues that religious extremism is defined by three characteristics.<sup>42</sup> First, since a religion emphasizes strong claims on authenticity and truth in their teachings, its followers strive to pursue finding absolute means to interpret and implement its principles. Second, culture is assessed based on the truths of the religion it follows. If a certain cultural practice does not conform to the religion’s principles, it may be disregarded or isolated.

And third, on matters of religious commitment, there could be a pressure to step up to the standards of morality set up by the institution. This means that religious members could experience a certain degree of hostility towards non-religious ones. In some cases, religious commitment may lead to righteousness and even self-isolation if the disciple believes that he or she is being subject to undesirable outside influences that are a threat to his or her faith. These three characteristics are notable factors that lead to religious extremism.<sup>43</sup>

In a written statement released by British Secretary of State for the Home Department Amber Rudd, she stated that Islamic Extremist Organisations in the UK, for example, take advantage of Islam’s emphasis on charity and use this to represent themselves as charities in order to gain funds and increase their credibility in the society, even though their status and

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<sup>41</sup> Prus, R. (2005). Terrorism, Tyranny, and Religious Extremism as Collective Activity: Beyond the Deviant, Psychological, and Power Mystiques. *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 36 (No. 1). pp.47-74.

<sup>42</sup> Liebman, C.S. (1983). Extremism as a Religious Norm. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 22 (No.1). pp. 75-86.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

activities are obscure.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in a study published by Springer scrutinising the radicalisation and recruitment process of such organisations, the study defines the radicalisation of Islamist politics as “a rational choice by a self-interested revolutionary organisation which seeks to maximise expected income per member from the conquest of power.” This means using the “degree of extremism of its policies” as a way to moderate the levels of membership.<sup>45</sup> Radicalisation is then viewed a form of response to inauspicious distress. This shock leads the people to form a rational choice under such circumstances and result to engaging in extremism for combined religious and political purposes, then leading to acts of terrorism. Nonetheless, it is possible in some cases that the concept of what a “terrorist” is could be viewed with subjectivity depending on the society giving the moral assessment of the circumstances. In a speech delivered by al-Qaeda founder Osama Bin Laden in 2004 through a videotape he sent to media outlet Aljazeera, he stated “Should a man be blamed for defending his sanctuary? Is defending oneself and punishing the aggressor in kind, objectionable terrorism? If it is such, then it is unavoidable for us.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, people who may be branded as “terrorists” and “freedom fighters” by other foreign communities may be viewed as heroes and protectors by some locals, only seeking to defend their collective interests from aggressors.

On the other hand, if we are to connect these actions to the field of politics, extremism has been known to be used as a tool in disrupting peace processes through different ways including violent ones.<sup>47</sup> According to Kydd and Walter, “The purpose of extremist violence is not to achieve anything directly in a military sense, nor to signal that the extremist group opposes the treaty. The purpose is to exacerbate doubts among those on the targeted side that the moderate opposition groups can be trusted to implement the peace deal and will not renege on it later.”<sup>48</sup> Their goal is to create mistrust between both moderate parties, enough to call off the deal. The use of terrorist

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<sup>44</sup> Rudd, Amber. Extremism: Written Statement. (2017). <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-12/HCWS39/>. Accessed 21 March 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Ferrero, M. (2005). Radicalization as a Reaction to Failure: An Economic Model of Islamic Extremism. *Public Choice*, Vol. 122 (No. 1/2). p. 216.

<sup>46</sup> Full Transcript of Bin Laden’s Speech. <https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/11/200849163336457223.html>. Accessed: 19 January 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Inbar, E. (1996). Islamic extremism and the peace process. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 8 (No.2). p.201.

<sup>48</sup> Kydd, A., Walter, B.F. (2002). Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization*, Vol. 56 (No. 2). p 267.

explosives exemplifies the incapability of the opposition to halt or prevent the insurgence of terrorism, making them appear possibly unreliable in the future.

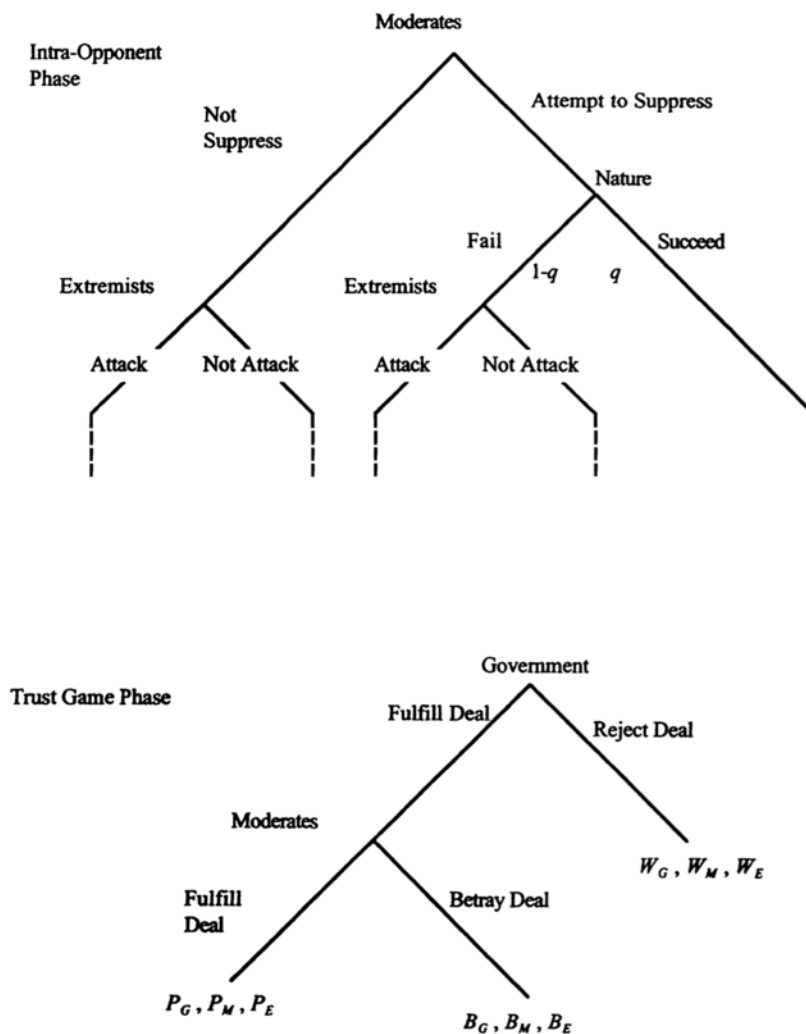


Figure 1.1 Structure of the Game <sup>49</sup>

Game Notations:

**Payoffs**

- $W$  = Value of a rejected deal (return to war)
- $P$  = Value of an accepted and fulfilled deal (peace)
- $B$  = Value of a betrayed deal
- $s$  = Cost of suppressing the extremists
- $t$  = Cost of a terrorist attack

**Beliefs**

- $p_{MT}$  = Probability that moderates are trustworthy
- $p_{MS}$  = Probability that moderates are strong
- $p_{GS}$  = Probability that government is soft line
- $q$  = Probability that attempt at suppression by strong moderates succeeds

<sup>49</sup> Kydd, A., Walter, B.F. (2002). Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization*, Vol. 56 (No. 2). p 267.

In their analysis, Kydd and Walter presented the game theory model in application to the actions of extremists that could lead to terrorism. The game model is composed of two stages. The first one lays out a decision point for moderates whether or not they would attempt to subdue the extremists.

In case of carrying out this attempt, the success rate is still equal to that of failure. Hence, should the moderates fail to effectively subdue the extremists, this could lead to a retaliation and the option of carrying out a terrorist attack. On the second stage, the government plays a game of trust with the moderates in the opposition and is subject to decide whether or not it will push through with the proposed peace deals. If the terror attack will successfully be carried out on stage 1, then the government may choose to withdraw from the deal and the state of conflict remains for both sides. However, if the government decides to carry on with the deal, it throws the ball to the court of the moderates which gives them the power to decide whether to betray the government or to abide by the conditions of the agreement made.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the power of extremists in using terrorism as a tool to influence significant peace processes cannot be underestimated.

### 1.3. Islamic Extremism

Among many forms of religious extremism is Islamic extremism. Islam, being the second most practiced religion in the world, is divided into various sects and has branched out a radical faction like all other religions. Islam follows the holy writings of the Qur'an which, like other religious texts such as the Bible, may be interpreted in many different ways including political ones. This paper, however, would like to specify that Islam is not to be conventionalised when referring to extremism as this phenomena is present in other religions as well. There are instances in which the holy texts are used to justify actions beyond the bounds of the relative forms of ethics. There have been instances in which the *fatwa*, a legal opinion on the interpretations of the Islamic law, has triggered movements of hate after their elucidation of certain texts.

According to Lewis, the ideology of the radical sect of Islam harbours antagonistic sentiments towards the West. He credits this fundamentalist attitude for views of the West and their colonialist roots as entities that corrupt Islam's way of life.<sup>51</sup> In theory, Lewis stated that "Islam was

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<sup>50</sup> Kydd, A., Walter, B.F. (2002). Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization*, Vol. 56 (No. 2). pp.263-296.

<sup>51</sup> Lewis, B. (1990) *The Roots of Muslim Rage*. The Atlantic. pp.47-60.

never prepared to accord full equality to those who held other beliefs, and practiced other forms of worship.”<sup>52</sup> This leads extremists to carry out acts that push the beliefs they are strongly committed to regardless of the nature of the approach they take.

With respect to the methods applied by extremists in gearing towards their goals, another popular concept is *jihad* or the holy war which is carried out against non-believers. On the radical side, there are plenty of followers who are willing to obtain *shaheed* (martyr status) for what is believed to be the greater good and in order to be guaranteed of receiving honour in the afterlife. This could lead to the absence of fear or anxiety when faced with the possible consequences of losing lives through the process.<sup>53</sup> This level of extremism could lead to terrorism when mixed with violence and political agenda. Terrorism in the form of extremist movements cannot be justified alone as a result of ideological provocation. It is more like a tactic, carried out by harming civilians or non-specific targets, to obtain political aims, create fear in the society, and deliver a message. By carrying out attacks or jihad in different parts of the world, the tactic works in successfully drawing the global community’s attention to the conflict in the Middle East. Moreover, terrorism is a tactic used by states or entities that do not have sufficient powers to achieve their political goals due to the more powerful states surrounding them.<sup>54</sup> In the cases of ISIS, greater Middle Eastern powers such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and Iran overpower it. Their strategy to propagate their movement’s ideological component through radicalization and maintaining supporters across the globe helps them secure their influence despite deterioration of their geographical caliphate.

A controversial deviation from Islam is *Islamism*. This movement claims to represent the religion of Islam yet a lot of Muslims are not pleased with their actions and claims that this branch deviates from the true teachings of the religion. Islam is a practice of faith, while Islamism is seen as an ideology.<sup>55</sup> It is important to note that Islamists are Muslims, however, not all Muslims are Islamists. Pipes characterises Islamism using three qualities: devotion to the sacred law, rejection of influences from the West, and the conversion of faith into ideology, traits that align with radical tendencies. Followers of Islamism strongly believe that Muslims trail behind the West due to the

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<sup>52</sup> Lewis, B. (1990) *The Roots of Muslim Rage*. The Atlantic. p.56.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.201.

<sup>54</sup> Shapiro, J. (2017). Terrorism as a Tactic. <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/terrorism-as-a-tactic/>. Accessed 11 May 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Van Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. (1995). Islamism: A Defiant Utopianism. *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 35 (No. 1). p.1-2.

fact that they are not good Muslims and see this as glory that is lost.<sup>56</sup> To regain this, strict observance of the Shari'a is deemed necessary for Islamists. For them, strict devotion to the religion of Islam is viewed as type of political allegiance, so in terms of religious righteousness by deeds in accordance with the faith, Islamists do not necessarily need to practice them. Unlike traditional Muslims, Islamists seek out to build a new order. They see the state as a medium to implement their ideologies and often lead the political opposition. They do not observe much tolerance for non-Muslims such as Jews and Christians, thus the desire to develop an Islamic State that will allow them full control over political and military entities in the territory.

Islamism has grown into a politicization of Islam in both social and political spheres. Religious and political actors become codependent and integrating Islamic terminologies with legitimate state policies paves a way for converting it into a modern national ideology.<sup>57</sup> The politicization of Islam has not caused much changes to its religious doctrines, but rather developed a sense of national and civic identity by equating it with national belonging. Muslim-majority states usually merge Islam with the state system and transforms it into a national ideology. Islamists emphasize on the importance of Islam in politics and promote Islamic fundamentalism. According to Burmeister, Islamic fundamentalism does not necessarily equate to a threat, however, it could lay the foundation for extremist interpretations of Islamic law and writings.<sup>58</sup> Politicization of Islam has made impacts on both politics and societies. In contemporary society, Islam is seen not just as a faith, but also as an identity. Since a characteristic of Islamism is its abhorrence towards Western influence, their actions could be seen as a response to globalization, seeing it as a threat to their identity.

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<sup>56</sup> Pipes, D. (2000). Islam and Islamism: Faith and Ideology. *The National Interest*, No. 59. p.89.

<sup>57</sup> Cesari, J. (2017). Islam as a Political Force: More Than Belief. berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/islam-as-a-political-force-more-than-belief>. Accessed: 29 April 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Burmeister, B.S. (2000). The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism—Over or Underrated As a Threat to (South African) National Security. [http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CJSupp/TrainingFormation/DefenceCollege/Researchpapers2000\\_02/burmeister.htm](http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CJSupp/TrainingFormation/DefenceCollege/Researchpapers2000_02/burmeister.htm). Accessed: 29 April 2018.



## 1.4 Counter-terrorism

Based on the definition and descriptions given to the term “terrorism” in this chapter, we define counter-terrorism as “actions that ameliorate the threat and consequences of terrorism”.<sup>59</sup> This can be carried out by various entities such as state governments, international organisations, the military, the police, private corporations, and even private citizens.

It is necessary to distinguish the dissimilitude between “war” on terrorism and “combating” terrorism.<sup>60</sup> As stated in this chapter, terrorism is a phenomenon and not a single fixed entity that could be engaged in war. Instead, the term “combating” would be of more appropriate usage as, in practice, we seek to prevent its spread and solve it from its roots.

With this, counter-terrorism measures consist of two types: defensive and proactive.<sup>61</sup> Defensive measures refer to the reduction of success rate for the terrorists and protection of possible targets by making the attacks more damaging to the terrorist side. If terrorists nevertheless succeed at their attack despite the use of defensive countermeasures, the losses on the the side of their targets are still minimised. On the other hand, proactive measures are identified as offensive since it involves direct confrontation of terrorist groups by the government or the military. This course of action results in the killing of terrorist group members, leaders, and the destruction of their bases if successfully carried out.<sup>62</sup>

There is, however, a determinant as to how terrorist groups collapse according to the Institute for Economics and Peace’ Global Terrorism Index. In the data processed by Gaibullov and Sandler covering the period of 1970-2007, 35% of terrorist groups end the moment they have achieved their political goals or integrate into politics; 35% end after being defeated by the police or the military; and the remaining 30% experienced disintegration due to internal splintering.<sup>63</sup> A factor contributing to this is the nature of terrorist group — whether they are left-wing, nationalist,

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<sup>59</sup> Sandler, T. (2014). Terrorism and counterterrorism: an overview. Oxford Economic Papers. pp. 13. <https://academic.oup.com/oep/article-abstract/67/1/1/2913015>

<sup>60</sup> Jenkins, B.M. (2002). STRATEGY FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF THE WAR ON TERRORISM. *Countering al Qaeda: An Appreciation of the Situation and Suggestions for Strategy*. pp. 17-30.

<sup>61</sup> Sandler, T. (2014). Op. Cit.

<sup>62</sup> Chase, M.S., Dobbins, J., Henry, R., Larrabee, S., Lempert, R.J., Liepman, A.M., Ochmanek, D., Martini, J., Shatz H.J. and Solomon, R.H. (2015). Counterterrorism. Choices for America in a Turbulent World: Strategic Rethink. p.51

<sup>63</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2017 Report. p.77 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%202017%20%284%29.pdf> Accessed: 14 March 2018.

right-wing, or religious. From the data collected over four decades, those groups with religious-political orientations have the highest percentage of continued activity post 2007.

Suppression by the police or military is found to be the most efficient method of counter-terrorism against the ones that pertain to left-wing terrorist groups. However, this is not the case for religious terrorist groups. Only 12% of religious terrorist groups gave in to this repressive counter-terrorism measure. Other terrorist groups such as right-wing and nationalist groups disbanded due to the achievement of political settlements and internal splintering, respectively.

Institutions comprising each state's security sector play different roles in countering terrorism. Though this varies per type of government, there are generally observed roles. For the Interpol, Police forces work to disrupt the recruitment and activities of foreign fighters, and protect civilians from attacks. Being the law enforcement entity, they are focused on preventing terrorist attacks and are also ideally in-charge of investigations.<sup>64</sup> Border police are also tasked to maintain security against the illegal entry of terrorists to the state's territory.

The military are also called to play a part in countering terrorism. In a speech delivered by Lord Robertson in a NATO Conference in Moscow, he stated that the distinction between terrorism and warfare is fading since international terrorist groups are now operating at a higher level of violence and can inflict damage to masses and economies. Likewise, he mentioned that in contemporary times, external and internal state security cannot clearly be separated in terms of responsibility.<sup>65</sup> Traditionally, internal security is left to the police and external security is accounted for by the military. However, terrorists can now slip into societies under radar and carry out large-scale attacks that may need military expertise for combatting.

Along with the police and the military, intelligence agencies also play an essential role in the security sector. The timeliness and accuracy of intelligence reports carry heavy consequences for the outcome of situations. Strategic intelligence is helpful in carrying out national security measures by analysing capabilities, vulnerabilities, and possible courses of action of terrorist organizations. In the tactical level, intelligence agencies seek to calculate the timing, target, and type of attack

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<sup>64</sup> Interpol: Crime Areas. Terrorism. <https://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Terrorism/Terrorism>. Accessed: 30 April 2018.

<sup>65</sup> Robertson, G. (2002). "The Role of the Military in Combating Terrorism" [Speech]. NATO-Russia Conference, Moscow. <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021209b.htm>. Accessed 28 April 2018.

<sup>66</sup> Kruys, G.P.H. (2007). The Role of Intelligence in Countering Terrorism and Insurgency. [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/5638/Kruys\\_Role%282007%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/5638/Kruys_Role%282007%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). Accessed: 30 April 2018.

planned by the adversaries.<sup>66</sup> If done efficiently, security intelligence is a big advantage in countering terrorism.

Terrorism is a politically-driven phenomenon that has no borders. It is not strictly contained in a specific region and has the ability to spread all over the globe through factors such as radicalisation, movement of fighters, funding support, arms transfer, and online propaganda. Through time, governments and organizations have worked hard to develop measures and tactics that could prevent terrorism, but at the same time, terrorist groups have constantly been evolving to adapt with the changes in technology, improved equipment, and innovative strategies. Though terrorism could not be fully eradicated, continuous developments in the field of counter-terrorism brings optimism towards obstructing and minimizing the dangers brought by this phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Southeast Asia's Regional Bloc and Its Security Challenges**

#### **2.1 The ASEAN's Role**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) , identified as one of the strongest and most successful intergovernmental organisations, was formed when the Foreign Ministers of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand signed the ASEAN Declaration (also known as the Bangkok Declaration) in August 1967. There was a need for an organisation promoting regional cooperation to be established. The ASEAN addresses regional concerns that are economic, technical, cultural, social, and educational in nature. The organisation is also geared towards promoting peace and stability in the region by observing the rule of law, claim for justice, and abiding by the principles of the United Nations Charter.<sup>67</sup>

The signed ASEAN Declaration proclaimed the organisation as the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity<sup>68</sup>. One of its founding fathers Adam Malik, Indonesia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, described his country's vision of seeing Southeast Asia develop into a region which can stand on its own feet, strong enough to defend itself against any negative influence from outside the region. The idea of the organisation's formation was clarified by then Singaporean Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam that the ASEAN is formed not to be against anything or anybody. Instead, he stated that it is for countries who are interested, genuinely interested, in the stability of Southeast Asia, the prosperity of Southeast Asia, and better economic and social conditions, will welcome small countries getting together to pool their collective resources and their collective wisdom to contribute to the peace of the world. The goal of the ASEAN, therefore, is to build and not to demolish. Apart from these objectives, the Bangkok Declaration also operates in order to move towards resolving more permanent and institutionalised treaties such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1976), ASEAN Free Trade Area (1993), and the Treaty on the

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<sup>67</sup> History: The Founding of ASEAN. Association of Southeast Asian Nations. <http://asean.org/asean/about-asean/history/>. Accessed: 23 November 2017.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (1995). The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia has listed the following fundamental principles of the ASEAN<sup>69</sup>:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
4. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
6. Effective cooperation among themselves.

At present, the ASEAN is comprised of ten member states with the addition of Brunei Darussalam (1984), Laos (1997), Cambodia (1999), Myanmar (1997), and Vietnam (1995).

Country	Total land area	Total population	Population density	Annual population growth	Gross domestic product at current prices	Gross domestic product per capita at current prices	
	km <sup>2</sup>	thousand	persons per km <sup>2</sup>	percent	US\$ million	US\$	US\$ PPP
Brunei Darussalam	5 765	423,0	73	1,4	11 206	26 493	77 085
Cambodia	181 035	15 158,2	84	1,2	19 194	1 266	3 848
Indonesia	1 913 579	258 705,0	135	1,3	931 216	3 600	11 701
Lao PDR	236 800	6 621,1	28	2,0	15 903	2 402	7 123
Malaysia	331 388	31 660,7	96	1,5	299 632	9 464	27 584
Myanmar	676 576	52 917,0	78	0,9	68 636	1 297	5 959
Philippines	300 000	103 242,9	344	1,7	311 453	3 017	7 987
Singapore	719	5 607,3	7 797	1,3	296 977	52 963	87 858
Thailand	513 120	67 454,7	131	0,3	407 048	6 034	17 273
Viet Nam	331 231	92 695,0	280	1,1	198 196	2 138	6 325
<b>ASEAN</b>	<b>4 490 212</b>	<b>634 484,9</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>2 559 463</b>	<b>4 034</b>	<b>15 164</b>

**Figure 2.1 Statistics of ASEAN Member States (2016)**

It is notable that most member states of ASEAN are developing countries perceived as having small power in the world of politics. The dynamics of regional cooperation in the ASEAN, however, changes this and escalates the acquisition of power by the member states combined. In the

<sup>69</sup> History: The Founding of ASEAN. Association of Southeast Asian Nations. <http://asean.org/asean/about-asean/history/>. Accessed: 23 November 2017.

economic cooperation theory, usually the larger states dominate the game in favour of their own economic interests and the smaller states passively open their markets. In the case of the ASEAN, the combined economies of its member states allow it to have influence on summits and agreements.

The ASEAN has also been moving towards resolving and handling issues in the security sector. During the period of the Cold War, the region was bombarded with wars from third party states. This led the ASEAN to push the promotion of their strategy on the balance of power and encourage major states to join the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) which advocates conflict resolution through peaceful measures.

The organisation, however, acknowledges that individually their respective national capacities are inadequate to deal with the issues that arise from the security sector so it is necessary to develop both regional and international cooperation. The concept of national sovereignty is still one of the hindrances that produce hesitation among the member states to this day.<sup>70</sup>

One of ASEAN's main communities is the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC). This serves as ASEAN's means to create a regional security framework through cooperation. APSC acknowledges the dangers and regional threat possessed by terrorism, radicalism, and violent extremism. Its goal is to preserve peace and stability in the region and develop regional mechanisms for security, while adhering to the United Nations Charter.<sup>71</sup> Under this community, ASEAN has developed the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting - Plus (ADMM+) to gather annually and discuss security measures to be taken within the region. The Defence Ministers congregate to review non-traditional and security issues, while exchanging best practices and encouraging military cooperation.<sup>72</sup>

In 1981, ASEAN also formed ASEANAPOL, a regional alliance for its police forces. Its Secretariat aims to standardize the mechanisms of coordination and communication among ASEAN police institutions.<sup>73</sup> As a whole, ASEANAPOL works towards building a stronger regional police cooperation and increase the region's efforts in combatting transnational crimes.

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<sup>70</sup> Kun, Z. (2009). *The ASEAN Power. The Architecture of Security in the Asia-Pacific*. pp. 21-31.

<sup>71</sup> ASEAN Political-Security Community Fact Sheet. <http://asean.org/storage/2012/05/8.-Fact-Sheet-on-ASEAN-Political-Security-Community-APSC.pdf>. Accessed: 23 April 2018.

<sup>72</sup> Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Maintaining Regional Security and Stability for and by the People. March 2015. <https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Joint%20Declaration%20of%20the%209th%20ADMM.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> ASEANAPOL Official Website. Objectives and Functions. <http://www.aseanapol.org/about-aseanapol/objectives-and-functions>. Accessed: 29 April 2018.

## 2.2 Religious Conflicts within ASEAN member states

As it is comprised of ten member states from a broad region, Southeast Asia has a large concentration of diverse countries with different religions, all coming from the evolution of paganism to results of different waves of colonisation through the early centuries. With an estimate of more than 650 million people in its population as of 2018, the major religions in the region are Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism.<sup>74</sup>

In 647 AD, Islam was first set up on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, from where it began to propagate as the years passed. The religion was mainly brought to the region by the early Arab traders passing through for their expeditions. The spread of the religion was marked on the 12th century when rulers began to convert and members of the population married with followers of the religion. It soon became the major state religion of countries such as India, Brunei, and Malaysia.<sup>75</sup>

Another major religion in the region is Christianity. It came to the region together with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the 1500's. The Spaniards colonised the Philippines and converted majority of its people to Catholicism, a branch of Christianity.<sup>76</sup> This occurred after Arab and Malay traders have formed Muslim settlements in the southern part of the country, thus, nowadays, the southern Philippines is Muslim and the northern part is Christian.

For Buddhism, Mahayana and Theravada are present in Southeast Asia. From the 9th century, Mahayana Buddhism was popular in the northern regions of Asia and some parts of Southeast Asia. It has heavily affected cultures, languages, arts, and architecture. Theravada Buddhism spread through the mainland Southeast Asia from as early as 500AD. Contrary to the other religions mentioned in this section, Buddhism expanded mainly through the people and not from colonisers or the ruling elite. Nowadays, countries such as Thailand and Laos mainly practice Buddhism.

Lastly, Hinduism became a popular religion in the mainland region of Southeast Asia and a state religion for most. It started from the 1st century and had a popularity lasted until the late 13th

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<sup>74</sup> ASEAN Infographics. <https://aseanup.com/asean-infographics-population-market-economy/>. Accessed: 11 March 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Religious Demographics of Southeast Asia. World Atlas. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-demographics-of-southeast-asian-nations-dependent-territories.html>. Accessed: 11 February 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

century. Buddhism had become prevalent in former Hindu states by the 14th century as an attempt to abolish the caste system that was made popular by Hinduism. Temples still remain until the present day from former Hindu states such as the Angkor Wat in Cambodia which became part of the country's cultural heritage.<sup>77</sup>

ASEAN countries are often criticised for the lack of consistency and cohesion in implementing policies, mainly due to conflicting domestic policies and the stipulated respect for freedom of religion and belief. All ASEAN member states are subject to challenges pertaining to the violation of religious freedom domestically and across borders.<sup>78</sup> For example, it is quite challenging for non-Muslims to build own their houses of worship if they are in a Muslim-majority state like Indonesia or Brunei; Muslims living in Thailand and the Philippines, which are primarily Buddhist and Catholic respectively, may experience a disconnect from a majority of the country's area causing tensions between their religions to build up. These result to discrimination, division, and poor integration of the religious minorities in the country, which subsequently develops into a quest for autonomy and gives rise to separatists.

In some ways, this religious diversity has given rise to social problems and conflicts, both national and regional, that hinder cooperation. Minorities in some member states could feel oppressed and also suffer from poor economic situations. A contemporary demonstrative example for this argument is the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar. The Rohingya, majority of whom are Muslims, suffer violent treatment and discrimination in their own country, which is dominated by Buddhists. This situation has led to casualties and fleeing of refugees from the country. Such situations sow vulnerability into the society and gives rise to the concern that terrorist groups may take advantage of these conditions to recruit and radicalize the oppressed. In the southern region of Philippines and Thailand, poor conditions and religious oppression has bred extremist violence and continues the growing security threat in the region.

This is not to say the religious violence is the sole driving force of such conflicts. As mentioned in the previous chapter, religious fundamentalism and the underlying social psychology of being included into a society, can be a driving force for extremist tendencies. ASEAN's objective is to narrow these social gaps and promote the development of oppressed areas, to help build a unified regional identity and strong security.

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<sup>77</sup> Religious Demographics of Southeast Asia. Op.Cit.

<sup>78</sup> A Right for All: Freedom of Religion or Belief in ASEAN (Report). September 2017. <http://www.uscifr.gov/reports-briefs/special-reports/right-all-freedom-religion-or-belief-in-asean>. Accessed: 16 March 2018.



### 2.3 Terrorism and Extremism in the Southeast Asian Region

Terrorism is not a new threat to the ASEAN. According to Atlantic Council Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security nonresident senior fellow John T. Watts, “Southeast Asia is an attractive target for ISIS ambitions due to large Muslim populations, history of terrorist activities, and a long- standing desire by groups there to establish a Southeast Asian caliphate.”<sup>79</sup> The fact that a number of terrorist groups have coexisted in the Southeast Asian region and remain intact proves the ability of these groups to keep growing and withstand the current counterterrorism efforts of the respective states or the ASEAN as a whole.

The Southeast Asian region’s political and economic diversity can both be a positive and negative trait. In the case of terrorism and violent extremism, the ASEAN members’ lack of uniformity in implementation, pace, and policies make it conducive for terrorists to carry out their operations. What could be illegal in one member state’s territory may be acceptable in another, thus making it convenient to shift locations within the region. Terrorists thrive on the political instability and Southeast Asian governments suffering from internal conflict are good targets for them. Moreover, there are huge gaps in the respective economies of ASEAN members. Paired with their Policy of Non-Interference, members may opt not to seek immediate help when attacked to protect the image of their country’s power and military capacity.

IS operatives in Southeast Asia work as a growing network. The high population density in Southeast Asia is conducive for radicalization and recruitment. Indonesia alone, the world’s largest Muslim nation, has a population of 266 million people. In geographic terms, the Southeast Asian region is filled with islands from its archipelagos. Combined with weak border security and coordination in some parts of the region, these spots can serve as fortresses to terrorists and other fleeing militants.

Furthermore, the financial situation in some parts of the region make it easier for terrorist groups to lure new recruits with the assurance of money and funds received from the network. The existing problem of religious and societal oppression among the youth, partnered with the lack of education due to economic limitations in some parts of the region make it easier to radicalize them.

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<sup>79</sup> ISIS in the Pacific : Assessing Terrorism in Southeast Asia & the Threat to the Homeland. Homeland Security Committee. p. 4 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg22758/html/CHRG-114hhrg22758.htm> or <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=798310>. Accessed: 24 November 2017.

## Indonesia

Early cases date back to 1942 during the period of the Dutch rule when the revolutionary extremist group *Darul Islam* (DI) was formed. The group's goal was to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. After the nation's Declaration of Independence in 1949, the group, who opposed the current administration, utilised the government's weakness and instability to expand their influence. In a decade, DI managed to gain control over regions such as the South Sulawesi, Aceh, and Java. It wasn't until the 1962, however, that the Indonesian government managed to disband the group, causing remaining members to go into hiding around the Southeast Asian region. Some members of the group resurfaced in the 1970's under the name *Komando Jihad*, instigating Islamic terrorist activities. An infamous terror incident was the group's hijacking of Garuda Indonesia Flight 206 in 1981 in which the group was reportedly armed with machine guns and grenades. The seize was carried out in demand of the release of 80 political prisoners (Komando Jihad members), a ransom amounting to \$1.5 million in cash, and a plane to transport the released prisoners to an unspecified location. The situation was handled jointly by the Royal Thai Airforce commandos and the Indonesian Army Kopassandha commandos. The operation resulted to six fatalities (4 hijackers, 1 commando, and the pilot) and left all passengers unharmed.<sup>80</sup> Indonesia's security services eradicated the group in the 1980's.

A decade later, the *Jemaah Islamiya* (JI) was formed from the remains of the DI. The organisation was set as a Southeast Asian transnational network and sent its fighters to Afghanistan for training. After the imposed resignation of Indonesian authoritarian president Muhammad Suharto in 1998, the trained fighters from Afghanistan returned to Indonesia to once again take advantage of the administration's instability and conducted a series of high-profile attacks which included the Bali Bombings of 2002 and 2005, Jakarta bombings, and similar terrorist attacks on other international establishments. Being an extensive regional terrorist network, JI is linked to Al Qaeda with reports of cooperation between the two, and has units in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. Following the arrest and execution of many of the group's leaders between 2007 to 2009, JI's power and influence in the region have decreased but it is still believed to pose a threat considering that there are a number of highly-trained members scattered around the region who are capable of carrying out acts of violence anytime.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Garuda Indonesia Flight 206. Sourced from World Heritage Encyclopedia. [http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Garuda\\_Indonesia\\_Flight\\_206?View=embedded%27#References](http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Garuda_Indonesia_Flight_206?View=embedded%27#References). Accessed: 28 April 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Terrorism in Southeast Asia. (October 2009). Congressional Research Service: Report for Congress. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL34194.pdf>. Accessed: 16 January 2018.

## Philippines

The Philippines has the longest standing separatist conflict in Southeast Asia, dating more than 50 years back.<sup>82</sup> Long before the Christian missionaries arrived in the archipelago along with the Spanish conquistadores, Arabic and Malay merchants have already introduced Islam to the Philippines by the 14th century. The religion, however, only managed to set up a stronghold in the Southern Philippines while the northern islands developed into Christian regions. At present, this history contributes to the tension between the Philippine Government, based in the northern region, and the southern community who demand autonomy. With the influence of Islamic extremism and unmet demands for separation from the main state, politically-driven violent rebellions have occurred through the years. In this case, there are separatists who are willing to negotiate and conduct talks with the government: the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). On the other hand, there are terrorists who commit more heinous attacks and are connected with global jihadist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS:

Jemaah Islamiyah, the Maute Group, and Abu Sayyaf.

The MNLF and MILF share a belief that the Southern Philippines has very different customs and culture from the rest of the archipelago, thus needs to be on its own. The MILF, an insurgent-terrorist organisation, was created in the late 1970s from MNLF members who abandoned the group to create a new one in belief that the MNLF was deviating from their aim of establishing an Islamic Moro State.<sup>83</sup> With the strength of 10,000-12,000 members, testimonies have stated connections between the MILF and JI. The latter is reported to be supported and trained in MILF camps and jointly plotting terrorist operations.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group are categorised as a more violent type of jihadist groups. The Abu Sayyaf has been the culprit of kidnapping foreign tourists to demand ransom from their governments. Should the ransom not be met, they kill their captives and publicise it. The Maute Group, founded by former MILF militant Abdullah Maute, is responsible for the siege of Marawi City on May 2017 and has been categorised as a global terrorist organisation and ISIS affiliate.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Palacián de Inza, Blanca. (2012) Islamic Terrorism in the Philippines. Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies. p.18 [http://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_analisis/2012/DIEEEA41-2012\\_TerrorismoIslamicoFilipinas\\_BPI\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2012/DIEEEA41-2012_TerrorismoIslamicoFilipinas_BPI_ENGLISH.pdf). Accessed: 3 May 2018.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.11.

<sup>84</sup> Congressional Research Service: Report for Congress. Terrorism in Southeast Asia. October 2009. Op. Cit. p.17.

<sup>85</sup> State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Senior Leaders. US Department of State. Washington, DC. February 27, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/02/278883.htm>. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

## Singapore

Being a small yet powerful state in Southeast Asia, Singapore has also been exposed to rising terrorist threats in the most recent years according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.<sup>86</sup> The country has been able to carry out successful investigations and arrests of suspected Islamic violent extremists, many of whom are linked to the JI. In 2002, the Singaporean authorities successfully foiled the JI's terrorist plot of bombing the U.S. Embassy. Majority of the suspects caught were from the Philippines' MILF. Though it is known for its near exemplary counter-terrorism measures, the nation's authorities lost face following the scandal of the high-profile prison escape of the presumed JI leader Mas Selamat bin Kastari.<sup>87</sup>

## Thailand

Similar to the Philippines, Thailand has experienced constant separatist insurgency in its Muslim southern region since the early 20th century. The motive behind violence is said to be the injustice felt by the inhabitants of the southern provinces for being discriminated and marginalised, leaving the region economically poor and underdeveloped.<sup>88</sup> Another infamous terrorist organisation which made a mark both in Thailand and Cambodia was the Khmer Rouge. The group was identified as a communist party and carried out 148 attacks in both countries.<sup>89</sup>

At present, fatal terrorist activities led by the insurgents in the region have included bombings, shootings, and beheading. According to the Foreign Office, "Since 2004, there have been almost daily attacks in Thailand's deep south, including arson, bombings and shootings."<sup>90</sup> Victims have included civilians, security forces, and political targets.

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<sup>86</sup> Lee, U.W. (01 June 2017). Terrorism threat to Singapore the 'highest' in recent years: MHA. The Business Times. <http://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/terrorism-threat-to-singapore-the-highest-in-recent-years-mha> . Accessed: 15 March 2018.

<sup>87</sup> Terrorism in Southeast Asia. (October 2009). Congressional Research Service: Report for Congress. p.29. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL34194.pdf>. Accessed: 16 January 2018.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.21.

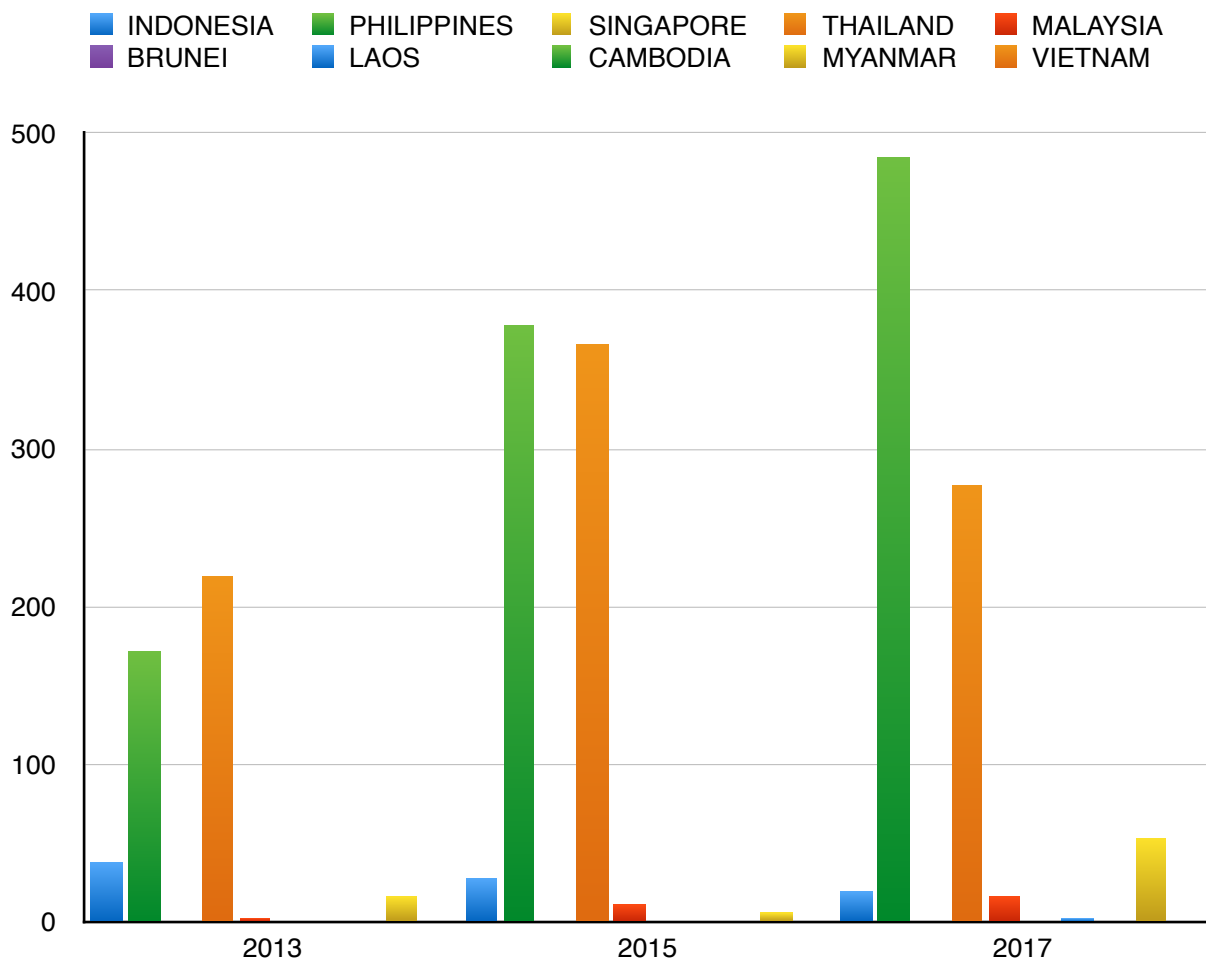
<sup>89</sup> Terrorist Groups in Thailand. <http://terrorist-groups.insidegov.com/d/a/Thailand>

<sup>90</sup> Calder, S. 2018. Thailand: Foreign Office Warns Tourists of High Terror Threat Amid Ongoing Insurgency

## Malaysia

Contrary to its neighbours, Malaysia has no existing separatist movements nor insurgents engaging in terrorist activities. This does not mean, however, that the nation is not subject to terrorist threats and operations. The country has been viewed as a global terrorism “hotspot” following the 9/11 attack because of reports that conspirators met in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>91</sup>

The Abu Sayyaf group which is headquartered in the Southern Philippines is also reported to operate on Sabah, a Malaysian territory situated in the northern coast of Brunei neighbouring Southern Philippine territory, due to its proximity.



**Figure 2.2 Incidents of Terrorism in the ASEAN member states**

data source: Global Terrorism Index<sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Terrorism in Southeast Asia. (October 2009). Congressional Research Service: Report for Congress. Op. Cit. pp. 24-25.

<sup>92</sup> Global Terrorism Index: World Map. <http://globalterrorismindex.org/> Accessed 22 March 2017.

Based on the statistic released by the Global Terrorism Index, the ASEAN member states have experienced a rise in terrorist incidents and casualties in the past few years. The graph above shows the number of terrorist incidents that occurred in the ASEAN member states for the past few years. The Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar have suffered the most cases being ranked as the 12th, 16th, and 37th (out of 163 countries) respectively in terms of terrorism index figures. Indonesia has seen a constant decrease in listed incidents of terrorism, demonstrating strong counterterrorism practices. Countries such as Cambodia, Singapore, Laos, Brunei and Vietnam have minimal to zero recorded incidents of terrorism in the recent years as data show.

Group	Country	Date of Pledging
Abu Sayyaf Group	Philippines	June 2014
Ansar al-Khilafah	Philippines	August 2014
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)	Philippines	August 2014
Bangsamoro Justice Movement	Philippines	September 2014
Jemaah Islamiyah	Philippines	April 2015
Jamaah Ansharut Daulah	Indonesia	2015
Jemaah Anshorut Taujid	Indonesia	August 2014
Mujahideen Indonesia Timor	Indonesia	July 2014
Maute Group	Philippines	2014

**Table 2.3 Southeast Asian Terrorist Groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIS <sup>93</sup>**

## 2.4 ISIS Threats and Incidents in the Southeast Asian Region

With a long history of terrorism and several coexisting terrorist organisations in the region, the unanimous current concern of the members of the ASEAN is the expansion of the notorious terrorist group ISIS. In 2016, ISIS has claimed responsibility for attacks in the region which include

<sup>93</sup> IS Affiliates Map. <https://intelcenter.com/maps/is-affiliates-map.html>. Accessed: 3 May 2018.

a coordinated attack in Jakarta (8 fatalities and dozens injured), and an attack on Filipino soldiers in the Southern Philippines (18 fatalities and 50 injured).<sup>94</sup>

In January 2016, ISIS designated Abu Sayyaf the now deceased Isnilon Hapilon as *amir* (commander) and encouraged other terrorist groups in the Southeast Asian region to support him. Later in June 2016, ISIS published a video of extremists, featuring a Filipino, and Indonesia, and a Malaysian, swearing allegiance to the organisation. In a statement released by the U.S. Department of State on February 2018, the U.S. recognised the existence of ISIS-Philippines, along with ISIS-West Africa and ISIS-Bangladesh, as an affiliate to the main organisation. They pertained to the recruitment video released by ISIS as a call to other Muslims in the region to support the group's efforts and join the fight. The Maute Group of the Southern Philippines, along with other terrorist organisations in Southeast Asia, declared their allegiance to ISIS in 2014 and is responsible for the Marawi Siege in 2017 and prior bomb attacks in the region.<sup>95</sup> Jihadists from the region aim to “repackage ISIS and make it relevant to local issues”.<sup>96</sup> This means adding in local grievances and issues in order to resonate with the locals and make recruitment easier for the middlemen. Recruiters put for an “emotional narrative” using their persecution as a call to stand up and “do something” for their community. Joining the ranks of ISIS was applauded as a sign of contribution and being responsible. In November 2016, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called on soldiers to join and launch attacks outside of Syria and Iraq, naming the Philippines and Indonesia as potential locations.<sup>97</sup> It is important to note that “some Indonesian jihadist groups have rejected ISIS because of its brutality and called it un-Islamic.”<sup>98</sup> In the Philippines, however, radicalisation strongly continues.

The first reported foreign fighters in Syria from Southeast Asia were Indonesian students already residing in the Middle East on student visas, sponsored by radical groups back home. They have been visible in some ISIS propaganda videos and their posts on social media. Returnees to Indonesia, however, claimed disappointment, saying they did not receive the money they were

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<sup>94</sup> King, P.T. (27 April 2016). ISIS in the Pacific: Assessing Terrorism in Southeast Asia and the Threat to the Homeland. Testimony before U.S. House of Representatives. Accessed: 16 March 2018.

<sup>95</sup> Buszinski, L. (2006). Russia and Southeast Asia: A New Relationship. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 28 (No. 2). pp 276-296.

<sup>96</sup> Samuel, T.K. (2016). *Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines*, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism. p.105

<sup>97</sup> Jihadism in Southern Thailand: A Phantom Menace. (8 November 2017). Asia Report No. 291. International Crisis Group.

<sup>98</sup> Watts, J.T. (27 April 2016). ISIS in the Pacific: Assessing Terrorism in Southeast Asia and the Threat to the Homeland. Testimony before U.S. House of Representatives. Accessed: 16 March 2018.

promised.<sup>99</sup> Unlike the Indonesian fighter who have backed by local extremist groups, most recruits from Singapore and Malaysia had no background or association to extremist movements before going to Syria. They are the product of effective online propaganda and travelled to fight in hopes of being pious to their religion and also as their way of punishing their government out of frustration.

Country	Official Count	TSG 2014 Figures	Returnees
Indonesia	700	30-60	162
Philippines	100	-	-
Singapore	2	1	-
Malaysia	100	-	5+
Cambodia	1	-	-

**Table 2.4** Southeast Asian Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria (2015) <sup>100</sup>

As of 2016, the estimated number of Southeast Asian fighters who flew to Syria to join ISIS is estimated to be between 800 to 1,200. Public reports indicate the creation of the Malay Archipelago Combat United which is comprised of recruited fighters from Malaysia and Indonesia. The said purpose of this unit is to encourage and inspire pro-ISIS attacks in the region.<sup>101</sup> The roots of this sudden spread in the region could be traced, similar to the case of the JI, to the departure and return of local combatants who fought and trained alongside the main organisation in Syria and other close locations. This leads the governments of the ASEAN member states to develop a growing concern on the possible transition of gained technical capabilities, such as bomb-making, and combat experience from the battlefield to the existing local groups in the region now that the ISIS has lost stronghold in Iraq and Syria.

On August 2017, BNPT Indonesia has report 18 voluntary returnees from Syria, more than 500 remaining abroad, and 30 fighting in Marawi, Philippines.<sup>102</sup> The threat of having these battle-

<sup>99</sup> The Soufan Group: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Iraq and Syria. [http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG\\_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf](http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf). Accessed: 13 April 2018

<sup>100</sup> The Soufan Group: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Iraq and Syria. [http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG\\_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf](http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf). Accessed: 13 April 2018

<sup>101</sup> Terrorism in Southeast Asia. (October 2009). Congressional Research Service: Report for Congress. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL34194.pdf>. Accessed: 16 January 2018.

<sup>102</sup> Terror in Indonesia – the threat posed by returning Islamic State fighters. (2017). Asia Pacific Report. PMC Editor. <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2017/09/27/terror-in-indonesia-the-threat-posed-by-returning-islamic-state-fighters/>. Accessed: 17 March 2018.



hardened foreign fighters return is their ability to revive dormant terrorist groups in the region, share combat skills through training camps, and gather more following, bringing with them the “prestige” and credibility of having fought along with the higher ranked members in Syria. Returnees by means of deportation saw their local governments as “infidels” and later proceed to attacks targeting the police.

ISIS also has facilitators scattered around the Southeast Asian region. They do not only facilitate recruitment and returnees, but also the flow of funds and arms trade to affiliated organizations the region. The US Treasury has reported a woman from the Philippines, Myrna Mabanza, as a facilitator for ISIS in the Philippines and Indonesia. She also reportedly served as an “intermediary” to jihadists in Syria.<sup>103</sup> Mabanza helped facilitate travel of fighters, funds transfer, and trainings for firearms use and basic bomb-making. In 2016, she assisted the travel of representatives from a local Indonesian terrorist group Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) to the Southern Philippines to purchase weapons for ISIS-aligned groups in Indonesia and set up training courses for pro-ISIS recruits together with ISIS-Philippines. This shows the ongoing network and degree of connectivity among Southeast Asian groups to the main forces in Levant.

In terms of tactics, Southeast Asian groups who have pledged allegiance to ISIS have also increased the use of ISIS-style violence. The Philippine’s Abu Sayyaf group, mainly known for kidnappings and execution of hostages, have increased beheadings similar to how ISIS executes their hostages in videos released.<sup>104</sup> ISIS propaganda is aimed at inspiring radicals to adopt to more brutal tactics. In the battlefield, Philippine soldiers who fought in Marawi also reported that Southeast Asian militants replicated the Iraqi tactic of blasting holes through walls in order for them to infiltrate buildings secured with sandbags.<sup>105</sup>

There are no signs of slowing down the spread of practices among the terrorist groups in Southeast Asia and the Levant. The security sector is expected to keep up in order to mitigate further growth of the network in the future.

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<sup>103</sup> Joscelyn, T. (2018). Treasury sanctions ISIS facilitator based in the Philippines. <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/thomas-joscelyn-treasury-sanctions-isis-facilitator-based-in-the-philippines/>. Accessed: 3 May 2018.

<sup>104</sup> Kurlantzick, J. (2016.) Democratic Backsliding and the Reach of ISIS in Southeast Asia. CFR Newsletter. <https://www.cfr.org/content/newsletter/files/Kurlantzick.pdf>. Accessed: 3 May 2018.

<sup>105</sup> Robson, S. (2017). Philippine troops credit US intel, training for helping them beat ISIS in Marawi. Stars and Stripes. <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/philippine-troops-credit-us-intel-training-for-helping-them-beat-isis-in-marawi-1.496965>. Accessed: 4 May 2018.

As a whole, ASEAN has continuously developed into regional bloc that serves as a platform for improved coordination and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region. Though it is said to function more in the economic sector, the organization is doing its best to serve as an efficient security body in the region as well. The data of incidents and returning foreign fighter presented in this chapter demonstrates that terrorism, particularly ISIS expansion in the region, is indeed a growing threat that continues to develop despite the present laws and agreements that have been passed to counter it. This shows that there are still loopholes in the system and improvements needing to be done.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Transnational Terrorism-Related Challenges to the ASEAN's Security Sector**

#### **3.1 Security Cooperation in the ASEAN**

Since the founding of the ASEAN in 1967, the association has faced a range of challenges for the security sector which include insurgences, terrorism, and internal conflict among the member states. To address this, the group has met and come up with resolutions and conventions to strengthen their relations and build a collective cooperation that will strengthen the region's security.

Security cooperation in the ASEAN has faced problems. In an analytical report conducted by the CIA on 1979, one of the main reasons for such challenges are the internal conflicts among the members of the regional bloc. Each ASEAN state believes that they hold primary responsibility for their own security, thus affecting their respective priorities and engagement in working collectively for some matters.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the existing nature of cooperation among the member states are mainly bilateral and member states have gaps in terms of their respective security sectors' efficiency and adequacy of resources.

In 2015, the ASEAN Defence Ministers issued a joint declaration, during the annual ADMM, on maintaining regional security and stability in the region. It affirmed that the use of military for non-traditional security issues is still subject to each member state' sovereignty and willingness to participate, given the declaration's non-binding nature. It also called for the adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter urging not to use force in dealing with disputes to prevent further conflicts in the region and to maintain security and stability. On the issue of terrorism in the region, the defence ministers proposed to counter it with increased surveillance, information sharing, and promoting awareness among the public about the dangers of radicalism.<sup>107</sup> Effective border control and the prevention of production of counterfeit travel documents and identification documents are part of the agenda. The agreement also set borders on designation of

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<sup>106</sup> CIA Report: ASEAN Security Cooperation: Problems and Prospects. (2006). Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80T00942A001200060001-4.pdf>. Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>107</sup> Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Maintaining Regional Security and Stability for and by the People. (March 2015). <https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Joint%20Declaration%20of%20the%209th%20ADMM.pdf>. Accessed: 9 February 2018.

responsible parties should terrorists be apprehended in a specific member state's territory yet tried on a different one's.<sup>108</sup>

### 3.2 Case Studies of Major Attacks in the Region

Despite penning agreements and joint declarations, the evolution of the ASEAN responses to security threats are still highly influenced by the alarming events that disturb the region through the decades. These incidents highlight the loopholes of the system and call for reforms in order to forestall future security-threatening events that may occur. This has drawn criticism, however, seeing that the regardless of the fact that the association has put in efforts to call for more cooperation and systematically organized their responses for the security sector on paper, implementation and management of the situations are still handled poorly.

The following case studies on Indonesia's Bali Bombings and the Philippines' Marawi crisis shall examine the functionality of the security sector in handling terrorist attacks, both domestically and regionally and how this has affected the ASEAN's response system through the years.

#### 3.2.1 Case Study 1: The Bali Bombings

On the night of 12 October 2002, Indonesia's deadliest terror attack took place in the resort island of Bali. Two bombs consecutively detonated at Kuta Beach holiday resort claiming 202 lives and leaving more than 300 injured. Most of the attack's victims were tourists coming from 21 different countries, with Australia having the most number of casualties at 88 citizens.<sup>109</sup>

The explosions happened in two establishments within the vicinity, the exclusive Sari Club which was popular among tourists, and Paddy's Irish Bar which was only across the street. At around 11pm, an explosive device detonated from the backpack of a suicide bomber inside Paddy's Irish Bar. In less than a minute, a white Mitsubishi L300 containing ammonium nitrate and C4 high explosives pulled over by the sidewalk and blew up across Sari Club. The impact of the explosion caused windows to be blown off and tiles torn apart. The bystanders surrounding the area were the first recorded fatalities. Since the roof of Sari Club is made of *nipa* and the frames were made of

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<sup>108</sup> ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. (2007). <http://asean.org/storage/2012/05/ACCT.pdf>. Accessed: 22 April 2018.

<sup>109</sup> The Terror Attack on Bali, 2002. (2007). Kamedo Report 89. The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies. Sweden. [https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35\\_200712335.pdf](https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35_200712335.pdf). Accessed: 21 March 2018.

wood, flames quickly engulfed the structure. In minutes, the ceiling collapsed on the injured people, burning some to death. Vehicles parked along the street also caught fire. After about 45 seconds, another bomb was detonated using a mobile phone near the Australian and United States consulate, kilometres away. The last bomb had no reported casualties and is seen as more of a political statement than an intentionally fatal attack.<sup>110</sup>

The response to the incident was prompt. Right after the initial attack, rescue teams were already on their way. By midnight, paramedics, firefighters, and the police have arrived at the scene. Locals also put in efforts to assist the victims by evacuating them and taking them to medical facilities. It was only at 3:00 a.m. that the corpses and other remains were taken from the site of explosion. Australia's response was immediate, sending out three C-130 planes to Bali for emergency medical assistance.<sup>111</sup>

Cooperation between the local government and those of the foreign victims was evident and quick but was challenged by local practices. The locals of Bali and the police wanted to promptly clean up the site of the incident as a cultural expression of expelling the savagery that occurred on that spot.<sup>112</sup> This made it difficult for the different parties involved to conduct investigation and was resolved by halting the cleaning process after some talks.

Investigations conducted on the terror attack pointed to Jemaah Islamiyah as the perpetrators. JI was suspected of carrying out the attack with support from Al-Qaeda since people were skeptical that JI was capable of plotting such enormous attacks on its own. However, Australian police and intelligence officials denied in their statement released on January 2003 that the two terrorist groups were linked. There wasn't any concrete evidence to support the accusation.<sup>113</sup> It wasn't until August 2003 that evidence for the link between the two terrorist groups was uncovered. Riduan Isamuddin, an Indonesian citizen who is also known as Hambali, was arrested in Thailand through a joint operation by the Thai police and the CIA. Prior to that, two Malaysian citizens, Mohamed Nazir Bin Lep (Lillie) and Mohd Farik Bin Amin (Zubair) who were

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<sup>110</sup> Cianflone, M., Cull, J., Fisher, J., Holt, D., Krause, A., Moore, J., Wadhvani, A., Yancey, J. 2007. Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: An in-Depth Investigation into the 2002 Bali, Indonesia, Bombings. [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/50173/07\\_Bali.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/50173/07_Bali.pdf). p.10

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>112</sup> The Terror Attack on Bali, 2002. (2007). Kamedo Report 89. The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies. Sweden. [https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35\\_200712335.pdf](https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35_200712335.pdf). p.90 Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p.29

his subordinates were also arrested. The three were held by the CIA in Thailand, labeled as “enemy combatants”, and interrogated. Based on their accounts, it was established that Lillie and Zubair were trained members of the Al Qaeda and sworn allegiance to Osama bin Laden since the 9/11 attacks. Their cell in the organization was prepped for airline hijacking operations but was later aborted since the assigned Malaysian pilot Zaeni backed out and got apprehended. Due to this, JI leader Hambali, whom they also identified as an Al Qaeda operative, recruited both Lillie and Zubair to work directly for him in Southeast Asia.<sup>114</sup>

Like Hambali, Kuwaiti senior Al Qaeda member Omar al-Faruq was also responsible for the liason between JI and Al Qaeda in the Southeast Asian region. He was trained in the Al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan during the early 1990’s before arriving in Southeast Asia and marrying an Indonesian, while hiding his identity. He had been authorised by JI leaders to employ their operatives and resources for planned embassy bombings. Based on the interrogations of Faruq and Hambali, it was discovered that Al Qaeda had indeed participated in the funding of the Bali bombing.<sup>115</sup> Funding for the Bali bombing were said to have been sourced from both contributions by Al Qaeda and criminal activities, such as robbery, of the JI in the region.<sup>116</sup>

At present, Hambali, Zubair, and Lillie are being held by the US government at Guantánamo Bay held as part of its high-value detainees corps. As stated on their prison records, they had been freely traveling around Southeast Asia to recruit people and arrange false documents before the attack. Hambali was recruited by Abdullah Sungkar in a Malaysian mosque, in which he was subjected to lectures described as “brainwashing” that convinced him to devote himself completely to jihad in order to demonstrate absolute commitment to Islam. He then travelled to Afghanistan to receive training.<sup>117</sup> Zubair also received training in Afghanistan after having been angered by the prosecution of Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia through clashes with Hindus and Christians. He gathered information from a mosque at Kuala Lumpur and left the region for training. He flew to

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<sup>114</sup> Thomas Jr., D.M. (13 October 2008). [Memorandum] Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control for Guantanamo Detainee (Lillie). U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay. Cuba: Department of Defense. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10022-lillie-mohammed-nazir-bin-lep->

<sup>115</sup> Cianflone, M., Cull, J., Fisher, J., Holt, D., Krause, A., Moore, J., Wadhvani, A., Yancey, J. 2007. Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: An in-Depth Investigation into the 2002 Bali, Indonesia, Bombings. [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/50173/07\\_Bali.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/50173/07_Bali.pdf). pp. 34-40

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p.13

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Jr., D.M. (30 October 2008). [Memorandum] Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control for Guantanamo Detainee (Hambali). U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay. Cuba: Department of Defense. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10019-hambali-riduan-isamuddin->

Cambodia in June 2003 and was caught in Thailand soon after.<sup>118</sup> Lillie's recruitment was mainly inspired by his own interest in books about jihad and the idea of martyrdom. He met Zubair at the same mosque in Kuala Lumpur and flew with him to Pakistan, then illegally crossed the border to Afghanistan, to train. He was captured on his way to Bangkok to pick up a passport in August 2003.<sup>119</sup> The information demonstrates the ease of travel and acquisition of false travel documents within the Southeast Asian region when one is willing to avoid being tracked by their own government.

Months before the attack, there were claims from the US about terrorism in Southeast Asia. Then Indonesian vice president Hamzah Haz called for a dialogue with the leaders of some terrorist organizations in the region. After some contacts made, Haz stated that there was no evident terrorist threat in the country since it was discussed that these organizations only wanted to advocate religious inclusivity in the country, dismissing the probability of attacks. However, the US State Department continued to issue warnings about possible terrorist attacks in Indonesia weeks before the incident. It was said that the US obtained information about the possible threats to American interests around the world which included Indonesia. A Worldwide Caution was issued on October 10, 2002.<sup>120</sup> Still, due to the lack of concrete information regarding the exact location of the terrorist attack, security was not specifically raised in Bali and the incident was not prevented.

The Bali Bombing served as a wakeup call to the Indonesian government and the ASEAN that terrorism is indeed an eminent threat in the region that endangers not only citizens from Southeast Asia but also the global community. The Australian Federal Police were the first to respond.<sup>121</sup> Teams from Taiwan, Japan, and Sweden also swiftly arrived to the site to aid with the crime investigation.<sup>122</sup> By the 23rd of October 2002, 52 countries jointly requested the United Nations to enforce the terrorist designation of JI. Along with this, more than 150 authorities

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas Jr., D.M. (23 September 2008). [Memorandum] Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control for Guantanamo Detainee (Zubair). U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay. Cuba: Department of Defense. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10021-zubair-mohd-farik-bin-amin-/documents/11>

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Jr., D.M. (13 October 2008). [Memorandum] Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control for Guantanamo Detainee (Lillie). U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay. Cuba: Department of Defense. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/guantanamo/detainees/10022-lillie-mohammed-nazir-bin-lep->

<sup>120</sup>The Terror Attack on Bali, 2002. (2007). Kamedo Report 89. The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies. Sweden. [https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35\\_200712335.pdf](https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35_200712335.pdf). pp.25-26. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Griffiths, C. (September 2003). Aspects of Forensic Responses to the Bali Bombings. ADF Health. Vol. 4.

approved of the freezing of assets owned by individuals linked to the JI. This move is considered as one of the biggest coordinated steps taken against a major terrorist group. Such response has also promoted international cooperation in countering terrorism by law enforcement and intelligence operations.<sup>123</sup>

Unlike its neighbouring Southeast Asian countries, counter-terrorism in Indonesia is handled by the Police. The counter-terrorism group Detachment 88 (Densus 88), a branch of the Indonesian National Police, was formed as a response to the Bali Bombing incident. Detachment 88 is the Anti Terror police force, specially trained to combat terrorist groups. This move was supported by the international community, with more than \$200million in funding received from Indonesia's allies, including the US and Australia. The squad is also trained jointly by the CIA, AFP, FBI, and US Secret Service.<sup>124</sup> Since its formation, the group has achieved considerable success and received acclaim for the effectiveness of its counter-terrorism efforts. Down from nine large terror attacks in Indonesia between 2002 to 2009 resulting into 295 casualties, 2010 to 2016 only experienced one major terrorist attack.

Though effective, Detachment 88 came under fire when human rights organizations called them out for their extreme measures and treatment of captured jihadists. The Indonesian National Human Rights Commission stated that at least 121 individuals detained during counter-terror operations by Detachment 88 have died in custody since 2007.<sup>125</sup> General Badrodin Haiti, then Chief of Indonesian National Police, admitted to an incident in which members of Detachment 88 caused the death of a detainee after kicking him in the chest, damaging his ribs and heart. In a statement issued by Amnesty International last 2016, the organisation called for "prompt, impartial independent and efficient criminal investigations into all reports of human rights violations involving criminal offences, including torture, allegedly perpetrated by the police, including Detachment 88."<sup>126</sup> This marks a challenge for Detachment 88 and other counter-terrorism units formed that cannot determine what is generally acceptable in terms of handling alleged terrorists captured and preventing violence from spreading.

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<sup>123</sup> The Terror Attack on Bali, 2002. (2007). Kamedo Report 89. The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies. Sweden. [https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35\\_200712335.pdf](https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/9209/2007-123-35_200712335.pdf). p.27. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>124</sup> Ward, O. (2018). Indonesia leads the way in counter-terrorism. <https://www.aseantoday.com/2018/01/indonesia-leads-the-way-in-counter-terrorism-strategies/> Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>125</sup> Amnesty International. (1 July 2016). [Public Statement]. Indonesia: Weak accountability systems and lack of respect for rights hampering police reform. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA2143902016ENGLISH.pdf> Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid



The 2002 Bali Bombing has led Indonesia to develop the country's counter-terrorism measures over the years and set an example for other ASEAN member states.

### 3.2.2 Case Study 2: The Marawi Crisis

On the afternoon of 23 May 2017, a standoff broke out between military forces and extremist militants in the small city of Marawi, located in the Philippines' southern region of Mindanao. The reported cause was said to be the security forces' attempted arrest of ISIS' Southeast Asian emir Isnilon Hapilon whom the government had been pursuing for long. Soon, the clash escalated into a larger scale conflict, leading to the city's siege by the militants. Further chaos ensued when the militants began to burn government facilities and churches, seize a hospital, and freed inmates from the local jail.<sup>127</sup> This resulted in about 360,000 being internally displaced persons<sup>128</sup>, 418 reported dead, and 209 missing.<sup>129</sup> Due to this, president Duterte immediately declared Martial Law in the region and suspended the writ of habeas corpus.<sup>130</sup> Within the week, residents have fled ground zero.

The militants involved in the attacks included members from five to six different insurgent groups in the region who have pledged their allegiance to ISIS. The most notable of which are the Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf which Hapilon was a member to. Security officials have also revealed that the militants do not come from the Philippines alone but also from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.<sup>131</sup>

After retrieving the flag of ISIS in the area, the Philippine Supreme Court announced that the rebels sought to establish an Islamic province in Mindanao.<sup>132</sup> This motive was proven after ISIS, via their own media channel Al Hayat Media Center, published a six-minute recruitment video

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<sup>127</sup> Dancel, R. (16 October 2017). Timeline of Crisis in Philippine southern city of Marawi The Straits Times. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/timeline-of-crisis-in-philippine-southern-city-of-marawi>. Accessed: 12 April 2018.

<sup>128</sup> Care International, Marawi Crisis Factsheet Philippines. 2017. [https://www.care-international.org/files/files/publications/MarawiCrisisResponseFactsheet\\_final\\_v2.pdf](https://www.care-international.org/files/files/publications/MarawiCrisisResponseFactsheet_final_v2.pdf). Accessed: 13 April 2018.

<sup>129</sup> Act Alliance. 2017. Emergency Response to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Host Families Affected by the Marawi Conflict PHL171. [http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Appeals\\_07\\_2017\\_Marawi-conflict-in-Philippines\\_PHL171.pdf](http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Appeals_07_2017_Marawi-conflict-in-Philippines_PHL171.pdf). Accessed 13 April 2018. p. 9

<sup>130</sup> Philippine Supreme Court Opening Statement on Martial Law (May 2017). <http://www.osg.gov.ph/documents/officeupdates/Supreme%20Court%20Opening%20Statement%20on%20Martial%20Law.pdf>. Accessed: 10 April 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Dancel, R. (16 October 2017). Op. Cit.

<sup>132</sup> Philippine Supreme Court Opening Statement on Martial Law (May 2017). Op. Cit.

featuring the conflict in Marawi.<sup>133</sup> The video was released in the English language to cater Western viewers. It displayed uncensored footages of the remains of fighters from both camps said to be glorifying the “martyrdom” committed by their comrades, while playing a background song about a “paradise” that serves as a “blessed outcome that awaits them after their death.” It also appeared to market their organisation by depicting a sense of courage and resilience from the side of the militants. The clip showed aerial footages of Marawi in ruins, closeup of bomb and grenade explosions, members mutilating Christian churches by breaking icons of religious figures and tearing photos of the pope, while threatening that they are coming for the Vatican soon. Fighters also addressed the audience in Filipino and Bahasa languages, justifying their actions as the product of the government’s corruption, the aggressiveness of the military, and the belief that Allah is above the government leaders. The video served as a call to arms for more fighters from Australia and other Muslim Southeast Asian countries to participate in the battle and join the ranks of ISIS.<sup>134</sup> Release of video brought more fear and panic to the masses, which corresponded to one of the goals of terrorism.

The units involved in the crisis included the Philippine Air Force, Navy, and the Army with around twenty-two battalions reportedly involved. The incident called for international involvement seeing the scale of damage caused by the growing threat of ISIS in the region. The Philippine government has a strong stance against terrorists, with measures such as: no ransom policy for kidnapping perpetrated by terrorists, no negotiations with terrorist groups, and destruction of terrorists with sustained police and military operations.

Earlier in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte deployed around 7,000 soldiers and infantry battalions to Mindanao in order to demolish IS terrorist cells in the region. This broke the IS cell into smaller groups which then spread around the region to avoid a crackdown by the military, leaving the citizens vulnerable to lone wolf attacks. The move also did not suppress radicalisation as it intended to do since an increase in terrorist recruitment activity in the Philippines was recorded by the military by the end of 2017.<sup>135</sup>

The armed conflict in Marawi is seen as one of the most serious advancements of ISIS-related groups in Southeast Asia. By 23 October 2017, the Philippine government officially

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<sup>133</sup> Tomson, C. (21 August 2017). ISIS releases English-spoken video about Marawi, calls on foreign fighters to join battle. AMN. [www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-releases-english-spoken-video-marawi-calls-foreign-fighters-join-battle/](http://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-releases-english-spoken-video-marawi-calls-foreign-fighters-join-battle/). Accessed 14 April 2018.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ward, O. (2018). Indonesia leads the way in counter-terrorism. <https://www.aseantoday.com/2018/01/indonesia-leads-the-way-in-counter-terrorism-strategies/> Accessed: 10 April 2018.

declared the end of the conflict. Statistics released by the government tally up the death toll at around 920 militants, 165 soldiers, and 47 civilians. 1,780 hostages were reported to have been successfully rescued.<sup>136</sup> The accuracy of these figures are doubted when accounts of torture and human rights violation from both the military and extremist fighters' sides were collected by Amnesty International and other international organizations present in the location. Adding to the possibility of inaccurate figures uncounted war crimes, air strikes carried out by both the militants and the government may have contributed to higher figures.

The response to the crisis has drawn criticism and called attention to the need for improvement in the Philippines' intelligence structure, disaster response coordination and military training.<sup>137</sup> In June 2017, president Duterte initially denied that there had been significant lapses in the intelligence sector that could have resulted in failing to prevent the attack.<sup>138</sup> However, he acknowledged, a month later, that there was indeed an oversight on the assessment of the intelligence reports received by the government prior to the incident. In defence of the government, the lack of cooperation to looming security from the residents of Marawi was also pointed out as a factor that caused difficulties in evacuation.

The prolonged siege and the significant number of casualties resulting from the crisis demonstrated weak points in the country's military capabilities which prompted the government to seek for external support. Such issues would take years to improve, thus the government has called for a raise in the military budget. The unsatisfactory response from the institutions involved may also catch the attention of other foreign fighters, who may seek to take advantage of the region's vulnerability—a possibility the government needs to pay attention to.

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<sup>136</sup> Amnesty International. (2017) "The Battle of Marawi": Death and Destruction in the Philippines. <https://www.amnesty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Philippines-The-Battle-of-Marawi-ASA-35.7427.2017-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed: 26 April 2018.

<sup>137</sup> Greenwood, A.B. (2017.) Marawi siege highlights need for Philippine military and intelligence reform. Jane's Intelligence Review by IHS Markit. <https://www.allan-assoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Marawi-siege-highlights-need-for-Philippine-military-and-intelligence-reform.pdf>. Accessed: 21 March 2018.

<sup>138</sup> Presidential Communications Operations Office. (2017). President Duterte denies failure of intelligence in Marawi Crisis. <https://pcoo.gov.ph/uncategorized/president-duterte-denies-failure-of-intelligence-in-marawi-crisis/>. Accessed: 12 April 2018.

As observed on both case studies, ASEAN and their partners act upon major terrorist attacks but has still not developed a structural response for the region. In Indonesia's case, the Bali Bombing has led to a significant improvement in their country's counter-terrorism measures by creating specialized groups to handle the issue and maintaining it under the scope of law enforcement. On the contrary, we observe that the Philippines' counter-terrorism response is leaning towards the use of military force and prefer repression rather than early prevention.

Indonesia, being a Muslim-majority country is open to dialogues with leaders of terrorist groups in attempts to create peaceful talks with them. On the other hand, the Philippines' policy does not encourage negotiations with terrorist groups which makes it more difficult for them to develop an organized response to such crisis.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Countering ISIS Violent Extremism: Responses at National, Regional, and Global Levels**

#### **4.1 National Level**

Each of the ASEAN member states handle and designate different authorities when it comes to terrorism and the threat of ISIS expansion in their territories. In this part of the chapter, we look into the distinct ways each ASEAN country classifies the threat of terrorism and the response mechanisms they practice.

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Type of Government</b>	<b>Responsible Authority</b>	<b>Unit</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	Republic	Police	Detachment 88
<b>Thailand</b>	Constitutional Monarchy	Military	Military Junta, ISOC
<b>Philippines</b>	Republic	Military	AFP
<b>Singapore</b>	Parliamentary Republic	Military & Police	SAF, SOC
<b>Malaysia</b>	Federal Parliament	Police	NSOF
<b>Vietnam</b>	Single-Party Socialist Republic	Police	Cảnh Sát Dã Chiên – CSDC
<b>Myanmar</b>	Constitutional Republic	Military	Tatmadaw
<b>Laos</b>	Single-Party Socialist Republic	Police	Royal Lao Police
<b>Cambodia</b>	Constitutional Monarchy	Police	Cambodian National Police
<b>Brunei</b>	Absolute Monarchy	Police	Royal Brunei Police Force

**Table 4.1 Designated Authorities for Countering Terrorism per ASEAN member state**

#### **Indonesia**

Unlike most of its Southeast Asian neighbors, Indonesia classifies terrorism as a criminal act, thus using the criminal justice system as a response to it. Being the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia has tried to maintain lukewarm treatment towards Muslim charities and the communities themselves in order to prevent backlash. The government has yet to develop a national strategy for countering violent extremism (CVE). Government leaders support the practice

of Islam as a peaceful alternative to extremist teachings since madrasas are pointed out as the root cause of radicalization in the country.<sup>139</sup>

The government employs law enforcement to handle terrorist threats and attacks while cooperating with various counter-terrorism institutions such as Detachment 88 and Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) or Indonesia's National Agency for combatting terrorism. The criminal justice system serves as the main actor and highly considers the use of soft-approach to address the issue. Moreover, Indonesia has developed a coordination body to improve their responses and mitigate the impacts of terrorism in the country.

Since the Bali Bombings of 2002, Indonesia has successfully enhanced its domestic counter-terrorism strategy. After police investigation, files of terrorist suspects are forwarded to the Task Force on Counterterrorism and Transnational Crimes. Detachment 88 leads the operations and the investigations. As needed, the president may grant authority to the Indonesian military's counter-terrorism units to back up national counter-terrorism operations. With special training both domestically and with partner states, Indonesia's law enforcement units are gradually able to identify, avert, and prevent most strikes before they are committed.<sup>140</sup>

BNPT is the body responsible for the coordination of terrorism-related intelligence. Their staff include assigned members of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Police, and the military.<sup>141</sup> Immigration officials from major entry points are granted access to domestic biometric database, albeit not yet centralised as a system. Indonesia closely works with INTERPOL in updating records of suspected terrorists.

Though Indonesia's Law on Combating Criminal Acts of Terrorism exists, it has yet to fix the gaps by issuing further laws on the criminalization of financial or material support to terrorist groups, traveling to join foreign terrorist organizations, and carrying out of terrorism-related extraterritorial offences.<sup>142</sup> On February 2016, the legislature submitted a draft of amendments for this law in order to address the missing points of this law but failed to pass legislature after debates.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Country Reports on Terrorism 2016. Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272230.htm>. Accessed: 21 April 2018.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Op. Cit.

<sup>142</sup> Indonesian Counterterrorism Bill [Translation]. Revision on Law Number 15/2003/ [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/indonesia\\_counterterrorism\\_bill\\_2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/indonesia_counterterrorism_bill_2017_0.pdf). Accessed: 11 May 2018.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

## **Thailand**

Amidst reports of ISIS expansion in the region, Thailand's government has viewed the threat terrorism with moderate concern, focusing more on the country's domestic political security challenges. This, however, does not mean that Thailand is safe from the threats plaguing its Southeast Asian neighbors. With Bangkok as one of the major travel hubs in Southeast Asia, it could be used as passage points by ISIS foreign fighters entering, leaving, and traversing the region. Similarly, ISIS propaganda is seen spreading through Thai social media— an issue the Thai government has openly acknowledged. Nevertheless, the Thai government has denied any confirmed pledging of allegiances from insurgent terrorist groups in the South of Thailand to ISIS.

Authorities handling counter-terrorism efforts in Thailand include the Royal Thai Police, Department of Special Investigations, and the Thai military. The prosecution process for terrorism-related incidents is reportedly weak due to the failure of garnering sufficient evidences for the arrest, thus leading only to deportation or conviction for less serious criminal offences. Similar to its Southeast Asian neighbors, challenges in the designation of duties impede the government's counter-terrorism endeavours. Information sharing is not widely observed and cooperation among agencies is not frequent. Moreover, real-time updates with the INTERPOL database<sup>144</sup> makes it more difficult to monitor movement of suspects across borders.

In terms of CVE, Thailand has yet to develop an agenda for the matter. There are government efforts, however, in promoting the teaching of moderate Islam and encouraging dialogues between both Islam and Buddhist communities. Non-governmental organisations contribute by reaching out to the southern region of the country to offer services and to help identify the roots of the area's violence.

## **Philippines**

The emergence of ISIS Philippines is proof that the Philippines is fertile ground for terrorist groups who wish to establish a strong foothold. The country, particularly in the southern region, has been plagued by various terrorist groups that either splinter to form newer factions or remain strongly intact, shifting low-key for certain periods of time. Counter-terrorism is mainly undertaken by the Armed Forces of the Philippines(AFP) and is actively supported by the Philippine National Police(PNP).

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<sup>144</sup> Gardezabal, J., Sandler, T. (2015). INTERPOL's Surveillance Network in Curbing Transnational Terrorism. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5029763/>. Accessed: 11 May 2018.

The Philippine government has the Human Security Act (HSA) which is the country's main counter-terrorism legislation. The HSA determines terrorist acts in the country and deploys police force for terrorism investigations.<sup>145</sup> Efforts of cooperation between different sectors of the government are continuously being promoted. This includes coordination between the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), PNP Special Action Force (PNP-SAF), and the Bureau of Immigration. In terms of intelligence gathering, there is no centralised intelligence agency in the country which makes receiving input from multiple independent intelligence agencies counterproductive. Another issue with the country's response to terrorism is the lack of clearly designated responsibilities between the military and the police in times of crisis. This makes counter-terrorism efforts inefficient, response time slows down, and the prevention of attacks is skewed. Moreover, information sharing is modest and the performance of command and control usually depends on personal relationships between commanders rather than fixed appointment of duties. Law enforcers in the country also have muddled records on the accounts of respect for human rights. Still, the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) tries to set up guidelines on the enforcement of terrorism laws but their jurisdiction remains limited.

The units responsible to countering terrorism have necessary equipments but considered insufficient due to budget constraints and the need for more human resources. This is addressed by the president's move to increase the country's military budget after the Marawi crisis.

In terms of cooperation for the improvement of counter-terrorism capabilities, the Philippines has diligently worked hand in hand with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague for training of personnel and with the Military Information Support Team of the US Pacific Command for sharing of best practices and performing joint exercises.<sup>146</sup>

## **Singapore**

Among the ASEAN member states, Singapore could be considered as one of the leading countries in counter-terrorism efforts and prioritising it nationally. Singapore considers counter-terrorism as a “top policy priority” and has developed strategies to be implemented based on global

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<sup>145</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Country Reports on Terrorism 2016. Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272230.htm>. Accessed: 21 April 2018

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



and regional trends. These include counter-radicalization efforts, vigilant security measures, cooperation for law enforcement, and preparing the public in case of attacks.<sup>147</sup>

The policies for arrest and confinement of terrorists in Singapore are covered by the Internal Security Act (ISA). This also allows the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to arrest a person who is identified as a threat to national security, without the need for an arrest warrant. This consent is given by the president and may extend the accused's time in detention when deemed necessary. So far, Singapore's command and coordination for its responses to terrorism have functioned efficiently.<sup>148</sup>

The Singaporean government introduced its *SGSecure* campaign in 2016 to promote public awareness for the security of the community in cases of emergencies and attacks. It was also that same year when Singapore carried out an 18-hour multi-agency counter-terrorism exercise which included a simulation of countering attacks towards civilians and the participation of the Singapore Armed Forces.<sup>149</sup>

For its border security, Singapore created the Integrated Checkpoints Command (ICC) program which is aimed at "strengthening interagency coordination", improving border security command and control, and increasing air, land, and sea monitoring within the territory.

Singapore's CVE effort is a good model for other countries in the Southeast Asian Region. The country serves as a regional hub with its Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) and the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). ICPVTR works on addressing the roots of radicalisation and terrorism and promotes dialogues among representative from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.<sup>150</sup> Singapore's approach to counter-terrorism is systematic and caters not only for protecting its citizens but also for seeking rehabilitation of radicalised individuals. The RRG promotes this by offering counselling to detainees, their families, and their communities, under the ISA. The organization launched an initiative of providing easy access to the masses by releasing a smart phone application in 2016 which allows users to engage in conversations with imams and counsellors, hoping to counter violent extremism.

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<sup>147</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Country Reports on Terrorism 2016. Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272230.htm>. Accessed: 21 April 2018

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

## Malaysia

For Malaysia, counter-terrorism is focused on tracking and arrest of ISIS supporters on the basis specific laws, strengthening the country's border and maritime security, monitoring social media recruitment of radicals, and prosecuting terrorism by means of the rule-of-law.

The Malaysian government has employed legislation for the prosecution and arrest of people who are suspected to have connections with terrorist groups and involved in financing them. With the threat of ISIS expansion in the Southeast Asian region since 2014, the government of Malaysia immediately sought to reform its anti-terror legislation. By 2015, the Prevention of Terrorism Act(POTA) and the Special Measures against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act (SMATA) gave police greater power to arrest individuals linked to terrorism. This raised human rights related concerns but displayed efficiency in preventing terror attacks.<sup>151</sup> In 2016, the National Security Council Act was passed, granting the country's prime minister expanded powers for countering terrorism.<sup>152</sup>

The Counter-terrorism Unit of the Royal Malaysian Police heads counter-terrorism enforcement in the country. This division is responsible for proactively pinning down soft targets related to terrorism and preventing attacks. Domestically, Malaysian authorities promote cooperation among its different agencies. On the other hand, the Royal Malaysian Police and Immigration Department work closely with INTERPOL to be able to provide immigration officials with updated information from their database. The government has backed UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2309 on aviation security and has issued a no-fly list for its suspects. Unlike Indonesia, the Malaysian government criminalizes foreign travel for engagement in international terrorist groups in areas such as Iraq and Syria.<sup>153</sup>

Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay, head of Malaysia's Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division, announced that there were at least 53 Malaysian fighters who joined ISIS in Syria and became members of the Southeast Asian ISIS cell Katibah Nusantara. The actual number of Malaysian

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<sup>151</sup> Hart, M. (2018). Malaysia's Counterterrorism Strategy: Keeping ISIS in Check, Geopolitical Monitor. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/malaysias-counterterrorism-strategy-keeping-isis-in-check/>. Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>152</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Country Reports on Terrorism 2016. Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272230.htm>. Accessed: 21 April 2018

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

fighters could possibly be higher. The Malaysian government has recorded about 20 of its citizens deceased on the Syrian battlefields, including nine from suicide bombings.<sup>154</sup>

In 2016, the National Special Operations Force addressed terrorist threats with a unit jointly supported by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, Royal Malaysian Police, and the Malaysian Armed Forces.<sup>155</sup> Another big step taken by the country is the release of an integrated rehabilitation module for detainees who have been apprehended for terrorism-related offences. This de-radicalization program is considered to be one of the most effectively globally. As shown by the records, from out of 229 suspects admitted between 2001 and 2012, only 7 reverted to terrorist activities, exhibiting 97% success rate of the program.<sup>156</sup>

Adding to its counter-terrorism efforts, Malaysia also implemented the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act(AMLATFA) which called for financial establishments to hand in reports of suspicious transactions passing through the Malaysian Central Bank. This move aimed to block funding for terrorist groups and their causes.<sup>157</sup>

The government greatly supports studies and research on radicalisation and promotes awareness among their citizens. It has released a study which outlined the suspected roots of extremism in Malaysia which included poor critical thinking skills, the lack of understanding of Islam, and the promise of adventure. The government's elusiveness on giving comments regarding Islam due to the possible sensitivity of the topic was also identified as a factor that adds to the ISIS narrative. The Malaysian government recognizes that pro-ISIS Malaysians, especially those who have traveled to Syria, use social media as a significant tool to radicalize more people.<sup>158</sup> Still, they anticipate the return of ISIS foreign fighters this 2018, hence maintaining high vigilance in the country.

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<sup>154</sup> Hart, M. (2018). Malaysia's Counterterrorism Strategy: Keeping ISIS in Check, Geopolitical Monitor. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/malysias-counterterrorism-strategy-keeping-isis-in-check/>. Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>155</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. Country Reports on Terrorism 2016. Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272230.htm>. Accessed: 21 April 2018

<sup>156</sup> Hart, M. (2018). Op. Cit.

<sup>157</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2016). Op. Cit.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

## Vietnam

Vietnam considers terrorism as one of its major security threats, thus coming up with a law on Anti-Terrorism. The Vietnamese government condemns all acts of terror and considers that these are aimed at disrupting the nation's internal affairs while posing a threat to the rest of the region. It has officially criminalized terrorist activities under Article 84 of the Criminal Code of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which identifies terrorist actions as “violent acts intended to destroy the life and physical health of people, going against people's government.”<sup>159</sup>

The country's Deputy Minister of Public Security, Nguyễn Văn Sơn, announced on 2017 that Vietnam will not halt its efforts on countering terrorism and extremism, while enhancing collaboration with other states. Citizens are also encouraged to actively participate in combatting terrorism, alongside the government's efforts to detect and impede extremist activities. To do this, the administration called for liaison between law enforcement agencies and special services. The task is to track and block websites spreading radicalism and trace where the funding for these groups comes from.<sup>160</sup> Vietnam also hosted the 2017 Counter-Terrorism exercises for the APEC Summit which involved its local residents and thousands of police officers from the Ministry of Public Security.<sup>161</sup>

Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman to the United States, Phan Thuy Thanh, also stated that Vietnam will continue to support the efforts of the international community in fighting terrorism in “observance of the UN Charter, fundamental principles of international law, insurance of peace, stability and security in the world and not causing damages to innocent civilians.”<sup>162</sup>

## Myanmar

Myanmar, conflicted with the Rohingya crisis and debacles of integration between the Muslim and Buddhist communities, suffers from both internal and external threats of terrorism and ISIS expansion. In 2014, Myanmar adopted its Counter-Terrorism Law identifying terrorist-related

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<sup>159</sup> Vietnam Law On Anti-Terrorism. Lawyer's Chapter, Vietnam National Assembly Office. <http://iadllaw.org/files/Phan%20Quang%20Vinh%20VIETNAMESE%20LAW%20ON%20ANTI-TERRORISM.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> Nhân Dân (5 October 2017). Vietnam backs world efforts to fight terrorism. <http://en.nhandan.com.vn/politics/external-relations/item/5551102-vietnam-backs-world-efforts-to-fight-terrorism.html>. Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>161</sup> Song, L.F. (2017). Vietnam holds counter-terrorism exercise for APEC summit. Xinhua Net. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/c\\_136702646.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/c_136702646.htm). Accessed: 24 April 2018.

<sup>162</sup> Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States of America. (30 April 2018). Vietnam Strongly Condemns Terrorism [Statement]. <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/relations/vietnam-strongly-condemns-terrorism>. Accessed: 30 April 2018.

activities as criminal and penal offenses in the country.<sup>163</sup> Along with this, the government formed the Anti-Terrorism Central Committee comprised of diplomats and Union ministers. It wasn't only until 2017, however, that the first meeting of the committee was held.<sup>164</sup> It was until the same year that they officially designated the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) as a terrorist group, following the group's attack on the Border Guard Police Command Headquarters, a local police outpost, and the Ngakhuya local administrative office.<sup>165</sup> ARSA, however, denies any links between their organization and ISIS or other global terrorist groups. In a video statement released by the group in 2016, the group's leader, Ataullah Abu Amar Jununi, defended their actions, stating that it was the Myanmar army that first incited violence.<sup>166</sup>

At present, Myanmar's government turns its head towards the possibility of foreign fighters entering the country and making situations worse. In Yangon, security details of foreign embassies have been heightened and visa applications are treated with more caution and scrutiny by both immigration officials and authorities.<sup>167</sup> The challenge for Myanmar now is to solve the Rohingya crisis in order to further prevent the possible expansion and spread of ISIS influence in their country. Ayob Khan, head of Malaysian police's counter-terrorism division, stated that there is "a high possibility that Muslims, be it from ISIS or other groups, will find the ways and means to go to Myanmar to help their Rohingya Muslim brothers".<sup>168</sup> Theoretically speaking, the current situation in Myanmar now is vulnerable to possible ISIS exploitation but there is insufficient evidence to state that links exist at the moment. Still, the country has currently focused on preventing terrorist attacks but has not yet fully developed a response plan in case of emergency.

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<sup>163</sup> International Labour Organization. (2014) Labour Standards, Myanmar. Counter-Terrorism Law. [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=100518&p\\_count=96298&p\\_classification=01&p\\_classcount=12520](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=100518&p_count=96298&p_classification=01&p_classcount=12520). Accessed: 17 March 2018.

<sup>164</sup> Anti-Terrorism: Central Committee Meeting Held on Nay Pyi Taw.(16 November 2017). MITV. <http://www.myanmaritv.com/news/anti-terrorism-central-committee-meeting-held-nay-pyi-taw>. Accessed: 25 April 2018.

<sup>165</sup> Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) Declared as Terrorist Group.(25 August 2017). The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-terrorism Central Committee. <http://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/nrpcen/node/124>. Accessed: 16 April 2018.

<sup>166</sup> Edroos, F. (2017). ARSA group denies links with al-Qaeda, ISIL and others. Aljazeera News. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/arsa-group-denies-links-al-qaeda-isil-170914094048024.html>. Accessed: 25 April 2018.

<sup>167</sup> Zaw, A. (2018). How Prepared Is Myanmar To Counter Terror Attacks? The Irrawaddy. <https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/commentary/prepared-myanmar-counter-terror-attacks.html>. Accessed: 25 April 2018

<sup>168</sup> Pennington, J. (2018). What are the links between the Rakhine crisis and ISIS. ASEAN Today. <https://www.aseantoday.com/2017/10/what-are-the-links-between-the-rakhine-crisis-and-isis/>. Accessed: 25 April 2018.

## Laos

The government of Laos does not have a separate counter-terrorism law but its intentions on the matter are positive. The challenge comes from the country's perception of terrorism as a marginal issue since it is believed that Laos is a small neutral country that could not possibly attack foreign terrorist fighters. The lack of efficient security organizations, unsatisfactory enforcement procedures, and weak border security contribute to the state's vulnerability vis-à-vis terrorist groups. Land and airport border securities of the country are more relaxed compared to neighboring Southeast Asian states. Moreover, fake identity documents and passports are easily obtained.<sup>169</sup>

In 2010, Laos' Ministry of Justice organized a workshop called "Promotion of ratification and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism" along with the UNODC. Experts from UNODC's Country Office addressed Laos' adherence to and implementation to global counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. Talks were held about the integration of counter-terrorism requirements to Laos' criminal justice system.<sup>170</sup>

## Cambodia

The threat posed by ISIS is not a part of Cambodia's biggest issues but the country does not dismiss its importance in the global security field. National Police Commissioner Neth Savoeun has ordered the increase of security and counter-terrorism efforts in the country. He considers Cambodia as part of the region posed with the possibility of further ISIS attacks, hence measures should be taken to prevent it even if the likelihood of attacks in Cambodia is relatively low.<sup>171</sup>

Cambodia shows interest in joint exercises with other countries and upgrading their equipment. However, effective cooperation and implementation of counter-terrorism measures are hindered by the under-developed law enforcement system and issues of corruption in the Cambodian National Police force. There is not enough equipment and training yet that could successfully prevent terrorist operations along the country's borders. Moreover, Cambodia is

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<sup>169</sup> Country Reports on Terrorism. (2006). U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/83383.pdf>. Accessed: 24 November 2017.

<sup>170</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. (2010). Lao PDR addresses terrorism prevention. <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2010/02/terrorism-prevention/story.html>. Accessed: 23 April 2018.

<sup>171</sup> Sony, O., Surrusco, M. (2017). Cambodia Must Be Ready for IS, National Police Chief Says. The Cambodia Daily. <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/cambodia-must-be-ready-for-is-national-police-chief-says-126480/>. Accessed: 27 April 2018.

allegedly one of the major sources of smuggled weapons. Hun Sen's government has admitted aiding militants and rebels fight against in the Philippines and in Myanmar.<sup>172</sup>

## **Brunei**

According to Brunei's Minister of Defence-II, Brunei Darussalam is committed to fighting terrorism and violent extremism alongside other ASEAN member states. He proposed Brunei's practice of a 'whole-of-nation approach' which calls for partnership among all sectors, adding that the task is not to be left only to the nation's security agencies and law enforcement.<sup>173</sup> This calls for the participation of agencies such as immigration, customs, finance, and labour control.<sup>174</sup> The Anti-Terrorism (Terrorist Financing) Regulations released in 2013 require that the country's financial institutions report any suspicious domestic and international transaction, potentially related to terrorist funding, to the Financial Intelligence Unit.<sup>175</sup> Brunei's counter-terrorism strategy aims to preserve religious and social unity while developing capabilities, enhancing legislation, and pushing for effective prevention of terrorism.<sup>176</sup>

In 2017, four Indonesian nationals in Bandar Seri Begawan were put into custody under Brunei's Internal Security Act and subsequently deported after being caught in possession of ISIS propaganda materials. The suspects admitted to sharing ISIS videos online and downloading related materials. This was the result of cooperation between Brunei's Internal Security Department and other intelligence agencies. Investigation confirmed that one of the four suspects had direct contact with a suspected ISIS member overseas. This led Brunei's government to be more vigilant as this incident signalled possible emergence of terrorism and extremism threat in the country, while at the same time warning its citizens that acts violating the Anti-Terrorism Order will not be taken lightly.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Pennington, J. (2017). Is Cambodia an easy target for terrorists? ASEAN Today. <https://www.aseantoday.com/2017/04/is-cambodia-an-easy-target-for-terrorists/>. Accessed: 25 April 2018.

<sup>173</sup> Hayat, H. (2018) Brunei maintains commitment to fight terrorism. Borneo Bulletin. <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/brunei-maintains-commitment-to-fight-terrorism/>. Accessed: 28 April 2018.

<sup>174</sup> Brunei A/RES/71/38: Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction. [https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/75506B23D97860BCC125815A0035463F/\\$file/BruneiDarussalam+Nuclear+Disarmament+Verification.pdf](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/75506B23D97860BCC125815A0035463F/$file/BruneiDarussalam+Nuclear+Disarmament+Verification.pdf). Accessed: 18 April 2018.

<sup>175</sup> Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam. (2013). [Press Release] Anti-Terrorism (Terrorist Financing) Regulations. <http://www.ambd.gov.bn/Lists/News/DisplayItem.aspx?ID=15>

<sup>176</sup> Brunei A/RES/71/38. Op. Cit.

<sup>177</sup> 4 Indonesian deported for IS terror links in Brunei (7 April 2017). Xinhua News. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/07/c\\_136191014.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/07/c_136191014.htm). Accessed 28 April 2018.

## 4.2 Regional Level

In the Southeast Asian region, ASEAN has worked hard to strengthen regional security and come up with effective counter-terrorism measures as a whole. Declarations and initiatives have been released to address both transnational crimes and the threat of terrorism.

The intensity and priority level of terrorism and violent extremism varies across ASEAN member states. Responses also depend on the country's military and financial capabilities. As a regional bloc, ASEAN has formed cells under the ASEAN Political-Security Community to focus on countering terrorism and the growing threat of ISIS expansion. This includes the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Security Community (ASC), Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (SAMMRRVE), and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC).

The ADMM is ASEAN's highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism. It aims to promote trust among the members and understanding of the region's defence and security challenges. Its goal is also to encourage transparency and openness for increased efficiency of responses.<sup>178</sup> Another specific meeting, SAMMRRVE, also calls for more resource sharing, transparency, best practice exchanges, and boosting member states' capabilities in combating terrorism.

Document	Date & Location
ASEAN Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Transnational Crime	20 December 1997 Manila, Philippines
ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism	5 November 2001 Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam
Declaration on Terrorism by the 8th ASEAN Summit	3 November 2002 Phnom Penh, Cambodia
ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism	13 January 2007 Cebu, Philippines
Trilateral Maritime Patrol Agreement	14 July 2016 Jakarta, Indonesia
ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism	20 September 2017 Manila, Philippines
"Our Eyes" Initiative	25 January 2018

**Table 4.2** ASEAN Documents and Initiatives for Countering Terrorism in the Region<sup>179</sup>

<sup>178</sup> About the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting. <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/about-admm/about-admm.html>

<sup>179</sup> Ong, K.Y. (2007) ASEA Documents on Combatting Transnational Crime and Terrorism. <http://www.asean.org/storage/images/archive/documents/DocSeriesOnTC.pdf>



Despite expressing strong intentions to collectively combat terrorism in the region, ASEAN is still criticized for limiting its response to solutions designed on paper but without concrete actions taken. ASEAN lacks necessary enforcement mechanisms to translate the written proposals to practical steps. Internal differences and the lack of uniformity hinder the the bloc's efforts. Each member has different takes on handling terrorist and violent extremist activities. Since terrorist groups are not widely present in all states, they are not necessarily a national priority for some members. Solidarity is essential in coming up with a uniform counter-terrorism practice in the region. However, ASEAN still follows a Principle of Non-Interference which may sometimes be counterintuitive for collective actions. Since a fixed counter-terrorism response plan involving all members of the ASEAN has yet to be fully developed, combatting terrorism and violent extremism in the region is currently being done through bilateral or small multilateral initiatives.

In June 2016, Indonesia, Philippines, and Malaysia signed an agreement on patrolling shared maritime borders, also known as the Trilateral Maritime Patrol agreement. The agreement calls for coordinative efforts among respective naval military personnel to apprehend Islamic militants who navigate through these territories.<sup>180</sup> Though operations are mainly maritime-based, air and land forces will aid in securing the Sulu Sea, in the southern region of the Philippines, where most terrorist activities have been reported to take place. The agreement gives permission for naval personnel of participating countries to enter one another's territorial waters in case of pursuit. Command centers were also set up for distress calls and to facilitate easier communication. Implementation was stretched especially following the siege of Marawi last 2017, in speculations that Islamic State militants may flee to Indonesia, posing as refugees.

In September 2017, ASEANAPOL received an upgrade in its Database System (e-ADS 2.0). Singapore's Coordinating Minister for National Security, Teo Chee Hean, acknowledged that as the terror threat in the region has reached a high point through the past years, it is necessary to enhance operations of regional law enforcement agencies.<sup>181</sup> Given the issue of returning foreign fighters from Syria, ASEAN countries should be equipped with essential digital tools for efficient biometric information checking of the militants and coordinated intelligence exchange.

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<sup>180</sup> Indonesia/Philippines/Malaysia: Agreement on Patrolling Shared Maritime Border. (2017) Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/indonesiaphilippinesmalaysia-agreement-on-patrolling-shared-maritime-border/>. Accessed: 5 February 2018.

<sup>181</sup> Seow, B.Y. (2017) Better information-sharing database for Asean police agencies: DPM Teo Chee Hean. Straits Times. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/better-information-sharing-database-for-asean-police-agencies-dpm-teo-chee-hean>. Accessed: 27 April 2018.

As of 2018, one of the biggest advancements in terms of regional security cooperation is the “Our Eyes” Initiative with six participating ASEAN member states: Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, and Thailand. This intelligence sharing initiative aims to overcome levels of distrust among participating ASEAN states. Patterned after World War II’s “Five Eyes” Initiative, its six members are set to meet every two weeks to exchange information on existing militant groups and to develop a common database. The initiative was proposed by Indonesia and further developed following the Islamic State’s siege of Marawi city last 2017, where it is believed that militants from other foreign countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia made their way to the Southern Philippine island through poor maritime border security in the region.<sup>182</sup> The lapse of intelligence sharing and preempting of such attacks lead to heavy damage and prompted regional leaders to work closely together to prevent it from occurring again. Nevertheless, to protect each member’s sovereign rights, the initiative is set specifically for purposes of countering terrorism and radicalism only. It will be led by the military but will include police as well.

#### **4.3 Global Level: International Responses and Cooperation with the ASEAN**

As terrorism is a global phenomenon, many states and organizations around the world have expressed their solidarity in combating the growing threat of terrorism and ISIS expansion in the Southeast Asian region. It is known that ASEAN, though a strong economic alliance, is still comprised of member states with limited financial and military capabilities for countering terrorism. Many countries with higher capabilities extended help to ASEAN member states. Different forms of aid provided range from joint military exercises, weapons delivery, table top trainings, best practice sharing, and fundings.

Another major pillar of the ASEAN Political-Security Community is the ASEAN Defence Minister’s Meeting - Plus (ADMM+). It is comprised of the ADMM, namely all ASEAN member states, and eight partner countries for defence, which include Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russian Federation and the United States.<sup>183</sup> ADMM+ has successfully conducted tabletop exercises for military medicine and maritime security since 2012. The military

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<sup>182</sup> Allard, T. (2018) Southeast Asian states launch intelligence pact to counter Islamist threat. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asia-intelligence/southeast-asian-states-launch-intelligence-pact-to-counter-islamist-threat-idUSKBN1FE163>. Accessed 27 April 2018.

<sup>183</sup> ADMM - Plus Participants. <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/about-admm/about-admm-plus/2013-01-22-11-01-22.html>

of ASEAN and the Plus countries also held joint practical exercises for counter-terrorism and maritime security in 2013 and 2016.

Australia is one of the biggest supporters of ASEAN's counter-terrorism operations, following the loss of a significant number of their citizens from the 2002 Bali Bombings. In March 2018, the Australian Prime Minister and ASEAN leader signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism. This will enable Australia to provide technical assistance to ASEAN in the development and implementation of counter-terrorism legislation that would follow best practices and international standards. Courses will also be offered to ASEAN members on financial intelligence analysis to disrupt terrorist funding, use of electronic evidence in terrorism-related prosecutions, and capacity building for ASEAN law enforcement partners.<sup>184</sup>

Adding to maritime security for mitigation of border crossing by terrorists within the region, Chinese Minister of National Defense General Chang Wanquan, along with ASEAN ministers, are set to arrange an ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise by the end of 2018. This is part of the annual agenda lined up for reaffirming the bilateral cooperation of ASEAN and China in the security sector.<sup>185</sup>

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is also an active partner of ASEAN in building counter-terrorism capabilities. In May 2018, Project Scorpius, an Interpol initiative funded by the Canadian government, will cooperate with the Philippine National Police, ASEAN, and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to conduct workshops for combat against and prevention of terrorism and other transnational crimes using social media investigations and open sources. Open source and social media are tools which both the police and military may utilise in tracking terrorist operations since terrorists use social media to channel their propaganda.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018. (17 March 2018). Combating terrorism and violent extremism. <https://aseanaustralia.pmc.gov.au/news/combating-terrorism-and-violent-extremism>. Accessed: 1 May 2018.

<sup>185</sup> MINDEF Singapore Government (February 2018). ASEAN To Step Up Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism, To Conduct Inaugural Maritime Exercise with China. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/february/06feb18\\_nr/tut/p/z/1/tVLLUuMwEPyWPfiozNjxK9y8sAVLYcJILYuJzID7CIIcsx-XsmYbcKqjZOHJAu0mi61a0WcMiAK7FpKmEbrURL-5yH99H05PgMfe9yGsxTO5ms4vg5-Xv2viEO-DAF8qubA1516iLLNICKyuVdbDWnXRQyaFnQi2Z3FC1d7AVVvaWGdlK0UsqeOjGDpayMGthtg5iSGs3vldmx75aNEvI3XCCwYTYw8gtmB9iwi0QIzYOaGloykC4MP9MLqdiPDASJDzft0z\\_-Keuj97FNL00iGEyiWd45eFp9LfhA46cNESHNUQw3zRygFulTUcvfPNFi2cI53sJH7ik1JqHpyeeUDS7LJ4tZN-QDV3jmfQ4rciAsDVRVKkh2wEg-weA7A2AhFetL7\\_VaKKcUxQI0tppBmtDZVra1f9kYMODsMwqrSuWjkyawf\\_h6h1T8beNcKq6-LxIj2W6a-xz4vtUKY2yJMfLzJB2-Y!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fmindef-content%2Fhome%2Fnews-and-events%2Flatest-releases%2F2018%2Ffebruary%2F06feb18\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/february/06feb18_nr/tut/p/z/1/tVLLUuMwEPyWPfiozNjxK9y8sAVLYcJILYuJzID7CIIcsx-XsmYbcKqjZOHJAu0mi61a0WcMiAK7FpKmEbrURL-5yH99H05PgMfe9yGsxTO5ms4vg5-Xv2viEO-DAF8qubA1516iLLNICKyuVdbDWnXRQyaFnQi2Z3FC1d7AVVvaWGdlK0UsqeOjGDpayMGthtg5iSGs3vldmx75aNEvI3XCCwYTYw8gtmB9iwi0QIzYOaGloykC4MP9MLqdiPDASJDzft0z_-Keuj97FNL00iGEyiWd45eFp9LfhA46cNESHNUQw3zRygFulTUcvfPNFi2cI53sJH7ik1JqHpyeeUDS7LJ4tZN-QDV3jmfQ4rciAsDVRVKkh2wEg-weA7A2AhFetL7_VaKKcUxQI0tppBmtDZVra1f9kYMODsMwqrSuWjkyawf_h6h1T8beNcKq6-LxIj2W6a-xz4vtUKY2yJMfLzJB2-Y!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fmindef-content%2Fhome%2Fnews-and-events%2Flatest-releases%2F2018%2Ffebruary%2F06feb18_nr). Accessed: 30 April 2018.

<sup>186</sup> Sadongdong, M. (2018) PNP to co-host Interpol-led training-workshop. Manila Bulletin. <https://news.mb.com.ph/2018/05/01/npn-to-co-host-interpol-led-training-workshop/>. Accessed: 1 May 2018.

Moreover, intelligence agencies of the Philippines and the Russian Federation also cooperate in combatting terrorism. One of the signed agreements between the two states includes intelligence sharing on terrorism, according to Philippine Ambassador to Russia Carlos Sorreta.<sup>187</sup> Russia and the Philippines have also signed two military pacts on 2017 following a donation of small arms which would help with the Philippine operations.<sup>188</sup>

As the threat of terrorism shows no signs of slowing down in the Southeast Asian region, more and more third party entities have shown willingness to help the region in its fight, all considering that terrorism has no borders and the problem is not solely to be handled by the Southeast Asian community.

Document	States/Organizations Involved	Date & Location
ASEAN-US Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, USA	1 August 2002 Bander Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam
Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues	ASEAN, China	4 November 2002 Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Joint Declaration Cooperation to Combat Terrorism	ASEAN, EU	27 January 2003 Brussels, Belgium
ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, India	8 October 2003 Bali, Indonesia
ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Australia	1 July 2004 Jakarta, Indonesia
ASEAN-Russian Federation Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Russian Federation	2 July 2004 Jakarta, Indonesia
ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Japan	30 November 2004 Vientiane, Lao PDR
ASEAN-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Republic of Korea	27 July 2005 Vientiane, Lao PDR
ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, New Zealand	29 July 2005 Vientiane, Lao PDR

<sup>187</sup> Sputnik News (2017). Philippines, Russia Intelligence Cooperate on Anti-Terror Issues, Bypassing US. <https://sputniknews.com/military/201708221056686721-philippines-russia-intelligence-cooperation/> Accessed: 27 April 2018.

<sup>188</sup> Mogato, M. (2017). Philippines, Russia sign two military deals. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-russia-defence/philippines-russia-sign-two-military-deals-idUSKBN1CU1K6>. Accessed: 27 April 2018.

Document	States/Organizations Involved	Date & Location
ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Pakistan	29 July 2005 Vientiane, Lao PDR
ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Canada	28 July 2006 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
MoU between the Governments of Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues	ASEAN, China	10 January 2014 Bangkok, Thailand
ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime	ASEAN, Japan	12 November 2014 Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Sochi Declaration of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Commemorative Summit	ASEAN, Russian Federation	20 May 2016 Sochi, Russian Federation
ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism	ASEAN, Australia	7 September 2016 Vientiane, Lao PDR
Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit	ASEAN, India	25 January 2018 New Delhi, India
Australia-Thailand Memorandum of Understanding	Thailand, Australia	3 October 2002
Japan-Indonesia Joint Announcement on Fighting against International Terrorism	Indonesia, Japan	24 June 2003 Tokyo, Japan
Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation	Philippines, USA	2002 January
India-Philippines Counter-terrorism Cooperation	Philippines, India	July 2017

**Table 4.3** List of Declarations and Partnerships for Countering Terrorism in the Southeast Asian Region<sup>189</sup>

Despite the number of agreements and initiatives formed on all levels to aid in ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts, the region is still highly subject to the looming threat of ISIS expansion. On the national level, we see huge discrepancies among the ten member states in handling terrorism. Six members rely on the police to counter terrorism, while the remaining four designate the issue to military forces. Based on the data collected, countries relying on police forces have experienced less attacks and casualties in the past years, while countries relying on the military, such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar, experienced high frequency of attacks.

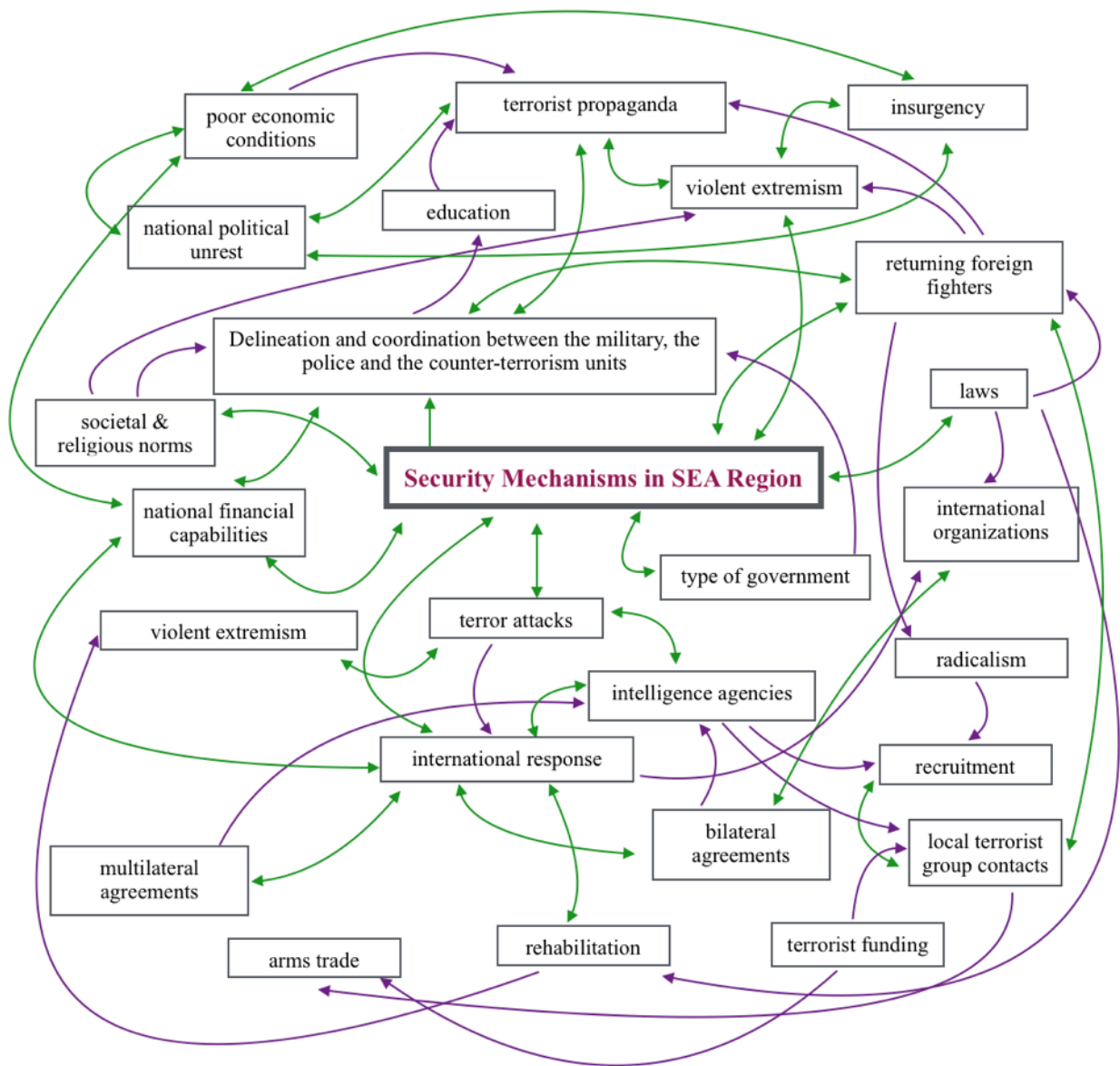
<sup>189</sup> Ong, K.Y. (2007) ASEAN Documents on Combatting Transnational Crime and Terrorism. <http://www.asean.org/storage/images/archive/documents/DocSeriesOnTC.pdf>

Besides this, countries outside the ASEAN also have their respective stands on which security unit should handle counter-terrorism which could give rise to problems in cooperation. Nevertheless, terrorism is seen as a problem without borders, which is why partner countries have readily offered help and cooperation with ASEAN as a form of strengthening global security.

Comparing treatment of the issue of terrorism per member state also shows that each country's security sector occupies different levels of priority on their national issues. The burden of economical disparities among the member states is lessened, however, through regional and global efforts. Notwithstanding ASEAN's Policy of Interference, assistance offered by the global community in form of donations, trainings, and best practice exchanges have helped sync counter-terrorism efforts of each ASEAN member state. The existence of the APSC will also give more opportunities for members develop adequacy in combatting terrorism.

## CONCLUSION

The ISIS expansion in the Southeast Asian Region is a growing threat that needs to be addressed effectively by the ASEAN. Throughout the region's history, links have been established between homegrown terrorist groups and international terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS. In the case studies presented on the paper's third chapter, we have compared the links and assistance exchanged between Southeast Asia's Jemaah Islamiyah and the global terrorist group Al Qaeda in carrying out the 2002 Bali Bombing, with the recent pledge of allegiance by the Philippines' Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups to ISIS. Over the past decade and a half, ASEAN has come up with several counter-terrorism measures to respond to the continuing expansion and radicalisations by the terrorist groups. With the decline of ISIS' foothold on Syria and Iraq, the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Countering Terrorism have issued a warning this 2018 on the anticipated influx of returning foreign terrorist fighters and cross border movements of terrorists. The threat has its historical basis on the establishment of major Southeast Asian terrorist groups, such as the Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf, from returning foreign fighters from Afghanistan in the 90's. With the reoccurrence of a similar situation in the present time, ASEAN's developed counter-terrorism measures and cooperation are experiencing challenges that impede the organisation's efforts.



**A Systems Map for the Security Mechanisms in the Southeast Asian Region**

Legend:

- *reinforcing*
- *counterbalancing*

The diagram demonstrates the interrelatedness of the elements and factors composing the system of security mechanism in the Southeast Asian region. It shows that terrorism and security measures taken against it does not only depend on cooperation and units involved to counter it, but also general factors such as societal norms, education, poor economic conditions, and national laws.



The demands of the security sector extends to a complex system that requires attention on various aspects in order to function with maximum efficiency.

## **Responses and Challenges**

ASEAN's response to terrorism through the years has been mainly composed of non-binding agreements, bilateral cooperation among member states or with third party states, and reports outlining desired outcomes should the collective efforts be successful.

In this study, we find out that one of the biggest factors that impede collective counter-terrorism efforts of the regional bloc is the designation on responsible authorities to combat terrorists in every member state. Majority of the member states designate counter-terrorism operations to the police. The data from the Global Terrorism Index presented on the second chapter shows that countries that rely on the military such as the Philippines, Myanmar, and Thailand top the ranking in terms of terrorist-related incident count and casualties in the Southeast Asian region. Though this does not directly equate to the inefficiency of the military approach to counter-terrorism, it demonstrates that the closer proximity of the police force to the civilian community adds to the effectivity of countering terrorism, being within reach, regularly exposed to public areas where attacks could occur, and not causing panic and unease towards civilians with their huge and strong presence.

Cultural, governmental, and religious differences between the ASEAN countries are also a big challenge. ASEAN's Principle of Non-Interference which protects every member's sovereignty and independence should responsibly be set aside if it for the collective security of the regional bloc. Its practice of strictly adhering to decision making by consensus limits ASEAN's actual enforcement of counter-terrorism, like how it took up to six years for all ten member states to ratify the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism. At present, there is no strategy developed that encompasses all ten ASEAN member states, mainly because the severity of terrorist threats vary per country which affects its rank in their respective national priorities.

We also find that even though ASEAN brings together all of its ten member states as a high-functioning regional alliance, the gap between each member's capabilities hinder the implementation of their agreements. On the data provided in the study's second chapter, we see that the level of terrorist threat in each country merely equates to their respective financial and military capabilities. The establishment of ISIS-Philippines and the Marawi crisis was strategically set up on

one of the poorest areas in the region with limited military power compared to other member states'. The challenge of border security on archipelagos such as Indonesia and the Philippines were also considered for the establishment of ISIS links and bases in this move towards expansion.

### **Improving ASEAN's Counter-terrorism Strategy**

A big step into a new phase of effective counter-terrorism responses by ASEAN is an agreement promoting exchange of information among its member states. Patterned after the Interpol and WWII's "Five Eyes", ASEAN is slowly launching the "Our Eyes" initiative which will enable intelligence sharing among 6 member states: Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia. This will be a big leap as multilateral intelligence sharing is not common within the region, mainly because members prefer bilateral information exchange. This has caused lapses in the security sector when terrorist group members took advantage of the visa-free movement within ASEAN member countries to plan attacks, change identity documents, and recruit more fighters. However, it would be ideal to encourage complete participation of all ASEAN states in the initiative to lessen the risks of terrorist groups seeking refuge in ASEAN countries not bound by the agreement. The initiative should be clearly limited, however, to the region's security from terrorism and radicalism, and exempt from political agenda.

With regard to the structure of responses to such incidents, poor response to terrorist attacks decreases the authorities' credibility leading to further instability in the government and the society, an environment that terrorists look for. Based on the data provided, police force in member countries like Indonesia and Singapore have recently performed well in impeding planned terrorist attacks, whilst member states that use military force suffer more attacks. The study recommends that ASEAN follows three different levels of Counter-Terrorism responses based on the escalation of the situation: Police, Military, Civilian Aid. The first stage, which is prevention, should be handled by the police. Upon escalation to confrontation, military forces would be necessary. Post-confrontation would be handled by civilian organisations that aim to deradicalize apprehended militants and aid them through the process of reintegration into the society through vocational training and development of professional skills.

Based on the accounts of terrorist recruitments in the regions mentioned in the study, it is advisable for the ASEAN to promote the development of rehabilitation centres for apprehended new jihadists. Prisons are highly conducive for recruitment and further radicalisation so this will not lessen the threats of terrorist expansion in the region. This could also be connected to the promotion

of public awareness on the risks of extremism and identifying terrorist propaganda, especially among the youth. Interviews conducted with government officials in the region stress the need of counter-terrorism through proper education of the youth in schools and universities.

The ASEAN Security Sector's responses to the threat of ISIS expansion in the region have mainly served as guidelines to the community with low rate of enforcement on the prevention side. Measures have been taken by the community since 2002's Bali Bombing, but it was not until 2017's Marawi Crisis that the ASEAN countries mobilized their security forces to collectively combat the terrorist groups' attempts to take over the city and forge a Southeast Asian ISIS province. The region's authorities saw it as a wake up call, hence taking action by developing more multilateral cooperation immediately. Tackling the problem at its roots demands sufficient response and coordination to prevent radicalisation and attacks. If the ASEAN desires to secure the region as a whole, it would need full cooperation from all its member states regardless of what the threat level of terrorism may mean to them individually.

## APPENDIX 1

Interviewee: **Col. X. Garcia (Philippine Army)**<sup>190</sup>

Designation: **PSG Chief of Staff**

Date: **7 May 2018**

Subject: **Marawi Crisis and Counter-terrorism in the Philippines**

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**Q:** In terms of counter-terrorism, how do you think is the Philippines handling the phenomenon? What are we lacking? What needs to be improved?

**Interviewee:**

Since the time of former President Arroyo, the Philippine government had a very strong stance against terrorists: *no ransom policy for kidnapping perpetrated by terrorists; no negotiation / talks with terrorists; destroy the terrorists with sustained police & military operations*. Terrorism is not just a military & police problem. It is complex problem with social, cultural, economic and religious dimension. So counter-terrorism needs effective and caring / responsive governance. It also needs popular support. Due to economic difficulties, a lot of Filipino youth do not have means to go to school. NGO's contribute money for samaritan purposes but criminal minded organizations could still manage to exploit this. In the Mindanao region, madrasas, which are not regulated by the government are factors as well.

**Q:** Have there been any efforts for cooperations between the Philippines and ASEAN or any third party states to resolve issues on terrorism and extremism in the country and in the region?

**Interviewee:**

Yes, very strong cooperation and collaboration between ASEAN. There had been and ongoing efforts among member states in our regional fight against terrorism. Aside from *regional annual forums*, there are *ongoing joint sea patrols in our common borders*.

**Q:** What do you think are the factors that makes the Philippines or the SEA region susceptible to terrorism and its establishments?

**Interviewee:**

Because of religious dynamics, Mindanao (Southern Philippines), Indonesia and Malaysia are more susceptible to violent extremism & terrorism. In Mindanao, century old injustices are being fed in the minds of young people with religious undertones thereby agitating the young and planting the seeds of hate & terror.

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<sup>190</sup> Real name withheld based on interview agreement.

**Q:** Could you give a brief overview about the Marawi crisis? How did the government respond so far?

**Interviewee:**

Marawi folks were *uncooperative* to looming security threats. Maute terrorists were funded with illegal drugs money. Just like in Afghanistan, the Taliban were supported with opium money.

**Q:** With the ISIS defeat in Syria, do you think the Philippines or our region should be on guard for possible returnees? How do you think can we protect our Muslim brothers and sisters in the country against discrimination?

**Interviewee:**

Definitely, yes. Counter and manage the spread of hate through right education of the young. Counter-terrorism can be done through ROTC programs in senior high school and college students. The mind is more lethal than the weapons itself, so it is important too educate the youth.

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