

**Forum:** GA1 – Disarmament and International Security

**Issue:** Tackling Violent Extremism in South East Asia

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## Introduction

Since the 1990s, the activity of constantly shifting militant groups in South East Asia has risen as a consequence of both modernization efforts by governments and the influence of radicalism within Islam. Both these factors have had a multiplier effect in that they have given rise to a violent and resilient form of extremism within the region. While many of these groups are small and locally acting, there are a few that have grown to such an extent that they now pose a threat to the security of multiple nations in which they operate.

Demographically, South East Asia has a total population of more than 625 million people, with a large Sunni Muslim population of around 240 million people. This amounts to about 15% of the total global Muslim population, making the South East an important Islamic centre.<sup>1</sup> While the majority of this population subscribes to syncretic and moderate forms of Islam, the more conservative communities have shown a tendency to become pockets of radicalism. Whilst such communities have existed for many decades, the recent rise in radicalism is often associated with the growth in support from Gulf donors during the late 20th century.

Pre and post 9/11 statistics tell a similar story: while Philippines was the only country in the region that appeared in the pre 9/11 list of top 10 most attacked global territories, the post 9/11 list now features Thailand as well, and the two countries alone account for around 9.7% of global terrorism.<sup>2</sup> These figures reflect the surge of extremist activities in the region during the early 2000s. Notable attacks include the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005, which killed several hundred people in crowded tourist districts. The 2009 bombings of JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta were also carried out in a highly planned and sophisticated fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> "Demographic Change in South East Asia," accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.pecc.org/resources/labor/820-demographic-change-in-east-and-southeast-asia-and-the-implications-for-the-future/file>.

<sup>2</sup> Statista, "Terrorism Stats," [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com), accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.statista.com/topics/2267/terrorism/>.

The most active, and perhaps the most dangerous, groups operating within the region include the Philippine Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf, and the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). It should be noted that the JI in particular is known for its cells not only in Indonesia but also in the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia. This multi-national character of JI will be explored further as it exemplifies terrorism in the region.

In addition to bombings on land, a unique dimension of groups operating in the region is their involvement in maritime terrorism. The region accounts for nearly 40% of global maritime trade, which makes it a target for hijacking. The Strait of Malacca, bordered by Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, is particularly infamous for its high risk of terrorism. In 2017 alone, there were 101 maritime incidents in the region, of which 85 involved armed robbery and 16, piracy. The hijacking of vessels to steal oil cargo is of particular concern.<sup>3</sup>

While the economic and human impacts of violent extremism are evident through statistics, the true scale of damage cannot be gauged without considering the cultural impact it has on nations. As most extremist groups operating in the region have a religious or ideological motive, destruction of culture is a powerful tool used by groups to propagate intolerance and undermine socio-political institutions. Much the same way as economic and human losses have a global dimension, cultural destruction is also an international concern with violent extremism.

Individual nations in the region have developed their independent counter terrorism task forces in the recent years, but in the absence of a region-wide effort, the issue of violent extremism in the region remains an unresolved one. Taking into account the threats to global peace and security posed by extremist groups in the region, this issue is of relevance to the First Committee.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Violent Extremism<sup>4</sup>

Violent extremism involves advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives.

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<sup>3</sup> "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." The Strait of Malacca. Accessed July 12, 2019. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32452>.

<sup>4</sup> Katharina Kiener-Manu, "Counter-Terrorism Module 2 Key Issues: Radicalization & Violent Extremism," Violent Extremism, accessed June 23, 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html>.

## Radicalism<sup>5</sup>

The belief that society needs to be changed, and that these changes are only possible through revolutionary means.

## Political Terrorism<sup>6</sup>

Political terrorism is violence—or equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim.

## Improved Explosive Device (IED)<sup>7</sup>

A homemade bomb, constructed from military or non-military components, that is employed as a crude weapon.

## Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP):

A non-governmental (second track) process for dialogue on security issues in Asia Pacific.

## Counter Terrorism<sup>8</sup>

An all-encompassing term that includes the strategies, techniques and practices deployed by intelligence agencies, governments or international organisations to combat or prevent terrorist activities.

## Background Information

Violent extremism in South East Asia is a highly complex issue with a multitude of groups, motivations, operating strategies, and funding sources that need to be examined in detail and tackled point by point. To this end, this section of the report details different aspects of extremism in the region that are within the scope of discussion at DAIMUN 2019.

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<sup>5</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Radical," Encyclopædia Britannica, July 20, 1998, , accessed June 23, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/radical-ideologist>.

<sup>6</sup> Ward and Antonia, "How Do You Define Terrorism?" RAND Corporation, June 04, 2018, , accessed June 23, 2019, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/06/how-do-you-define-terrorism.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Mansoor, "Improvised Explosive Device," Encyclopædia Britannica, August 30, 2018, , accessed June 23, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/improvised-explosive-device>.

<sup>8</sup> "UN Global Counter-Terrorism," United Nations, , accessed June 23, 2019, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>.

## Historical background

### *Rise of the MNLF (Renamed MILF)*

Between 1903 and 1973, the Philippine government encouraged the migration of landless Christian citizens from different parts of the country to Mindanao, the second largest island of the Philippines. The lack of any land titling system by the native residents of Mindanao meant that the settlers could exploit the situation and seize large areas of land. This led to heightened tensions between the Islamic residents of the island (called the Moro people) and the Christian settlers.

The anguish caused by the Resettlement Policy led to a build-up of anger among native Moros, and they were driven to act after the Jabidah massacre of 1968 where Moro army recruits were allegedly shot by members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

This incident led to the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the first batch of MNLF fighters was trained in 1969. The group was officially founded by Nur Misauri, a Moro revolutionary turned politician. The first major operation of the group was in early 1973, when MNLF revolutionaries parallelly attacked eight municipalities in Cotabato and exercised temporary control over them. The MNLF was beaten by the quick mobility of the army, but it quickly revised its modus operandi and started employing Guerrilla warfare techniques as early as 1974.

However, throughout this period, the MNLF was controlled largely by a leadership situated outside Philippines – Nur Misauri too eventually operated from Libya. Although distance slightly weakened the MNLF, it remained by far the most significant separatist organisation of the time

The MNLF transformed into a political party in 1996; this was partly as a result of 1987 negotiations which lead to the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. One offshoot of the MNLF, however, continued to operate until very recently – the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). A ceasefire was signed between the MILF and the Government of Philippines in 1997, but this was abolished under President Joseph Estrada's administration in 2000. Consequently, MILF initiated a Jihad against the Philippine Government and its citizens, leading to numerous attacks such as the 2003 Davao Airport bombing.

A ceasefire was signed again in March 2014, but considering the volatility of the region, the risk of a MILF uprising looms in the Philippines.

### *Growth of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)*

The Jemaah Islamiyah is a trans-national extremist organisation based in Indonesia, with its roots as far as the early 1940s. The JI has its roots in the Darul Islam (DI), which was an anti-colonialist racial Islamist movement in Indonesia in the 1940s. Three men – Abu Bakar Bashir, Shahrul Nizam and Abdullah Sungkar – began propagating the DI movement under the banner of the JI around the year 1969.

Sungkar and Bashir were both soon imprisoned by the Indonesian administration, and the two radical leaders spent several years in lockup. Upon their release in 1982, they moved to Malaysia with their supporters. It was here that they recruited fighters from Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia, formally adopting the name Jemaah Islamiyah.

The two men finally found an opportunity to return to Indonesia after the death of President Suharto in 1998. The group developed a terrorist dimension after Sungkar established contact with Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda and benefitted from its strategic and financial support. In 1999, with the eruption of conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Maluku Islands, the JI began its operations.

Since then, the JI has shifted its attention to Western interests in Indonesia and South East Asia. It was responsible for the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings, and the 2009 JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton Hotel attacks. The intentions of its founders were made evident when Bashir created the Indonesian Mujahedeen Council in 2004 that serves as a network for Indonesian Islamic groups. This council exists to this very date and poses the threat of collaborative attacks.

Unlike the MILF which has signed a ceasefire, the JI still remains an active militant organisation operating not only in Indonesia but in neighbouring regions as well. The JI is aligned to both the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, making it one of the strongest extremist forces in the region.

### *Formation of Abu Sayyaf*

Abu Sayyaf is a militant and pirate group that operates from the Philippines and is unofficially known as the 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Philippines Province'. An offshoot of the MNLF, Abu Sayyaf was established in 1989 and follows the Wahhabi doctrine of Islam.

The group was founded and led by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani until his death in 1998, with its first attack in Mindanao in 1995. Since then till 2006, Khaddafy Janjalani was considered the head of the organisation. Janjalani was only 23 years old when he took control of Abu Sayyaf, and it was under him that the organisation began a new strategy – taking hostages. The primary objective of such kidnappings was, and is, financial gain, and this is said to be an important source of funding for the organisation.

The group has grown tremendously since its birth; the year 2000 saw the expansion of the organisation into Malaysia, where it was responsible for the murder of foreigners, Christian clerics and workers. Under Janjalani's leadership, the group carried out the 2006 Jolo Military Base explosions, which led to Janjalani's addition to the FBI Most Wanted Terrorists list. He was shot later that year in an encounter with government troops.

Since his death, Abu Sayyaf has been under control of regional commanders. Notable, in 2014, the group openly declared allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and named then then IS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi their chief. In September 2014, the group started kidnapping people for ransom, this time under the IS banner.

In 2016, the group shifted its focus to off shore ransom operations – at least 17 ships were put under ransom by the group between 2016 and 17 alone. Four seamen were also executed by the group to set an example. This appears to be Abu Sayyaf's new financial strategy as its grips on land are challenged by the positioning of US troops in Philippines as part the Global War on Terrorism. The group collected around \$4 million in ransom from Indonesia and Malaysia in exchange for the release of 14 sailors in two separate incidents in its 2016 alone. Its unwillingness to negotiate (evidenced by the fact that the amount paid in both incidents was the same as the amount demanded) has grown with the shift from land to marine kidnappings, and its sea operations are only expected to expand in the years to come.<sup>9</sup>

## Cooperation Rings Among Organisations

A unique characteristic of terrorism in South East Asia is the strong cooperation among groups in the region despite differences in goals and motives. Although terrorist groups belong

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<sup>9</sup> "MMP: Abu Sayyaf Group," FSI, , accessed July 12, 2019, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/abu-sayyaf-group>.

to different countries, they are linked together linguistically (most speak some variant of the Indo-Malay Language Family) and in terms of religious beliefs (orthodox Islam).

Before the signing of the ceasefire in 2014 for instance, Abu Sayyaf and MILF were allies and worked together on multiple counts. Notable among these was the January 2005 attacks by MILF on government troops situated in Maguindanao, where Abu Sayyaf and MILF fighters used combined heavy artillery to fight continuously for several days.

Smaller groups in the region, such as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP) and United Liberation Organization (PULO) are confirmed to be engaged in frequent dialogue. The geographical proximity and shared linguistic systems make it extremely easy for such extremist organisations to collaborate for training purposes and weapons trade. This issue must be addressed in resolutions pertaining to this topic.

### Modes of Attack

Most attacks carried out in the region involve the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in some form or the other. The advantage with IEDs is that they can be made quickly, often from common household materials. Groups in the region have been known to use raw materials ranging from alcohol to sugar and fertilizers for their IEDs. The flow of these materials is difficult to regulate, and hence there has been no large scale crackdown on IED production.

Groups also have several ways to deliver the IEDs to target locations. These include Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and Suicide IEDs (SIEDs). In VBIEDs, a bomb is usually placed inside a vehicle, which is parked in a busy locality and triggered remotely. In another variant of VBIEDs, a bomber drives a vehicle into a restricted area and detonates an explosive device, killing the bomber and nearby personnel. Such a method was used to carry out a blast in front of the Australian Embassy in South Jakarta, which killed nine people and injured 150 others.

Suicide IEDs involve an attacker who is strapped onto an IED with a trigger in their hand. This allows for greater mobility, and allows the attacker to join large crowds and discreetly carry out an explosion. The Jamaah Ansharut Daulah Surabaya Bombings in Indonesia (2018) involved the use of SIEDs as a family carried out coordinated blasts in three churches.

The most common locations for IED based attacks include places of worship, commercial premises and markets. These locations are chosen for their high population density and maximum potential for destruction of life and property.

## Maritime Terrorism

The primary extremist groups that operate on high seas include the Abu Sayyaf, Polisario, and MILF. The region accounts for about 40% of international maritime trade, making it a hotspot for ship hijackings. The risk of attack is increased as the crew on board ships passing through South East Asian waters may belong to different countries from around the world, reducing negotiation powers and increasing vulnerability.

Much like land-based attacks, maritime attacks also involve the use of IEDs due to their ease of manufacture and low cost. These IEDs are often delivered by dinghies or small motorized boats. Most organisations have access to technologies like satellite communication and the Global Positioning System (GPS), for which they often align themselves with international terror rings and criminal organisations.

A body of particular interest in the Strait of Malacca, which is bordered by Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. It is a part of major shipping routes, and attracts crime such as piracy, armed assault and hijackings. The most common, however, is low-level armed robbery. As was seen in the section about Abu Sayyaf, these robberies and attacks are often a source of revenue for extremist groups, and hence a crackdown on maritime terrorism would also be a crackdown on land-based extremism.

It should be noted that although there have been instances of major commercial vessels being attacked by pirates, more often than not it is the small merchant ships and yachts that are under attack. At a larger scale, some groups are also known to capture ships, rename and repaint them, and then register them for illegal resale. Asian criminal syndicates such as the Chinese Triads have often been accused of being the driving force behind such operations, but that is beyond the scope of discussion.

## Local Support for Extremist Organisations

Violent extremist groups operating in the region have had considerable support from locals, either because of similarities in ideology or religion. For instance, the MNLF had considerable backing from the Moro people and Muslim majority of Mindanao as the locals saw MNLF leaders and fighters as one of their own. As the MNLF fought against government forces, their popularity amongst native island residents only grew, as the group had provided them with an opportunity to feature in mainstream media and address their grievances. The strong local base was one reason why counter-terrorism operations were (and still are) difficult – the rule of law was weakened in Southern Philippines, and it has still not completely recovered.

In the case of Jemaah Islamiyah, the local support is also evident in terms of financial help. According to Indonesian intelligence officers, as much as 20-25% of funds from Islamic Charities in the region are forwarded to shell organisations operated by JI. The main source of funds for these charities is, in turn, *zakat* – a form of donation which most Muslims are expected to give (amounting to about 2.5% of their income). With most donations in cash, laundering is difficult to catch.<sup>10</sup>

### Impact of Violent Extremism

Violent extremism has far reaching socio-economic impacts that makes it a key issue to tackle. There are several theories about extremism, but most analyse it from a psychological perspective. The Swiss psychologist Arno Gruen, for instance, views extremism from the lens of a plague, wherein one's lack of identity results in a revenge toward life and a compulsion to kill human emotions. This animosity, according to the theory, spreads rapidly among populations as they find peace in collective hatred.

Other theories relate extremism to an emotional outlet for unresolved feelings stemming from loss, oppression or insecurity. Regardless of the reason behind violent extremism, it is evident that extremists systematically try to destroy cultural symbols and attitudes in the hope of radicalising others and spreading terror. Such an atmosphere of fear is not conducive to societal growth, as it leads to repression of values of different thought processes.<sup>11</sup>

The impact is also economic in nature. The JI Bali bombings, for instance, caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage. The cost to finance the missions was under \$35,000.<sup>12</sup> Extremist organisations epitomize value for money, and arms them with the ability to carry out large scale damage with miniscule funding and planning. As the South East grows, particularly middle-income countries, assurances of safety will become increasingly important to international firms. Economic damage done today also impacts future investment possibilities, making it crucial to tackle violent extremist organisations.

### Major Countries and Organizations Involved

<sup>10</sup> Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, report, December 2003, , accessed July 12, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090326131526/http://www.nbr.org/publications/analysis/pdf/vol14no5.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Peter T. Coleman and Dr Andrea Bartoli, Addressing Extremism, report, [https://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/9386\\_WhitePaper\\_2\\_Extremism\\_030809.pdf](https://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/9386_WhitePaper_2_Extremism_030809.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "Where Is Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia's Terrorism Landscape?" The Diplomat, July 08, 2019, , accessed July 12, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/where-is-jemaah-islamiyah-in-southeast-asias-terrorism-landscape/>.

## China

China has often staked claims over the South China Sea, which accounts for over 30% of global maritime crude oil trade. 42% of this crude oil is shipped to China. Extremist groups operating from Philippines and Indonesia are known to roam these waters, which makes counter-terrorism in this maritime area an important concern for China.

## Indonesia

The JI is the primary group of concern in Indonesia. With around 5,000 active members and operations in countries ranging from East Timor to Brunei, the JI has evolved into a multinational extremist organisation with close ties to the Al Qaeda. They were responsible for some of Indonesia's worst terrorist attacks (such as the Bali bombings), are continue to pose a major threat to the stability of the region. Since much of the higher command of the organisation resides in Indonesia, counter terrorism here could be a major step in bringing down the JI network.

## Japan

Japan is the second largest importer of oil shipped through the South China Sea, accounting for 20% of total oil quantity.

## Malaysia

While most local extremist groups operating in Malaysia are now defunct or dissolved, the country does serve as an important destination for international extremist organisations including the Abu Sayyaf and JI. Moro pirates are also known to have found refuge in the country.

## Philippines

Philippines lies at the centre of extremism in South East Asia. The Southern region of Philippines has been particularly troubled with bouts of terrorism, particularly after the Moro conflict of 1974. The primary groups operating in Philippines include the MILF and Abu Sayyaf, of which the latter has been more active in the recent years. Philippine extremist groups involved in maritime piracy are known to capture ships in International waters, which is why any effort to tackle extremism in Philippines would also be beneficial to trade beyond Philippine borders.

## Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the prime supplier of oil shipped through the South China Sea, accounting for 24% of total oil quantity.

## Singapore

Singapore is one of the safest countries in South East Asia, and also the richest in terms of GDP per capita. Singapore is known for its strong counter terrorism units and concept of 'Total Defence', both of which could help carry out operations in other countries with cooperation between nations.

## United Arab Emirates

The UAE is the second largest supplier of oil shipped through the South China Sea, accounting for 11% of total oil quantity.<sup>13</sup>

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1969	Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) established and commenced a struggle against the Government of Philippines
24 <sup>th</sup> September 1974	Malisbong Massacre kills 1,000 Moro civilians and sparks conflict between MNLF and Philippine Government
1998	The ultra-fundamentalist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) emerges under the leadership of Abdurajak Janjalini
July 1997	Asian financial crisis hits South East Asia, leading to destabilization in the region
21 <sup>st</sup> May 1998	Indonesian President Suharto resigns, spurring a large increase in violent political extremism
Early 2000	Laskar Jihad (LJ) established in response to allegedly deliberate persecution of Muslims in Moluccas

<sup>13</sup> "Strait of Malacca Key Chokepoint for Oil Trade," The Maritime Executive, , accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/strait-of-malacca-key-chokepoint-for-oil-trade>.

12 <sup>th</sup> October 2002	Extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) bombs the tourist district of Kuta in Bali, killing 202 people
1 <sup>st</sup> October 2005	Bali is hit by several suicide bombers for the second, again allegedly in a series of attacks organised by the JI
17 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	The JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in South Jakarta are hit by separate bombings 5 minutes apart – Malaysian extremist Noordin Mohammad believed to be mastermind
9 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Faction of the MNLF claims control over the Zamboanga City in Philippines, resulting in a three-week siege
June 2016	Islamic State (IS) releases propaganda video named 'The Solid Structure' to encourage sympathisers to form a caliphate in Philippines
1969	Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) established and commenced a struggle against the Government of Philippines

## Relevant Treaties and Events

### Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia

This treaty is a peace treaty established by the ASEAN countries that was signed on 24th February 1976 and amended twice in 1998 and 2009. It should be noted that other than the ASEAN countries, several other nations including members of the EU, the United States of America and Canada have also signed the treaty. This treaty is of importance as it indicates the shared responsibility of signatories in dealing with issues of the region, in this case violent extremism.

#### Article 4

The High Contracting Parties shall promote active cooperation in the economic, social, technical, scientific and administrative fields as well as in matters of common ideals and aspirations of international peace and stability in the region and all other matters of common interest.

#### Article 9

The High Contracting Parties shall endeavour to foster cooperation in the furtherance of the cause of peace, harmony, and stability in the region. To this end, the High Contracting Parties

shall maintain regular contacts and consultations with one another on international and regional matters with a view to coordinating their views actions and policies.

**Article 4 and 9 are of relevance because they promote cooperation amongst member states in matters pertaining to peace and harmony. As violent extremism is clearly a threat to stability in the region, these articles can serve as a basis for a coordinated counter-terrorism strategy.**

### **1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation**

As of June 2015, 166 states are party to this convention, include all ASEAN states and stakeholders. It is a multilateral treaty that provides guidelines to punish and prohibit actions which threaten maritime safety.

#### Article 3

Any person commits an offence if that person unlawfully and intentionally:

1. seizes or exercises control over a ship by force or threat thereof or any other form of intimidation; or
2. performs an act of violence against a person on board a ship if that act is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship; or
3. destroys a ship or causes damage to a ship or to its cargo which is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship; or
4. places or causes to be placed on a ship, by any means whatsoever, a device or substance which is likely to destroy that ship, or cause damage to that ship or its cargo which endangers or is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship; or
5. destroys or seriously damages maritime navigational facilities or seriously interferes with their operation, if any such act is likely to endanger the safe navigation of a ship; or
6. communicates information which he knows to be false, thereby endangering the safe navigation of a ship; or
7. injures or kills any person, in connection with the commission or the attempted commission of any of the offences set forth.

**Article 3 is of importance as it lists out the activities that classify as ‘offences’ according to the convention. Sub parts (1), (2), (3) and (4) can be linked to the activities of extremist**

groups in the region.

### Article 13

1. States Parties shall co-operate in the prevention of the offences set forth in article 3, particularly by:
  1. taking all practicable measures to prevent preparations in their respective territories for the commission of those offences within or outside their territories;
  2. exchanging information in accordance with their national law, and co-ordinating administrative and other measures taken as appropriate to prevent the commission of offences set forth in article 3.
2. When, due to the commission of an offence set forth in article 3, the passage of a ship has been delayed or interrupted, any State Party in whose territory the ship or passengers or crew are present shall be bound to exercise all possible efforts to avoid a ship, its passengers, crew or cargo being unduly detained or delayed.

**Article 13 legally requires countries to cooperate to prevent maritime offences. As maritime extremism occurs in the territorial waters of different countries in the region, countries must work together to capture perpetrators.**

### **1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings**

This treaty is designed to criminalise terrorist bombings and promote judicial co-operation to prevent and investigate such acts.

### Article 10

1. States Parties shall afford one another the greatest measure of assistance in connection with investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings brought in respect of the offences set forth in article 2, including assistance in obtaining evidence at their disposal necessary for the proceedings.
2. States Parties shall carry out their obligations under paragraph 1 in conformity with any treaties or other arrangements on mutual legal assistances that may exist between them. In the absence of such treaties or arrangements, States Parties shall afford one another assistance in accordance with their domestic law.

**Article 10 is of importance as it delineates the procedure to deal with criminals operating across boundaries, in terms of assistance, extradition and support (refer to the section on JI – leaders hiding in Malaysia).**

### **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**

This convention is an international agreement between 167 countries that establishes the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to fair and sustainable use and management of oceans. It also includes some relevant articles to the issue of piracy, specifically regarding the jurisdiction in which the captured pirates should be tried.

#### Article 100

##### *Duty to cooperate in the repression of piracy*

All States shall cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of piracy on the high seas or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any State.

#### Article 105

##### *Seizure of a pirate ship or aircraft*

On the high seas, or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any State, every State may seize a pirate ship or aircraft, or a ship or aircraft taken by piracy and under the control of pirates, and arrest the persons and seize the property on board. The courts of the State which carried out the seizure may decide upon the penalties to be imposed, and may also determine the action to be taken with regard to the ships, aircraft or property, subject to the rights of third parties acting in good faith.

**Articles 100 and 105 are of relevance because they promote cooperation amongst member states and also establish the jurisdiction in which pirates can be tried. This is important, because maritime pirates often operate in countries different from their nationality.**

### **International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages (1979)**

176 nations are party to this treaty, which was instituted specifically to prohibit and punish the act of ransom/ hostage taking.

### Article 6

1. Upon being satisfied that the circumstances so warrant, any State Party in the territory of which the alleged offender is present shall, in accordance with its laws, take him into custody or take other measures to ensure his presence for such time as is necessary to enable any criminal or extradition proceedings to be instituted. That State Party shall immediately make a preliminary inquiry into the facts.
2. The custody or other measures referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall be notified without delay directly or through the Secretary-General of the United Nations to:
  - a. the State where the offence was committed;
  - b. the State against which compulsion has been directed or attempted;
  - c. the State of which the natural or juridical person against whom compulsion has been directed or attempted is a national;
  - d. the State of which the hostage is a national or in the territory of which he has his habitual residence;
  - e. the State of which the alleged offender is a national or, if he is a stateless person, in the territory of which he has his habitual residence;
  - f. the international intergovernmental organization against which compulsion has been directed or attempted;
  - g. all other States concerned.

**Article 6 is of importance as it stresses the importance of international co-operation in the prosecution of hostage-takers operating outside their country of origin, and indicates the possibility of extradition.**

### **Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

The UN Global CT Strategy was adopted by the General Assembly on 28th September 2006 to help co-ordinate global, regional and national efforts to combat terrorism. It is based on four pillars: addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, preventing and combatting terrorism, building states' capacity and strengthening the role of the UN and Ensuring Human rights and the rule of law. The General Assembly reviews the strategy on a biyearly basis. However, it should be noted that the measures prescribed as part of this strategy are often very broad and require careful reworking to be applied to a specific region like South East Asia.

International Organisations like the UN Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) have assisted partners in South East Asia to find effective counter terrorism strategies. The latest official report published by the CTED in connection with South East Asia was in December 2016, when the committee performed a risk analysis on terrorism funding in the region. Such reports are far more region specific than those published by the General Assembly. These investigations and recommendations have served as good starting points for local governments, but in the absence of swift implementation and action, their utility is limited.

The ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism was signed by 10 ASEAN Countries in 2012. The convention hopes to improve co-ordination between states for the purpose of combatting terrorism in the region. Prior to its adoption, there was disagreement regarding whether a regional instrument was needed to deal with extremism. However, since then, it has become clear that regional co-operation is important in dealing with co-ordinated rings of terrorism. The convention has certainly raised awareness on the issue: the 2015 Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism is an example of a summit where regional leaders have sat together to work out solutions to this problem. Yet, work has been slow, and the role to be played by different parties is still under dispute.

Amongst all the strategies that have been tested, perhaps the most successful have been those put in force by individual governments. The Indonesian Government, for instance, formed the Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) in 2010 as the non-ministerial government department that works to prevent terrorism. The institutionalisation of the BNPT took Indonesia out of the Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) blacklist in 2014 and since then a number of laws (Law No. 9/2013 for example) have been passed that increase the power of the BNPT in dealing with violent extremists.

The Philippines has a similar counter-terrorism unit called the Special Action Force (SAF). Though the unit is not nearly as successful or powerful as the BNPT, it has gained momentum in the recent years as more Special Action Battalions have been added to the force. Notably, in a 2015 operation, the SAF located and killed Zulkifli Abdir, one of the FBI Most Wanted Terrorists. He was a member of both the JI and Abu Sayyaf, and was one among several senior extremists killed by the force.

Taking a cue from the Philippines and Indonesia, in January 2014, the Malaysian Immigration Department formed the *Grup Taktikal Khas* or the Special Tactical Group, a special operations unit responsible for conducting high risk raids and fighting organised terrorist and crime syndicates. They make use of the German 9mm Heckler & Koch USP Compact semi-automatic pistol, and Remington 870 12 bore shotgun supplied by the United States. With

special equipment including Government Integrated Radio Networks and Kevlar vests, the group represents an active effort by the Malaysian Government to tackle high value targets.<sup>14</sup>

## Possible Solutions

### Building counter-terrorism capacity in south-east Asia

The deployment UNODC and UN CTED sanctioned analysts that work in the absence of government interference can be another solution to the problem. This could be particularly helpful in regions where local political parties are aligned with extremist agendas, and hence hinder any governmental counter-terrorism efforts.

### International co-operation in supplying technology and human assistance

Currently, the counter-terrorism units in South East Asia are weak in comparison to the extremist groups that operate in the region. One front where they particularly fall short is technology – whilst maritime terrorists procure sophisticated technology from international criminal networks, law enforcement agencies lack such support. For instance, pirates are now increasingly making use of GPS services, satellite phones, and statistical analysis of data from shipping blogs to triangulate the location of cargo vessels. When on sea, they often use radar technology to identify ships and carry out targeted strikes. Assistance by international stakeholders in terms of technology and specialised human assistance could go a long way in combatting extremists. This may include analysis of publicly available information to reverse-engineer the modus operandi of pirates, or radar identification approaches where incoming radar bursts can be used to determine the position of adversaries.

### Focussing on a grass-roots approach

Extremist groups thrive on local support. A 2016 CTED report [xii] claims that the most common, and the most dangerous source of funds to extremist organisations in the region is contribution of legally acquired funds. There is nothing illegal about contributing personal wealth to a cause, and hence this source of funding is perhaps the most difficult to tackle. Yet, if nations can leverage social media platforms to spread awareness, transform radicals into moderates, and weed out recruitment networks, much of this funding can be reduced. This is already underway with large social media corporations running automatic algorithms to disable recruiter accounts; however, with local assistance, these algorithms can be fine tuned to

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<sup>14</sup> LLC Revolv, "Grup Taktikal Khas," Revolv, , accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.revolv.com/page/Grup-Taktikal-Khas>.

improve the detection accuracy. From a less technological stand-point, the most vulnerable group to online recruiters is teenagers and young adults. By educating this cohort about the manipulation techniques used by extremist organisation, the potential reach of recruiters can be limited.

**Note to Delegates:** This topic has many dimensions to it, and delegates are not expected or advised to tackle each and every bit in utmost detail. Resolutions that effectively tackle parts of the issue are likely to be more than those that try and cover every detail.

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