



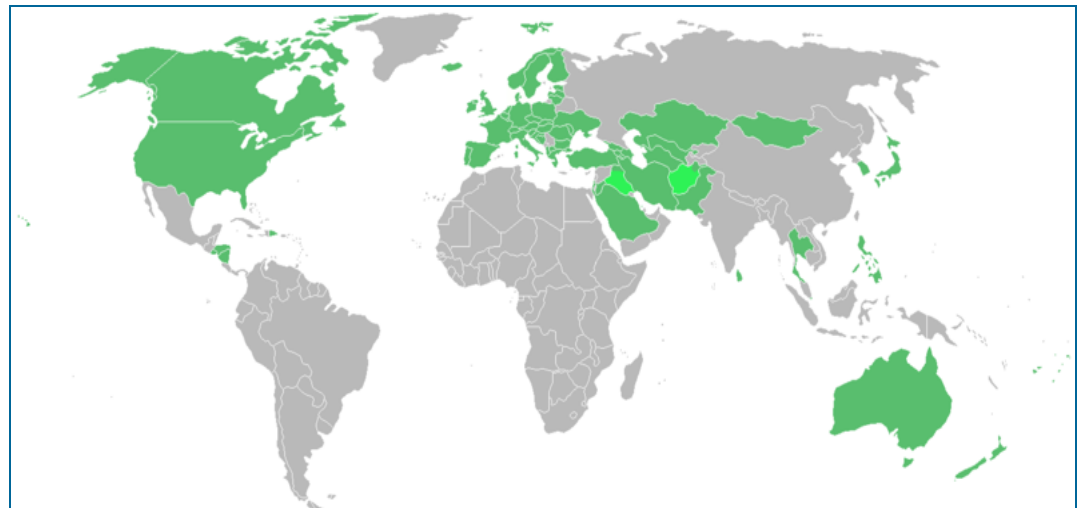
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## The Global Landscape of Terrorism 2012

Professor Rohan Gunaratna

*In this article, Professor Gunaratna, the Head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) gives an assessment on the threat of terrorism in 2012.*



Highlighted countries (green) are those who have contributed troops to operations in the Global War of Terror since 2007, Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Transnational terrorism will remain the most significant national security threat for many countries in the world. This is despite the killing of key Al Qaeda leaders in 2011 including Al Qaeda founder Osama Bin Laden and Anwar Al-Awlaki of the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The Al Qaeda and its associated and affiliated groups will continue to project a threat even as most of their top leadership are being neutralized and most of their assets – training facilities and financing – are under threat. At the same time, there will be an increasing threat from home-grown terrorism- individuals who act individually or

in small cells. This trend is observed mostly in the West but countries in the global south are also exposed to this emerging phenomenon.

Terrorism in 2012 will be driven and sustained largely by geopolitical disputes and developments in the Middle East and Asia. The principal threats to the world will stem from four regions of concern - (1) Pakistan and Afghanistan, (2) the Levant-Arabian Peninsula, (3) the Horn of Africa, and (4) the Maghreb-Sahel. Countries in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, southern Thailand, and southern Philippines, and Northeast Asia

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specifically Xinjiang in China will experience a measure of stability, though low levels of political violence and associated criminality cannot be discounted. While left-wing and ethno-nationalist groups will remain a threat, terrorism by politico-religious groups, especially by Muslim threat groups will remain preeminent. At the same time segments of migrant and Diaspora communities will continue to be politicized and radicalized under the ideology of global jihad.

Domestic political compulsions and causalities have constrained Western governments to pull out their military forces both from Iraq and Afghanistan. But as the developments in Iraq have shown, troop withdrawals and total disengagement could be the likely catalyst for major instability, the impact of which will reverberate across the world.

### **Nature of the Threat to Come**

In addition to its own operations, the Al Qaeda will instigate and support its associated groups and inspire home-grown individuals and cells to plan, prepare and execute attacks. It is likely that in terms of numbers, attacks by home-grown entities will surpass the threat from structured groups, especially in Europe and North America. This will necessitate a review of homeland security policies, strategies and procedures by the respective countries.

Both South Asia and the Middle East will remain enduring battlefields. Pakistan will remain the ground-zero of terrorism, with thousands of both indigenous and foreign fighters active in its tribal areas, especially in North Waziristan. In addition, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq and the traditional conflict zones of Palestine, Chechnya, Algeria, Kashmir, southern Thailand, and southern Philippines will witness significant acts of violence. Many of these areas will also be used as staging pads for international terrorist operations targeting the West.

Terrorists will continue to use real and virtual communications platforms for propaganda, recruitment and indoctrination. Muslim communities in Asia, Africa and the Middle East and migrant and the Muslim Dias-

pora in North America, Europe and Australia will be susceptible to such propaganda. Countries with majority Muslim populations such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Maldives and those with Muslims in large to significant numbers such as India, Nigeria, and parts of Central Asia will witness an increase in radicalization and extremism.

With the globalization of communications and increased interconnectivity, the Diaspora will continue, some unwittingly, to support the conflicts in their respective home countries. There will be instances wherein this will translate into active participation in violence with some members of the Diaspora especially Somalis from America, North Africans from Continental Europe, and Pakistanis in Australia and the United Kingdom (UK), travelling to conflict zones for training and combat. Some of them are likely to return to their respective communities to support or participate in attacks in the target countries.

### **Regional Trends**

In Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan will remain the most vulnerable to ideological extremism and terrorism. In the Middle East, both the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant will experience violence. With the shift in of operations of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) from Saudi Arabia to Yemen, the threat to the region and beyond will remain robust. The threat in the Maghreb notably from Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) will percolate to Sahel to the south and Europe to the north. Developments in Somalia will affect the security of the horn of Africa including the security of the territorial and international waters in the region.

### **Functional Trends**

Ideologically and operationally, Al Qaeda will remain a key player as not only will it seek to shape the agenda of associated groups, it will also influence the thinking of the Muslim masses. Groups and individuals who are indoctrinated to the Al Qaeda brand of propaganda will mount more kill and die attacks. With the cult of martyrdom gaining attention, suicide attacks, the most favoured tactic, will be copied by more groups and indi-

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viduals. Simultaneously, the *fedayeen* or “no surrender” attacks like the November 2008 Mumbai attacks will also increase. Although aviation is the most protected domain, the terrorists will continue to target aircraft, air transport and airports.

Al Qaeda itself will morph in its form and agenda. Rather than conducting the bulk of the attacks, Al Qaeda will function more as an ideological vanguard and a training organization for like-minded groups. Having suffered gravely from combat and drone attacks, Al Qaeda is likely to outsource operations to groups such as AQAP, AQIM, Tareek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) and the Al Shabab. Over time, the AQAP and TTP may emerge as the greater threats especially to the West.

### Control Strategies

Ten years into the war on terror, the limitations of using predominantly military force to end extremism and terrorism is evident. The Western-led, US-centric, global anti-terrorism agenda has not been entirely successful to contain the threat. Lethal and kinetic operations by the West and the invasion of Iraq have led to a loss of Muslim public participation and reluctance of Muslim governments to counter the threat. While military means are essential to fight insurgency and other forms of political violence, the excessive reliance on firepower, with resultant high collateral damage to property and people, together with the failure to provide basic needs have protracted the conflicts.

Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency measures should be comprehensive, strategic in orientation, and both population- and enemy-centric. While high-grade, high-quality intelligence determines operational success on the ground, political will is the most essential ingredient to ending a fight. To win over the marginalized and the disaffected, political establishment and militaries should work with a range of local and international actors. These include religious establishments, the education ministries, governmental and non-governmental organizations entrusted with socio-economic development, the banking and financial industry, and the mass

media. As insurgent and terrorists seek to exploit new media technologies to disseminate propaganda, governments need an effective media strategy to insulate the masses from radical propaganda and garner the support of the civil society and the international community at large.

### Impediments

The understanding of the political dimensions of the conflict, bases of support, leadership persona, and ideologies, are necessary ingredients of a successful strategy. At the heart of many of the conflicts are geopolitical and strategic disputes. As much as Palestine has an indelible imprint on the psyche of Muslim groups worldwide, the protracted disputes over Kashmir, Chechnya, and others have regional implications. Therefore, the strategy to fight insurgency and terrorism must include serious attempts to resolve these disputes.

Taking into consideration the gravity of the threat from terrorism to the West, especially the brand of terrorism spearheaded by Al Qaeda, it is important for the US to be cautious of its relations with Iran. The country, which has borders with Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, has detained key Al Qaeda leaders and their families. In retaliation to Western pressure, the Iranian government has released important Al Qaeda leaders and their family members. Similarly, the country supports Shia threat groups in Iraq, Yemen and in Pakistan as well as the Taliban and other likeminded Sunni groups. Iran continues to support opposition groups including groups that resort to terrorism. To stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan, the West may have no option but to work with Iran.

The world is ideologically and politically divided when it comes to fighting insurgency and terrorism. Increasingly, non-Western nations see terrorism and extremism as a Western problem and a creation of the West. Reports by western-funded NGOs have helped to consolidate this view. There are concerns that the reporting of violations in conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan where Western forces participate versus

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conflicts in Xinjiang, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka and South-eastern Turkey are biased. There are also perceptions that Western governments are using human rights issues as a political tool.

Every conflict zone has produced civilian deaths and injuries. Insurgent and terrorist groups use these statistics, whether they are civilians killed deliberately or accidentally by them, for propaganda. While government forces should minimize civilian losses, the stark reality is that no counterinsurgency and counterterrorist campaign can be without civilian fatalities and casualties. First, insurgents and terrorists operate amidst civilian settlements and second, they use the civilians as human shields. A review of the laws of war is essential to safeguard government and foreign forces in their mission as well as protect civilian populations.

### The Future

As the center of global economic power shifts from the West to the East, the geography of terrorism may also shift. In addition to the United States, all the other major powers also face a threat from terrorism, though countries like India, Russia and China are more resilient to political violence than the West. Although the threat is global, there is no true global strategy and response to the terrorist threat. Without cooperation among the states, the fight against terrorism is most likely to endure.

Conflict zones are the crucibles where threat groups emerge, develop and sustain. Both for peace-keeping and war fighting, conflict zones need more civil and military personnel on the ground. As the memory of 9/11 recedes, the public opinion in individual Western countries is shifting against the deployment of their respective forces in conflict zones. This is reinforced by recession, budget cuts and decline of military power especially in Europe. In such a situation, it is important for the United Nations (UN) to assume a greater role and call for a wider participation of nations to stabilize intractable armed conflicts.

### Recommendations

Ten years after the 11 September 2001 attacks, Al Qaeda has yet to be completely defeated at both po-

Photograph of Ayman Al-Zawahiri at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Most Wanted Terrorists List. He is wanted for the murder of US nationals outside of the United States; Conspiracy to murder US nationals outside of the United States; Attack on a Federal facility causing death. Full details can be found [here](#)



litical and military fronts. Although Bin Laden was killed, the Al Qaeda now has an equally, or even more competent leader, Ayman al Zawahiri at the helm. To tackle the Al Qaeda and its associated groups, a wider set of strategies at a global level is needed. Because nations have different levels of commitment, it is a task that cannot be accomplished in the short term. The focus should be on the decapitation of the Al Qaeda leadership and decimation of the group. It will be foolish for the West to pull out of Afghanistan without working with Pakistan to dismantle Al Qaeda, the Taliban and their associated groups. It is important for the US to restore its disrupted relations with Pakistan as it is a pivotal ally in the fight against terrorism.

With the rise of China and India, the United Nations should share the burden of security with other countries to provide manpower to stabilize conflict zones. That will also give a greater voice and participation to non-Western nations to find solutions to manage, reduce, and end violence. Furthermore, international organizations and governments should carefully study the implications of intervention and invasion. For instance, disbanding the military and the civil service in Iraq after the US invasion did not help reduce the threat but contributed appreciably to an increased threat of global terrorism. Likewise, to stabilize Somalia, deploying a force drawn from the Muslim World would have been prudent. Rather than a largely Christian Ethiopian army, deploying a Muslim force would have given Mus-

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lim public and their governments a greater justification to get involved.

Today, a civilian corps that can deliver services to the ordinary people is as important as military forces to keep the threats in check. In parallel with building military and law enforcement capabilities to stabilize conflict zones, building local, regional and international institutions to prevent the formation of threat groups is essential. By engaging the marginalized and addressing legitimate grievances and genuine aspirations of ethnic and religious communities, the potential for conflict can be reduced. As most international assistance is still geared to ending conflict by the application of force, there should be more efforts on educating and training leaders worldwide in political negotiations and conflict management.

### Conclusion

With the globalization of communication, insurgent, terrorist and extremist groups will compete with governments to influence their territorial as well Diaspora and migrant communities. By politicizing, radicalizing and mobilizing their communities both in real and the cyber world, these groups will seek their advocacy, support and participation in respective political, diplomatic and militant campaigns. Furthermore, groups will seek to engage civil and human rights, humanitarian and other charitable organizations to assist their causes and agendas through front organizations. Insurgents and terrorists are the biggest human rights violators. The United Nations should review some human rights organizations which are actually used as fronts by terrorist and insurgent groups.

As the threat spreads to population centres, governments need to educate the general public in partnership with the civil society and the members of the respective communities. Although intelligence-led counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations is essential, greater investment is needed in community engagement. The challenge is to prevent and immunize communities that are vulnerable to the extremist narrative. This entails a transformation from a purely kill-and-

capture strategy to winning the hearts and the minds of affected communities. Currently, law enforcement agencies are considered a tactically trained blue collar force. It must become a strategically trained partner capable of reaching out, engaging, and befriending the potential opponent and future adversary.

## East Asia Country Assessment: China

### Su Hao'En

China has faced the threat of terrorism and ethnic violence in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region from different entities since the 1990s. The Chinese government is acutely concerned with the security situation in Xinjiang and has undertaken measures to deal with the violence and the ethnic tensions. The worst of the violence stemmed from the ethnic tensions between the Uighur and Han communities in the regional capital Urumqi on 5 July 2009. The riots left approximately 200 people dead. Various analyses claimed that ethnicity, or religion, or both, were the main contributory factors to the current state of violence. However, there is a general consensus that the root cause of the conflict arises from the perception of the local Uighur community that their identity is under threat.

Against this backdrop, a group known as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), also goes by the name the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), have carried out attacks within China to fight for a Uighur separatist cause. The group continues to pose a threat to China's security. The Chinese government consistently blames the current political instability in the region on the ETIM and labels the recent spate of violence in the region as terrorist attacks.

However, based on the types of attacks attributed to ETIM or which ETIM itself claimed responsibility in the past, the violence in Xinjiang in 2011 does not appear to be the handiwork of the ETIM or other terrorist groups. Rather, the spate of violence could be a direct result of the heightened sense of mistrust and tension between the local Uighur and Han Chinese communities. The Chinese government have contributed to these tensions as well



Map of China showing location of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in red.

Image Source: [Wikimedia](#)

with its aggressive integration policies that are perceived by the Uighur as an affront to their community. These policies are seen to threaten or even replace the distinct ethnicity, language, religion, and culture of the Uighur. It is significant to note that the Chinese language is fast replacing the Turkic language among the younger generations of Uighur. Even if Turkic is still being taught, job opportunities and the prospects of social mobility involve the mastery of the Chinese language. The widening socio-economic divide between the Han Chinese and the Uighur has also contributed to the general feeling of marginalization and prosecution.

#### Key Developments

Despite an overwhelming security presence, incidents of violence carried out by the local Uighur communities continue to persist. On 16 July 2011 in Kashgar, two men drove a truck into a Han Chinese crowd and proceeded to carry out knife attacks. The following day, clashes with the local authorities were reported to have taken place. On 18 July 2011, a peaceful

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protest devolved into a violent riot in Hotan. The riot occurred after Uighur protesters, who wanted to find out the whereabouts of their arrested relatives, were fired upon by the police. This lethal response angered protesters and incited them to storm a police station and a government office in which a number of persons were killed including the security personnel. The most serious incident of violence took place on 31 July 2011 in Kashgar when a riot broke out in response to the demolition of traditional Uighur houses. Eighteen people were killed in the riots. As the incidents occurred close to the China-Eurasia Expo scheduled to take place in Xinjiang in September 2011, Beijing deployed additional forces to reinforce security. A number of Uighur were arrested.

On 28 December 2011, local Chinese authorities raided a mountain hideout outside of Hotan City, near Pishan county. The police claimed that the raid was a rescue operation to free hostages kidnapped by a "violent terrorist group." In the operation, seven kidnapers were killed, four were injured and another four were arrested in the firefight. Although no hostages were hurt, a police officer was killed and another injured during the rescue operation. Local authorities identified the kidnapers and hostages as ethnic Uighur and claimed that the kidnapers were armed, thus necessitating the use of firearms by the police. However, since the alleged hostages themselves were Uighur, the claim that they were kidnapped by terrorists came under scrutiny. A spokesman from the World Uighur Congress claimed that the raid could be used as an excuse for authorities to carry out more acts of suppression in the region. By labeling these incidents as acts of terrorism and using responses such as crackdowns on the local Uighur populations, the Chinese government has further exacerbated and reinforced the level of mistrust between the state and the Uighur population.

### Terrorism

China has suffered from terrorist attacks from the ETIM, and by extension, Al Qaeda, in the past. In 2011, it appears that attacks were disorganized and not typical of the methods used by organized entities like the ETIM. Incidents of violence this year started out with

protests based on local grievances which turned violent.

The capability of organized entities such as the ETIM is rather limited in China as they have minimum influence and access to the mainland. With ETIM's top leadership almost completely decimated, the group's ability to carry out attacks has come under severe stress. The ETIM's founder, Hasan Mahsum, was killed in 2003 by the Pakistan military. His successor, Abdul Haq was killed in February 2010 by a United States (US) drone strike in Afghanistan. It is estimated that the ETIM has less than one hundred members. It also operates mainly outside of China.

Though there were sporadic protests in March 2011 involving the Tibetans, there is no indication that they pose a credible threat to the country. Some of the younger generation Tibetans are getting restive but they do not have any demonstrable capacity to carry out attacks. In August 2011, a Tibetan Buddhist monk burned himself to death, demanding that Dalai Lama, their spiritual leader, who is in exile in India be allowed to return to China. This was followed by self-immolation of two other monks in Kirti monastery, demanding religious freedom. These incidents sparked the fear of ethnic tensions in the region.

### Prognosis

Despite the Chinese government's heavy investments in Xinjiang, violence persists. This is likely to linger as long as the government fails to address ethnic tensions and grievances. Beijing needs to appreciate that, more often than not, extremism and terrorism take root due to marginalization and repression – perceived or otherwise. The government must move towards engaging the local population and alleviate local grievances and address the deep sense of mistrust between the Uighur and the Han Chinese.

## Middle East and North Africa Country Assessment

Ahmed S. Hashim, Gregoire Patte, Nathan Cohen, and Mia Jayne Shelton

### Arab Spring

In 2011, the Middle East and North Africa experienced a wave of political change known as the “Arab Spring.” Authoritarian regimes were challenged by mass protests throughout the region, many of which were overthrown. These events started in Tunisia, though Egypt soon followed. Successful overthrows in these two nations then inspired uprisings in others. Governments in Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen have since experienced civil resistance; however, not all followed the same trajectory as these earlier examples.

Whereas the protesters failed to overcome the minority Sunni government in Bahrain, it was the nature of the conflict in the Libyan uprising which made it distinct. The events in Tunisia and Egypt were revolutions. Although these were often violent, Libya – at that stage – represented an isolated case as a civil war. The subsequent foreign military intervention represented a marked shift from “soft power approaches” applied in other nations. The reluctance of the international community to implement these same measures in Syria is becoming increasingly controversial, even as that country descends into civil war. Protests in other nations remain on-going. In Jordan, where the still push for institutional – particularly economic – reform, while in Saudi Arabia, tensions between the royal regime and the public has intensified in recent months.

And yet the post-authoritarian regime era is not synonymous with stability. In Egypt, resurgent clashes between authorities and the public have amounted to further lives lost, and the Yemen crisis continues.

Without effective institutions in place and political tensions still flaring, the democratic transition period will remain an unstable time within these nations. Moreover, a new trend seems to be emerging within this transition phase. Elections have been held in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt and Islamic parties have received the majority of votes in each.

The emergence of the Islamists has made Israel nervous as the reshuffling of alliances ensues. These changes will fundamentally alter power balances in the region. Some alliances will be formed and others will be broken as each state tries to renegotiate its position amidst new leaderships. Whatever these future dynamics should be, 2011 marks the beginning of a very different Arab world.

### Bahrain

The February 2011 protests calling for democratic reform split the Bahraini government. Some senior officials attempted to conduct negotiations with the demonstrators, while others opposed any concessions. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia, wary of Iranian machinations and democracy in its majority-Shiite but Sunni-ruled neighbor, pressured Bahrain to quash the protests. The hardliners initially prevailed, and in March 2011, Saudi troops were deployed to Bahrain and King Hamad announced a state-of-emergency. The protests ultimately subsided, but not before dozens died, scores were wounded, and hundreds were imprisoned.

Recently however, Bahrain has adopted a more conciliatory approach. In response to international pressure from human rights groups and governments, King Hamad established the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to



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A photo collage of MENA protests. Clockwise from top left: Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. Image Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

investigate reported human rights abuses during the crackdown. BICI's report sharply rebuked the Bahraini government for systematic torture and other excesses. King Hamad has pledged to implement BICI's recommendations along with other reform oriented measures.

Bahrain is the only Arab kingdom to experience significant upheaval; if the reforms promised actually materialize, Bahrain sets an example for the others. However Saudi Arabia will not accept a democratic Bahrain. The Bahraini government may likely implement incremental reforms that do not fundamentally change the power structure.

### Egypt

Egypt, the largest and most populous country in the Arab world, erupted in mass revolutionary violence in January 2011 against the authoritarian government of Hosni Mubarak. Decades worth of barely submerged grievances and popular disgust with government corruption and brutality were the factors behind the three-week long revolution. Mubarak resigned on 11 February 2011 after the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) -- the eighteen most senior generals of the armed forces -- nudged him out. The military took over and promised far-reaching constitutional changes and elections.

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As the year progressed, Egypt succumbed to serious political violence. The country went through nine months of tense relations between the ruling military and civilian politicians, sectarian violence between Muslims and Coptic Christians, rising terrorism and lawlessness in the poverty-stricken Sinai Peninsula, particularly along the border with the Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip where violent Islamist groups associated with Al Qaeda have taken established themselves. The civil war in neighboring Libya saw the influx of small-arms into Egypt. Most of these arms have made their way to the disgruntled groups in the Sinai Peninsula and organized criminal gangs and Islamist groups in Upper Egypt (southern Egypt, traditionally a poor region).

The Islamist parties have proven to be better organized than their secular and liberal rivals and have taken advantage of the political hiatus to gain greater traction among the population; this was particularly true of the large and influential Muslim Brotherhood mass movement whose *Freedom and Justice Party* was the clear winner in the first round of parliamentary elections in late November. The MB leadership denied that they were in league with the ultra-conservative Salafist *Al Nour* party to create an Islamist coalition government. Nonetheless, Islamists entrenched their dominance with the second round of elections on 7 December 2011; the Salafists claimed that they had won a quarter of the vote. This situation seemed to worry the military high command, whose leading spokesman stated that the military will not allow a minority to shape the contours of the Egyptian constitution or political trajectory. Despite the deep tensions between the armed forces and the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement, it is likely that the two will collaborate to determine Egypt's political fortunes in the coming months. It is not clear, however, that this will go unchallenged.

### Israel/Palestine

Israeli-Palestinian relations went from bad to worse in 2011; however they took a back-seat to the events in the Arab world where a number of regimes were overthrown and to growing tensions in Israeli-Iranian relations. The Palestinian Authority's bid for

statehood stalled but a third *intifada* never materialized. Rockets and mortars fired from the Gaza Strip continued, as did retaliatory Israeli air force strikes, but neither side escalated to the level of violence witnessed in 2008.

The main development in Israel and Palestine was the prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas. Under the auspices of Egypt and German led negotiations, on 11 October 2011, Hamas agreed to exchange Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners. Many of the Palestinians released have been directly implicated in terrorist attacks, and Israelis fear that the deal will unleash a new wave of attacks. To date, those fears have not been realized. Similarly, commentators and analysts wrote that the deal vindicates Hamas' tactics and weakens the moderate Palestinian Authority (PA). Furthermore, with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and signs of a rapprochement with Jordan, Hamas might increase its regional support.

However confidence in Hamas' strength should be doubted for two reasons. First, the upheaval in Syria directly affects Hamas, who maintained its headquarters in Damascus and enjoyed generous support from the Assad regime. Hamas is currently withdrawing from Syria and is looking to relocate elsewhere, perhaps Egypt or Jordan. Second, while the prisoner exchange was certainly a victory for Hamas, it does not ensure overwhelming Palestinian support for the group or its ideology. A recent poll showed that 57% of Palestinians wish for Salam Fayyad, a secular Western-trained economist, to remain as the Palestinian Prime Minister. Khalid Shikaki, a well respected Palestinian pollster, recently stated that if presidential elections were held today Hamas would undoubtedly lose.

Since the 2006 elections, Palestinian politics have been characterized by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas' mutual inability to establish dominance over the other. Despite the Gilad Shalit deal, this trend is expected to continue in 2012.

### Libya

The Libyan Uprising commenced on 15 February 2011, when a group of frustrated Libyans took to

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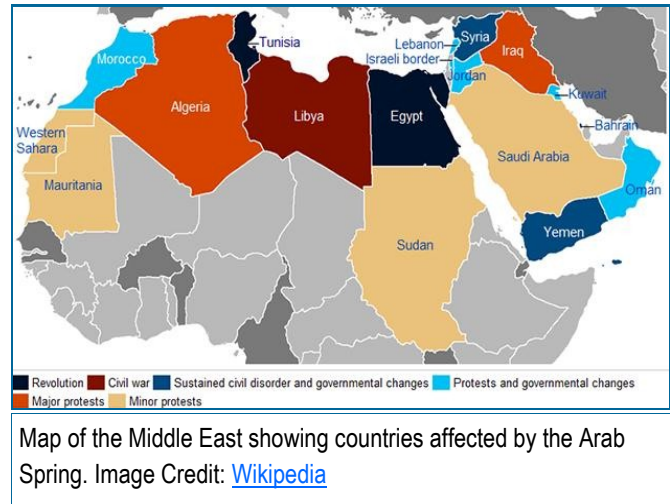
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the streets in protest against the Muammar Gaddafi regime. Gaddafi responded violently; security forces opened fire on protestors. One man was killed on that first day, and subsequent clashes resulted in a further 1,000 deaths in the following week. By the third week of February, the number of protestors had grown from hundreds to thousands, and it was not long before they established military strongholds in eastern Libyan cities, including Benghazi.

While this push for change was inspired by movements in Tunisia and Egypt, the events in Libya followed a distinct trajectory. The Libyan Uprising quickly descended into a bloody civil war that would cost more than 35,000 lives. The rebels were able to organize, rallying under the banner of the National Transitional Council (NTC), which would represent the movement for the remainder of the conflict. Arms were acquired from ransacked compounds, and reserves drawn from defectors within Gaddafi's own ranks. This enabled rebel forces to challenge Gaddafi's army, initially at least. However as the conflict wore on, a stalemate ensued which highlighted the rebels' military disadvantage. Western powers, headed by France, then applied to intervene according to the precepts stated by responsibility to protect. Permission was granted by the United Nations under UNSCR1973, which authorized the NATO-led intervention that ultimately guaranteed a rebel victory. Gaddafi was overthrown and then killed in October 2011. Libya remains unstable. Whereas the rebel movement was united by a common goal in the overthrow of Gaddafi, they remain divided along distinct tribal, regional, and political lines. Regime change will not erase these differences, a point made evident by clashes between militias, which continue to occur regularly throughout the country. This is made all the more pressing by two factors. First, weapons used during the course of war have become the inheritance of these militia movements. Second, the governance mechanisms in Libya remain too weak to regulate this threat; especially in the absence of formal security structures.

### Somalia

In 2011 Al-Shabaab faced increased military pressure from the Somali government and her allies. A



coordinated offensive conducted by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the African Union (AU) evicted Al-Shabaab from most of the capital city, Mogadishu in early August 2011. In October this year, Kenya, with the TFG's acquiescence, launched a campaign against Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia and in November Ethiopia also deployed forces against the group. Militias such as the *Ahlu Sunna wal Jumma* (ASWJ) and Ras Kamboni have continued to fight the Al-Shabaab. As a result of military pressure from multiple directions, Al-Shabaab lost its territory, key resources, like the Bakara market, and influential leaders, such as Fazul Mohammed.

These defeats came on top of a famine that exacerbated preexisting tensions within the Al-Shabaab leadership. Global *jihadists*, such as Ahmed Godane and foreign fighters, have denied access to international relief agencies which they accuse of harboring colonialist intentions. However, nationalist *jihadists* who depend heavily on indigenous clan support, such as Mukhtar Robow and Hassan Aweys, were more agreeable to the presence of the relief organizations. At one point, clan elders in Robow's native Bay and Bakool regions urged him to withdraw from Al-Shabaab because of the group's harsh stance against the distribution of relief aid.

Despite these developments, Al-Shabaab may yet survive. Kenya's campaign has stalled and analysts doubt her ability to sustain a lengthy fight. An Ethiopian

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incursion may cause more harm than good; Ethiopia's 2007 invasion of Somalia was widely denounced in Somalia and contributed to the rise of Al-Shabaab's popularity. TFG forces are underpaid and poorly disciplined, occasionally looting and abusing civilians. If the TFG cannot provide order in Mogadishu, then it risks losing its legitimacy. However, these qualifications should temper, but not dismiss, the optimism that 2012 may see the defeat of Al-Shabaab.

### Syria

Syria is the fourth Arab country to experience popular discontent with its ruling elite. Although signs of discontent were apparent as early as January 2011, they became serious only in mid-March when thousands went out into the streets demanding far-reaching reforms. Though initially peaceful, the mass protests were violently repressed by the Bashar al-Assad regime. The brutal response of the regime encouraged many within the opposition to begin demanding regime change and to oppose force with force. A nascent rebel army is increasing in strength. The Free Syria Army, led by Colonel Riad al-Asad, claims to have 15,000 soldiers in its ranks and has already carried out operations against regime forces. As the situation in Syria worsened, the international community ratcheted up the pressure on the regime. In August 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights requested the Syrian government to be referred to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. In November 2011, Turkey, formally Syria's ally, called for Bashar al-Assad to resign, and soon after floated the possibility of establishing "safety zones" within Syria. The French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe raised a similar proposal. Most striking is the reaction of Assad's Arab counterparts. The Arab League has suspended Syria's membership in the organization and imposed heavy sanctions.

However, Syria still retains some allies. Iran remains a loyal ally. In December 2011, Russia delivered anti-ship cruise missiles to the Syrian government, and has consistently defended the regime. Furthermore, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah declared his support for the Assad regime in a public

speech on 6 December 2011. Hezbollah has good reason to hope for the Assad regime's durability. Nasrallah's recent comments leave no ambiguity as to which side Hezbollah will belong. Burhan Ghalioun, chairman of the opposition Syrian National Council, has stated that a post-revolutionary Syria would have a different relationship with Hezbollah. Nasrallah's *bête noire*, former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri moved quickly to declare his support for the Syrian people and criticized Nasrallah.

It is not clear that the Assad regime will survive this crisis despite the presence of a still cohesive internal security force and supportive external allies. A transition government will face the daunting challenge of rebuilding a state with deep reservoirs of inter-communal suspicion, if not animosity.

### Tunisia

Tunisia was the first Arab country to experience a popular overthrow of its leader in 2011. While it set the stage for the Arab Spring, no single event was the cause of the Arab Spring, events on 17 December 2010 in a small non-descript Tunisian market-town, produced a ripple effect that would echo throughout the Arab world. Mohamed Bouzizi, a 26 year old grocer, set himself alight in protest against his mistreatment by security forces. This symbolic display ignited the frustrations of the masses, which launched protests against the brutally oppressive Ben Ali regime that same day which responded violently with its massive security forces. However the subsequent crackdown by security forces created such uproar that the revolution soon spread to major cities. From Sfax and Tunis, thousands gathered across the country in a collective mission to force the regime to resign. The regular army refused to fire on demonstrators.

In a desperate attempt to regain control, Ben Ali promised the protesters a series of concessions, including 300,000 new jobs. These offers were refused by the protesters and on 14 January 2011, Ben Ali finally stepped down and was replaced by interim prime-minister Fouad Mebazza. But the revolution was not yet over. Controversy generated by Mohamad

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Ghannouchi's continued role as Prime Minister resulted in riots that compelled his resignation on 27 February 2011 and promises of future elections. The situation in Tunisia then remained quiet until May 2011, when almost 200 people were arrested during protests that erupted in light of concerns the interim leadership would revoke its offer of democracy. While elections were delayed, they were nonetheless held in October 2011, during which 'Ennadha', a moderate Islamist party, was elected to power.

Thus far, Tunisia has been a success story. In little more than 10 months, its people have fulfilled two major goals: toppling a dictatorship and holding democratic elections. However the future trajectory is impossible to determine. Ennadha now face the difficult task now of simultaneously fostering stability and development. This would be difficult task for any government, let alone one with no experience.

### Yemen

It took more than ten months of protests, repression and thousands of dead to finally force Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. On 23 November 2011 Saleh had no choice but to sign an agreement brokered by the Gulf Co-operation Council and transfer power to his Vice President, Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi. Even if this agreement is an indisputable step forward, it is too early to say whether it will end the violence as many Yemenis reject the immunity provide to Saleh.

The 2011 uprising in Yemen came as a result of grievances accumulated over the past several years. The population was seething over corruption and economic mismanagement. In the south, *al-Haraka al-janubiyyah* organized strong protests against domination by the capital, Sana'a. On 18 March 2011 Saleh lost the support of a long-time ally, General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar who defected after the death of more than fifty unarmed demonstrators in Sana'a. The country then sank into full-fledged civil war between the supporters and opponents of President Saleh.

Ten months of internecine fighting weakened the state and allowed some extremist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to spread their influence and demonstrate the capacity to take and hold territory from state control. Militant groups subscribing to AQAP ideology formed a group named "Ansar al Sharia." Ansar al Sharia seized towns such Jaar or Zinjibar in the Abyan governorate and gain access to weapons, which they used both in clashes with government forces and to ambush military convoys. The Yemeni strategy of shelling Jaar and Zinjibar areas proved to be inefficient, and increased the number of civilian casualties. The death of AQAP's cleric Anwar al Awlaki on 30 September 2011 may affect AQAP's recruitment process in the short term, but will not diminish its fighting capacities on the field as AQAP enjoys a safe haven in South Yemen.

The Yemeni government also lost control of the north as the al Houthi rebels have gained tactical control of territory in northern Sa'ada province, and neighboring al-Jaw province, both of which border Saudi Arabia. The Houthis pushed westward in an attempt to open a supply route to the Red Sea.

## South Asia Country Assessment: Afghanistan

### Wadan Farahi

2011 was one of the most important years for Afghanistan. It was the year that United States (US) President Barack Obama announced the withdrawal of 33,000 troops who were deployed in 2009 as part of counterinsurgency operations. Major conferences also took place to decide the fate of the country beyond 2014. The insurgents changed their fighting tactics against the international troops as well as the Afghan government. The targeted killing of high-ranking government officials, pro-government local elders and key political figures have increased. Insurgents stepped up their attacks throughout the country including in Kabul.

The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) increased its efforts in training Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the international community pledged financial support until 2024. However, the prolonged security problems, the financial crisis and the targeted killings of senior Afghan government officials has weakened President Hamid Karzai's government and increased the risk of ethnic violence and civil war post-2014. The attacks on Shiite pilgrims have raised concerns that a sectarian war would break out.

The efforts of the High Peace Council, which was set up in 2010 to reconcile with the Taliban who are willing to put an end to violence, were weakened with the killing of Professor Burhanudin Rabbani in October 2011. He was the former president of Afghanistan and the head of the High Peace Council. The peace efforts also faced strong political opposition from the northern political figures of the country.

### Security Transition

The US, ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), and NATO-backed transition process is scheduled for completion in 2014. The transition started in March 2011 when President Karzai announced which provinces and cities would have their security handed over to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

The first phase rolled over in July 2011. The security of Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Mehtaralm of Laghman Province, Panjshir and Bamayan were transferred to the ANSF. The first phase was considered a success by the Afghan government as they did not face any major setbacks with the turn-over. Fifty percent of the Afghan population has been covered with the start of the second phase on 2 December 2011.

As the transition plans were laid out, NATO and the US increased its mentors and budget for the training of ANSF personnel. In consultation with the Afghan government, it was agreed that the number of ANSF forces will be increased to 352,000 forces by 2013. The US government has already spent USD21 billion for the training and equipment for the ANSF as there has been a major focus on increasing the quality of the personnel.

The ANSF has made significant improvements since 2009 when the focus shifted to equipping and training their personnel. The ANSF has led several operations throughout the country but the high rate of illiteracy, corruption, 24% attrition rate, ethnic division and the costs of maintaining the ANSF has raised serious concerns about its sustainability after 2014.

The Afghan government has decided to seek a long-term commitment

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Security transition ceremony in Panjshir, Afghanistan on 24 July 2011. Photo Credit: [ISAF Media](#)

from the international community in the form of strategic partnerships to strengthen the transition. The past few months, the Afghan government has been working on a strategic partnership with the US government but no agreement has been reached yet. President Karzai called on the Afghan Traditional Loya Jirga (TLJ) to get the perception of the Afghan population with regards to a strategic partnership deal with the US. The deal, if pushed through, will allow US troops to stay on in Afghanistan for another 10 years after 2014. The TLJ endorsed the partnership but with the condition that the US military and the foreign troops should end its night raids as these has caused political setbacks for the Afghan government. However, the night raids are seen by the US and coalition forces as an effective and important element in counterinsurgency.

Afghanistan signed its first strategic pact with India on 4 October 2011, shortly after the killing of Professor Burhanudin Rabbani of the High Peace Council (HPC). Under the pact, India will provide training to 30,000 Afghan military forces in India over the next three years. The pact has actually been in the drawing board since 2005 but it was not implemented because the Pakistan government was not comfortable with the agreement or cooperation.

The US is keen that other countries should also step up their efforts in training and equipping the ANSF.

The Afghan government is also exploring strategic partnership deals with France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the European Union.

### State of Insurgency

On 11 April 2011, the Taliban announced the launch of “Operation Badr” where coordinated attacks with the use of conventional and non-conventional tactics throughout the country. The Taliban is focused on expanding the insurgency to northern Afghanistan. It has stepped up attacks that target senior government officials. The targeted killings increased by 60 percent in 2011. There was a 500% increase in cross borders attacks and a 20% increase in Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) attacks during the year.

In response to the counterinsurgency operations, the insurgent leaders directed their commanders to avoid large-scale confrontations with ISAF forces and to increase their use of IEDs. The ISAF has had some success in clearing most of the insurgent strongholds in south Afghanistan. But there has been little progress in introducing governance and carry out rebuilding and development activities to stabilize the areas cleared of militancy. As a result, the insurgents have taken to re-infiltrating the community and target and kill those working with the government.

While there have been some progress, improvements to national infrastructure remain insufficient to provide tangible benefits for the populace. This weakness has been exploited by the insurgents who continue to leverage on their religious, ethnic, and tribal affinities with local Afghans for recruitment, resources, and freedom of movement. Insurgent information operations remain focused on portraying the Afghan Government’s inability to provide security to the Afghans. Insurgents sought to underline this message with high profile complex attacks in Kabul and Kandahar.

High-profile killings aimed at thwarting the government’s efforts to maintain peace and security and stabilize the country. The killing of Professor Rabbani created further division among Afghans fighting or reconciling with Taliban. In some of the high-profile attacks in the central region, the insurgents penetrated heavily

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guarded and secured areas of Afghanistan. The infiltration of the Taliban in Afghan National Army is also a serious concern.

### **ISAF and ANSF Operations**

Throughout 2011, the ISAF's strategic goals were to create conditions for a smooth security transition, protect the population in areas where the insurgents have influence, separate insurgents from the populace, establish rule of law, and deliver basic services, foster community development and generate employment opportunities. US and coalition forces nearly tripled the number of its kill-or-capture missions this year, there was also an increase in joint and Afghan-led operations. More than 2,800 night raids and 27 major military operations were conducted across Afghanistan. These resulted in the death or capture of 1,500 Taliban leaders and over 11,200 cadres.

With the success of counterinsurgency operations (COIN) in southern Afghanistan, the focus is now shifting towards the eastern part of the country which has borders with Pakistan. It was reported that since mid-May through 26 September 2011, the ANSF and ISAF have killed more than 450 insurgents and captured 300 others in operations in east Afghanistan. The 60-days operation focused on the volatile border provinces of Khost, Paktiya, Nuristan, Paktika and Wardak to the west of Kabul. On 24 October 2011, ISAF spokesman Brigadier General Carsten Jacobson told reporters that nearly 200 Taliban-linked militants were captured or killed in a joint operation by ISAF and Afghan forces. The Afghan-led operation aimed to kill or capture Haqqani-affiliated insurgents along the eastern border. These operations further increased the momentum of Afghan and coalition security forces in eastern Afghanistan.

### **Safe Havens**

The presence of insurgent safe havens in Pakistan and the reluctance of Islamabad to take action on Afghan insurgents have become a major hindrance to efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. All three major Afghan groups, the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and Hizb-e-Islami have safe havens in the tribal areas of Pakistan..

Despite the pressure from the Afghan and US governments, Pakistan has refused to attack and dislodge the Afghan insurgents. Attacks on US and Afghan forces are planned inside these safe havens. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are at its lowest point since 2001. The suicide attack on a Shiite procession in Kabul on 6 December 2011 was blamed on the Lashkar-e-Jhangavi (LEJ), a Pakistani based militant group. The attack has further escalated the tension between two countries. Afghan authorities believe that the attack was carried out with the support of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to spark sectarian violence.



## South Asia Country Assessment: Bangladesh

### Iftekharul Bashar

2011 saw the further consolidation of Bangladesh's ongoing counter terrorism efforts. Bangladesh continued to cooperate with its regional and international partners in counter terrorism. It has strengthened its domestic legal response to terrorism and worked towards enhancing the capacity of its national institutions in combating terrorism and militancy.

The threat scenario in Bangladesh has significantly changed in recent years. The killing of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden by United States forces in Pakistan have angered Islamist militants in Bangladesh as Bin Laden was considered an "ideological beacon" for their operations. The operational threat from militant groups has been reduced to some extent but the threat of radicalization has emerged in a big way. There has been no significant terrorist attack in Bangladesh in 2011. Law enforcement agencies were successful in thwarting several terror plots. However, radicalization, especially of a segment of the urban youth, is now a new challenge. This highlights the need for Bangladesh to put more emphasis on its strategic counterterrorism initiatives.

Bangladesh constructed its first ever maximum security prison in suburban Gazipur. The prison has facilities to accommodate 1,000 inmates who are considered "dangerous" or a threat to national security. The prison, which will be in operation soon, will initially house top militant leaders. Also, the formation of a specialized police body, the National Police Bureau of Counter Terrorism, is currently underway. The proposed body would monitor the activities of militants who are on the run. The relatives of suspected militants will also be monitored by this unit which will maintain a database of

terrorist and militant organizations at home and abroad.

### Counterterrorism and Counter-Radicalization

Approximately 220 persons were arrested this year in counterterrorism operations. Most of the top Islamist militant leaders have been arrested and brought to justice. The arrests affected the overall operational capacity of the groups they were leading. However, there were efforts within some of the militant groups to adapt to the current law enforcement responses of the state. For example, some of the groups were found to be pursuing new strategies to survive and sustain the crack-down by law enforcement agencies. They have adopted a cell structure wherein cell members can function without depending too much on the group's central command. That is why despite the arrest of top terrorist leaders, the cells have survived and remained active.

The Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and the Harkatul Jihad al Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B) are two major militant groups. Both the groups have been banned by the government. In 2011 some of the top leaders of both these groups were arrested and they are now in prison.

The JMB has not carried out any terrorist attacks in 2011. However, it has threatened to blow up a high-security prison in the port city of Chittagong in the early part of the year. The operational strength of the JMB and its networks all over the country remain a concern. Law enforcement agencies have compiled a list of 8,096 members of the JMB- more than 2,000 of which are believed to be mem-

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bers of the group's suicide squad. Bangladeshi authorities have arrested over 1,500 JMB members along with a few top leaders. But at least 25 district-level commanders remain at large.

The HuJI-B is reportedly facing a major setback following the arrest of three of its former leaders — Maulana Yahiya, Sheikh Farid, Maulana Sabbir Ahmed. It should be noted that both Maulana Yahiya and Sheikh Farid took part in the Afghan War. Sheikh Farid reportedly played a vital role in reuniting Afghan War participants with some other top leaders of HuJI-B in the past few years.

The banned Islamist outfit Hizb ut Tahrir Bangladesh (HTB), the Bangladesh chapter of Hizb ut Tahrir, a global pan-Islamist outfit, was active throughout 2011. This outfit is increasingly becoming a concern for Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies. The group has been active in the country since the early 2000s and it has managed to radicalize a small but significant segment of the urban youth, especially from the affluent class of the society. The propaganda capacity of HTB is higher than any of the other groups banned in Bangladesh. Through its website, the group provides their narratives on a range of domestic, regional and global issues which has a deep impact on the youth. Unless the HTB narratives are challenged by counter narratives from the government and the mainstream community, the radicalization of the youth in Bangladesh will go unabated.

Another banned outfit, the Hizbut Tawhid (HT) has also been active in its underground radicalization activities in the form of conducting orientation courses, publishing books and periodicals. This group is based in Dhaka but has extended its activities to other parts of the country.

In December 2011, the Bangladesh Cabinet approved the final draft of the (Amendment) Anti-Terrorism Act 2011. The Act now has a provision for the death penalty for those involved with, supporting, or financing militancy and terrorist activities in the country. A person convicted under this act will have to serve a

minimum jail term of three years to a maximum of 20 years, as well as pay fines, depending on the nature of the crime. Any Bangladeshi or foreign national using Bangladesh for terrorist activities in other countries or supporting such activities would be brought to trial under this act. The main aim of the act is to curb militancy, prevent money laundering and counter the financing of terrorism.

### Issues of concern

There are concerns about the residual capacity of the groups in Bangladesh. The command and control structure of both the JMB and HuJI-B are changing in response to the increased policing. The groups that had a vertical command and control structure have shifted towards a more horizontal structures. As a result, the future threat scenario in Bangladesh will most probably be dominated by smaller, but efficient, and more lethal cells.

In 2011 some of the Islamist militant groups tried to forge alliances with other groups with a similar politico-religious ideology. The goal was to gain a strategic leverage to reorganize and to launch multiple operations. Though so far the groups have not been able to form alliances, this tactical intent of the militant groups



December 2011 photo of arrested members of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) convicted for the murder of Awami League leader Shahadat Hossain Master (inset).

Photo Credit: [The Daily Star](#)

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needs continued vigilance from the authorities.

As of December 2011, the propaganda capability of the major groups have been disrupted, but not fully eliminated. Interestingly, the propaganda activities has shifted to the lesser known groups like the HTB.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's southeastern region, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), remains a simmering conflict zone. There has been an increase in the number of clashes between the Parbattya Chattagram Jana-sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF). 2011 marked the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the peace accord signed between the Government of Bangladesh and the PCJSS. The organization blamed the government because the accord has yet to be fully implemented. The PCJSS threatened that it will wage a tough movement by January 2012 to force the government to implement the accord. For its part, the Bangladeshi government gave its assurance that it is committed to the full implementation of the peace accord and sought cooperation from all the stakeholders.

For the latest reports and commentaries on terrorism and political violence please visit [www.pvtr.org](http://www.pvtr.org)

### GLOBAL PATHFINDER II

The ICPVTR Terrorism Database – Global Pathfinder - is a one-stop repository for information on the current and emerging terrorist threat. The database focuses on terrorism and political violence in the Asia-Pacific region – comprising of Southeast Asia, North Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Oceania.

Global Pathfinder is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, key terrorist personalities, terrorist and counterterrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps . It also contains specific details and analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles.

In addition to providing the latest information on terrorist attacks and pronouncements, Global Pathfinder also includes over a hundred terrorist training manuals, counter terrorism legislations and conventions, analytical papers on terrorist ideologies, commentaries on terrorist trends and patterns, transcripts of landmark cases, interviews with terrorists as well as photographs from different conflict zones across the world. Further, Global Pathfinder also has a huge collection of jihadi websites, the contents of which are routinely translated and analyzed by our analysts. This analysis helps develop an understanding of the developments in the ideological spectrum and trajectory of the terrorist threat, in both in tactical as well as strategic space.

For further inquiries please email Ms. Elena Ho Wei Ling at [isewlho@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:isewlho@ntu.edu.sg)

## South Asia Country Assessment: India

### Akanksha Mehta

With two major attacks on urban centers, a deadly and ever expanding Maoist insurgency, and political unrest in the Kashmir valley and Northeast India, security remained the most significant national concern for India in 2011. There were approximately 1,036 casualties of terrorist/insurgent violence this year- 407 civilians, 193 security personnel, and 436 militants. While this is a marked drop from the 1,902 casualties reported in 2010, terrorism and insurgency remain serious threats to the nation's stability.

#### **Terrorism in Urban Centers**

On 13 July 2011, three coordinated bomb attacks took place in the city of Mumbai. This was the first major attack in the city after the November 2008 terrorist attacks that claimed almost 200 lives. The first bomb was planted on a motorcycle in Khau Gali, a crowded street in South Mumbai's Zaveri (Jewelers) Market. The second bomb was planted in a tiffin-box placed at the Opera House near the crowded Charni Road. The third bomb was placed on an electric pole at a bus stand in the crowded area of Dadar. All three bombs went off between 6:55PM and 7:06PM, a time when all the sites face immense peak traffic from commuters. The blasts killed 26 people and injured 130 others. The investigation of the attack is still underway and the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has named the terrorist group Indian Mujahideen as the perpetrator behind the act. In the aftermath of the attack, amidst widespread public anger, the state's Chief Minister Prithviraj Chauhan urged the modernization of police forces and the installation of CCTV at potential target sites.

On 30 July 2011, the lone-surviving militant of the November 2008 Mumbai at-

tacks, Ajmal Kasab, challenged his conviction and sentence at the Supreme Court of India. Kasab, who was sentenced to death for his role in the attacks lost a prior appeal at the Bombay High Court in February 2011. A special Supreme Court bench is currently hearing the matter.

At 10:14AM on 7 September 2011, a bombing took place at the Delhi High Court in the capital city of New Delhi. The bomb was placed in a briefcase and planted outside Gate Number 5 of the court. The attack took place at a time when a large number of people were queuing outside the gate to gain passes for access to the court. Furthermore, the court was attacked on a Wednesday, a day that attracts an even higher number of visitors because it is the day when hearings on Public Interest Litigations are held. The blast claimed 12 people and injured 78 others. In the aftermath of the attack, police released two sketches of possible suspects. An email sent to media houses claimed that the Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami carried out the attack in retaliation for the conviction of the militant Afzal Guru. Later, another email suggested that the Indian Mujahideen was responsible. While arrests have been made, the identities of the perpetrators are yet to be confirmed. The attack reasserted the gaps and inadequacies in India's counterterrorism strategies and operations.

#### **Insurgency and Political Unrest in the Kashmir Valley**

The insurgency in the Kashmir Valley has been on the decline since 2005. This year, there were 181 casualties related to terrorism and insurgency in Kashmir including 33 civilians and 29 security personnel. A total of 119 militants were

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13 July 2011 attack at the Zaveri Market in Mumbai.

Photo Credit: [The Guardian](#)

killed in counterinsurgency operations in the region. Despite the decrease in insurgent violence, political unrest and turmoil still persist. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh initiated a dialogue for peace in Kashmir in 2010 but his efforts were deemed inadequate and some events in 2011 intensified political dissatisfaction in the region.

In August 2011, a Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission inquiry uncovered dozens of unmarked graves across the valley. There were more than 2,000 bodies buried in the graves and it was reported that those were “disappeared persons” who went missing during the peak years of the insurgency (late 1980s- early 1990s). While some of those killed were involved in militant activities, it was confirmed that many of the bodies were civilians. This was the first public, official acknowledgement of widespread human rights abuses in Kashmir and it has led to a thorough inquiry and collection of DNA evidence to identify the dead and avoid future abuse by military forces. It also sparked a number of protests and rallies across the region.

In addition to the public protests, there was a intensified demand for the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which grants immunity to security forces in Kashmir. For political stability in the region, it is therefore necessary for the government to reconvene a comprehensive dialogue between

New Delhi and Srinagar that will acknowledge and address the above mentioned grievances in addition to issues linked to insurgency and security.

### The Maoist Insurgency

In 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh termed the Maoist (or Naxal) insurgency as “the biggest security threat to India.” The year 2010 saw a massive escalation of the insurgency with several major attacks that claimed hundreds of lives. Although the year 2011 witnessed a decrease in attacks and casualties in comparison to the previous year, the insurgency continues to plague 223 districts across 20 states of the country. The Maoists launched attacks against security forces, public and private infrastructure, as well as civilians. There were 258 civilian deaths this year along with 128 security personnel. A total of 198 militants were killed in counterinsurgency operations. The statistics shows that the Maoists have changed their main targets and are now engaged in widespread violence against civilians. In addition to violence in Maoist strongholds in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Orissa, other states like Bihar and Maharashtra are also immensely affected.

Security forces also carried out a number of successful operations against key Maoist leaders. On 10 March 2011, authorities killed top-ranking Maoist leader Sasadhar Mahato in the Jamboni police station area in West Midnapore district of West Bengal. Mahato, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India-Maoist was instrumental for the spread of the movement. In November 2011, police arrested Mahato’s wife, Suchitra, also an important figure in the insurgency. The most important counter-insurgency operation this year was on 24 November 2011 when security forces killed Maoist leader Mallojula Koteswara Rao. Rao, popularly known as Kishenji, was shot dead in an encounter in West Midnapore district of West Bengal. He first joined the movement in the mid-1970s and has been at large since 1980. He was a revered intellectual who was also the movement’s military commander. Rao’s death is expected to weaken the insurgency, especially in the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand.

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It was reported that Rao's whereabouts was tipped to authorities by one of his allies. Though not confirmed, this would indicate that the internal cohesion of the insurgent movement is weakening. In the last five years, the insurgency has seen the merger and consolidation of various factions and sub-groups. This has intensified the cadre, financial, and tactical strength of the main outfit, as well as the support towards movement. Therefore, disagreements within the insurgent outfit could suggest the beginning of the disintegration of the militancy- a positive development for counter operations and strategies.

### **Insurgency in Northeast India**

The insurgency in Northeast India is on a decline and this trend continued in 2011. There were a total of 229 casualties of insurgent violence in the region -75 civilians, 35 security personnel, and 119 insurgents were killed. Assam and Manipur remain at the center of the violence, while rebel outfits in Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland, and Mizoram remained largely inactive.

Informal peace talks between the Indian government and the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) have been ongoing since 2010 but official peace talks commenced in September 2011. So far, the talks have been inconclusive and are expected to continue well into 2012. It is significant to note that ULFA's military commander, Paresh Baruah continues to remain at large in spite of rumors of his arrest in Myanmar. In November 2011, Baruah officially announced the split of ULFA and the establishment of an anti-talks faction of the outfit. The anti-talks faction has a 16 member central committee and excludes any leaders who are in favor of peace talks. The government has reasserted that the peace talks do not include Baruah's faction and his activities continue to pose a serious threat to stability and peace in Northeast India.

While Dhaka's crackdown on militants in 2009-2010 as well as the administration of several surrender and rehabilitation schemes in India's northeast contributed to the decline of insurgency in the region in 2011, two issues need to be urgently addressed. First, be-

cause of the crackdown by Bangladesh, many north-eastern groups began to establish structures, training camps, and hideouts in Myanmar and China. As India shares a long border with the two countries, cooperation with Yangon and Beijing is important to prevent the creation of this alternate insurgent sanctuary. Second, while the violence in the region has definitely decreased, issues of socio-economic and institutional underdevelopment in the region remain to be adequately addressed.

### **The Road Ahead: Need for Substantive Reforms**

India is currently faced with a serious multi-faceted threat from terrorism and insurgency that warrants substantive reforms in its counterterrorism strategies and operations. To elaborate, the lack of an information sharing framework, differences between leadership, political discordance, and ineffective coordination between the central and state agencies, continues to negatively affect all levels of counterterrorism, intelligence, investigation, and operations. Furthermore, the delays in establishing umbrella agencies- National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) as well as delays in securing potential high-value targets with appropriate security systems place a question mark on the effectiveness of counterterrorism in the country. Lack of resources (financial, manpower, and technical) as well as lack of adequate organizations conducting research on terrorism and insurgency further strengthens the gaps in India's security apparatus.

It is unreasonable to expect that there would never be an attack in a country like India which has multiple issues and underlying grievances leading to extremism, political violence, and terrorism. India also has the burden of dealing with an unstable and volatile neighborhood. However, the government must do all it can to prevent attacks and restore the faith and confidence of the public in the event of one. For peace and stability in the following years, India must demonstrate significant political will and invest in human resources, technology, and institutions with high standards of efficiency and professionalism.

## South Asia Country Assessment: Pakistan

### Saba Noor



Map showing the districts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) FATA and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan.

Image Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

In 2011, Pakistan had to contend with tense and rapidly deteriorating relations with the United States (US) along with terrorism and other political, economic, and social problems. Three major incidents took place this year which brought relations between Pakistan and the US to a near breaking point. The first was the killing of two Pakistani nationals by Raymond Davies on 25 January 2011. The second incident was the killing of Osama Bin Laden by US forces in Abbottabad, Pakistan on 2 May 2011. The third incident was the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) airstrike at security check-points in Salala at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border on 26 November 2011. In response to the incident, Pakistan closed NATO's use of supply routes through its territory, boycotted the Bonn Conference which was to discuss the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan, and demanded that US forces vacate the Shamsi

military base in Quetta. The air base is being used by US forces to conduct drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The US vacated the air base on 11 December 2011.

Extensive operations by the Pakistani military have resulted in a decrease of terrorist incidents. According to open source statistics, there were 1,966 terrorist attacks in Pakistan during 2011 compared with 3,393 attacks in 2010. There has also been a significant decline in the number of suicide attacks this year. A total of 45 suicide attacks were carried out whereas, 68 were reported in 2010.

Following the killing of Osama Bin Laden, terrorists targeted security forces and highly-sensitive and well-guarded installations. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella terrorist organization representing more than 40 terrorist groups, carried out several retaliatory attacks. Terrorist attacks were carried out against the Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters in Shabqader on 13 May, 2011; the Pakistan Navy (PNS Mehran) airbase in Karachi on 22 May 2011; a suicide attack at the Crime Investigation Department (CID) police station in Hayatabad on 25 May 2011; and the 11 October 2011 attack at the Wana Cadet College. Moreover, the personnel of intelligence agencies the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Intelligence Bureau and Civil Intelligence Bureau were targets of attacks.

Karachi witnessed extensive ethno-political and religious-sectarian violence throughout the year. The clashes in July and August 2011 between the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the Awami National Party (ANP), and the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) left around 600 people dead and hundreds more injured. The

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situation was brought under control after Pakistan Army personnel were deployed in the city.

Balochistan also remained mired in violence as clashes between Baloch insurgents and government forces continued. The insurgents targeted security forces convoys, non-Balochs, and government officials in the province. The government announced the implementation of the Aaghaz-e-Haqooq Balochistan Package which has been pending since November 2009. The package proposed initiatives to address the conflict including political dialogues with major stakeholders, resource sharing, withdrawal of armed forces from selected areas, and investigations of the deaths of key Baloch nationalist leaders. As a reciprocal gesture insurgents were asked to accept the writ of the government. However, this did not reduce the number of attacks on Pakistani security forces. In the later part of the year, sectarian, anti-Shia militant groups wrecked havoc in the province with attacks against Shia Muslims. In November 2011, the Al Qaeda-linked organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi killed twenty nine Hazaras (an Iranian ethnolinguistic group in central south western Pakistan) on their way to a pilgrimage in Iran.

### Impact of Military Operations

The decline of terrorist attacks could be attributed to the massive security operations which began in 2008 in various parts of the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), previously known as the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Pakistan's security forces expanded their operations to various parts of the tribal areas and on 13 July 2011 completed Operation Tri Star. The operation was launched in the Janata valley of South Waziristan with the objective of flushing out terrorists from the area. The Pakistan Army destroyed terrorist sanctuaries, arrested three key leaders of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from the area and seized a cache of arms and ammunitions. The Pakistan military launched two search-and-destroy operations namely *Barekhna* (Lightening) in January 2011 in Mohmand and Orakzai agencies and *Spain Gher* (White Mountain) in July 2011 in central Kurram Agency. As of December 2011, both operations are still ongoing.

The Pakistan Taliban survived the onslaughts from the Pakistani military and managed to take refuge across the border in Afghanistan where they continue to plan attacks to be carried out in Pakistan. In September 2011, Taliban militants entered Malakand where security forces have launched rehabilitation and de-radicalization programs. The militants targeted military personnel in Bishban. In response to this attack, security forces imposed a curfew in the area and launched yet another search and destroy mission. Because of the increase in cross-border infiltration of terrorists from Afghanistan into FATA, the government also deployed troops in border areas adjacent to Upper Dir, Lower Dir and Chitral.

The Pakistan Army has now taken charge of most of the areas in FATA and this resulted in the destruction or significant weakening of most of the Taliban command and control structures. There are Taliban members who have either moved to Afghanistan or have merged with civilians. The heavy military presence has also made it difficult for the TTP to regroup and recruit new members. The TTP also suffered financially as it lost territorial control and opportunities for making money from diverse means including crime and forced donations.

Moreover, there are splits within the TTP, which is no longer a unified entity. Several key commanders representing their respective tribes have split from TTP to form separate groups or factions. These internal divisions are mostly due to the differences in the choice of targets and financial constrains. Most of the small groups affiliated with the TTP are reluctant to carry out attacks in Pakistan as this invokes retaliatory attacks from the Pakistani military. Fazal Saeed, a TTP leader in Kurram Agency who has an estimated 2,500-3,000 foot soldiers under his command, has decided to form a separate group, the Tehrik-i-Taliban (Islami) because of issues with TTP leadership's policies in targeting mosques and civilians in Pakistan. If the Pakistani government were to succeed in engaging disgruntled elements of the TTP, this could deal the movement a significant blow.



## South Asia Country Assessment: Pakistan

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### Change in Trends and Tactics

This year there was a significant decrease in suicide attacks although there was an increase in the use of improvised explosive devices (IED), rockets, and armed assaults. The increase in the use of IED's could be a reaction to the military operations and efficient security measures by law enforcement agencies which have hindered the ability of the terrorists groups to recruit and train more suicide bombers. It is also easier to use IED's to target military personnel in the open or in convoys.

There is also an increase in the involvement of female bombers in suicide attacks. There were at least two reported suicide attacks which involved women. Security officials were able to arrest an 11 year old girl named Sohana, from the Lower Dir district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The girl was kidnapped by terrorists from Peshawar and was forced to carry out a suicide attack against security forces. The increasing involvement of women in suicide attacks could be a matter of concern. Use of female suicide bombers is an advantage from a tactical perspective; as the prevailing traditional and conservative norm and the reluctance of the overwhelmingly male security forces to confront females and subject them to body searches, allow women suicide bombers greater freedom of movement. Also, use of the *Burqa* (veil used to cover from head to toe) provides an advantage for women who can wear the suicide belt underneath their dress and pretend to be pregnant. The number of women in the police and security services is not enough to cope with the situation which is further complicated by Pakistan's cultural norms that discourage the deployment of women in roadside check points.

There is also a trend towards targeted assassinations involving high-profile political figures and government officials. These include the killing of Salman Taseer, the Governor of Punjab Province in January 2011, Shahbaz Bhatti, Minister for Minorities Rights in March 2011. There have also been a number of attacks against the Senior Police officials in different parts of the country.

### Challenges

While there have been visible improvements in Pakistan, the worsening security scenario in neighboring Afghanistan meant that any gains made remains fragile and reversible. A case in point is the establishment of sanctuaries by the Pakistani Taliban in Kunar, Nuristan and Ningarhar provinces in Afghanistan. From these areas, the militants continue to plan attacks to be carried out in Pakistan.

Another challenge is the tense relations between Pakistan and the US government and NATO and the Afghanistan government. If the relations were to worsen, the fight against terrorism in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region would be seriously jeopardized. This would benefit the Taliban on both sides of the border as it would allow them to regroup and reorganize to destabilize both the countries.

Even if the military operations have been successful from a tactical perspective, development both in terms of political-administrative structures and economy is essential to ensure long term and sustainable stability of the affected areas. The limitations of the Pakistan government to address economic and social issues are further hampered by the country's bleak economic outlook aggravated by the worsening global financial crisis and a series of natural disasters. If issues such as unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy are not addressed it could drive some people, especially the youth, to look towards the Taliban as an alternative for employment opportunities.

### Way forward

Despite strained relations, both Pakistan and the US need each other to fight terrorism effectively and stabilize the region. The post 9/11 cooperation between Islamabad and Washington has benefited both the countries. Pakistan remains a front-line state in fighting terrorism especially targeting groups like Al-Qaeda. Pakistan's security is also inherently linked to the stability of Afghanistan. It is therefore necessary that all stakeholders work together to root out militancy, not only through military means, but with socio-economic development in areas which have become breeding grounds for various terrorist & insurgents groups.

## South Asia Country Assessment: Sri Lanka

### Nadisha Sirisena

Ever since the military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009, there have been positive advances in development, infrastructure, and economy in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government has made strides with its reconciliation efforts, especially with the resettlement of former LTTE cadres. However, 2011 saw mounting international pressure to have an international investigation into the alleged war crimes committed during the final phase of the war between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. There has also been a noted increase in activities of LTTE sympathizers and members abroad and this is seen to be a threat to Sri Lanka in the near future.

#### International Pressure

In March 2011, the United Nations (UN) Panel of Experts released a report stating that both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE committed activities that would amount to war crimes. The Panel said there were “credible allegations” of serious violations of international law by both parties. However, the Panel of Experts had a limited mandate and was not a fact-finding mission. The panel also did not carry out a formal investigation that would draw conclusions with regards to the legal liability or culpability of states and non-state actors.

On 27 April 2011, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, called for an international investigation into the alleged war crimes. The report was submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland in September 2011 in spite of the objections made by the Sri Lankan government. A session will be hosted by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2012 to formally discuss the reports



Image Credit: [Top News](#)

by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), which was set up by the President of Sri Lanka to inquire and report on the conflict and the UN Panel of Experts.

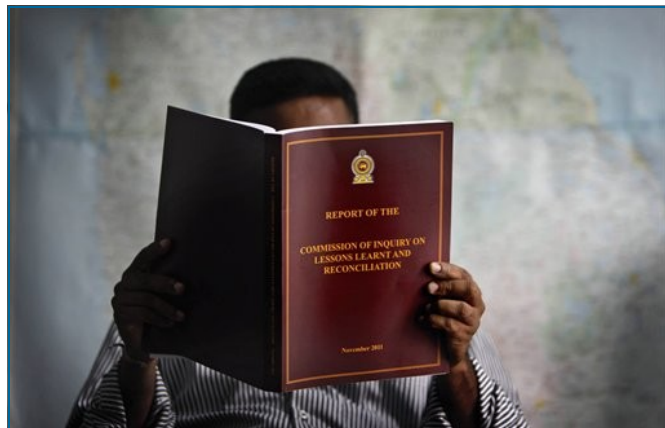
In June 2011, a controversial documentary entitled “Killing Fields” was aired by British Channel 4 station. Filmed by Benjamin Dix, a staff of the United Nations, the documentary showed graphic footage of alleged war crimes made by the Sri Lankan government. The documentary garnered much attention and was discussed in various forums. However, the Sri Lanka government rejected the documentary as fabrication and claimed that the documentary is filled with factual inaccuracies and inflated number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Australia and the United Kingdom expressed their intent to increase the mandate of the Commonwealth to include human rights issues- a move seen to put pressure on Sri Lanka to show account-

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## South Asia Country Assessment: Sri Lanka

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A Sri Lankan journalist with the LLRC Report.

Image Credit: [AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe](#)

ability for its actions during the war. This was made clear during the Commonwealth Conference held in Perth, Australia in October 2011. As an added pressure, there were speculations that Sri Lanka will be stripped of from hosting for the 2013 Commonwealth Conference.

### Tamil Diaspora

On 31 January 2011, European Union (EU) relisted the LTTE as a terrorist group along with 26 other groups on the determination that “they have been involved in terrorist acts within the meaning of Article 1(2) and (3) of the Council Common Position 2001/931/ Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of 27 December 2001. At the same time in its 2011 EU Terrorism and Situation Report (EU TE-SAT), the European police maintained that the LTTE is still extorting money from its members in the guise of “donations” and “membership fees.” The group is also said to be involved in human trafficking, money laundering, and illegal drugs.

On 21 October 2011, the Hague District Court in the Netherlands convicted five naturalized Dutch citizens of Sri Lankan Tamil origin, for organizing illegal lotteries and extorting money from other Dutch Tamils in the country. The suspects were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to five years. The longest sentence was given to a man identified as Selliah, who was described as the “global book-keeper” for all LTTE operations outside of Sri Lanka. Colombo has been putting

diplomatic pressure on several European and North American countries and the EU to proscribe LTTE front organizations.

Amidst all these developments, the Sri Lankan government must initiate efforts to reach out to the Tamil Diaspora in order for reconciliation to move forward.

### Reconciliation

Speaking at the National Reconciliation Conference held in Colombo on 24 November 2011 Sri Lanka’s Secretary of Defense, Gotabaya Rajapaksa announced that the government is finalizing its report on the number of civilians killed during the final phase of the war. The data gathering for this report is conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics, which has already conducted the research in the concerned areas.

The Sri Lankan government reported that out of 11,700 LTTE cadres, 8,500 were released after undergoing rehabilitation and are reintegrated back into their communities. Many of these LTTE cadres were those who surrendered or were arrested after the military defeat of the LTTE in May 2009.

### LLRC

On 20 November 2011, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) submitted its final report on the war to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Though some of the recommendations of the LLRC report are appropriate and could create a climate of trust, there are number of issues that could be counterproductive as well. For example, the report commended the Sri Lankan government for finally acknowledging the loss of civilian lives. However, many critics feel that the LLRC is not an independent body as it was set up by the government itself. In addition, there are concerns that the recommendations brought forward by the LLRC in the report will not be fully implemented, as all the recommendations in the LLRC’s interim report were not implemented. The Sri Lankan government has allowed the Emergency Regulations to lapse as per the recommendation of the LLRC’s initial report, but the Prevention of Terrorism Act is still in effect.

Another issue that could potentially affect the reconciliation process is LLRC recommendation to

## South Asia Country Assessment: Sri Lanka

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charge former army chief, Sarath Fonseka. He was found guilty by the commission of generating ill feelings after he made allegations that the Defense Secretary ordered Brigadier General Shavendra Silva of the 58<sup>th</sup> battalion to shoot LTTE leaders who have surrendered. The Sri Lankan government acted on the recommendations made by the LLRC and sentenced him to three years in prison on 18 November 2011. This sentence will commence once Fonseka completes serving the 30-month sentence earlier imposed on him for irregularities in army procurements.

### **Land Issues**

The Sri Lankan government introduced the Cabinet Memorandum “Regularize Land Management in Northern and Eastern Provinces” in July 2011. This was followed by the release of a Land Circular, “Regulating the Activities Regarding the Management of Lands in the Northern and Eastern Provinces” issued on 22 July 2011. This has caused confusion as the policy in the memo aims to give advantage to those who left their properties and the country during the war, but the Circular, on the other hand, recognizes the rights of people who secured control over these lands and developed them. The Circular also recommends that land transactions taken during the war should be ruled as void as it was under “terrorist influence”. The status of these claims is not clear, as landowners and claimants, including people who have documentation may lose their land.

In conclusion, while there have been some positive progress, such as initiatives like the National Reconciliation Conference, there is still more left to be done. The objective of the National Reconciliation Conference was to enrich the discourse on every aspect of reconciliation and find a way for continuity. However, issues like land ownership and the needs of affected communities are to be addressed as well. Failure to do so could have repercussions for security in the northern and eastern provinces.

## Southeast Asia Country Assessment: Indonesia

Muh Taufiquorrohman and Rebecca C. Lunnon



Map of Indonesia. Image Credit: [Lonely Planet](#)

There have been a handful of significant terrorist attacks in 2011, but not of the magnitude of the Bali 2002 and 2005 bombings, the 2003 and 2009 JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton bombings, or the 2004 Australian Embassy bombing. This year's attacks were significant in terms of the impact they caused on the Indonesian community as they marked a shift from international targets (the far enemy) to Indonesian police and the Christian community (*thoghut*, near enemies).

The key attacks for this year include the suicide bombing of the Adz-Dzikro Mosque in the Cirebon Police Precinct on 15 April 2011 and the suicide bombing of the Kepunton Bethel Full Gospel Church in Solo on 25 September 2011. There were smaller hit-and-run attacks on Indonesian police personnel, not to mention the four book bombs sent to prominent Indonesian figures from 15-17 March 2011.

Several other plots were foiled, including the plan to bomb the Christ Cathedral Church in Serpong, Banten on Good

Friday with 150kg of explosives and the plot to poison police by placing cyanide in their food. Over 130 terrorists or suspected terrorists were arrested, and half a dozen or so killed. Many more were tried and convicted, including Abu Bakar Ba'asyir.

The situation in Papua also flared up, with quite harsh reactions from security forces which led to a number of deaths on behalf of both security forces and the separatists. While several Papuans thought to be connected to the Free Papua Movement (OPM) were arrested or killed, the guerrilla forces were able to elude authorities. Civilians were by far the main casualties.

Detachment 88, Indonesia's specialized counterterrorism force, remains successful in its operations and has reduced the capability of terrorist groups to launch major attacks against foreign targets. However, a more comprehensive approach to radicalisation is needed, a role that the Indonesian Anti-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) hopes to play. Engagement and

## Southeast Asia Country Assessment: Indonesia

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cooperation with the two largest and moderate Islamic organisations is crucial. Perhaps, that is the only way to effectively engage the wider community to spread awareness about the threat and the importance for tolerance and pluralism. Timing could not be more conducive, as Indonesians and their houses of worship, traditionally very safe places, were the primary targets of the two major terrorist attacks this year.

### Shift in Targets

This year has shown a further consolidation in the shift in targets that first became apparent in 2010. Before 2009, all major attacks were masterminded by the hard-line faction of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). This faction was led by some JI members who were dissatisfied with the pragmatic stance of JI's central leadership which was more focused on religious outreach (*dakwah*) than jihad. There were similarities in terms of the modus operandi and target types between JI's five major attacks mentioned above. All attacks made use of suicide bombers and targeted Western assets and citizens, primarily to attract international attention. JI's hard-line faction also used small and dedicated teams to conduct their attacks. Noordin M. Top, the mastermind of the bombings and the leader of the faction, built small teams comprised of individuals for each attack.

The terrorist activity and arrests in 2010 and 2011 revealed that terrorists have changed their choice of targets and the way in which they operate. The primary targets were President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Indonesian police. While foreign embassies theoretically remained attractive targets, the actual targets on the ground were the police, and this year, even the Christian community. For instance, in 2010 police were targeted in a retaliatory attack on a police station in Hampan Perak, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra on 22 September and in Yuli Harsono's attacks on 15 March and 10 April. In 2011, the police were the primary targets in the Adz-Dzikro Mosque bombing, the hit and run attack in Palu, Central Sulawesi on 25 May 2011, and the foiled cyanide plot. Further plans to attack the police this year were made, including plots by members of Abu Omar's cell, who were arrested in Novem-

ber 2011. The police were successful in foiling these plots.

The rise in the number of confrontations between the police and terrorists indicates the latter's decreasing capability to strike at international targets, but shows the groups' increasing resilience and hatred towards the Indonesian police and the Indonesian state. There is also an increasing intolerance towards the Christian community. The targeting of government officials has been further reinforced by the theological argument, proposed by Aman Abdurrahman, that anyone who obstructs the implementation of *sharia* – whether they are the police or Indonesian government officials – are *thoghut* (infidels) and thus appropriate targets.

Terrorist networks and cells have also changed. JI's previous attacks involved a small select team of individuals, but in the last two years, and 2011 in particular, attacks were perpetrated by small, radical, religious cells. They often have some kind of connection to the Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), but they act independently and are composed of mutual friends rather than individuals brought together by a leader. This perhaps increases their cohesiveness, and while it gives JAT less authority over attacks committed, it also increases plausible deniability on behalf of JAT, and has allowed the group to escape being officially labelled a terrorist organisation.

Overall, the Indonesian police have made a significant number of arrests, though there were still reports of excessive force and unnecessary fatalities, with allegations of torture in some instances. While police argued that this is due to resistance from terrorists, the fact that police are now the primary target of attacks could have a psychological impact that translates to an increased use of force. Again, there is evidence that this could lead radicalised Muslims to seek revenge (*qisas*), with the perpetrators of the attack on police in Palu, Central Sulawesi saying that it was in revenge for the arrest and trial of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. This was also apparent in Yuli Harsono's killing of three police officers on two separate occasions last year, and the attack on the Hampan Perak police station.

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### Key Players

In 2011 several prominent individuals led the groups involved in terrorist acts including Abu Omar, Ali Miftah, Abrory, Santoso and Yadi.

Abu Omar led a cell which smuggled weapons from the Philippines and plotted to attack the Singaporean Ambassador to Indonesia. He was arrested on 4 July 2011, while remaining elements of his cell were arrested in November 2011. Ali Miftah was the leader of terrorist cell who planned to poison police personnel with cyanide in Jakarta. He was arrested on 11 June 2011. Abrory was the leader of Umar Bin Khattab pesantren in Bima who planned to carry out bombings in Senggigi, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara and who was also involved in the explosion at his pesantren. One of his students stabbed a police officer to death in Bima. Abrory was arrested on 15 July 2011. Santoso was the leader of the JAT in Poso whose men shot at policemen in Palu. He remains at large, and is believed to be highly capable of motivating others. Yadi was the leader of the Cirebon terrorist cell, whose men bombed the Adz Dzikro mosque in Cirebon and the GBIS church in Solo. He was arrested on 21 October 2011.

Another figure of note is Mus'ab Abdul Ghaffar alias Darwo, a fiery orator who radicalised the Ightiyalat group involved in the Klaten bombings in Central Java in 2010. He remains at large and is also believed to have the potential to encourage young radicals to carry out terrorist acts.

### Outlook 2012

Despite the arrest of key leaders and members, the jihadi ideology continues to prevail and spread throughout Indonesia, particularly amongst the youth. This is in part due to the inability of authorities to monitor and prosecute those who preach hatred and seek to recruit new members. It is not purely a matter of lack of legislation, it is also due to the lack of community engagement between the authorities and key social organisations in Indonesia. For instance, *Nadhlatul Ulama* (NU), Indonesia's largest Islamic social organisation with an estimated 40 million members, has an extensive pesantren network throughout the archipelago that could

be used to effectively reach out to the general public, make them aware of the threat of radicalism, and teach the importance of pluralism and tolerance. As it is, most of NU's religious scholars and teachers (*ulama* and *kya'i*), who have a prominent position in Indonesian society, are completely unaware of the threat radicalism poses, or the extent to which it has infiltrated society.

JAT is now the primary threat in Indonesia, as the hard-line faction of JI has been neutralized and any sympathisers have moved to JAT. The remaining JI elements are purely focused on *dakwah*. JAT is particularly dangerous for its two faces. The JAT presents itself as a conservative religious organisation that denies any association with terrorism and states that Indonesia is not a legitimate area of jihad. The JAT is involved in social welfare activities such as reconstruction efforts after the Merapi explosion in 2010. Such activities generated sympathy from most Muslim communities, increased recruitment and fundraising, and allowed the JAT to portray itself as a victim of police or western conspiracies every time it is linked to terrorism.

On the other hand, it is clear that the JAT is linked to terrorist activities. Evidence have shown that there is an undeniable money trail to many incidents, and the arrests in 2010 and prosecutions in 2010-2011 of key financiers including Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Syarif Usman, Hariyadi Usman, Abdul Haris, and more recently Mujahidul Haq, have shown a clear financial trail from JAT to the Aceh military training camp. In addition, the attacks in 2011 were largely perpetrated by individuals with links to JAT. Although in each instance, the JAT either denied membership, stated that the perpetrators had since left the organisation due to ideological differences, or that they had been acting on their own account. This dual nature of the JAT makes it difficult for Indonesian authorities to proscribe the organisation, as not all of its members are terrorists or even radical. Perhaps a better step is for the BNPT to work with prominent religious organisations such as NU, NGOs and educational institutes to engage with the wider Indonesian community in order to develop resilience to jihadist ideology.

## Southeast Asia Country Assessment: Philippines

Diane Russel O. Junio

The Philippines started 2011 on a high note with the resumption of peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF). However, the negotiations are not without its hurdles and challenges.

Nearly two years after being elected, it remains to be seen whether President Benigno Aquino III will be successful in bringing peace and stability to the country. The President still enjoys a high trust rating and many Filipinos are optimistic that a peace agreement is feasible under this administration. Throughout the country, military operations have significantly reduced the strength of the threat groups. While there have been some high profile incidents, on a whole the Philippine government has achieved moderate gains in its counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

### Abu Sayyaf Group

In the past few years, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have consistently claimed that the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is on its last legs. In 2011, thirty one (31) members of the ASG were arrested in what authorities described as "intelligence-driven operations." A total of 17 ASG members were killed and 10 others were wounded in encounters between government troops and the rebels. Despite the significant blow to its membership- in June 2011 the military announced that the group is now left with only 379 members down from a peak of more than a 1,000 ten years ago. Despite this claim however, there are legitimate concerns about the group's ability to carry out terrorist attacks.

One of the deadliest encounters between government troops and ASG rebels was the 28 July 2011 encounter in Patikul, Sulu. Seven members of the Philippine Marines were killed, five of whom were beheaded and mutilated, while 21 soldiers were wounded. It prompted the government to impose the "highest order of battle" against the group and pursuit operations were carried out even during the Ramadan.

### Bombings, Kidnappings

The ASG was also held responsible for a series of bombing incidents in Zamboanga City in October 2011. The police confirmed that the bombs used in the attacks were made out of ammonium nitrate, which were similar to bombs used by the ASG in past attacks. Authorities also confirmed that two known ASG members were seen inside one of the targeted areas, minutes before the explosion. More bombs were recovered in Zamboanga City and Cotabato City. Security was tightened immediately after the blasts and the discovery of the IEDs. Additional police and military personnel were deployed around Zamboanga city to watch for any suspicious activity. Police officials claimed that mainland Mindanao and the Zamboanga Peninsula is under threat from more bomb attacks. There were speculations that Basit Usman, a member of regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was the real mastermind of the bombings but these claims have yet to be confirmed.

The Philippine government has confirmed reports that the ASG is "working closely together" with the JI. The collaboration is said to be taking place in Jolo, Sulu

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GRP and MILF Peace Panel Chairs sign the Joint Statement after the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2011

Image Credit: [OPAPP](#)

where foreign militants are based. The military said that they have monitored at least four JI militants in Sulu who are training ASG members in tactics and bomb-making. The links between the ASG and JI is not necessarily a new development- Philippine officials have acknowledged the presence of JI members such as Omar Patek and Dulmatin in ASG strongholds. It is important that the Philippines gain access to Patek, who was arrested in early 2011 in Pakistan and extradited to Indonesia. Patek will be able to give a clear picture of the extent of his terrorist operations and networks while he was based in Mindanao.

The tempo of military initiatives against the ASG has caused major disruptions for the group. With the arrests and deaths of its leaders since 2005, the ASG is essentially decentralized and has been reduced to different factions that operate in Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi and has turned to criminal activities to sustain its operations. Kidnapping-for-ransom continue to be one of the ASG's main focus. At one point in 2011, the group had as many as 13 hostages in their custody. The victims are mostly local businessmen, teachers, and social workers, and some are foreign nationals. Most of the victims have been released after allegedly paying ran-

som to the group. As of December 2011, the ASG is still holding several hostages in custody including one Indian, one Malaysian, one Japanese, and more recently an Australian national.

There is however, a speculation that organized crime groups operating in Zamboanga Sibugay and Basilan were the ones doing the actual kidnapping and that the victims were then "turned over" to the ASG, who will then make the ransom demand. These criminal groups will get a "fee" for their role in the kidnapping once the ransom is paid.

The Philippine government has yet to implement a sustainable response to the ASG. While the military operations in ASG-controlled areas are met with considerable success, the group continues to thrive. There are reports that local government officials, especially in Sulu and Basilan, are providing the ASG with safe havens and that has allowed them to flourish and elude security forces.

### GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations

Prospects for peace between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were high at the beginning of 2011. An independent survey showed that 52 percent of Filipinos expected a final peace agreement to be signed. However, the peace negotiations came to another deadlock after the 22<sup>nd</sup> Formal Exploratory Talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 22-23 August 2011. The MILF rejected the GRP's proposal on the peace accord which is composed of three major components: socio-economic development, a more empowered autonomy, and acknowledgment of the history and identity of the Bangsamoros and their struggle. The MILF said that the GRP proposal failed to acknowledge the demands of the group for a sub-state.

This impasse did not come as a surprise as the creation of a sub-state does not exist in the Philippine Constitution which only provides for autonomy. The GRP is not in a legal position to accept the MILF's de-

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mands as it needed to refer to the Philippine Constitution as its guide in the negotiations. The GRP would not want a repeat of what happened with the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) in 2008 which was issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) by the Philippine Supreme Court. The cancellation of the MOA-AD triggered attacks in Central Mindanao and very nearly jeopardized the peace negotiations. Nevertheless, both the GRP and MILF peace panels affirmed their commitment to come to a mutually agreeable political solution to the conflict in Mindanao.

### Al Barka Incident

2011 also saw the resumption of hostilities between the Philippine military and the MILF. Thirty-three people were killed in the surge of violence in the region in October 2011. Twenty-eight of those killed were soldiers and policemen. This is despite the fact that both sides are party to a ceasefire agreement as they go through peace talks in attempts to forge a political solution to the conflict in Mindanao.

The most prominent of the clashes that took place was on 18 October 2011 in the town of Al-Barka, Basilan. Nineteen soldiers were killed in a nine-hour firefight with MILF troops in Sitio (sub-village) Bakisung, Barangay Cambug. The MILF said that the Philippine Army's Special Forces were the ones who initiated the attack. For its part, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said they will file a complaint with the International Monitoring Team (IMT) against the MILF for ceasefire violations, murder and frustrated murder charges.

President Benigno Aquino III has rejected calls for an all-out war against the MILF but vowed to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of the soldiers. His decision not to use military force was both commended and criticized but the government has remained firm that a political solution is a more appropriate response against the ongoing conflict in Mindanao. The Philippine government asked the MILF to surrender five of its commanders and one Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) member who were believed responsible for the deaths



of soldiers in Al Barka.

There were concerns that the resumption of hostilities between the MILF and government troops would have even more negative repercussions for the peace negotiations. These incidents highlighted the need for both sides to uphold the mandate and authority of the ceasefire agreement. Mechanisms such as the GPH-MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, the Ad-Hoc Joint Action Group, the Local Monitoring Teams, and the International Monitoring Teams, must be allowed to carry out their functions in order to resolve issues within their mandates in a peaceful and timely manner.

Amidst the issues surrounding the Al Barka incident, the GRP and MILF met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 4 November 2011 where the negotiators clarified certain issues and identified common grounds to work on for the peace negotiations to continue. The two peace panels also called for an investigation to the Al-Barka incident. The Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) and the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG), the Coordinating Committee for the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) investigated the incident and probed any ceasefire violations committed by either side. The report, entitled "Verification and Assessment

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Group (VAG) Report on Basilan” was completed in December 2011. However the report will remain classified until both the GRP and the MILF agree to declassify the contents of the report.

### BIFM/BIFF

The GRP and the MILF also had to deal with disgruntled MILF rebels led by Commander Ameril Umbra Kato who went on to form his own group called the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) with its owned armed wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The impasse in August 2011 raised fears that the rebels will launch attacks as what happened in August 2008.

Commander Kato, who led the 2008 attacks, has been very vocal against the peace talks and accused the MILF Central Committee of abandoning its original aspiration for independence. The MILF has admitted that Kato and the BIFF were the most contentious agenda they had to address throughout its negotiations with the GRP. Efforts were made to make amends with Commander Kato but he has refused to accede to the MILF leadership and disband his armed group. The MILF formally expelled Kato and his followers from their ranks on 18 August 2011.

Kato’s expulsion from the MILF was both a feared and welcomed development. There are genuine fears that no peace agreement can be reached with a fragmented MILF. Because the MILF has relinquished control over Kato, no one can preempt his next move. The BIFF might come out and challenge the MILF’s standing as the representative of the Bangsamoro people. There is the question whether or not the Philippine government should acknowledge groups like the BIFF and talk peace. But at the same time, Kato’s expulsion meant more vigilant manhunt operations against him and his followers as they are no longer protected by the ceasefire agreement between the GRP and the MILF.

On 25 November 2011, various news sources reported that Kato suffered a stroke while on a trek in Maguindanao. The MILF was quick to announce that

they will welcome back any BIFF members who would want to return to their group. The BIFF denied the reports and in December 2011 a “proof of life” photograph of Kato was released to news media.

### Extortion, Landmine attacks and the NPA

The Philippine military estimates that the New People’s Army (NPA), the armed faction of the communist movement, has around 5,000 fighters- a significant decrease from the 20,000 rebels in the 1980s. There are no existing ceasefire agreements between the GRP and the NPA rebels, although it is customary for both sides to declare a unilateral ceasefire at the end of the year.

Even as the communist movement is talking peace with the government, the NPA continue to carry out attacks including raids on police and military outposts, abductions, the use of landmines, and extortion of “revolutionary taxes.” While the number of reported attacks would vary, on average the NPA conducts five attacks per week. Fifty six civilians were reported killed in attacks perpetrated by the NPA.

The Philippine military claimed that the NPA collected at least PHP300 million from extortion activities in 2011. The group targets mining companies, construction firms, businessmen, plantations, fishpond owners. These businesses are attacked, their compounds raided and their equipment burned if they refuse to give in to the NPA’s extortion demands. The funds collected are used to fund the communist movement’s operations and propaganda. In one of the worst extortion-related attacks in recent years, around 300 members of the New People’s Army (NPA) carried out three coordinated raids on mines operating in the town of Claver in Surigao del Sur on 3 October 2011. All three companies who operate the mines have refused to pay the extortion demands of the group.

The Philippine government has also consistently deplored the NPA’s use of landmines in their operations as it is prohibited under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and the Inter-

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national Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The CARHRIHL is a written agreement between the GRP and the CPP/NPA/NDF which was signed and approved by both the GRP and CPP/NPA/NDF in March 1998. There were 21 reported cases of landmine attacks this year which resulted in the deaths of 28 people.

On the part of the Philippine government, the military announced that in 2011 they have successfully cleared 229 barangays (villages) in 23 provinces from NPA influence and that 341 rebels were neutralized, 245 of whom surrendered while the rest were killed in encounters with the military. There are claims that the new “epicenter” of the CPP/NPA/NDF is in southern Mindanao namely the three Davao provinces, Compostela valley, two Agusan provinces, two Surigao provinces, North Cotabato and parts of Bukidnon. Attacks by the NPA and encounters between the rebels and government troops mainly occur in these areas. The NPA’s notoriety will only have negative repercussions for the peace talks. There is a growing perception that there’s no use talking peace with the rebels if they would just continue to carry out attacks against civilians and businesses.

### CPP/NPA/NDF Peace Talks

The peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People’s Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF) resumed in February 2011. While only two informal peace talks took place this year, it was a huge step for the peace process which has been at an impasse since 2005. The negotiations are facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government. Both the GRP and the National Democratic Front (NDF), which represents the communist movement in the negotiations, signed an Oslo Joint Statement that provides for an accelerated time frame of 18 months to complete the talks.

In August 2011 the NDF demanded the release of 17 “consultants” as a precondition to the peace talks. The NDF said that the release is provided for in the im-

plementation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Government and military officials have refused to give in to the rebel’s demands and said that there should be no preconditions for peace talks to continue. Both sides have traded barbs over this issue but the GRP has made it clear that the “door is always open” for the resumption of the negotiations.

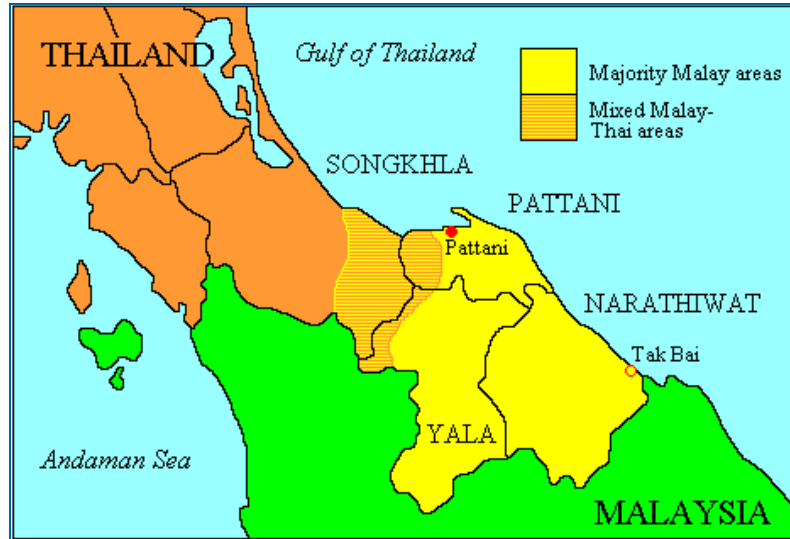
### Way Forward

In 2012, the Philippine government must ensure that it has proper mechanisms in place to maintain the tempo of the peace negotiations and ensure that the security situation is under control. At the same time, the government needs to accelerate its efforts to alleviate the economic conditions in the affected areas and address other root causes of the conflict.

The government must continue to be open to debates and disagreements on certain issues with both the MILF and the CPP/NPA/NDF. To show its sincerity and firm commitment to the peace negotiations, the government must use contentious issues as jump-off points to further the negotiations until it comes to a mutually acceptable resolution.

## Southeast Asia Country Assessment: Thailand

### Su Hao'En



Map showing ethnic distribution in Southern Thailand. Image Credit: [Wikimedia](#)

The peace and order in the Southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala of Thailand have shown no marked improvement in 2011. The terrorist attacks continue with regular frequency which has claimed more than 4600 lives since the insurgency resurfaced in the three provinces in January 2004. Despite the changes in the political leadership after the General Elections in July 2011, there is no perceptible change in government's approach to counter the insurgency and stabilize the South. Funds for infrastructure and development projects continue to flow into the region in a bid to alleviate the persistent income disparity in the Southern provinces compared to other parts of Thailand. The Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) remain in charge of security with some changes in key leadership positions and an improved level of cooperation between the two security agencies.

### Tactics and Targeting

In terms of tactics and targeting, the trend continues to be the same. Militants continue to target those perceived to be linked to the government and local authorities such as the police and military and government educational institutions. Attacks against teachers continue but the number of casualties has been reduced due to armed convoys to escort teachers to local schools. Civilians were not the main targets but they have also suffered from militant attacks. It is important to note that ethnicity or religious affiliation does not deter acts of violence against civilians as Malay-Muslims are also among those who have been targeted by the militants.

The tactics used are primarily shootings and bombings in both rural and urban areas in the southern provinces. Bombs have been used in an increasing frequency- the size and composition of which are usually based on the terrain and the intended targets. Larger sized bombs

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are used mainly in rural areas where it is easier to conceal them in the forests and alongside dirt roads. These bombs are mainly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used to ambush security personnel and their vehicles. In the urban areas, smaller IEDs are used as they are easier to conceal during transport and hide at targeted areas. Vehicle-borne IEDs, usually involving motorcycles, are used by the militants to cause a large number of casualties. Shootings are still a common tactic—many civilians have been ambushed and shot at in rural roads and rubber plantations. In urban areas also militants have carried out sporadic and random killings especially targeting civilians in local shops and restaurants.

The technical sophistication of the attacks remains the same albeit with minor tactical changes. Coordinated attacks have been common since the insurgency resurfaced in January 2004. Such attacks are characterized by one “trigger event” to facilitate a response from security personnel who are the main targets. Once the police or military are in the attack site, another attack will follow. Other forms of coordinated attacks include those carried out within a small window of time in an attempt to create mass casualties. For example, three coordinated attacks took place between October and November 2011 in Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani. These coordinated attacks consisted of bombings and shootings which took place within minutes of each other across multiple districts throughout the three provinces. No Thai insurgent groups have claimed responsibility for any of the attacks which took place this year.

During the Premiership of Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Thai government entered into a month long temporary ceasefire with the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in Narathiwat’s Rangae, Ti-ngo and Cho Airong district. The ceasefire was the result of negotiations between the Thai government, the exiled insurgent members, and third party international mediation in early 2010. However, this ceasefire did not result in any substantial change in the overall level of violence or in government policy to deal with the insurgency.

### Counter Measures

In order to restore normalcy and stability to Southern Thailand, the government has taken a multi-pronged approach, though it is more focused on security rather than on development. Nonetheless, in the early part of 2011, attempts were made by the Abhisit administration to utilize the “soft approach” to deal with the insurgency. With his “Justice and Development in the South” initiative Abhisit restructured the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), and had it report directly to the Prime Minister instead of military’s Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC). He also promised much needed economic development in the Southern provinces and introduced extensive vocational training programs. However, these efforts and those by his predecessors could not yield any perceptible results largely due to implementation failures arising out of the instability in Bangkok and frequent changes in political leadership.

It is not clear yet what would be the approach under the Yingluck administration. During the election campaign she promised a degree of autonomy for three Southern Provinces, similar to that of the Pattaya City Administration, where a local government could take control of policymaking and public services. But nothing substantive has been done so far. On the other hand, on 23 September 2011, Yingluck announced that there was no intention of creating a special administrative zone in Southern provinces. She further stated that the immediate concern of her administration is on security issues rather than suppressing the insurgency. She also announced to set up a committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister Kowit Wattana to oversee matters relating to the conflict in the south, and to ensure closer coordination between the SBPAC and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

Despite the presence of the military, attacks continue in regular intervals. The ability of the local authorities to detect and defuse IEDs has seen marked improvement though only in respect of unexploded devices near a location where an attack has already taken place. The police have also shut down cellular phone

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transmissions in areas where coordinated bombings have taken place. This is to prevent the remote detonation of bombs by the insurgents. However, the militants have improvised by using timed fuses instead of cell-phone triggers.

The Thai government has not been successful in strengthening its ties with the local community. The Emergency Decree which is very unpopular in the South has been repeatedly extended further aggravating the sense of alienation among the locals. Under the Emergency Decree, the military remains to be the main security apparatus in the southern provinces. It has also the authority to make arbitrary arrests. There is little faith in the military as it is yet to address allegations of excesses and abuse. Moreover, the military has also managed to keep its personnel exempted from SBPAC's authority to transfer officials found guilty of corruption and misconduct. SBPAC itself has come under suspicion with the appointment of Thawee Sodsong who is a close associate of Thaksin Shinawarte. Despite his public admission of mismanagement, Thaksin's name still invokes resentment in the Southern Provinces due to his high-handed policies, brutal crackdowns especially during the April and October 2004 Krue se Mosque and Tak Bai incidents respectively, and insensitivity to the grievances of the people in the south.

### Reconciliation as a Way Forward

Negotiation as an option to sort out the issues is gaining increasing acceptance from all the stakeholders involved in the conflict. After the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held meetings with separatist leaders in September 2010, the government has increased its commitment to serious peace talks. Separatist and government delegations are due to meet in a foreign country with a third party to mediate the proceedings. However, the entire government apparatus is now bogged down in responding to the flooding of Bangkok which has almost ruined the economy. This would make any substantive steps to address the southern conflict a far cry.

### EDITORIAL STAFF

#### Editor

Dr. Arabinda Acharya

#### Associate Editor

Diane Russel Junio

*For inclusion in the mailing list please email your name and the name of your organization with the subject "CTTA subscription" to Miss Diane Russel Junio at the following address:*

[isdiane@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:isdiane@ntu.edu.sg)

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Topical areas of interest are terrorism and political violence, terrorism and organized crime, homeland security, religion and violence, internal conflicts and terrorism, and all other areas of security broadly defined.

Article length could be anywhere between 800 to 1500 words. Submissions must be made before the 15th of every month for editing purposes and for inclusion in the next month's edition.

Electronic copies of the articles (MS Word format) may be submitted to the editors at the following address: [isdiane@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:isdiane@ntu.edu.sg)

## INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH



### S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University  
Block S4, Level B4, Nanyang Avenue,  
Singapore 639798

Phone: +65 6316 8925

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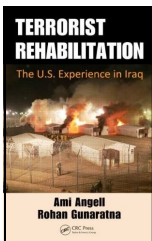
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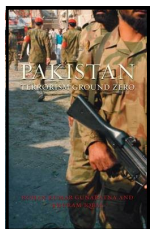
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## Events and Publications



- Terrorist Rehabilitation: The US Experience in Iraq (CRC Press Taylor and Francis Group, 2011) by Dr. Ami Angell and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna



- Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero (Reaktion Books, 2011) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and Mr. Khuram Iqbal



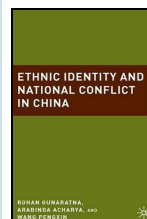
- International Aviation and Terrorism: Evolving Threats, Evolving Security (Routledge 2009) by Dr. John Harrison

### Terrorism Analyst Training Course (TATC) 2012

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For more details, please click [HERE](#).



- Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in China (Palgrave Macmillan 22 June 2010) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, Dr. Arabinda Acharya and Mr. Wang Pengxin



- Targeting Terrorist Financing: International Cooperation and New Regimes (Routledge 2009) by Dr. Arabinda Acharya