

Indonesians Infiltrate Southern Thailand's Insurgency

Publication: Terrorism Focus Volume: 3 Issue: 27

July 11, 2006 03:39 PM Age: 4 yrs

By: Zachary Abuza

While the Thai government goes to great lengths to state that the insurgency in Southern Thailand is solely a domestic affair, there is evidence that a growing number of Indonesians are involved. In late-2005, the Thai government began to acknowledge that a number of Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN-C) militants, one of the two key insurgent groups in southern Thailand, had been trained in Indonesia, although it was not known by whom (Thai Day, January 10). Additionally, both Thai officials and the media began to discuss a group known as the Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) (Bangkok Post, November 24, 2005). Yet RKK is unlikely to be a separate group altogether, but rather a name for BRN-C militants who received some training in Indonesia; mostly, it seems, while studying there. The RKK simply translates as "small group tactics," while the BRN-C is a very cellular and horizontal organization. Although Deputy Prime Minister Pol. Gen. Chidchai Wannasathit claimed to have a list of the RKK's 500 members, Thai intelligence on the insurgency has been woefully inept to date and his assertion should be treated with a measure of skepticism (Bangkok Post, June 17).

A growing number of insurgent suspects do seem to have ties to Indonesia. The 17 suspects arrested in connection with the October 16, 2005 killing of a monk all claimed to be part of the RKK and police asserted that they were trained in Bandung, Indonesia. "We cannot conclude whether Indonesian soldiers were involved, but we are certain they were trained in Indonesia," said the deputy prime minister (Bangkok Post, November 28, 2005). A senior police official said that the group that had decapitated an army commando in early January was trained by Islamic scholars who studied in Indonesia. Likewise, three men suspected of participating in an ambush on a commando unit in Yala on January 2 said that they had received training in guerrilla tactics from the RKK in Indonesia (The Nation, January 10). Most recently, authorities attributed to the RKK the unprecedented 74 bombings that rocked the three troubled provinces of southern Thailand for four days starting on June 15 (Bangkok Post, June 16).

Thai officials have expressed concern that a handful of Indonesian operatives are also becoming directly involved in the insurgency. Police identified an Indonesian known as Mudeh, who has been working with the BRN-C's Sapaeing Basoe, the former principal of the Thammawithaya Foundation School (Bangkok Post, September 20, 2005). They have labeled his group the South Warriors of Valaya. Again, however, it is unlikely to be a completely autonomous group, but rather a cell within the loose BRN-C structure. Following the spate of bombings in June, police arrested a 37-year-old Indonesian from Sumatra, Sabri Amiruddin (known as Zablee Hamaeruding), who they suspect might be Mudeh (Bangkok Post, June 17). He was arrested in Narathiwat province with 10 kilos of urea fertilizer and three kilos of nails and spikes in his possession (The Nation, June 19). Authorities have still not confirmed whether he is Mudeh.

Regardless of Thai denials, the Thai insurgency is becoming increasingly internationalized. Since late-2005, both the deputy prime minister and the commander of the Royal Thai Army have traveled to Indonesia to discuss counter-terrorism cooperation, and the Indonesians agreed to monitor links between the southern Thais and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) (Bangkok Post, November 29, 2005, December 17, 2005). There is still no evidence that Jemaah Islamiya has conducted the training.

[Email this article to a friend](#)

The Jamestown Foundation
1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202.483.8888 | Fax: 202.483.8337 | pubs@jamestown.org
Site By New Village Media | © 2010 The Jamestown Foundation